



Stonington
Media LLC

Screenplay Coverage: Comprehensive

Title: *Tides of Cyan*

Format: Feature

Genre: Drama, Experimental

Logline

A burned-out young creative, home to care for family fallout, falls into an intimate orbit with an engaged small-town radio host and must choose between emotional truth and the safer life he has been “going along” with.

Overall

Total Score: 63/100

Tier: REWRITE

One-line verdict: Beautifully observed mood piece with real cinematic instincts, but it ducks the hard narrative commitments that would make it feel inevitable instead of merely immersive.

Scorecard

Category	Score (0–10)
1) Concept & Market Hook	6.5
2) Structure & Narrative Momentum	6.0
3) Protagonist Depth & Arc	6.5
4) Stakes, Conflict & Urgency	5.5
5) Scene Craft & Dramatic Design	6.0
6) Dialogue & Character Voice	6.0
7) Theme & Emotional Impact	6.5
8) Visual Storytelling & Cinematic Execution	7.0
9) Tone, Genre Control & Consistency	7.0

Strengths (what's working)

- **Strong sensory/cinematic language.** The script thinks in images and sound, and the radio framing plus montage instincts are confident (the final departure sequence is clean and cinematic).
 - **Real emotional texture in the “going along” idea.** Michael’s articulation of defaulting to compliance and fear of managing others’ feelings is the clearest thematic spine you have.
 - **Lily’s interiority is legible.** Her journaling makes the internal conflict explicit without long speeches (“Why does it feel so bad to want more?”), and her dynamic with John reads emotionally specific rather than generic romance beats.
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Major problems (what's breaking the script)

- **The story refuses to cash the checks it writes.** You open on Michael crying in a hospital room beside an older man, but the feature as experienced leans more like a memory collage than a tightening present-tense dilemma. The framing device feels like a promise of consequence that the narrative doesn’t fully pay off.
 - **Stakes are mostly atmospheric, not dramatic.** Michael is clearly under stress (career pressure, family duties, fractured relationship), but the plot rarely forces irreversible choice until the very end gesture (handing off the ring). Internal longing is not enough by itself; the script needs external consequences that accelerate.
 - **Key supporting characters skew one-note, creating tonal/ethical drag.** Courtney is framed through volatility, sexual intensity, and “validation” conflict, which risks flattening her into an obstacle. John is mostly “the decent guy being iced out,” then escalates into confrontation around the ring. The triangle wants complexity; right now it leans toward convenience.
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Priority fixes (top 3)

- **Make the central dramatic question explicit and enforce it with a clock.** You already have a built-in deadline: Michael is only in town for weeks while handling his uncle’s situation and work coverage. Turn that into a story engine, not background.

- **Force one irreversible choice in Act 2 that costs him something.** Not “a vibe shift.” A choice that burns a bridge, changes a relationship status, or materially affects his job/family obligations.
 - **Rebalance the triangle so nobody is a strawman.** Courtney and John need dimensional agency so Michael and Lily’s choices feel morally expensive, not pre-justified.
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Category notes + specific improvement actions

1) Concept & Market Hook (6.5)

Why this score: Indie-adjacent emotional affair + music/radio + experimental structure is viable for festivals and prestige indie, but the hook is more “tone” than “premise.”

Improve by: Sharpen the pitchable engine: “two people with real commitments collide under a deadline, and the collision forces a permanent life change.”

2) Structure & Narrative Momentum (6.0)

Why: The mosaic/flashback intercuts are stylish (radio station present vs LA relationship memory spirals), but momentum is inconsistent because scenes often function as mood vignettes rather than steps in escalation.

Improve by: Track cause-and-effect relentlessly. Every sequence should either (a) tighten the deadline, (b) worsen the moral bind, or (c) force disclosure.

3) Protagonist Depth & Arc (6.5)

Why: Michael has a coherent wound: learned compliance, fear of conflict, fear of being responsible for feelings. The childhood camera story supports it. But his *want* stays fuzzy: is he trying to save his relationship, escape it, become an artist again, or just feel alive?

Improve by: Define his concrete want in the present-tense storyline, then design choices that prove change through action. “Insight” is not an arc unless it changes behavior under pressure.

4) Stakes, Conflict & Urgency (5.5)

Why: The script has conflict (Courtney fights, John ring confrontation, internal longing), but not enough consequences. Example: Courtney’s call about her promotion lands emotionally, yet it

doesn't trigger a decisive shift.

Improve by: Attach real losses to indecision: career jeopardy, family fallout, reputational damage, or a relationship rupture that cannot be patched with another call.

5) Scene Craft & Dramatic Design (6.0)

Why: Many scenes are well-observed, but too many end in the same emotional temperature (quiet, longing, unresolved).

Improve by: Give scenes sharper objectives. Someone wants something specific and pushes for it. Example of strong push: John demanding clarity and dropping the ring case on the counter. Use that kind of pressure more often, earlier.

6) Dialogue & Character Voice (6.0)

Why: Naturalistic dialogue works; occasional lines pop ("caught here in a red dress I don't want to be in"). But voices blur into similar "earnest realism," and Courtney's dialogue often functions as characterization by volatility.

Improve by: Differentiate by intention. Lily speaks in avoidance and containment; John speaks in contracts and expectations; Courtney should speak from a coherent need, not just chaos.

7) Theme & Emotional Impact (6.5)

Why: The theme of compliance vs agency is your strongest material, stated cleanly by Michael and echoed by Lily's "want more" journaling.

Improve by: Make the ending answer the theme in plot terms. Right now the ending is poetic (ring transfer, departure) but still arguable as "another version of going along."

8) Visual Storytelling & Cinematic Execution (7.0)

Why: The script is filmable and confident with montage, sound cues, and visual motifs (pool/underwater, radio, rings).

Improve by: Tie motifs to turning points, not just mood. Make the motifs *do work* at decision moments.

9) Tone, Genre Control & Consistency (7.0)

Why: The experimental drama tone is consistent and intentional.

Improve by: Watch the early explicit sexual material: it's vivid, but it can tip from character into provocation and may alienate buyers if it's not clearly servicing plot/arc.

10) Ending (6.0)

Why: The final sequence is emotionally clean and cinematic (ring given to Lily, airport, both alone). But the story threads around the hospital framing and the triangle consequences feel under-resolved.

Improve by: Close the frame in a way that clarifies what changed and what it cost.

Main Character Analysis

Michael Andersen (Protagonist)

Character Strength Score: 6.5/10

- **Want (concrete):** Unclear. He is “helping mom move uncle’s things” and filling radio shifts, but his deeper want (freedom, intimacy, reinvention, stability) is not operationalized into a goal.
- **Cost:** Emotional cost is present (guilt, anxiety, avoidance). External cost is muted until the end gesture.
- **Change:** He can name the problem (going along). The script needs him to *prove* change through a choice that hurts.
- **Failure mode:** Passive drift. He lets life happen, then narrates how it feels.

Lily Walsh

Character Strength Score: 6.5/10

- **Construction:** Clear internal conflict: duty/security vs desire/identity (journal line).
- **Agency:** Often indirect (avoidant with John, hesitant with Michael). That may be truthful, but drama needs moments where she actively chooses, not just withholds.
- **Risk:** If she never makes a decisive move, she becomes a symbol rather than a person.

Courtney (structurally important foil)

Character Strength Score: 5.0/10

- **Construction:** She reads as a volatile, hyper-sexualized pressure system in Michael’s life, with some hints of vulnerability (promotion not satisfying without him).

- **Problem:** Too often she is written as “the bad relationship” rather than a credible partner Michael would stay with. That weakens Michael because his “choice” stops being a choice.
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Structure Diagnosis

Momentum and escalation

- The script’s strongest engine is **deadline proximity** (Michael’s limited time in town) but it stays mostly implied rather than weaponized.
- The midpoint and Act 2 build feel like **repeated near-connection beats** (montage intimacy) without a hard pivot that changes the game.

Missing turns

- You need at least one **public or consequence-laden reveal** that forces alignment: either Michael’s relationship reality becomes unavoidable, or Lily’s engagement becomes unavoidable, or both.
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Theme Diagnosis

What belief is tested: “It’s easier to go along than to take responsibility for everyone’s feelings” and Lily’s version: “wanting more is wrong”.

How the ending answers now: The ring handoff + separation suggests “letting go” and choosing feeling over possession, but it’s still ambiguous whether Michael has *stopped* going along or just chosen a prettier form of avoidance.

Rewrite Roadmap (with options)

Phase 1: Foundation fixes (story engine)

1. **Pick the movie's core question and write it on the wall.**

Options:

- Choice movie: Michael must choose between the life he built (even if flawed) and a more honest life that costs him stability.
- Consequence movie: Michael and Lily's connection inevitably detonates their existing arrangements and they must own the fallout.

2. **Install a hard clock that cannot be negotiated.**

You already have the ingredients: limited time in town + family obligations + work demands. Convert them into explicit constraints that squeeze characters.

3. **Define "the cost of truth."**

Decide what truth-telling destroys. If nothing meaningful can be lost, the story has no teeth.

Phase 2: Scene and dialogue refinement (execution)

1. **Make every major scene about a pursuit, not a mood.** Someone is trying to get a yes, a confession, a commitment, a promise, or a boundary.

2. **Complexify Courtney and John.**

Options:

- Make Courtney's pull credible (shared history, genuine care, specific future plan), not just toxic heat. Her promotion beat is a good start.
- Make John's "contract" side sympathetic, but also let him have an actual blind spot that is not just insecurity.

3. **Use experimental devices as escalation tools.**

Keep montage and sound play, but attach them to story pivots. The audience should feel the form tightening as the trap tightens.

If you do only 3 things

1. **Force a mid-film irreversible choice** that burns a bridge.
 2. **Raise external stakes** so the ending gesture is earned, not merely poetic.
 3. **Rebalance the triangle** so every side is morally expensive and emotionally plausible.
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Risk flags

- **Story clarity risk:** Experimental structure can read like "plot avoidance" if the spine is not enforced.

- **Tone risk:** Explicit sexual content may be read as gratuitous if it doesn't directly evolve character decisions.
 - **Castability risk:** Courtney as written trends toward stereotype; strong actresses will push back unless she's deepened.
 - **Execution risk:** Without sharper turns, the script will attract "beautiful writing" praise but stall at acquisition/development.
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Final blunt assessment

You have genuine cinematic instincts and an emotional thesis worth exploring. But right now the script is safer as a mood poem than as a dramatic feature: it sketches longing and avoidance beautifully, then sidesteps the ugly decisions that would make it land. Put the characters in positions where they cannot "go along" anymore, and make them pay for whatever they choose. The film you want is in there, but you are protecting the audience (and the characters) from consequences.