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PRESENTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Your field research is the biggest weapon in your arsenal

Your research is real. The people, quotes, and stories are nearly indisputable.

Your research is unique. The material you've gathered isn't available anywhere else.

Your research is persuasive and engaging. The stories you tell will tug at people's hearts and challenge their minds.

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

When you present your research, tell stories.

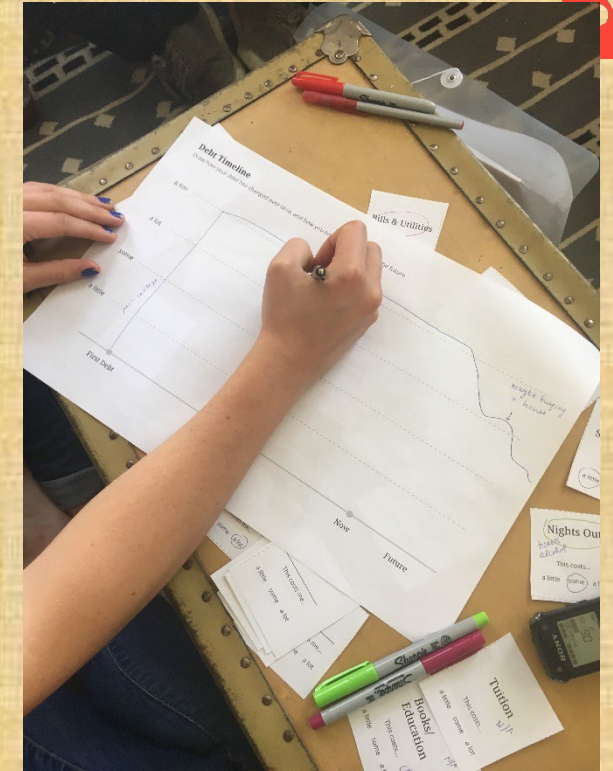| About people	About emotions	Visual	Detailed	Real

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Approach 1...

(not great)

- Research study

- Focus on debt

- 10 participants

- Different ages, locations, amount of debt

- Ashley

- 24

- Lives in Austin

- $60,000 debt

- Lots of notices

- Worried

- Doesn't understand how payment works

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD
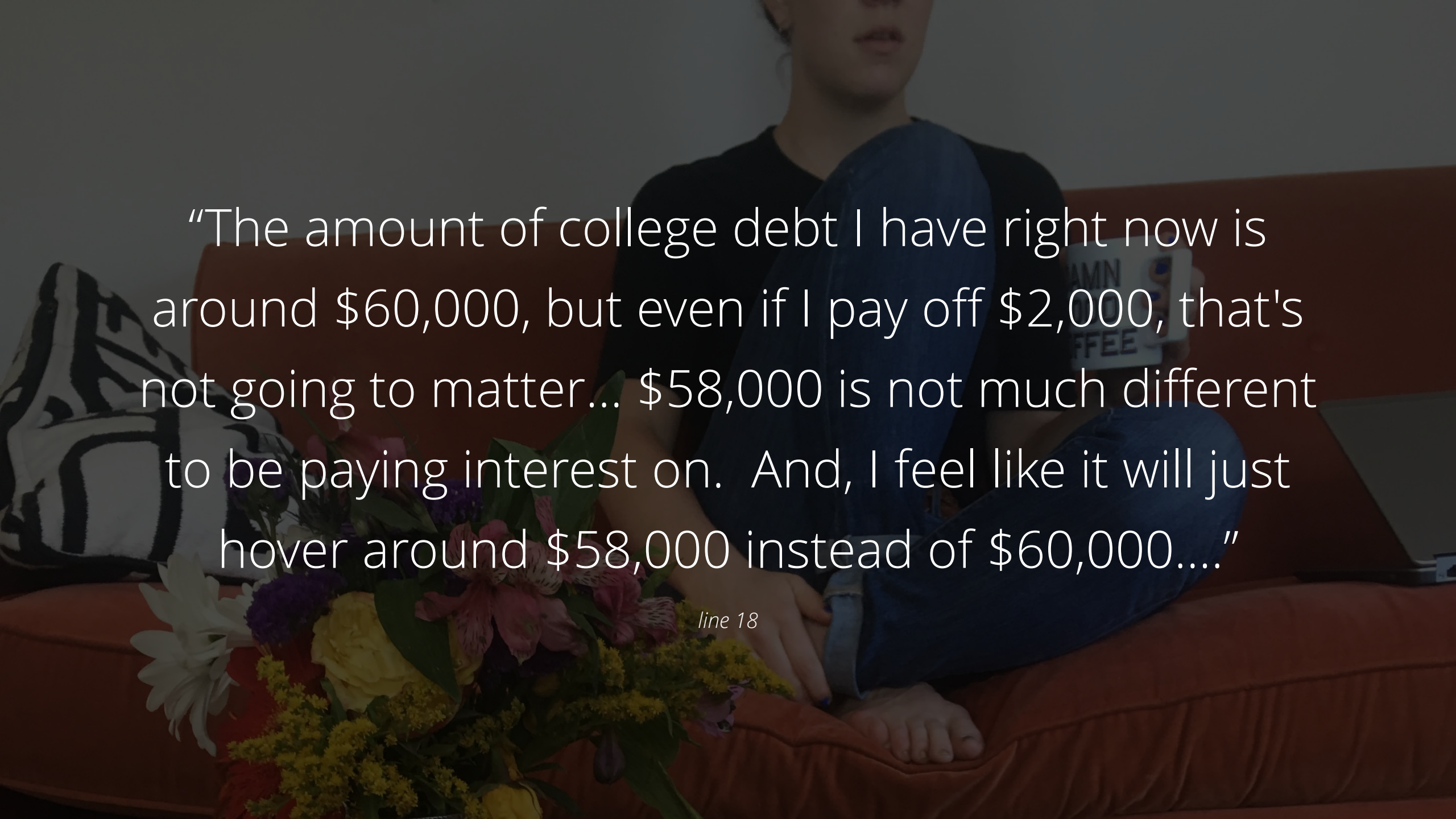
Approach 2...

This is Ashley.

She's 24, and lives in Austin.

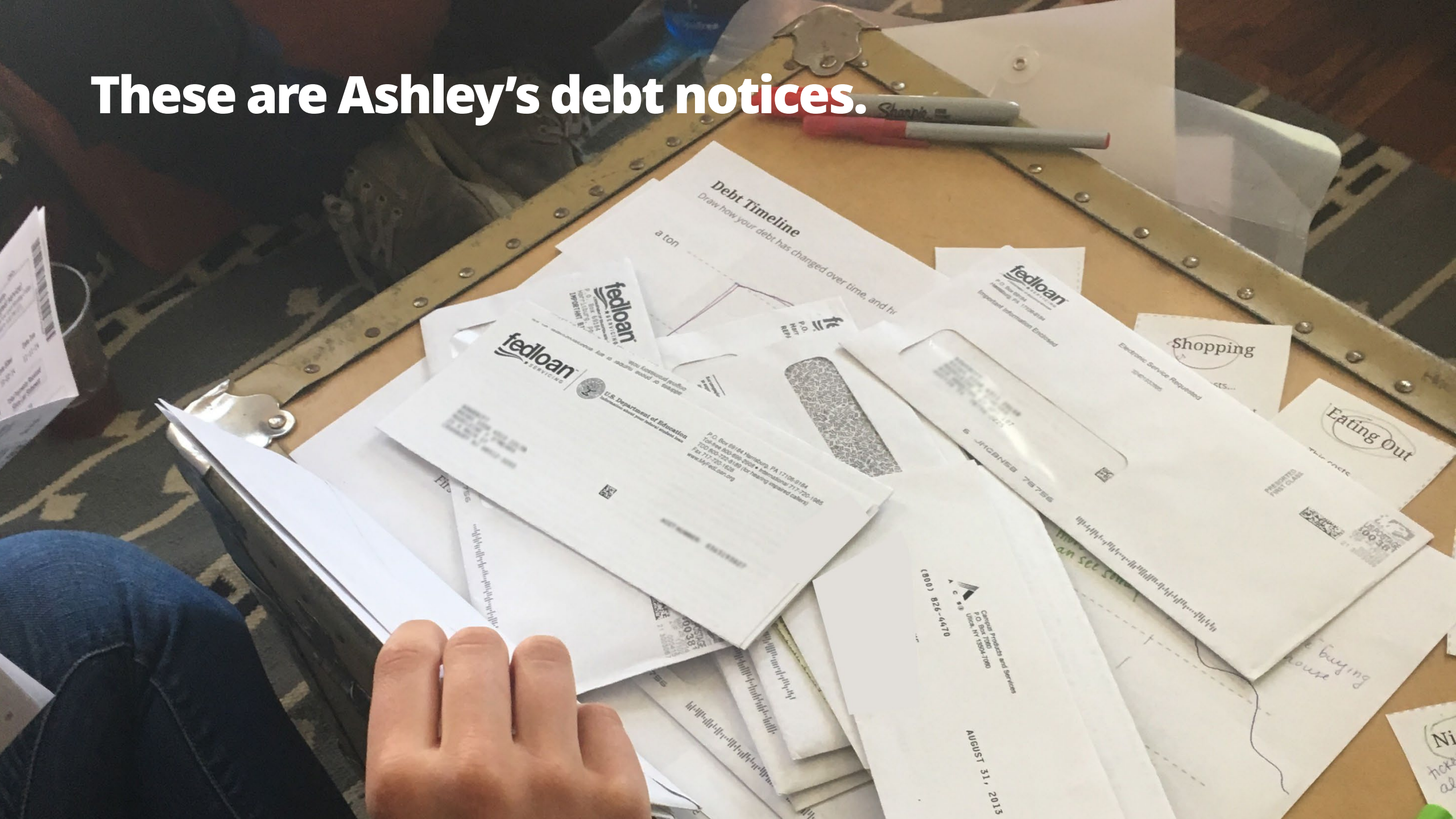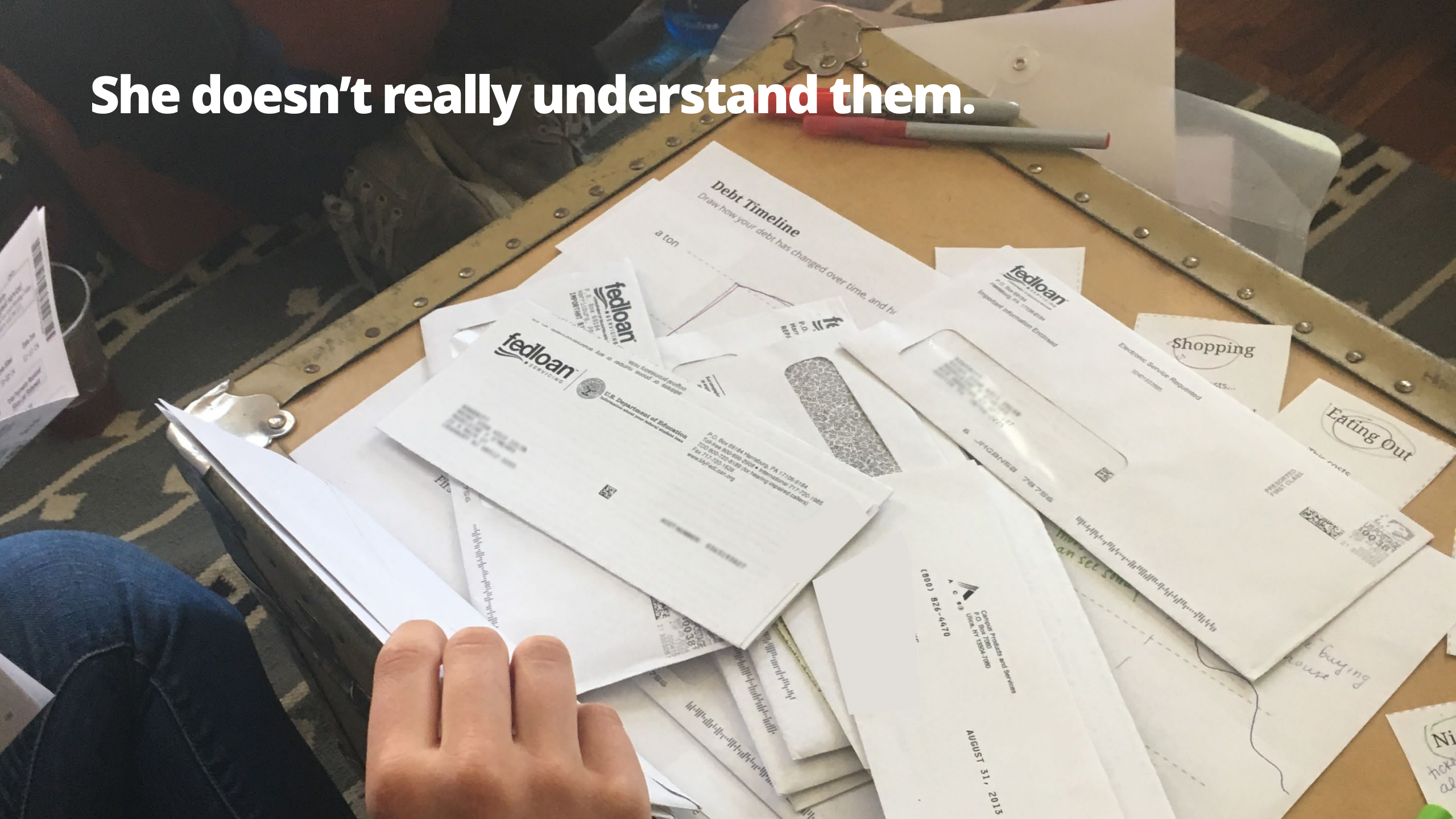She has $60,000 in college debt, has no job, and feels trapped.

"The amount of college debt I have right now is around $60,000, but even if I pay off $2,000, that's not going to matter... $58,000 is not much different to be paying interest on. And, I feel like it will just hover around $58,000 instead of $60,000...."
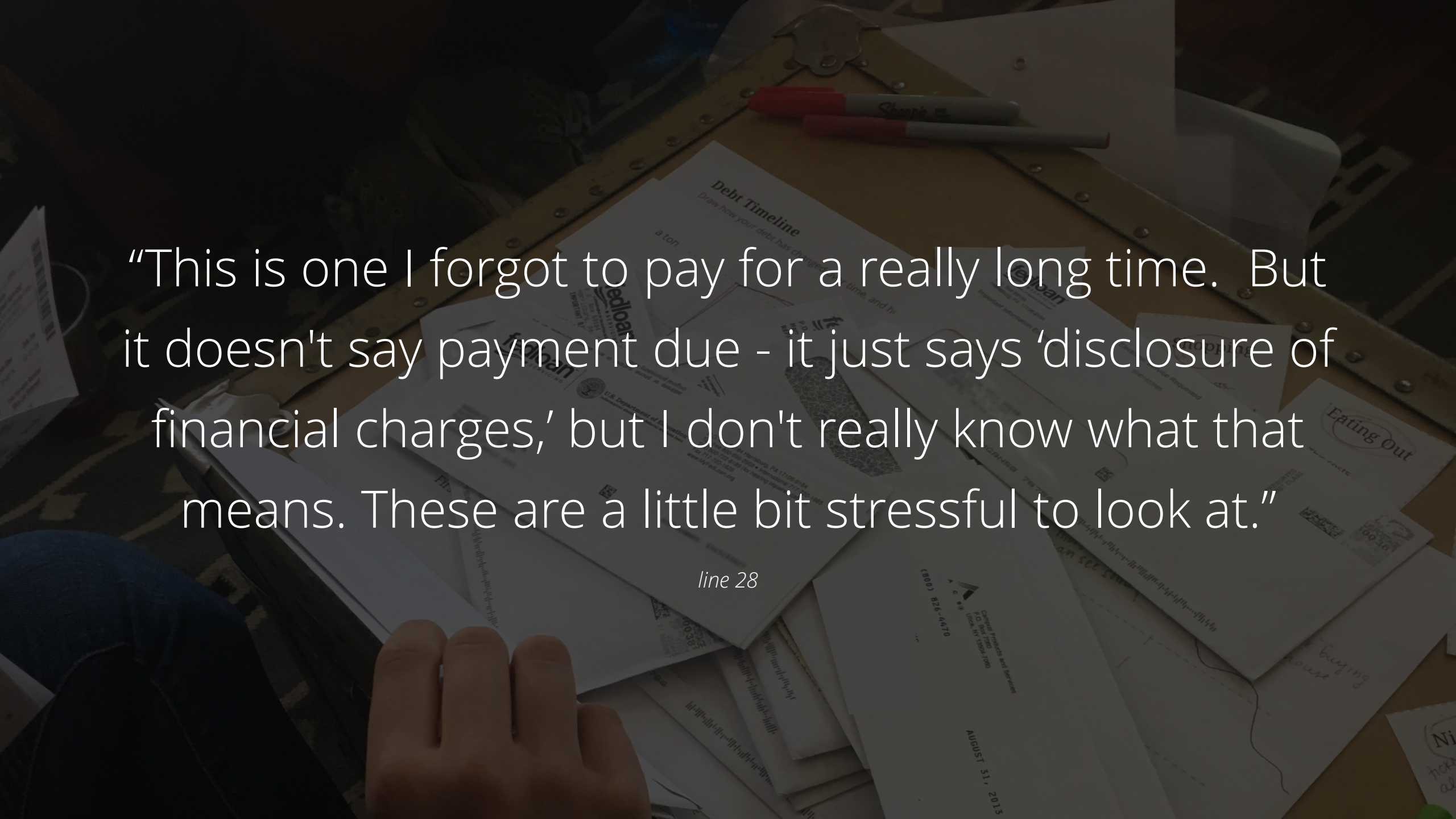
line 18

These are Ashley's debt notices.

She doesn't really understand them.

"This is one I forgot to pay for a really long time. But it doesn't say payment due - it just says 'disclosure of financial charges,' but I don't really know what that means. These are a little bit stressful to look at."

line 28

She only started opening the notices recently.

"I didn't pay the one through Oberlin for like 8 months because I didn't know I had to. I kept on getting these loan notices, I almost defaulted and I had no idea, because I was like 'oh, I'll just ignore this...' I was so terrified, I had this shoebox full of past due notices, and I just didn't look at it. I got them shredded. It was awful."

line 44

During our research, she found more unopened notices.

This one says she owes another $8,119.00.
The notice is from 2013.

Ashley has a loose plan – to have her debt cancelled by the government in 20 years.
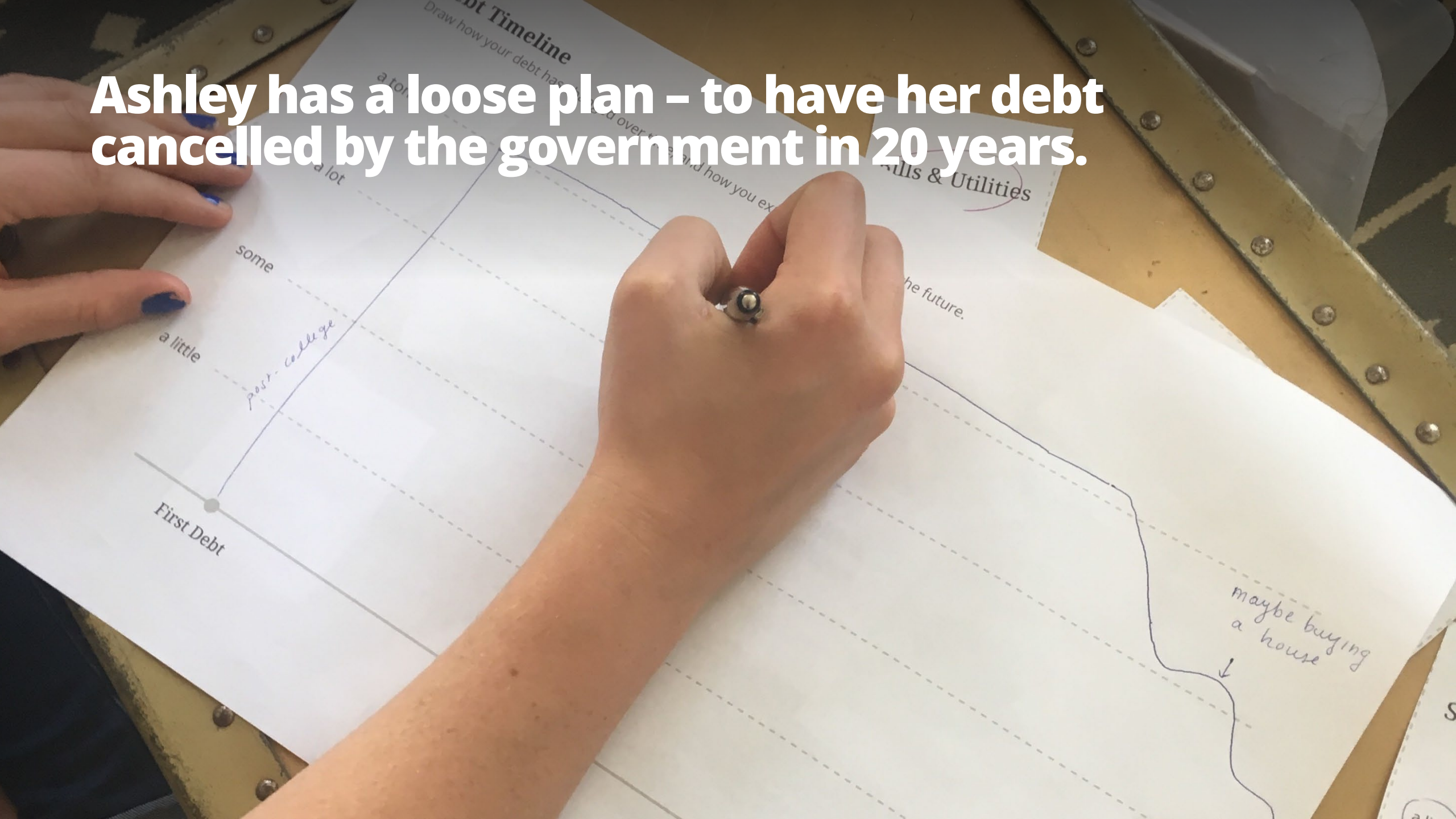
"I've heard that if you don't pay off your student loans for 20 years, then they get rid of them. That could also just be a rumor... There's all this stuff that could happen that could affect my paying off my student loans, like, what if Bernie Sanders becomes president? Then I don't have to pay off anything ever again. But I don't think that will actually happen..."

line 66

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Approach 1

Approach 2
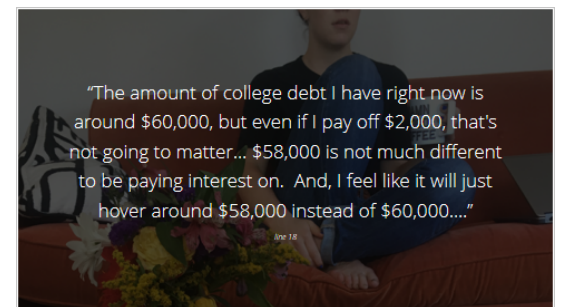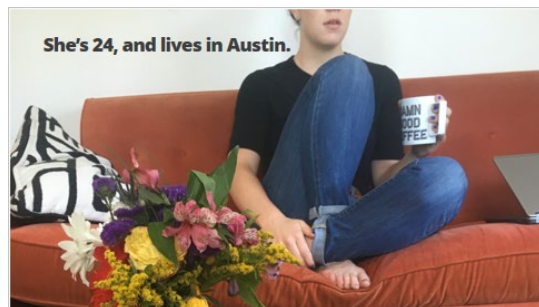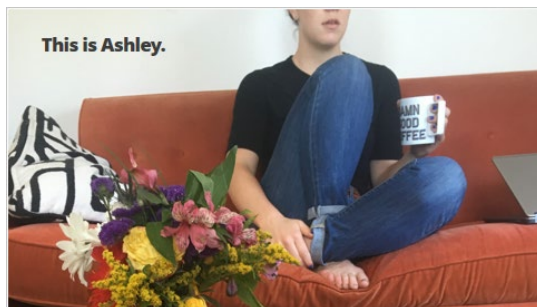
PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Think about the components:
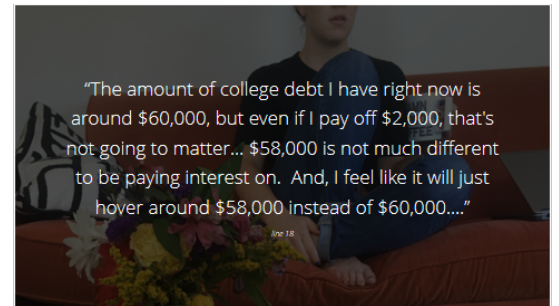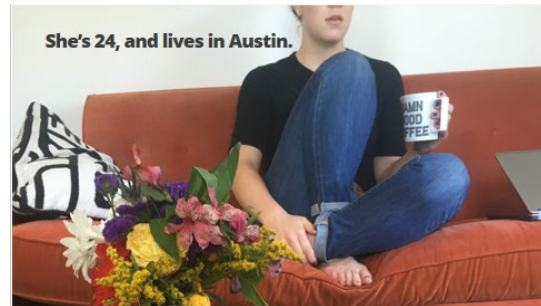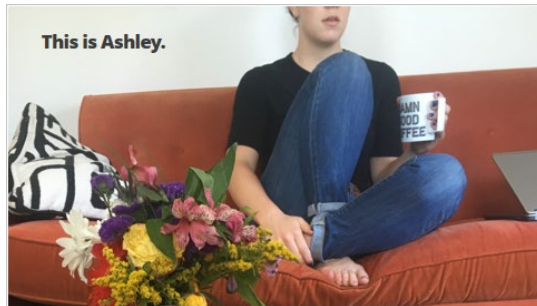
1. Using images and text, introduce the person, and describe what makes them unique.

2. Use the physical space to humanize them.

3. Emphasize the emotions (feeling trapped).

4. Highlight the unusual or surprising (large amount of debt, no job).

5. Use their own words to hammer the point home.

6. Build a story through four or five key moments (in debt, scared, avoidance, ignorance)

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

It's all about the storytelling.

1. Select no more than 5 stories.

2. Pick the stories that emphasize behavior, emotion, and experience.

3. Let the stories speak for themselves by using their words.

4. Be selective and judicious in the quotes and pictures you use.

5. Clean the quotes (remove irrelevant content and add ellipses, add unspoken detail in brackets)

6. Make an implicit point, but leave it understated.

PRESENTING STORIES FROM THE FIELD

When you present your research, tell stories.

About people	About emotions	Visual	Detailed	Real

- thanks!

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ALTERNATE APPROACH

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PRESENTING RESEARCH FINDINGS

RECAP: WHAT IS DESIGN RESEARCH?

Design research is about learning from people in the context of their lives.

| Find Problems | Understand a Topic | Build Empathy |

THE GOALS OF PRESENTING RESEARCH

Design research is a powerful way to explain behavior and persuade an audience.

There are a variety of contexts where you may be presenting design research findings.

Context of the presentation	Qualities of your audience	Important points to emphasize
Identifying innovation opportunities for new product and service offerings	Excited, but skeptical and risk-adverse	Research offers provocation, but not prediction: other techniques will be used to ensure broad market applicability of findings, and to mitigate risk
Describing customer (and not-yet-customer) perceptions of a company or topic	Defensive, particularly if the research indicates an organizational breakdown or inefficiency	People's perceptions drive actual behavior, and changes should be considered outside of a political context or environment
Showing places where an existing product can be improved for usability or appeal	Defensive, if they were the ones that made the decisions in the first place; Optimistic, if they see and agree with the ability to quickly and efficiently improve the product or service	Real behavior uncovered these problems – they aren't guesses, but they are grounded in actual people having actual problems or expressing actual frustration
Seeking funding or stakeholder backing	Skeptical and in a hurry	An emotional, persuasive story

JUSTIFYING THE METHOD

Design research methodology will often be met with skepticism and scrutiny.

Design research is a qualitative methodology, one that focuses on a small and non-random (biased) sample. Many people are unfamiliar with the benefits of this form of research, and need to both understand what you did, but also why you did it.

Contextual Inquiry...

... is valuable because we can observe real behavior, and identify problems with existing products, services, and systems.

Cultural Probes...

... are valuable because they give us an intimate, private view into the lives, wants, and needs of our target customers and users.
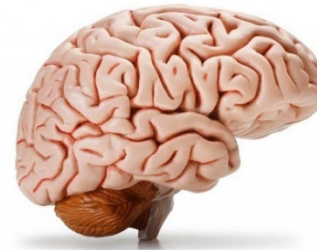
Think Aloud...

... is valuable because it gives us an unfiltered view into working memory, highlighting areas where our products don't make sense or aren't clear.

BUILDING THE STORY

The most important way to communicate design research is through a story.

Stories act as compelling, emotional delivery vehicles for the things you heard and observed during research. These are factual stories – they capture the things participants actually told you, without embellishment.

A good research story:

- Identifies the participant, and gives some relevant and salient parts of their backstory

- Uses quotes and media to make the story stand on its own

- Reiterates the main points of the story, but identifying the implications of those points

Meet Stephen.

Stephen is 48 years old, a single father, a veteran, and is struggling to make ends meet.

"I would like to get a 4 year degree. I'm earning 12.50 an hour and I need to get something else. I'm retired from the military, which gives me something to pay bills and pay the mortgage…

I think I'm worth more than 12 per hour. I told my boss that I'm getting tired of working 7 days a week and not getting paid for it."

Stephen is flying by the seat of his pants.

Stephen's life is disorganized and messy. He's staying just one step ahead of his job, his school, and his life.

"I don't think I ever declared my major at Austin Community College. I think that might happen right before you graduate; haha! Your about ready to graduate and then they ask you to fill out a piece of paper that tells them what your graduating in."
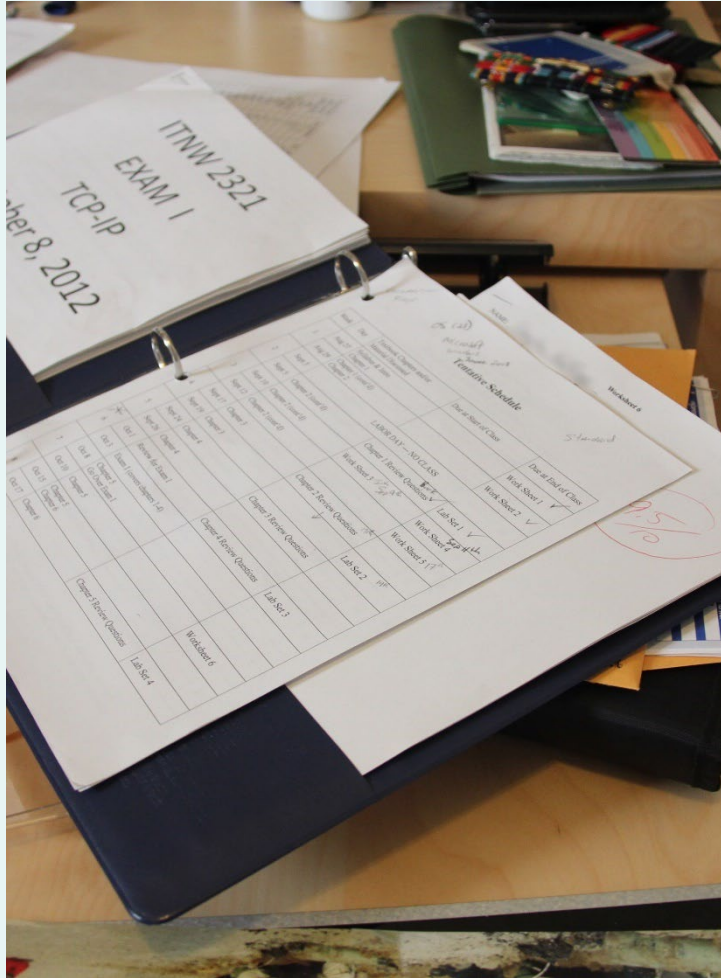
Stephen has developed an entrepreneurial coping strategy.

Stephen has developed a keen ability to see value in a situation, and to leverage that situation to his benefit.

"Through my UPS job, I found my current technician job. I was literally loading the computers into the back of a truck. I didn't know what it was – so I asked someone – I took a sticker off one of the boxes. I kept the sticker, found the company, and then happened to know someone that worked there. Months later I finished the electrical technician degree."

Stephen is learning, but not in traditional ways.

Stephen sees that he's growing, but doesn't necessarily attribute that growth to his formal education.

"I'm leaning how to learn, if that makes sense. I'm realizing that my trick is immersion. For example, I picked up Japanese by being in Japan. I found that if I'm studying this IT stuff, I'll just read books about it to get more immersed."
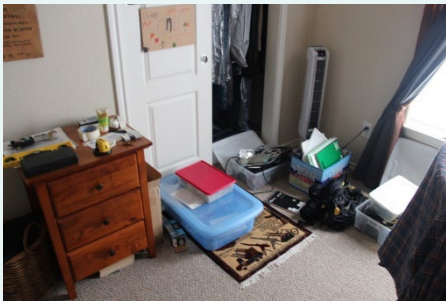
Key takeaway:

Academia is providing little traditional benefit, but is helping Stephen gain introspection.

Stephen has a path towards success:

- He is securing a credential which will help him earn more money
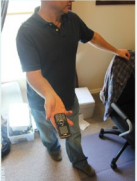
- He is building new skills which will position him for more employment opportunities

- He is "learning how to learn", giving him a lifelong foundation for further skill and knowledge acquisition
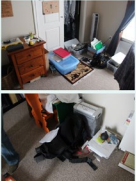
BUILDING THE STORY

The story humanizes the problem space: it's persuasive and believable.

Set the backstory

Describe just a few details about the main actor, and then include a quote that exemplifies the way the person views their life and work.

Include a photo of the individual.

Identify key points, and substantiate with media

Describe 3-4 core points gleaned from the research, all building towards a larger story. For each core point, make a declarative statement, describe the statement briefly, and substantiate it with a quote.

Include relevant photographs that help humanize the individual; selectively, include videos or audio clips.

Identify Implications

Based on the key points and the narrative that's been developed, identify a key takeaway observation. Make an assertion, and then support it with a summary of your previous points.

SELECTING STRONG QUOTES

A successful quote will highlight a unique or unexpected perspective in a provocative way.

Select quotes that stand on their own – that offer complete representations of how a participant thinks or acts.

Good quotes:

- Are surprising, and cause a reader to pause and reflect on the quote

- Are complete and stand on their own with little or no explanation

- Highlight ideosyncratic or anomalous behavior

Clean up the quote by removing "uh", "uhm", "like", and other verbal tics.
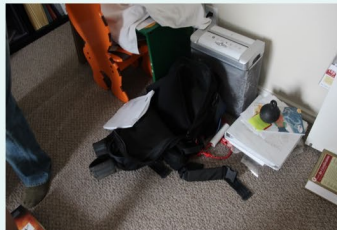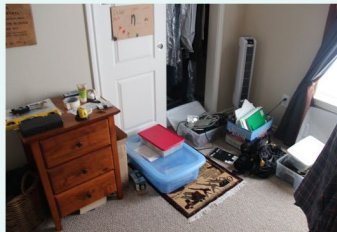
Stephen is flying by the seat of his pants.

Stephen's life is disorganized and messy. He's staying just one step ahead of his job, his school, and his life.

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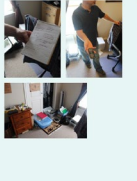
Stephen is describing a loophole in the educational system that encouraged him to skip important steps in his educational journey; this is compounded by his lack of understanding about the administrative process surrounding graduation. If this way of thinking is pervasive at the college, there is the potential for a large number of students to fail to complete required graduation requirements – it would indicate a systemic problem at the university.

SELECTING STRONG IMAGERY

A successful image supports the observation in a visually powerful manner.

Select images that have dual meaning: that present the context of the interview, but also that highlight a unique, interesting, or bizarre circumstance. The image, combined with the quote, should tell a comprehensive story.

Good images:

- Are intimate, showing unique qualities of a person's life

- Are supportive of, and supported by, an accompanying quote

- Are technically sound (not blurry, large)

Stephen is studying to be an IT professional, but is using an older mobile phone, indicating a breakdown in his knowledge and his personal life.
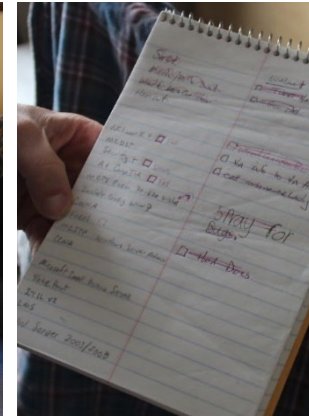
Stephen is doing his best to keep up with his schoolwork, but his organizational system is haphazard, indicating that he's not set up for academic success.
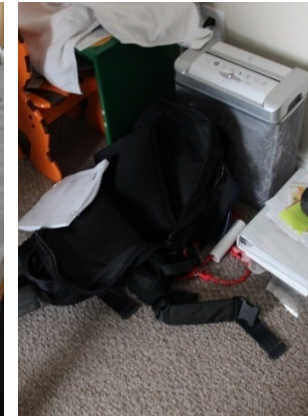
Stephen's house is a mess, indicating that he is disorganized, has poor time management, or both.

DELIVERING THE CONTENT

Let the research findings "sell themselves" and act as a catalyst for discussion.

By grounding the research findings in concise, compelling and emotional stories, the data should sell itself – people should understand it, empathize with the participants, and be compelled to probe deeper into the stories.

- Verbally present the stories from the perspective of an omniscient narrator

- Dive deeper into each character's unique qualities and bring them to life

- Focus on details rather than generalities

- Don't over-extend your findings by assuming or predicting they apply to other participants

DRIVING TOWARDS NEXT STEPS

Research data is the input to a rich and rigorous synthesis process.

Research data alone presents facts – it presents the way things are and highlights problems in the current state. But on its own, research does not tell us what to design: it only indicates opportunity areas. Synthesis acts as the bridge between research.

A research presentation should:

- Persuade an audience that the topic and content is exciting and worth further exploration

- Align the audience around core principles and ideas, so they all view the data from the same lens

- Present data in a way that easily transitions from research to synthesis.

APPLICABILITY

A research presentation captures the value of the research efforts.

Find Problems	Understand a Topic	Build Empathy

Research identifies problems, and a presentation with rich quotes from users makes those problems believable.

A research presentation acts as a data transfer mechanism, helping an audience who wasn't present for the research become conversant in the lives of the research participants.

The rich quotes, imagery, and narrative that are included in a research presentation help an audience build an emotional connection with participants and view an opportunity area from a human perspective, not just a business or technical perspective.