

Christopher, 30-40s

From ICH WUNSCHTE DEN SCHONEN LIEBESTOD*

*(Roughly translated: I want the beautiful love-death.)

by

Lisa M. Konoplisky

Christopher explains his love of smoking to Mr. Biggs, the administrator of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Christopher

This isn't one of those fascist non-smoking offices is it? Cause I hate that shit. My motto? You can't start too young. (*A beat, then reminiscing*) You know, I remember sitting in my crib—Jeez, I couldn't have been more than 45, 50 weeks—staring at the cigarettes in my Dad's shirt pocket. They were Camels. Filterless (*gives a low, sexy whistle*) I thought—that's what I want do when I grow up. I wanna be a smoker.

Then, in second grade, I finally tasted my first cigarette. Wow. What a thrill. I was trying impress this girl...(*trying hard to remember*) what was her name?.... oh, I know, I know, it's right on the tip of my-...Trina...Trina D'Alessandro. That's it! She was I-TAL-IAN. (*A gutteral, lecherous laugh*) I stole some cigarettes from my mom...*she* smoked Kents. Menthol. The ladies loooooove their menthol.

She kept them in the front pocket of her nurses uniform. I'd just reach in and grab a couple...she never missed them...I'd steal whole packs from my best friend Pauley Gallato's. His Dad owned a liquor store and we'd take two, three cartons at a time. There was this hollowed-out tree in the woods behind Pauley's house and we'd keep our stash there. Jesus, we did that for years. But by the time I was 12 I didn't give a fuck if my mother knew. I remember sitting in the back seat of the car smoking and she's driving me to school and she yells back at me (*imitating mother*) 'put that goddamn thing out!' and I'm like 'What? You going to *make* me?'