

HOLLYWOOD IS DEAD

Written by

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EXT. LUXURY BEACH RESORT - DAY

The sun hangs low on the horizon, casting a golden glow across an pristine beach.

Waves lap gently at the shore, their rhythm punctuated by the faint clink of ice in a glass.

CAMERA PANS TO REVEAL AN OLDER MAN'S HAND, TANNED AND ADORNED WITH AN CLASSIC ROLEX, HOLDING A SWEATING MOJITO.

The man's face remains in shadow as he gazes out at the ocean.

MYSTERIOUS MAN (V.O.)
2024 was a shit year.

He takes a long sip of his drink, ice cubes rattling.

FADE TO:

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The conference room buzzes with nervous energy. Framed movie posters with Principle Media logos line the walls, a visual reminder of past glories.

At the head of the sleek glass table sits RANDALL KEYS. In his 40s, he wears a sharp suit, with lines of worry etched around his kind eyes. He sits in front of a Principle Media logo, custom carved into a rich, wood-paneled wall.

Nearby, his assistant JESSICA perches, tablet in hand and perfectly coiffed. She is in her late 20s, with her fingers poised to take notes.

RANDALL
Alright, folks. We know there are going to be layoffs with this new Vanguard takeover. Content is the heart of our company. The vultures are circling, but we're not dead yet. Let's show them what Principle Media is made of. Our weekly meeting is where the magic happens.

He scans the faces of his DEPARTMENT HEADS - a mix of determination and barely concealed panic.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Mike, you're up. Give me something to fight with.

MIKE (Film Division President, 40s) clears his throat with disheveled enthusiasm.

MIKE

We've got a secret weapon. "Echoes of the Past" directed by Ridley Scott is ready to roll, but here's the kicker - we just locked down Costner for "Dark Horizons".

A ripple of excitement courses through the room.

RANDALL

Not bad. Jessica, leak that to Variety. Let's get the industry buzzing.

Jessica's fingers fly across her tablet. Randall turns his laser focus to the next person.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Robin, please tell me TV's not falling behind.

President of Television, ROBIN DUKE, (30s), wearing a blazer over a band tee, checks her notes.

ROBIN

We're doing the Invisible Man reboot, but with a twist. It's a woman.

RANDALL

Hmm. Do we have a star?

ROBIN

Not yet, but Denise Richards and Garcelle Beauvais are circling.

RANDALL

Oh---kay. Ah...anyone else?

Tony Parks (30s), streaming division, speaks up.

TONY

In streaming we're looking to expand the Taylor Sheridan universe to outer space.

RANDALL

I'm still listening.

TONY

He's got an idea for a moon colony show. So it's like the first town set up on the Moon, right? But it's played like a Western town on the Western Frontier.

RANDALL

I actually love that.

TONY

Thank you. I know everyone's terrified about this sale, but if it doesn't go through, we'll never be able to afford any of Taylor's shows - let alone a new one set in space.

RANDALL

Don't fret, the party's not over yet.

The door CRASHES open. In swaggers MARCUS HOLLOWAY (50s, expensive watch, oozing charm), Randall's co-CEO and current thorn in his side.

MARCUS

(booming)

Did someone say party? You're coming the diversity charity party tonight, eh Randy?

TONY

I'm Tony.

Marcus smacks Randall on the back as he pushes past him.

MARCUS

Hey Randall! Sorry I'm late buddy. Also, not sorry.

RANDALL

You have any pitches, Marcus?

MARCUS

Actually - something better.

He saunters to the front, a broad grin on his face.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Check this out, people - So, LeBron and I were partying in the Hollywood Hills, right?

The execs CHATTER with excitement as Marcus continues.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

And we ended up in this crazy all-star 3-on-3 basketball game. I'm talking all stars, Brad, Tom, Leo - all the ballers. Did I have a triple double? Yes. Bottom line, Leo DiCaprio committed to being in a Principle Media film - this year! Boom!

The room erupts in applause, except for Randall, who sits quietly, skepticism etched on his face. He knows that Marcus is full of shit.

RANDALL

(to the room)

That'd be great if we could really get him. I heard he was booked for the next five years.

MARCUS

Don't be that kind of co-CEO! Let's all be positive, am I right? Can I hear it for positivity?!

Marcus starts CLAPPING, and much to the chagrin of Randall, most of the executives clap along.

TITLE CARD: **HOLLYWOOD IS DEAD**

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - DUSK

A sprawling three-story Mediterranean-style mansion perches on a hillside, its windows ablaze with god rays.

Sleek cars wind up the long driveway, disgorging a stream of Hollywood's elite.

Red carpet stretches from the valet stand to the grand entrance. Paparazzi cameras flash incessantly, capturing arrivals of stars and moguls.

A banner above the door reads: "PRINCIPLE MEDIA CHARITY GALA - FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN URBAN COMMUNITIES"

Through the windows, we glimpse a glittering crowd inside. The atmosphere buzzes with excitement and the undercurrent of deals being made.

A black Tesla pulls up.

The valet opens the door, and Randall steps out. He tugs at his bow tie nervously, takes a deep breath, and plasters on a smile as he heads towards the entrance.

INT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The mansion's grand ballroom teems with "Hollywood's finest". Champagne flows freely, laughter bubbles over the elegant string quartet in the corner.

Despite this being an event celebrating diversity, Randall weaves through the mostly white crowd, shaking hands and exchanging pleasantries.

His smile never quite reaches his eyes.

A booming voice calls out:

MARCUS HOLLOWAY (O.S.)
Randall! There's my favorite dick-
in-the-mud!

The "charismatic" Marcus strides over, clapping Randall on the back harder than necessary.

MARCUS
Thought you might find a reason to
skip out tonight. Not quite your
scene, is it?

RANDALL
(forcing a chuckle)
And miss out on all this? Not a
chance.

An elderly man in the corner catches Randall's eye: CLARK PENNINGTON (80s, frail. Clark nods almost imperceptibly at Randall.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
(turning back to Marcus)
So where are our gracious hosts,
our new owners?

Marcus nods towards Pennington, lowering his voice conspiratorially.

MARCUS
(in a stage whisper)
You mean Tweedledum and
Tweedlerich?
(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Word is, they're sunning their privileged asses in Turks and Caicos. Turks and... Cay-coos? Ka-Ka bullshit?

RANDALL

So our probably new bosses, couldn't be bothered to hop on their private jet and grace us with their presence?

MARCUS

(with faux sympathy)

Now, now, Randall. I'm sure the nepo twins had a very good reason. Like...maybe their gold toilet got clogged.

RANDALL

Un-fucking-believable. We're throwing a "diversity celebration" that looks like a mayonnaise convention.

Marcus leans in.

MARCUS

Keep your voice down, Randall, we're co-CEOs now. Important to look the part. At least for the time being, right?

RANDALL

(smirking)

Wouldn't want to disappoint. Cheers.

Randall tips his drink before taking a sip. Marcus's smile tightens, his eyes flashing with a mix of rivalry and disdain.

MARCUS

Well then, go mingle. Show them you belong here buddy.

Marcus saunters off, his facade of charm slipping as he turns away.

Randall's smile fades briefly, a flicker of frustration crossing his face. He composes himself quickly as an approaching starlet catches his attention.

EXT. RALEIGH STUDIOS - DUSK

The iconic entrance of Raleigh Studios stands proudly, a historic landmark in Hollywood. The large, wrought-iron gates, adorned with intricate designs. Beyond the gates, the brick facade of the main building rises, a blend of old-world charm and modern functionality.

A sign reading "Raleigh Studios" is prominently displayed, flanked by well-manicured hedges. Not many workers are visible on the grounds.

INT. ROOT FILMS PRODUCTION OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

The office is buzzing with the low hum of computers. The walls are adorned with vintage Blaxploitation movie posters. The ROOT FILMS TEAM is scattered around the office, packing up for the night.

KISHNA DAVIS, African American, mid-30s, vibrant energy, leads the group with a confident air.

SMYTHE, late 20s, sexy yet perpetually disheveled, is fiddling with some gear. Bit of a computer nerd, gamer.

JENNY CHU, early 30s, sharp eyes and no-nonsense attitude, super creative, is organizing files.

HENRY "HAMMER HEAD" THOMPSON, 50s, weathered and relaxed, is leaning back in his chair, sipping coffee. If Kool Moe Dee has a long lost brother, it'd be "Hammer Head". This guy knew every celebrity back in the day, and has a story for all of them.

KISHNA

Another day, another dollar. Or lack thereof, thanks to those strikes.

SMYTHE

Yeah, who knew AI would kill the biz faster than a writer's strike?

JENNY

Or faster than Principle Media can postpone a meeting.

HAMMER HEAD

Can't blame them - the whole industry is in the shitter.

SMYTHE

With diarrhea.

KISHNA

Alright, enough joking.

Kishna walks over to a whiteboard filled with notes on their AI workflow.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

This business isn't dead yet. Let's rehearse what we're going to pitch to Randall.

JENNY

And remind them - writing is rewriting, okay? We're all about an AI workflow - but human output is key. AI just lets us get to the rewriting faster - we need to remember that.

The team smirks as Kishna picks up a marker.

KISHNA

Alright, focus. Let's go over our AI workflow one more time. Smythe, you're up.

Smythe stands and moves to the front, mockingly adjusting an invisible tie.

SMYTHE

(clears throat, formally)
Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the future of scriptwriting. Our proprietary AI can analyze market trends, generate scripts, suggest plot twists, and use the power of AI compute to reverse engineer any plot point.

JENNY

(playing along)
And how fast can it do all that, Mr. Smythe?

SMYTHE

(pompously)
Why, in a fraction of the time it takes a human writer. Hours, not weeks!

HAMMER HEAD

And does it come with a guarantee that it won't go on strike?

JENNY

I don't know if we should say that.
Sounds a little anti human.

Kishna steps in, smiling.

KISHNA

We need to change up our pitch.

(Thinks)

Crime Dramas are the number one
show genre in the world, and
Principal Media produces five of
them. I think we should focus on
that.

(Points to Smythe)

Smythe really has that "AI is a
super investigator" thing cracked.
I think Randall will flip over
that.

SMYTHE

Compliments will get you
everywhere.

HAMMER HEAD

Let's wrap this up. We need to be
ready.

KISHNA

Hammer's right - this could be our
big break. Let's nail it.

The team nods in agreement, the humor fading as they focus on
the task ahead.

INT. MANSION PARTY, HALLWAY - NIGHT

The party is still in full swing as Randall passes a group of
chattering TELEVISION EXECUTIVES.

RANDOM EXECUTIVE #1

...just let me pocket half my
assistant's salary, and I'll gladly
let ChatGPT write my emails, do my
coverage, and submit invoices.

RANDOM EXECUTIVE #2

I'm losing my assistant to AI but
I'll miss Amy. And I'm certainly
not getting a percentage of her
salary.

RANDOM EXECUTIVE #1

Yeah, but you can't sexually harass
a chatbot.

RANDOM EXECUTIVE #2

Watch me try, asshole.

The Hollywood bros LAUGH at their own jokes as Randall keeps moving past them, and steps into a quieter hallway. He leans against the wall, loosening his bow tie and taking a deep breath.

His phone BUZZES. He pulls it out, frowning at the screen.

CLOSE ON PHONE: Text from SARAH GOLDSTEIN: "Need to talk. Where are you? I'm still on the Roof garden."

Randall glances around, making sure no one's watching. He straightens his tie, squares his shoulders, and heads for the stairs.

As he climbs, the sounds of the party fade, replaced by the THUDDING of his heartbeat.

Randall reaches for the roof door handle, hesitates for a split second, then pushes it open.

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Randall steps onto the roof. Twinkling city lights stretch to the horizon. SARAH GOLDSTEIN (late 30s, sharp suit, worried expression) paces near the edge.

RANDALL

Sarah?

Sarah whirls around. She glances nervously over Randall's shoulder.

SARAH

You alone?

RANDALL

Pretty obvious.

SARAH

Give me your phone.

RANDALL

What?

SARAH

You heard me. Here, put it in this lead lined pouch. Your burner phone too.

RANDALL

Burner phone?

SARAH

You didn't bring it?

RANDALL

Why are we up here, Sarah? What's going on? Are you okay?

Randall looks down to see that Sarah is holding open a thick pouch big enough to hold an iPhone.

Randall begrudgingly places his iPhone in the pouch and Sarah closes it.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Now that we've got the cloak and dagger shit out of the way, what...

SARAH

The Vanguard deal is dirty. I've found proof.

RANDALL

Everyone in this town has their stink.

SARAH

It's bad, Randall.

RANDALL

Harvey Weinstein bad?

SARAH

Like money laundering, dirty shell companies, offshore accounts. Nothing is real. Smoke and mirrors. Theft on a massive scale. That kind of bad.

She pulls out a thumb drive.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It's all here.

RANDALL

Thumb drive? Really Sarah? We're in a new world. No one believes in digital evidence anymore.

SARAH

There are account numbers here. Traceable account...

A HEAVY GUNSHOT rings out! Sarah's is knocked back with incredible force, sending her flying back!

RANDALL

Sarah!

He lunges for her, grabbing her neck for a second she continues to fall back - and topples over the edge of the roof!

Randall can only helplessly watch as her body hits the ground far below.

EXT. ROOFTOP GARDEN - NIGHT

Chaos erupts. Screams echo from below. Randall stands frozen, staring at where Sarah fell.

The roof access door BURSTS open as SECURITY GUARDS and PARTYGOERS flood out!

SECURITY GUARD

What happened? We heard a shot!

Randall turns, shock etched on his face. He opens his mouth, but no words come out.

MARCUS (O.S.)

What have you done?

The crowd parts. Marcus stands there, his face a mask of horror and disbelief.

Randall looks down at his hands, then back at the crowd. Realization dawns as he sees suspicion in their eyes.

RANDALL

I... I didn't...

More SHOUTS from below.

Sirens wail in the distance, growing closer.

Randall's eyes dart around, landing on his iPhone, next to the fallen THUMB DRIVE near the wall.

As the security guards approach him, he retrieves his iPhone and subtly slips the thumb drive into his pocket.

The security guard is now almost on top of Randall as he stands back up.

SECURITY GUARD

Sir, I'm going to need you to come with us.

As they lead Randall away, he locks eyes with Marcus.

For a split second, Randall catches a glimmer of something in Marcus's expression. Satisfaction?

The roof door closes behind them, leaving the garden empty save for the distant sound of approaching police SIRENS.

INT. LAPD INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

Harsh fluorescent lights buzz overhead. Randall sits at a metal table, still in his rumpled tuxedo from the night before. Dark circles under his eyes, he looks shell-shocked.

DETECTIVE CHEN (mid-40s, no-nonsense demeanor) enters, file in hand. She sits across from Randall, studying him.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Mr. Keys. Want to tell me again what happened on that roof?

RANDALL

I've told you everything. Sarah texted me to meet her. She wanted to talk. She made me put my phone in a lead pouch, then told me she had concerns about the Vanguard deal...

He trails off, shaking his head.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Then she just happened to fall off the roof?

RANDALL

(looking up sharply)
She was shot! I tried to grab her, but--

DETECTIVE CHEN

(interrupting)

Yet we found no gun, no bullet.
Just your fingerprints on her neck
and eyewitness on the ground that
saw you on the edge of that roof
when she fell - or was pushed.

RANDALL

Wait. What are you saying?

DETECTIVE CHEN

Witnesses report hearing a gunshot,
but Sarah Goldstein died as a
result of a nasty fall from a third
story rooftop, not a gunshot - like
you say.

RANDALL

I know what I saw and heard.

DETECTIVE CHEN

And I know what you're telling me.

She leans forward, eyes boring into Randall.

DETECTIVE CHEN (CONT'D)

Ms. Goldstein was against the
Vanguard acquisition? That right?

RANDALL

Yes.

DETECTIVE CHEN

While you've been publicly
supportive. Just like a co-CEO
should be, that also right?

RANDALL

I don't know what you're implying,
but Sarah was my friend! She found
something and...

He stops abruptly, remembering the thumb drive.

DETECTIVE CHEN

(raising an eyebrow)

Found what, Mr. Keys?

Randall slumps back, realizing his precarious position.

RANDALL

I think I'll call my lawyer now.

Detective Chen sighs, gathering her files.

DETECTIVE CHEN

You're free to go. Just Don't leave town, Mr. Keys. We're not done.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS MANSION - DAY

The opulent Mediterranean-style mansion that hosted the Hollywood party, now stands in stark contrast to the somber atmosphere surrounding it.

Yellow police tape flutters in the gentle breeze, cordoning off a large area at the base of the mansion where Sarah Goldstein's life came to a tragic end.

News vans line the street, their satellite dishes extended skyward.

A poised NEWSCASTER stands in the foreground, microphone in hand, her expression appropriately grave as she delivers her report to the camera.

NEWSCASTER

(professional tone)

In a shocking turn of events, one of Hollywood's most respected executives, Sarah Goldstein, lost her life last night after plummeting from the roof of this mansion during a high-profile charity event. Goldstein, the Chief Financial Officer for entertainment giant Principle Media, was known for her financial acumen and philanthropic efforts.

The camera pans to show more of the crime scene before returning to the newscaster.

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

This tragedy comes at a tumultuous time for Principle Media, which has been making headlines due to its volatile stock performance and the on-again, off-again sale negotiations with financial investment firm Vanguard. Industry insiders are speculating about the potential impact of Goldstein's death on these ongoing talks.

(softening slightly)

(MORE)

NEWSCASTER (CONT'D)

Beyond her professional achievements, colleagues remember Goldstein as a beloved friend and devoted animal lover. She leaves behind her partner and their two golden doodles, Sasha and Meinhard, who were often seen accompanying Goldstein to industry events.

(resuming professional tone)

While authorities are currently treating Goldstein's death as a possible suicide, Detective Chen of the LAPD has stated that a full investigation is underway. Sources close to the case suggest that foul play has not been ruled out.

(turning slightly)

The entertainment industry has been rocked by this loss, with tributes pouring in from across Hollywood. Principle Media has announced that all productions will observe a moment of silence in Goldstein's memory.

(to camera)

We'll continue to follow this developing story. For now, reporting from the Hollywood Hills, this is Alyssa Chen for KHTV News. Back to you in the studio.

EXT. LAPD STATION - DAY

Randall exits the station, squinting in the bright sunlight. He looks disheveled and disoriented.

As he reaches the bottom of the steps, his phone BUZZES. He pulls it out, frowning at the screen.

CLOSE ON PHONE: Text from UNKNOWN NUMBER: "Keep quiet about Vanguard if you know what's good for you. And Sarah."

Randall's head snaps up, scanning the street nervously. A black SUV with tinted windows slowly drives by. Randall tenses, but it passes without stopping.

While looking over his shoulder, Randall's UBER arrives.

As he opens the car door, he hesitates, a look of determination settling on his face.

RANDALL
 (to the driver)
 Take Fountain Ave to Hollywood -
 Principle Media Lot. Melrose
 entrance. Please hurry.

The DRIVER pulls away from the curb, merging into the busy LA traffic.

In the back seat, Randall stares out the window, then back down at the ominous text, his mind clearly racing.

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA OFFICES - DAY

Randall steps off the elevator into a hushed office. Employees fall silent as he passes, averting their eyes or whispering behind their hands. The tension is palpable.

He approaches Jessica at her desk just as she looks up, startled.

JESSICA
 (nervously)
 Mr. Keys! I... we weren't expecting
 you today. Marcus said you were
 taking a leave of absence.

RANDALL
 I need to get into Sarah's office,
 Jess.

JESSICA
 I'm not sure that's... There are
 police seals, and Mr. Holloway
 said...

RANDALL
 Please, Jess. It's important.

Jessica bites her lip, then nods slightly.

As Randall moves towards Sarah's office, he overhears snippets of conversation:

EMPLOYEE 1
 (whispering)
 I heard he pushed her...

EMPLOYEE 2
 (hushed)
 Always seemed so nice. You never
 know...

Randall clenches his jaw but keeps walking. He reaches for Sarah's door handle when--

MARCUS (O.S.)

Randall!

Randall turns to see Marcus approaching, all fake concern.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I'm surprised to see you here.
Shouldn't you be... resting?

RANDALL

Just picking up some things,
Marcus.

Marcus puts his hand on Randall's shoulder like he genuinely cares.

MARCUS

I told the team you'd be taking
some time off, Randall. With
everything happening...

RANDALL

Appreciate the thought, but I'm not
going anywhere. It's business as
usual.

MARCUS

Ah, but it's not just business as
usual when there's a tragedy
involved.

RANDALL

You're right about that.

Marcus gets curt with Randall.

MARCUS

Sarah would be heartbroken to know
you're not even pausing a day to
sit shivah for her.

Randall clenches his jaw, visibly affected.

RANDALL

Choose your next words carefully.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Hey - we all grieve in our own
ways. Just a heads-up: Sarah's
office is off-limits.

(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Police tape and all that. No one's getting in. I'm keeping her key card with me.

RANDALL

Yeah, sure.

INT. RANDALL'S OFFICE - LATER

Randall enters his office, closing the door behind him.

He leans against it, exhaling heavily. Then --

JESSICA (INTERCOM)

Mr. Keys? Your 11 O'clock is here.
The Root Films team.

Randall frowns, confused. He presses the intercom button.

RANDALL

Root Films?

JESSICA

They had that little comedy that people liked - the Juneteenth thing with that guy from that one show? And that action film with that blonde guy and the gun.

RANDALL

Doesn't ring a bell.

JESSICA

They also sent us the pitch deck about a woman defending her land who unveils wide spread corruption It doesn't matter - they're here to present their latest project and their AI workflow.

RANDALL

Oh yeah, that meeting--the big guy wants me to meet them, but it's really not a good time.

JESSICA

They've been rescheduled four times already. And they're here...right in front of me...glaring.

Randall sighs, rubbing his temples.

RANDALL
Right. Send them in.

Moments later, the door opens. In walks the Root Films team: Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head.

KISHNA
Mr. Keys! We're so excited to show
you how Root Films can
revolutionize your workflow!

Randall stares at them, the absurdity of the situation hitting him. He lets out a short, bitter laugh.

RANDALL
Ah - Sure. Why not? Revolutionize
away.

The Root Films team exchanges confused glances as Randall slumps into his chair, gesturing for them to begin.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The Root Films team has set up their presentation. Randall sits at the head of the table, distracted and fidgeting with his phone.

KISHNA
So, Mr. Keys, Your hour long crime
dramas generate over 50% of your
over all TV revenue.

SMYTHE
But creating and solving all those
crimes takes a lot of writer hours
and therefore money.

KISHNA
Root Films's developed an AI-driven
workflow solution the will save you
all that time.

Randall pays attention as best he can, but he can't help but look down at his phone, scrolling, distracted.

SMYTHE
With our AI, we can reverse
engineer any crime or any
investigation and let the AI tell
us how the cop can solve any crime.
All in minutes.

KISHNA

Instead of having a writer's room spend the week trying figure out how Colonel Mustard killed Mr. Green with a bunsen burner and get caught, just ask our AI for 3 possibilities and boom - done.

SMYTHE

We calculate that we can streamline your content creation process - and in crime drama alone - we can reduce your writing and development cost by 300%.

Randall nods absently, clearly not really paying attention.

Kishna presses on.

KISHNA

Smythe, why don't you show Mr. Keys the demo?

SMYTHE

R-right. So, um, this is our proprietary algorithm...Let's start with a crime...

Randall's phone BUZZES loudly. He glances at it, tension visible on his face.

RANDALL

I'm sorry, I need to take this.
I'll be right back.

He hurries out, leaving the Root Films team looking bewildered. Continue for whom?

HAMMER HEAD

Well, that went about as well as a fart in church.

KISHNA

It's fine. He's clearly got a lot on his plate.

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA HALLWAY - DAY

Randall paces down the hallway, phone to his ear.

RANDALL
 (hushed, urgent)
 It's Randall. Any new information
 about the bullet, Detective?

INTERCUT CONVERSATION AS NEEDED

DETECTIVE CHEN
 Nothing new there. No bullet
 wounds, no bullet holes, nothing.

RANDALL
 How can that be?

DETECTIVE CHEN
 But when our team looked at the
 surveillance video we did see you
 pick up something off the roof deck
 after Sarah's death.

Randall becomes visibly uncomfortable.

RANDALL
 Oh?

DETECTIVE CHEN
 You know what that could've been?

RANDALL
 Ah jeez, No. My phone I guess. I
 was in shock, ya know?

DETECTIVE CHEN
 Your phone?

RANDALL
 Yeah, Sarah took it from me when we
 met on the roof. Remember I told
 you about the pouch? What happened
 to Sarah's phone?

DETECTIVE CHEN
 I'll ask the questions. Was your
 iPhone the *only* thing you picked
 up?

He stops abruptly as two employees round the corner, deep in
 conversation.

EMPLOYEE 1
 (whispering)
 I heard Keys and Sarah were having
 an affair. Maybe she threatened to
 #MeToo him?

EMPLOYEE 2

No way. I bet it's about the Vanguard deal. Sarah was always poking around, asking questions.

EMPLOYEE 1

Well, whatever it was, Keys sure picked a dramatic way to shut her up.

They notice Randall and fall silent, hurrying past with awkward nods.

DETECTIVE CHEN

(From phone)

Mr. Keys? Mr. Keys?

RANDALL

(Into phone)

Sorry, can I call you back?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The Root Team waits in awkward silence.

HAMMER HEAD

Somethings off here. You notice that? It's weird vibes.

SMYTHE

Yeah - even the guard at the gate was acting strange.

The conference room door opens, and Randall pokes his head inside.

RANDALL

So sorry about that...

KISHNA

No worries at all - We were wondering if you'd like to see the predictive analytics model...

RANDALL

That sounds great - but actually, Ms. Davis, I think we need to reschedule. Something urgent has come up.

KISHNA

Oh. Of course, we understand.

But Randall is already hurrying down the hallway. Kishna and the team watches him go, a mix of confusion and curiosity on her face.

HAMMER HEAD

See - weird.

INT. RANDALL'S HOME - AFTERNOON

Randall enters his upscale home, looking exhausted. The sound of a news report drifts from the living room.

MARILYN (Randall's wife, early 40s, sharp and elegant) sits on the couch, watching the TV intently. Their daughter CLAIRE (15, perceptive and mature for her age) is curled up in an armchair, glancing between the TV NEWS COVERAGE of SARAH'S DEATH and her phone.

Marilyn mutes the TV as Randall enters the room. An awkward silence follows.

RANDALL

(attempting normalcy)

So - How was your last 24 hours?

MARILYN

Oh, you know. Just fielding calls from reporters, the police, dodging paparazzi, the usual.

RANDALL

The police called you?

MARILYN

Of course they did Randall. I know the press is calling this a suicide, but that's not what the police are saying.

RANDALL

Marilyn, please. Not in front of Claire.

CLAIRE

(without looking up from her phone)

It's fine, Dad. My Instagram's already blown up with people asking if you're going to jail.

RANDALL

What?

MARILYN
Sarah didn't kill herself, did she?

RANDALL
She was murdered. I just don't know
how.

MARILYN
But you were there.

RANDALL
I know it doesn't add up.

MARILYN
Is there something you're not
telling me?

RANDALL
No.

MARILYN
I know you're not a murderer, but
are you covering for someone?

RANDALL
Honey - listen to me - no.

MARILYN
Then make me understand.

Randall slumps onto the couch, the weight of everything
crashing down on him.

RANDALL
I don't know. I really don't. But
Sarah found something, something
about the Vanguard deal.
(realizing)
I'm being set up.

His voice breaks.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
It's all a set up.

Claire looks up, a mix of worry and intrigue on her face.

CLAIRE
So Sarah really was murdered?

RANDALL
Claire - Don't mention that to
anyone.

CLAIRE

Okay.

RANDALL

Anyone! The speculation is bad enough.

CLAIRE

Dad - okay.

Marilyn moves closer, placing a hand on his arm.

MARILYN

(softly)

If that's true - Then find out who really did this. For Sarah. For us.

CLAIRE

This is crazy! Just think, if your company made a murder mystery this juicy, maybe you wouldn't be stuck with that nepo baby investor trying to play Hollywood mogul.

RANDALL

What's the supposed to mean?

Claire just rolls her eyes.

MARILYN

Randall, just promise me - we'll do everything by the book, okay? The right way.

RANDALL

I promise.

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

A sleek, modern high-rise gleams in the California sun. The building's glass facade reflects the palm-lined streets and blue sky, a monument to success and power in the heart of Beverly Hills.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

The office of BENJAMIN SHAPIRO exudes understated luxury. Dark wood paneling and leather-bound law books line the walls. It's an old school office with a killer panoramic view of the Hollywood Hills.

Randall sits across from Ben, a distinguished man in his 50s with sharp eyes and a no-nonsense demeanor. Marilyn sits beside him, her posture tense but composed. The atmosphere is charged with anxiety and conflicting energies.

BEN

Randall, Marilyn, I need you both to understand the gravity of this situation. The police may not have charged you yet, Randall, but you're their prime suspect in Sarah's death.

RANDALL

What about the gunshot, no bullet, how she fell... It doesn't add up.

BEN

Exactly. What matters now is how things look, and right now, they don't look good. But their case has a lot of problems.

RANDALL

So what do we do? I can't just sit around while they build a case against me. I was thinking of hiring a private investigator, someone who could-

BEN

Absolutely not. You don't do anything. If anyone needs to hire a PI - I'll do it. Randall, listen to me carefully: do not, under any circumstances, hire a PI or conduct your own investigation yourself. It will only make you look guilty.

MARILYN

Ben's right. We can't risk anything that might make you look more suspicious.

RANDALL

But we can't trust the police to figure this out. They've already decided I'm guilty!

Ben stands as he tries to soften the mood.

BEN

I understand your frustration, Randall.

(MORE)

BEN (CONT'D)

But this is not the time for rash actions. Any move you make outside official channels can and will be used against you.

MARILYN

Please.

RANDALL

So what, I just do nothing?

BEN

You do exactly as I say. You don't speak to anyone about the case - not the media, not your colleagues, not even your family - without consulting me first. Let me handle all interactions with the police, media, and prosecutors.

MARILYN

We'll make sure he follows your advice to the letter, Ben.

RANDALL

And that's going to clear my name?

BEN

(sighing)

It's going to keep you out of jail while we work on clearing your name. Randall, I'm one of the best defense attorneys in Los Angeles. Trust my experience.

Randall stands, pacing in front of the window. Marilyn watches him, concern etched on her face.

RANDALL

Sarah was my friend. She deserves justice.

MARILYN

The best way to get justice for Sarah is to clear your name. We can't do that if you're in jail.

BEN

Marilyn's right. Give me time to build our defense, to find the inconsistencies in their case. That's how we'll uncover the truth.

Randall looks from Marilyn to Ben, feeling the weight of their united front. After a moment, he nods reluctantly.

RANDALL
Alright. We'll do it your way. For now.

MARILYN
(relieved)
Thank you, honey.

RANDALL
Good. Then the interest of full transparency, Sarah gave me this right before she died. She says it has all the info about Vanguard's corruption.

Randall holds up the thumb drive.

BEN
You took that from the crime scene?

RANDALL
Well technically she gave it to me.

BEN
And the police let you take it?

RANDALL
Well the police don't know.

Marilyn puts her head in her hands.

MARILYN
Oh my god.

Ben takes the thumb drive from Randall's hand.

BEN
Please tell me you're kidding.

RANDALL
I'm giving it to you, okay. I'm doing what I was told.

BEN
Have you looked at what's on it?

RANDALL
Yeah, a bunch of numbers and Excel documents. I don't get it. Must be important to someone.
(MORE)

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Sarah said there's traceable account numbers in there. I couldn't find 'em.

BEN

Any more stolen evidence you want to share?

RANDALL

That's it. I have copies of course.

BEN

I didn't hear that.

(Beat)

Now, let's go over your statement again. We need to make sure every detail is consistent...

As Ben guides the couple back to the desk, we see the conflict still evident on Randall's face.

Despite his agreement, it's clear this isn't the end of his desire to take action, even as Marilyn keeps a supportive but watchful eye on him.

INT. LUXURY YACHT TURKS AND CAICOS - DAY

The camera sweeps across a lavishly decorated yacht, complete with gold-plated fixtures and extravagant décor. The yacht is anchored just off the coast of Monaco.

These women are the owners of Vanguard, HANNA-BELLE and TIFFANY TAMARA, identical twins in their late 20s, lounge on deck chairs, sipping cocktails.

HANNA-BELLE

(giggling)

Can you believe we're buying that poor little studio?

TIFFANY

But I really wanted it. You know how much I like that hottie on their daytime drama. Besides how hard can it be to run a studio. We make Instagram reels all the time and people love us!

HANNA-BELLE

Well, it's not like we're spending real money anyway!

They move to clink their glasses, but Tiffany notices her glass is empty.

TIFFANY

Jerome! Where the fuck is my Vodka cran?! These glasses don't fill themselves. I can't even toast my sister!

INT. RANDALL'S BACK YARD - NIGHT

Randall is outside his house, pacing around the pool.

Suddenly, he stops and digs in his pockets to find a business card, half crumpled: **Kishna Davis - Root Films.**

RANDALL REMEMBERS - FLASHBACK - QUICK CUTS

SMYTHE

...we can reverse engineer any crime or any investigation and let the AI tell us how the cop can solve any crime.

KISHNA

...figure out how Colonel Mustard killed Mr. Green with bunsen burner and get caught, just ask our AI for 3 possibilities and boom - done

ON RANDALL

An idea forming. He glances at the house, then pulls out his phone.

Randall takes a deep breath and hits the call button. It rings several times. He's about to hang up when--

KISHNA (V.O.)

(sleepily)

This is Kishna.

RANDALL

Sorry to bother you so late. It's Randall Keys from Principle Media.

KISHNA (V.O.)

(suddenly alert)

Mr. Keys! I didn't expect -- Is everything okay?

RANDALL

Actually, no. But I want to talk to you about a project I think you and your team might be able to help me with. Can we meet? Privately? Too much drama at the office.

KISHNA (V.O.)

Of course. There's a Norms on Wilshire. Tomorrow, 7 AM?

RANDALL

I'll be there. And Ms. Davis? Thank you.

He ends the call, a mix of relief and apprehension on his face.

INT. NORMS CAFE - NEXT MORNING

Early morning light filters through the windows of a quiet café. Randall sits at a corner table, nervously checking his watch.

The door chimes as Kishna enters, followed by the rest of the Root Films team.

KISHNA

(sitting down)

Mr. Keys, good morning. I hope you don't mind, I brought the whole team.

Randall nods, looking around warily before leaning in.

RANDALL

Thank you for meeting me.

KISHNA

Before we get started. I am so sorry for the loss of your colleague. When we met the other day, we had no idea what had just happened. Our deepest condolences.

RANDALL

Thank you for saying that. Sarah was a dear friend.

KISHNA

If there's anything we can do, just ask.

RANDALL

Well actually, there is kind of -
that's why I called you here.

The group leans in to hear Randall's every word.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

What I'm about to ask... it's not
exactly a standard business
proposal.

SMYTHE

Ooh, are we doing corporate
espionage? Skunk works?! I've
always wanted to--

JENNY

(elbowing Smythe)
Shh! Let the man talk.

RANDALL

I need your help with a... a script
I'm working on. A crime thriller. I
came up with the murder, but it
needs your AI brains to figure out
how a mastermind could have pulled
off the murder and set up a patsy.

JENNY

So you came up with a crime story,
but you don't know how it could be
pulled off?

RANDALL

Exactly. And if your AI "detective"
cracks the case, it cracks the
plot, and then - you've got
yourself a green light.

KISHNA

I love it.

SMYTHE

What's the crime?

RANDALL

It's about a media executive framed
for murder. He uncovers a
conspiracy involving corporate
takeovers, money laundering,
offshore accounts, shell
companies...

HAMMER HEAD
(raising an eyebrow)
Sounds an awful lot like what's
happening at Principle Media.

Randall falters for a moment, then recovers.

RANDALL
It's all very ripped from the
headlines - Art imitating life, you
know? Here, I wrote a little one
pager story doc with all the
elements of the crime. To help get
you started.

He slides a paper across the table.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
I need your AI skills to help
analyze the... the plot - and
reverse engineer how a smart
detective would solve the crime.
Find connections, patterns. Things
a human writer might miss.

Kishna studies Randall intently, wheels turning in her head.

KISHNA
Like we said, AI is actually
perfectly suited to figure out a
whodunnit.

RANDALL
If this works, I can see a lot of
projects for you at Principle.

HAMMER HEAD
You're okay Keys!

KISHNA
So, is this a paying gig? Let me
give you our lawyer's contact info.

RANDALL
This is a pitch for now, but I've
got to sell it to the new owners.
I'm sure they'll say yes with my
recommendation - but it's gotta be
good.

The team looks at each other very disappointed.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

The last hoop I'll have you jump through, I swear.

The tension breaks.

KISHNA

Mr. Keys, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful - and off the books relationship.

They shake hands as the rest of the team nods in agreement, a mix of excitement and apprehension on their faces.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - DAY

The team files into the office around a large, interactive whiteboard. Hammer Head slams down his papers.

HAMMER HEAD

More motha-fucking free work!

KISHNA

I know, but if we pull this off they'll have to give us a production deal.

SMYTHE

It's all a waste of time anyway. In another 6 months production deals will be a thing of the past.

HAMMER HEAD

Hollywood is dying, so we might as well have fun writing a murder mystery in the meantime.

KISHNA

(tapping the whiteboard)

Alright, team. We need to craft the perfect whodunit.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - LATER

The team now gathers around Smythe's computer, an air of excitement and anticipation filling the room.

KISHNA

Alright, let's see what Randall's given us.

Smythe quickly uploads Randall's one-pager to their AI system.

SMYTHE

Feeding it into Claude and ChatGPT now. Let's see what they make of this "script."

The team watches intently as the AI analyzes the document. Suddenly, Jenny's eyes widen.

JENNY

Wait a second... These details. They're eerily similar to the Principle Media case.

HAMMER HEAD

(leaning in)

You're right. The rooftop, the fall, the missing bullet... It's all there.

A moment of tense silence falls over the group as the realization sinks in.

KISHNA

(quietly)

He's not writing a script. He's trying to solve the actual murder.

SMYTHE

(excited)

Holy shit! We're like, real detectives now!

JENNY

But should we be doing this? It's not exactly ethical...

HAMMER HEAD

Who cares about ethics? We signed an NDA, and this is our chance to be like Charlie's Angels!

KISHNA

Plus, if we crack this, our AI tech will be the talk of Hollywood.

The team exchanges looks, a mix of excitement and apprehension on their faces.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

All in favor of continuing?

One by one, they all raise their hands.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

Then it's settled. Let's solve a
murder by writing a pilot, people.

INT. BEN SHAPIRO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is dimly lit, save for the glow of Ben's computer screen. Legal books and case files are meticulously arranged on shelves behind him. Ben, looking tired but focused, examines the contents of Sarah's thumb drive.

His eyes widen as he scrolls through document after document.

BEN

(muttering)

My God, Sarah. What did you find?

Suddenly, a shadow moves across the frosted glass of his office door. Ben looks up, startled.

The door handle turns slowly.

BEN (CONT'D)

Hello? Is someone there?

The door swings open. A TALL MASKED ASSAILANT, dressed in black, enters silently.

Ben stands, reaching for his phone.

BEN (CONT'D)

Who are you? What do you want?

The assailant moves swiftly, producing a small device. Before Ben can react, the assailant activates it.

A high-pitched WHINE fills the air!

Ben clutches his head, disoriented. He stumbles, knocking over a stack of files.

BEN (CONT'D)

(in pain)

What... what is that?

The assailant approaches, retrieving the thumb drive from the computer.

Ben tries to stop them but collapses, blood trickling from his ears.

The assailant turns off the device and exits, leaving Ben motionless on the floor.

INT. RANDALL'S HOME - MORNING

Sunlight streams through the windows of Randall's modern, upscale home. Randall, dressed for work, paces in the kitchen, phone to his ear. Marilyn enters, already in her doctor's scrubs.

MARILYN
You're up early.

RANDALL
(distracted)
Ben's not answering. I've tried his office, cell, even his home number.

Randall hangs up, immediately dials again.

MARILYN
(concerned)
Maybe he's in court? Or a meeting?

The call goes to voicemail again. Randall slams his phone down on the counter.

RANDALL
He was supposed to look at that thumb drive last night and call me right away.

MARILYN
(trying to calm him)
I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation. Why don't you wait an hour and try again?

Randall starts pacing, running his hands through his hair.

RANDALL
No, no. I can't wait. I need to know what he found.

He grabs his jacket and keys.

MARILYN
(grabbing his arm)
Babe you are being dramatic.

RANDALL
(softening)
This is my life Marilyn, our lives.
I've got to go.

He kisses her quickly and rushes out, leaving Marilyn standing in the kitchen, worry etched on her face.

INT./EXT. RANDALL'S CAR - DAY

Randall drives frantically through the city streets, his knuckles white on the steering wheel. He pulls up to Ben's office building, his face falling as he sees the scene before him.

EXT. BEN'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Police cars with flashing lights surround the building.

Crime scene tape already cordons off the entrance. Officers and detectives mill about, some entering and exiting the building.

Randall pulls up abruptly, parking haphazardly. He jumps out of his car and approaches the police line, his face a mix of shock and determination.

Detective Chen spots him and breaks away from a conversation with another officer, walking towards him with a raised eyebrow.

DETECTIVE CHEN
Mr. Keys, what a surprise.

RANDALL
What's going on? What happened?

DETECTIVE CHEN
Funny, I was about to ask you the same thing. You seem to have a knack for being connected to these mysterious "incidents."

RANDALL
What kind of incident? Is Ben okay?

DETECTIVE CHEN
He's dead.

Randall glances nervously at the building, lips clench.

RANDALL

Oh my god. We had a meeting yesterday.

DETECTIVE CHEN

About Sarah's death?

RANDALL

We were discussing my situation. Look, I need to get into Ben's office. He has something of mine. My files must be kept confidential.

DETECTIVE CHEN

(cutting him off)

Mr. Keys, this is an active investigation. You're not going anywhere near that office.

RANDALL

But there could be evidence—

DETECTIVE CHEN

(sharply)

Evidence of what? Care to fill me in on what you're really looking for?

Randall pauses, realizing he's said too much.

RANDALL

That's my defense attorney. It's complicated.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Isn't it always? Listen, Randall. Two people connected to you have died under suspicious circumstances. That puts you in a very precarious position.

RANDALL

(defensively)

If you had a case, you'd fucking make it.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Is there anything else you want to tell me? Anything at all? Or are you going to lawyer up again and get someone else killed?

RANDALL

Well I guess it's clear you're not gonna solve this crime.

DETECTIVE CHEN

When people are hiding secrets it takes a lot more time. Well, like I said before, don't leave town, Mr. Keys.

Randall nods grimly and walks back to his car, casting one last frustrated look at Ben's office building.

As he drives away, his face is a mix of disappointment and renewed determination.

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA OFFICES - DAY

Randall walks through the office, his demeanor tense. As he approaches Marcus's office, he overhears a hushed conversation. He pauses, listening.

MARCUS (O.S.)

(muffled)

...ensure the offshore accounts are untraceable. We can't afford another Goldstein situation.

UNKNOWN VOICE (O.S.)

And the board meeting?

MARCUS (O.S.)

Just stick to the script. Vanguard's interests are our interests now.

Randall's eyes widen slightly. He composes himself and knocks on the door.

MARCUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Come in.

Randall enters. Marcus is alone, ending a call.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(overly cheerful)

Randall! What brings you to my humble abode?

RANDALL
(cautiously)
Just wanted to touch base about the Vanguard integration. There are some... concerns.

MARCUS
(smile tightening)
Oh now there are concerns?
Everything's proceeding as planned.

RANDALL
Is it? Some of the numbers seem... off.

Marcus leans back, studying Randall.

MARCUS
Numbers can be tricky things,
Randall. Easy to misinterpret.

RANDALL
Or manipulate.

A tense silence falls between them.

MARCUS
(softly)
Careful, Randall. Curiosity killed the cat, you know.

RANDALL
(matching his tone)
And satisfaction brought it back.

They hold each other's gaze, the unspoken threat hanging in the air.

MARCUS
(forcing a laugh)
Well, if you have concerns, I'm sure the board would love to hear them at the next meeting.

RANDALL
I'm sure they would.

As Randall turns to leave, his phone PINGS. He checks it.

CLOSE ON PHONE: A text from Kishna reads "Meet us at the cafe. We have updates."

MARCUS
Anything important?

RANDALL
(pocketing his phone)
Just some script notes. Nothing for
you to worry about.

Randall exits, leaving Marcus staring after him, his friendly facade slipping into a look of suspicion.

INT. NORMS CAFE - DAY

Randall sits at a corner table, nervously checking his watch. The Root Films team enters, led by Kishna, all looking excited.

KISHNA
Mr. Keys, thank you for meeting us.
We've got some fascinating
scenarios to share.

RANDALL
(forcing a smile)
Great. Let's hear them.

The team sits down, pulling out tablets and notepads.

SMYTH
So, we used Claude and ChatGPT to
generate five plausible murder
scenarios. You ready for this?

Randall nods, bracing himself.

JENNY
Scenario 1: A staged suicide using
a sound device to simulate a
gunshot.

RANDALL
I don't understand how that would
even work.

Randall's hand tighten around his coffee cup.

SMYTHE
There's more.

KISHNA
Scenario 2 is where it gets really
interesting. A hidden shooter fires
a bean bag projectile at Sarah,
knocking her back off the building.
(MORE)

KISHNA (CONT'D)

The impact would be nearly impossible to detect due to the damage from the fall.

Randall visibly flinches, his mind flashing back to the night of Sarah's death.

RANDALL

That's... quite creative. How did you come up with that?

KISHNA

It's fascinating, isn't it? The AI analyzed various non-lethal weapons and their potential to cause significant force without leaving obvious traces.

SMYTHE

...it even factored in the difficulty of detecting such an impact after a fall from that height. Pretty smart, huh?

Randall nods, his mind racing with the implications of this information.

RANDALL

And the other scenarios?

KISHNA

We think the beanbag theory is the most plausible. But we're stuck on something. How would the shooter know Sarah would be on the roof?

JENNY

One theory is that Sarah could be having an affair with our main character and was going to threaten to go public with the affair.

RANDALL

The main character would never have an affair. He loves his wife and family.

The team exchanges knowing glances. Kishna's eyes narrow slightly.

JENNY

Claude 3 suggested that someone lured her up there by cloning our main character's phone number?

RANDALL

Oh my God. That's it. Setting me up to take the fall.

HAMMER HEAD

(chuckling darkly)

It's actually Sarah who took the fall. Literally off the side of the building.

Jenny elbows Hammer in the ribs. Randall pales visibly, his hands shaking as he reaches for his coffee.

KISHNA

Mr. Keys? Are you alright? You seem... affected by this.

RANDALL

I'm fine. It's just... very realistic. You've done an impressive job.

KISHNA

So, what do you think? Do these scenarios work for your "script?"

Randall catches Kishna's emphasis on "script" and swallows hard.

RANDALL

Yes, they're perfect. But we need to really figure out the masterplan, you know? Like who's the puppet master? I need to know that.

KISHNA

To know that, our algorithm is gonna need more data.

RANDALL

Okay, listen. I'm gonna send you a digital file of a bunch of financial records - can your tools figure complicated corporate tax shell games?

SMYTHE

Oh yeah!

KISHNA

I think you made Smythe just orgasm.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Randall pulls up in his car and parks a few houses down. He takes a deep breath, hoping the mansion is empty. As he walks closer, he hears the thumping bass of a party and sees vibrant lights illuminating the mansion. A banner hangs over the entrance reading, "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MIA!"

RANDALL

Great, just my luck.

He approaches the entrance and sees a group of young influencers chatting and taking selfies. Randall adjusts his jacket and puts on a confident smile.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Time to blend in.

EXT. MANSION ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Randall walks up to the front door where a bouncer stands guard with a guest list.

BOUNCER

Name?

RANDALL

Oh, I'm Mia's uncle. Just here to drop off my niece's birthday check. She said I could just come in and join the fun.

The bouncer looks skeptical but lets him in with a shrug.

BOUNCER

Alright, go on in.

INT. MANSION - NIGHT

The mansion is packed with partygoers, all dressed in trendy outfits, posing for photos, and dancing to the music. Randall weaves his way through the crowd, trying to avoid drawing attention to himself.

He passes a group of influencers filming a live stream.

INFLUENCER 1

Hey everyone, we're live at Mia's epic birthday bash!

INFLUENCER 2

Don't forget to like and subscribe!

Randall keeps his head down and heads toward the staircase.

INT. MANSION - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Randall climbs the stairs quickly, avoiding more partygoers. He reaches the second floor and looks for the staircase leading to the rooftop deck.

INT. MANSION - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Randall moves through the hallway, passing rooms filled with more guests. He spots the door leading to the rooftop deck and slips through.

EXT. MANSION - ROOFTOP DECK - NIGHT

The rooftop deck is decorated with string lights and surrounded by planters full of flowers. A few partygoers are up here, chatting and laughing. Randall waits until they move to the far side of the deck before sneaking out and searching around.

He moves quickly, looking behind flower pots and along the edges of the deck. He spots a small crack in the wall near a corner planter. Randall kneels down, peering into the crack. There it is—a small bean bag projectile wedged in the crack.

RANDALL

Got you.

He carefully pries it out, slipping it into his pocket. Just as he's about to leave, he hears voices approaching. Randall hides behind a large potted plant as two partygoers walk by, oblivious to his presence.

PARTYGOER 1

Did you see Mia's dress? It's insane!

PARTYGOER 2

Totally! Best party ever!

They move on, and Randall seizes the opportunity to make his way back to the staircase. He descends quickly and quietly.

INT. MANSION - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Randall retraces his steps through the crowded first floor, dodging more partygoers and avoiding the brightly lit areas. He heads towards the exit.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Randall slips out of the mansion and walks briskly back to his car.

INT. RANDALL'S CAR - NIGHT

Randall gets in, breathing a sigh of relief. He pulls the bean bag projectile from his pocket and examines it.

RANDALL

Now we've got the proof.

He starts the car and drives away, leaving the party behind.

INT. RANDALL'S HOME - NIGHT

Randall enters, looking exhausted. Marilyn is waiting in the living room, her expression a mix of concern and frustration. The TV is muted, showing news coverage of Sarah's death.

MARILYN

(firmly)

Where have you been? Why haven't you answered any of my calls?

RANDALL

(sighing, trying to avoid eye contact)

I'm sorry. I had my phone off during meetings.

MARILYN

(crossing her arms)

Meetings? Randall, it's past 10 PM. You've never been this late without telling me.

RANDALL

I know, I know. Things are... complicated at work right now.

MARILYN

Complicated? Randall, Sarah is dead and you're a suspect! The police are watching our house. Claire's friends are asking her if her dad's a murderer. This is more than complicated.

RANDALL

What do you want me to do, Marilyn?
Just ignore everything that's
happening?

MARILYN

I want you to tell me the truth!
What's really going on? Why did you
rush off to Ben's office this
morning?

Randall paces, running his hands through his hair, avoiding her gaze.

RANDALL

I went to Ben's office because... I
hadn't heard from him. I was
worried.

MARILYN

Worried? Worried why?

RANDALL

(voice breaking)
Marilyn, Ben is dead. I think he
was murdered last night.

MARILYN

(stunned)
What? How? When?

RANDALL

This morning. That's why I rushed
over there. I tried calling, and
when he didn't answer...

MARILYN

And you waited until now to tell
me? Randall, what the hell is going
on?

RANDALL

I was trying to figure things out,
to protect you and Claire. I didn't
know how to tell you.

MARILYN

Protect us? You thought you could
hide the fact that your lawyer may
have been murdered!

RANDALL

I'm trying to keep you safe. I didn't want to drag you further into this mess.

MARILYN

We're already in it, Randall. You need to start being honest with me. With us. What else aren't you telling me?

Suddenly, they hear a door slam upstairs. They both freeze, realizing Claire has overheard.

RANDALL

Marilyn I can't tell you. It's not that simple, but I'm going to figure it out.

She takes a deep breath, her eyes filled with a mixture of fear and determination.

MARILYN

Figure it out Randall. Before it's too late.

She turns and heads upstairs, leaving Randall alone in the living room.

He slumps onto the couch, the weight of everything crashing down on him. The muted TV shows the headline: "PRINCIPLE MEDIA EXEC MURDER MYSTERY DEEPENS."

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS HIKING TRAIL - MORNING

Randall jogs along a secluded trail, the Los Angeles skyline visible in the distance. He's clearly using the run to clear his head, his expression tense and distracted.

As he rounds a bend, he nearly collides with MARCUS, who's standing in the middle of the path, holding a map and pretending to be lost.

RANDALL

(startled)

Marcus? What are you doing here?

MARCUS

(smiling coldly)

I could ask you the same thing, Randall. Bit far from your usual routes, isn't it?

Randall tenses, glancing around. They're alone on the trail.

RANDALL

Just... trying something new.
Clearing my head before the big
board meeting.

MARCUS

(stepping closer)
Funny thing about clear heads. They
tend to forget about...
distractions. Old stories. Past
tragedies.

RANDALL

(cautiously)
What are you getting at, Marcus?

MARCUS

(voice hardening)
I think you know. Your little
investigations, your meetings with
that tech startup. It needs to
stop.

RANDALL

I don't know what you're talking
about.

MARCUS grabs Randall's arm, his grip firm.

MARCUS

(grabbing Randall's arm)
Don't play dumb, Randall. It
doesn't suit you. Sarah made the
same mistake, thinking she could
dig around where she didn't belong.

Randall jerks his arm away, using the motion to subtly lift
Marcus's key card from his pocket. Anger flashes in his eyes.

RANDALL

Are you threatening me?

MARCUS

(smiling again)
Threatening? No, no. Just having a
friendly chat between colleagues.
Reminding you where your loyalties
should lie.

He starts to walk away, then turns back.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Oh, and Randall? Watch your step.
You never know who might be
watching.

Marcus disappears down the trail, leaving Randall standing there, shaken but resolute. Randall looks around, realizing just how isolated the trail is.

Randall pulls out the KEY CARD and ATM CARD he lifted from Marcus, his face set with determination. He quickly dials a number on his phone.

RANDALL

(into phone)

Kishna, it's Randall. I've got something. Can we meet me at your office tomorrow morning? I'm going to have some more notes for you.

Kishna's voice crackles through the phone.

KISHNA (V.O.)

Absolutely.

Randall pockets the key card, his pace quickening as he jogs back towards the trailhead, a new resolve in his eyes.

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA OFFICES - NIGHT

The office is quiet. Randall cautiously approaches Sarah's office, looking around to ensure he's alone. He pulls out a key card, hesitates, then swipes it.

The door unlocks with a soft CLICK. Randall slips inside, closing the door behind him.

INT. SARAH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Randall flicks on a small flashlight, sweeping it across the room. Sarah's office is untouched, a snapshot frozen in time. Family photos, awards, and a half-empty coffee mug still sit on her desk.

RANDALL

(whispering)

What were you hiding, Sarah?

He begins searching methodically, rifling through drawers and files. As he checks under the desk, he hears FOOTSTEPS in the hallway. Randall freezes, holding his breath.

The footsteps pause outside the door. A shadow passes beneath it, then moves on. Randall exhales, relief washing over him.

Returning to his search, he notices a loose panel behind Sarah's computer.

He pries it open, revealing a hidden compartment. Inside is a small notebook.

Randall flips through it, his eyes widening as he reads Sarah's hastily scribbled notes.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
My God, Sarah. You really did find
it all.

Suddenly, the office door begins to open. Randall quickly pockets the notebook and ducks behind the desk.

SECURITY GUARD (O.S.)
Hello? Anyone in here?

The guard's flashlight beam sweeps across the room. Randall holds his breath, pressing himself against the desk.

After a tense moment, the guard closes the door.

Randall waits until the footsteps fade, then emerges from his hiding spot, sweat beading on his forehead.

He takes one last look around the office, then slips out, clutching the notebook tightly.

INT. HIGH-END SPA - DAY

The Tamara Twins relax in a private spa room, receiving luxurious treatments. They are mid-conversation, clearly unconcerned with the chaos unfolding at Principle Media.

HANNA-BELLE
Did you hear? That Marcus guy is
trying to get rid of Randall.

TIFFANY
That's too bad. Randall is so
cute!

HANNA-BELLE
Yeah but he thinks he's so smart.

TIFFANY

A smarty and an idiot. What a disaster!

HANNA-BELLE

Well, as long as it keeps the drama going, I'm entertained.

TIFFANY

(raising her glass)
Here's to the chaos.

They toast, laughing at the absurdity of it all.

EXT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - DAY

Randall rushes into the Root Films office, holding a small bag. He bursts into the main room where the team is gathered around a table.

RANDALL

Sorry I'm late.

KISHNA

No worries. It's all good. Smyth was just catching me up on that copy of the thumb drive from Sarah? Any luck?

SMYTHE

Our financial AI is still working on it. We're having our "AI Agent" scrape every financial website in the world and even go through the infamous Panama Papers to track down every asset Vanguard owns. But it's going to take some time.

RANDALL

Thanks. Keep me updated.

JENNY

You also might like this, Randall. Well, we started researching who sells that kind of ammo.

HAMMER HEAD

We found a few specialty stores and online shops that sell non-lethal ammunition. But now with the evidence you just found - we'll be able to pinpoint exactly where it was sold.

Hammer moves to another computer, starting a search.

RANDALL

If we can trace the ammo, we might
find our shooter.

The AI systems start processing the new information. Screens fill with data points, connections forming between various pieces of evidence.

SMYTHE

Sarah's notes point to meetings
with someone she trusted but
feared. I wonder who it was.

Randall reaches into the bag and pulls out the bean bag projectile, placing it on the table.

The team looks at it, impressed.

HAMMER HEAD

Is that what I think it is?

RANDALL

And that's not all. I also got this
key card and an ATM card.

He pulls out the key card and ATM card, and Sarah's notebook showing them to the team.

SMYTHE

The ATM card is gold. Our AI can
track his finances much more
precisely now.

Smythe scans the key card. Marcus's photo immediately pops up. Kishna points to the screen.

KISHNA

Well this certainly got
interesting.

SMYTHE

Indeed it has. This key card
belongs to your colleague Marcus.
It tracks all of his movements and
the purchases on this ATM card is
coincidentally linked to Marcus'
bank accounts.

The tension in the room is palpable. The AI tools begin synthesizing the information, creating a timeline and potential suspect list.

RANDALL

I have to come clean with you all.

The team looks at him, confused and concerned.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

This information isn't for a crime thriller. I'm not writing a script. I'm trying to exonerate myself. Ben, Sarah... I think I'm being framed. We need to pretend this is a project to protect everyone involved.

KISHNA

Yeah.

HAMMER HEAD

We know.

JENNY

Kind of obvious.

KISHNA

But don't worry. You still have plausible deniability. And this is still just a "script," right?

HAMMER HEAD

When we exonerate you, and you become the CEO of Principle Media, Root Films gets an amazing overall deal with the studio.

RANDALL

I mean, yes. Of course.

KISHNA

Okay then. Let's just think of this as the midpoint in the script. Time to dig in!

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA OFFICES - DAY

Randall sits at his computer, brow furrowed as he scrolls through financial records. His eyes widen suddenly.

RANDALL

(muttering)

What the hell?

He frantically clicks through more files, finding more gaps.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 (under his breath)
 They're all gone. Anything from the
 last six months...

A KNOCK at his door. Randall quickly minimizes the windows.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 Come in.

MARCUS enters, dressed in a somber suit.

MARCUS
 Randall, we're heading to Sarah's
 funeral. You coming?

RANDALL
 (hesitating)
 Of course. I'll be right there.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A crowd dressed in black surrounds a fresh grave. Randall stands at the back, his eyes scanning the attendees. He spots Marcus speaking quietly with two men in expensive suits. One hands Marcus an envelope, which he quickly pockets. Randall locks eyes with Marcus across the crowd. Marcus's friendly smile doesn't reach his eyes.

The RABBI steps forward, addressing the mourners.

RABBI
 We gather here today to remember
 Sarah Goldstein, a beloved
 daughter, colleague, and friend. At
 this time, I would like to invite
 someone who knew Sarah well to say
 a few words.

Randall tenses, expecting to be called up. Instead, the rabbi turns to Marcus.

RABBI (CONT'D)
 Marcus Holloway, would you please
 come forward?

Marcus steps up, his expression somber, yet there's a glint of satisfaction in his eyes. He begins his speech, carefully crafted to elicit sympathy.

MARCUS
 Thank you. Sarah was not just a
 colleague but a dear friend.
 (MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Her loss is a tragedy, and we must honor her memory by continuing the work she was so passionate about.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

DETECTIVE CHEN (30s, sharp, no-nonsense) stands beside her unmarked car, phone pressed to her ear. Her free hand fidgets with her badge as she listens intently.

DETECTIVE CHEN

(into phone)

You're sure about this? ...
Alright, send me the security footage. I want to see it myself. I mean, what's this guy thinking? This case just got a whole lot messier.

She pauses, listening to the person on the other end of the line.

DETECTIVE CHEN (CONT'D)

No, I'm at the funeral now. I'll talk to Keys myself... Yeah, I know it's sensitive. Trust me, I'll handle it.

Chen ends the call, her expression a mix of frustration and determination. She takes a deep breath, straightening her blazer.

She pockets her phone and starts walking back towards the funeral, her stride purposeful.

As she approaches the gathered mourners, we see Randall in the distance, standing at the back of the crowd. Chen's eyes lock onto him, her jaw set with resolve.

CUT BACK TO:

As Marcus finishes his speech, Randall notices the Tamara Twins, HANNA-BELLE and TIFFANY, making their way through the crowd, drawing attention with their flamboyant outfits and dramatic presence. They spot Marcus and rush over, making a scene.

HANNA-BELLE

(shouting)

Marcus, darling! Over here!

TIFFANY
 (dramatically)
 We're so sorry for your loss,
 Marcus.

The twins hug Marcus tightly, their exaggerated movements drawing even more eyes. Marcus looks uncomfortable but manages a tight smile.

MARCUS
 (awkwardly)
 Thank you, Hanna-Belle, Tiffany.
 It's a difficult time.

HANNA-BELLE
 (loudly)
 Oh, we know! Funerals are just
 so... morose. But we had to come
 and support you, darling.

TIFFANY
 (smiling at the crowd)
 And look at all these people! So
 many familiar faces. This must be
 the event of the season, sadly.

They both laugh lightly, oblivious to the solemnity of the occasion. Marcus gently guides them away from the crowd, trying to minimize the disruption.

MARCUS
 (quietly)
 Ladies, perhaps we should keep it
 down. This is a funeral, after all.

HANNA-BELLE
 (giggling)
 Oh, Marcus, always the serious one.

TIFFANY
 (waving to someone in the
 crowd)
 Let's catch up later, Marcus. We
 need to mingle!

The twins continue to make their way through the attendees, turning heads and causing a stir. Randall watches them, shaking his head at their insensitivity.

The service concludes, and attendees move toward the reception area, forming a line to greet Sarah's parents. Randall, feeling the weight of the recent discoveries and his complicated emotions, joins the line.

As Randall approaches Sarah's parents, MR. and MRS. GOLDSTEIN, their expressions harden.

MRS. GOLDSTEIN
How dare you show your face here!

MR. GOLDSTEIN
(accusingly)
You killed our daughter! You and
your company!

Randall, shocked and embarrassed, tries to respond.

RANDALL
I... I didn't... I'm so sorry for
your loss.

MRS. GOLDSTEIN
Save your apologies! We know what
kind of man you are.

Heads turn, and a murmur ripples through the attendees. Hanna-Belle grabs Tiffany's shoulder

HANNA-BELLE
Ohh drama. This funeral is poppin'

Randall, feeling the eyes and whispers of the crowd, backs away, mumbling another apology before quickly heading towards the parking lot.

As Randall turns to leave, he spots Detective Chen approaching. She gives him a nod, indicating she needs to talk.

DETECTIVE CHEN
We need to talk, Randall. There's
been a development.

RANDALL
What is it?

DETECTIVE CHEN
Not here. Follow me.

Randall nods and follows Detective Chen away from the cemetery, leaving the chaos of the Tamara Twins and the funeral behind.

EXT. CEMETERY - PATHWAY - DAY

Randall and Detective Chen walk along a quiet pathway away from the main group of mourners.

The cemetery's peaceful surroundings contrast sharply with the tension in their conversation. Chen's demeanor is more confrontational than before.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Randall, I need to ask you again about the night of Sarah's murder. What exactly did you pick up off the roof?

Randall keeps his face neutral, trying to stay calm.

RANDALL

I told you, it was nothing important. Just my phone.

DETECTIVE CHEN

I know it wasn't your phone.

RANDALL

I already told you.

DETECTIVE CHEN

And now - We have video of you going back to the crime scene and picking something up from behind a planter.

Randall's mind races, but he maintains his composure.

RANDALL

I went back to see if I missed anything. I want justice for Sarah.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Randall, you're not making this any easier on yourself. What did you really take from the rooftop?

RANDALL

You're seeing things, Detective.

Chen steps closer, her eyes narrowing.

DETECTIVE CHEN

I'm watching you, Randall. You make one wrong move, and you'll regret it.

Randall stops walking, facing her with a determined look.

RANDALL

Do what you have to, Detective. I've got nothing to hide.

DETECTIVE CHEN
We'll see about that.

They stand there, locked in a silent standoff, the tension palpable. Finally, Chen turns and walks away, leaving Randall alone with his thoughts.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - SAME

The Root Films office is buzzing with activity. Multiple screens show various AI analysis tools at work. Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head are huddled around the table, intensely focused.

KISHNA
Alright, let's start with Marcus's financial transactions. See if we can find any unusual purchases.

Hammer Head types in commands, pulling up Marcus's financial records. The AI flags several transactions.

HAMMER HEAD
Look at this. A lot of cash withdrawals from an ATM in...Long Beach?

KISHNA
Why's a wealthy media exec withdrawing thousands of dollars in cash in Long Beach?

HAMMER HEAD
Hookers?

JENNY
What about Sarah's journal? Anything there?

Jenny flips through Sarah's journal, scanning pages into the system.

JENNY (CONT'D)
This might be it. Her journal says someone she thought she could trust but now fears offered her a bribe. That could be what the money was for.

The AI processes the names and extracts relevant messages and emails. The screen fills with highlighted text.

SMYTHE

This is big. Look at these emails—they were discussing something secret.

JENNY

So Marcus must have been working with Vanguard orchestrating something, and Sarah found out. But why kill Ben the lawyer.

KISHNA

Wait, didn't Ben get that thumb drive from Randall, the one Sarah gave him?

SMYTHE

Yeah, and those Vanguard files were encrypted. Accessing them would trigger alerts.

JENNY

Which means Vanguard knew when Ben accessed those files. That's why he was killed.

HAMMER HEAD

What a second, aren't we accessing those same files? Oh shit! Do we have a mark on our backs?

SMYTH

No my custom firewalls blocks all that. But lookie lookie here.

Smyth swivels around his screen so everyone can see.

SMYTH (CONT'D)

Marcus took out another cash transaction down in Long Beach the day of Ben's murder. I'm a GOD!

KISHNA

You are a God! Now, let's run a final synthesis. AI, generate a summary of all findings and potential leads.

The AI processes the data, creating a detailed report. The team reads it, the room silent with concentration. The team exchanges determined looks, realizing the gravity of their discovery.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

We need to tell Randall. This is the break we've been waiting for.

HAMMER HEAD

And we need to take a trip to that ammunition store.

They spring into action, preparing the evidence and planning their next steps.

EXT. CEMETERY PARKING LOT - DAY

Randall reaches his car, his mind racing from the confrontation with Sarah's mother.

As he fumbles for his keys, he notices an envelope tucked under the windshield wiper. He glances around but sees no one suspicious.

He opens the envelope and pulls out a note. It reads: "**Drop it. Now.**"

41 Randall's heart pounds.

41

He looks around the parking lot one more time, then slips the note into his pocket and gets into his car.

INT. BLOOMBERG STUDIO - DAY

The sleek, modern studio is abuzz with activity. Multiple screens display live financial data, stock tickers, and headlines. At the center, a BUSINESS NEWSCASTER sits at a desk, looking directly into the camera.

BUSINESS NEWSCASTER

Good morning, I'm Emily Carter, and welcome to Bloomberg Markets. Our top story today: all of Hollywood is holding its breath as Vanguard proposes its final offer to the board and shareholders of Principle Media.

The screen splits, showing the Principle Media logo alongside Vanguard's.

EMILY CARTER

Speculation is rife. Will they meet regulation hurdles? Does Vanguard have the capital to pull off this monumental deal?

(MORE)

EMILY CARTER (CONT'D)

Heightened tensions follow the recent tragic death of Principle Media's COO, Sarah Goldstein.

A photo of Sarah Goldstein appears on the screen, accompanied by a headline: "Principle Media COO Found Dead."

EMILY CARTER (CONT'D)

Sources close to the matter suggest that this acquisition could redefine the landscape of Hollywood's media industry. However, questions remain. Can Vanguard navigate the complex regulatory environment, and what will this mean for Principle Media's future?

The screen shifts to show analysts discussing the potential impacts of the deal.

EMILY CARTER (CONT'D)

Joining me now is media analyst Tom Reynolds. Tom, what are your thoughts on Vanguard's final offer?

The screen splits again, showing TOM REYNOLDS, a seasoned analyst, in a remote studio.

TOM REYNOLDS

Emily, this is one of the most significant moves we've seen in years. Vanguard's offer is substantial, but they face numerous challenges. Regulatory approval is not guaranteed, and there are concerns about whether they have the financial backing to complete the acquisition. The market is watching closely.

EMILY CARTER

How does Sarah Goldstein's untimely death impact this deal?

TOM REYNOLDS

It's a significant factor. The uncertainty, speculation, and rumors surrounding her death have added a layer of complexity to the negotiations. It has certainly heightened tensions and created a sense of urgency for both parties to finalize the deal.

EMILY CARTER

And what about the shareholders?
What can they expect?

TOM REYNOLDS

Shareholders are in a precarious position. On one hand, they stand to gain significantly if the deal goes through. On the other hand, the uncertainty and potential regulatory hurdles could impact the stock negatively. It's a high-stakes game right now.

The screen returns to Emily Carter, who looks directly into the camera.

EMILY CARTER

Thank you, Tom. We'll be keeping a close eye on this developing story. Stay tuned to Bloomberg Markets for the latest updates. Up next, how the tech sector is reacting to new regulatory challenges. But first, a quick break.

INT. NON-LETHAL WEAPONS STORE - DAY

The store is a bizarre mix of military surplus, survival gear, and non-lethal weapons. The aisles are cluttered with odd items, from gas masks to high-frequency audio weapons. The lighting is dim, casting eerie shadows.

Randall enters with Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head. They look around, trying to find the clerk. A bell rings as they approach the counter, and a tall, gaunt man with wild hair and a crooked smile emerges from the back. His name tag reads "RONNY."

RONNY

(cheerfully)

Welcome! How can I help you fine folks today?

RANDALL

(forcing a smile)

We're looking for some information, Ronny. We're interested in specific purchases made recently.

Ronny's eyes narrow, his smile never fading.

RONNY

Oh, are you now? And what kind of information would that be?

KISHNA

(stepping forward)

We need to know about recent sales of bean bag ammo.

Ronny scratches his head, thinking for a moment.

RONNY

Bean bag ammo? That's old school. Not much requests for that. What's this about?

JENNY

It's important. We're trying to connect some dots.

RONNY

(slyly)

Connect some dots, you say? Well, let me see what I can find.

He disappears into the back, leaving the group waiting. They exchange nervous glances, the odd atmosphere of the store getting to them.

After a few moments, Ronny returns with a worn ledger. He flips through the pages, scanning the entries.

RONNY (CONT'D (CONT'D)

Ah, here we go. There was a big purchase not too long ago. Bean bag rounds and one of those fancy audio weapons. Paid in cash.

SMYTH

High frequency infrasonic weapon?

Ronny looks at the receipt.

RONNY

Yep that's it.

RANDALL

(leaning in)

Do you have a name or an address?

RONNY

(grinning wider)

As a matter of fact, I do. The guy was huge. Hard to forget.

(MORE)

RONNY (CONT'D)

Name's Phelps. Lives in Long Beach.
Here's the address.

KISHNA

Long Beach, huh?

HAMMER HEAD

Guess Phelps only takes cash.

Ronnie scribbles the information on a piece of paper and hands it to Randall.

SMYTHE

You're sure about this, Ronny?

RONNY

(nodding vigorously)

Oh, absolutely. Big guy. Must be
about 6'6", 300 pounds. Smells like
ham and eggs. Hard to miss.

HAMMER HEAD

Thanks, Ronny. You've been a big
help.

Ronny gives them a mock salute.

RONNY

Anytime, folks. Anytime.

EXT. NON-LETHAL WEAPONS STORE - CONTINUOUS

Outside, Randall looks at the address.

KISHNA

Long Beach. Let's go find this
Phelps.

RANDALL

Wait - what time is it?

KISHNA

2:15 - why?

RANDALL

I'm about to miss the board
meeting. Long Beach is gonna have
to wait.

They head to their cars, the sense of urgency and anticipation palpable.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA BOARDROOM - DAY

The meeting is already in full swing. The room is filled with EXECUTIVES and VANGUARD REPRESENTATIVES. MARCUS presides at the head of the table, all smiles.

MARCUS

...and with the integration of Vanguard's resources, Principle Media will be poised for unprecedented growth.

Suddenly, the doors burst open, and RANDALL strides in, clearly agitated. The room goes silent as all eyes turn to him.

RANDALL

Sorry I'm late.

Marcus's smile fades slightly as he watches Randall make his way to an empty seat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

I need to speak.

MARCUS

Randall, we're in the middle of--

RANDALL

(interrupting)

I used to support this acquisition. But after Sarah's death, I've had second thoughts. I have questions.

The Vanguard Representatives exchange uneasy glances. Marcus tries to maintain control.

MARCUS

Perhaps this isn't the time--

RANDALL

No, it is. For example, does Vanguard have the capital to pull off this deal? And what about the regulation hurdles? Have those been addressed?

The room murmurs with tension. One of the VANGUARD REPS speaks up.

VANGUARD REP

We assure you, all necessary steps have been taken--

RANDALL

And then there's the matter of Sarah's death. How do we proceed with such a cloud hanging over us?

Marcus's patience is wearing thin. He stands up, trying to regain control.

MARCUS

Randall, you're out of line. This is not the place for this discussion.

RANDALL

Oh, I think it is. Because if this deal goes through and it's found that we're complicit in any wrongdoing, we're all going down.

MARCUS

Enough! I move that we temporarily remove Randall from his duties until the investigation is concluded. It's clouding his judgement.

The room erupts in whispers. Marcus continues, his voice more commanding.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

In fact, I have surveillance footage of Randall sneaking into Sarah's office and stealing evidence.

The room falls silent. Marcus motions to a SECURITY GUARD at the door.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Escort Mr. Keys off the premises.

RANDALL

This is a setup, and you know it!

The Security Guard approaches Randall, who doesn't resist but glares at Marcus.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

This isn't over.

As Randall is escorted out, the tension in the room is palpable. Marcus sits back down, trying to regain his composure.

MARCUS

Let's proceed, shall we?

The meeting resumes, but the shadow of Randall's accusations looms large over the room.

CUT TO:

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA, STUDIO LOT - DAY

A LOCAL NEWS REPORTER stands in front of the Principle Media studio lot, holding a microphone. The Principle Media logo is prominently displayed on the building behind her. The camera crew sets up, capturing the bustling scene of reporters and onlookers.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER

This is Lisa Turner reporting live from Principle Media headquarters, where the company's stock has taken another hit following the dramatic ouster of Randall Keys during a heated shareholder meeting earlier today.

The scene shifts to a video clip of Randall being escorted out of the building by security, his face tense with anger.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Keys, a high-ranking executive, was forcibly removed from the premises after raising serious concerns about the proposed acquisition by Vanguard. His unexpected removal has only fueled speculation and unrest among shareholders and employees alike.

The camera cuts back to Lisa Turner, standing with the Principle Media building in the background.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER

The price of Principle Media stock has fallen even further in the wake of Keys' ouster, adding to the company's recent turmoil following the mysterious death of COO Sarah Goldstein. Investors are now questioning the stability and future direction of the media giant.

She turns to another camera angle, showing a group of concerned shareholders gathered outside the building, discussing the latest developments.

LOCAL NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

The question on everyone's mind: what will happen next for Principle Media? Will the Vanguard acquisition proceed despite the growing doubts and internal conflict? We'll continue to follow this story closely. For now, back to you in the studio.

The camera pulls back, showing the chaotic scene outside Principle Media headquarters as the report concludes.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - DAY

The Root Films office is filled with tension as Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head huddle around a computer screen. The AI has just finished analyzing the financial information from the thumb drive Randall provided.

SMYTHE

Alright, everyone. The AI is done processing all the data from the thumb drive. It's scraped every website worldwide and even went through the infamous "Panama Papers" to track down all of Vanguard's assets.

JENNY

So, what did it find?

Smythe takes a deep breath, his face a mix of shock and disbelief.

SMYTHE

You're not going to believe this. Vanguard, who purports to be worth 20.3 billion dollars, is actually a giant shell game. Their true worth is less than 10 million dollars.

The team stares at Smythe, stunned into silence.

HAMMER HEAD

You've got to be kidding me. How is that even possible?

SMYTHE

The AI cross-referenced thousands of financial records, offshore accounts, and shady transactions. It's all smoke and mirrors. They've been inflating their worth through a complex network of shell companies and fraudulent investments.

Kishna's phone buzzes. She glances at it and her eyes widen.

KISHNA

Hold on, I'm getting an alert from Deadline Hollywood.

She reads the headline out loud.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

"Randall Keys out at Principle Media."

The team reacts with shock and disbelief.

JENNY

What? They fired him?

HAMMER HEAD

What the fuck! You mean this guy can't even get us a job now, whether we clear him for murder or not! And we're putting our lives in danger!

SMYTHE

I told you I have fire walls.

KISHNA

We need to get this information to Randall. He needs to know what we've found. This changes everything.

Jenny picks up her phone and dials Randall's number. The team waits anxiously as the phone rings.

JENNY

It's going right to voicemail.
(into phone)
Randall, it's Jenny and Kisha from root Films. We have some information you need to know. Call us.

HAMMER HEAD

So long multi-picture deal. My wife's going to kill me.

INT. RANDALL'S HOME - NIGHT

Randall enters his home, the weight of the day evident in his posture. Marilyn, his wife, is sitting on the couch, waiting for him. She stands up as he walks in.

MARILYN

What happened?

Randall sits down heavily on the couch, running a hand through his hair.

RANDALL

I got fired. Everyone thinks I'm a piece of shit. Even Sarah's parents accused me. In front of everyone.

MARILYN

You were really fired?

RANDALL

Technically it's a leave of absence.

Marilyn sits beside him, wrapping her arms around him in a comforting embrace.

MARILYN

I'm so sorry, Randall.

RANDALL

I can't stop thinking about what really happened. Why did they kill her?

Marilyn gently cups his face, making him look at her.

MARILYN

Randall, you've been through so much. Maybe it's time to put this to rest, at least for tonight. Enough mystery-solving for now.

She kisses him tenderly. Randall responds, his hands moving to her waist, pulling her closer. The tension starts to melt away as they deepen the kiss. They move to the bedroom, the weight of the day giving way to their love and connection.

INT. RANDALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Randall and Marilyn lay intertwined under the sheets, the room quiet and filled with the soft sound of their breathing. Marilyn is asleep, but Randall's eyes are open, staring at the ceiling, thoughts racing.

INT. RANDALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

The clock on the nightstand shows 11:15 PM. Randall carefully slips out of bed, trying not to wake Marilyn. He dresses quietly, glancing back at her one last time before leaving the room.

EXT. RANDALL'S HOME - NIGHT

Randall gets into his car, the note with the address clutched in his hand. He takes a deep breath, then starts the engine and drives off into the night, heading towards the unknown.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Randall's car weaves through the neon-lit streets of downtown L.A. His knuckles are white on the steering wheel, eyes constantly flicking to the rearview mirror.

A black SUV appears in the mirror, several cars back. Randall's breath quickens.

RANDALL
(to himself)
Come on, you're being paranoid.

He makes a sudden right turn. The SUV follows. Randall's face tightens.

He takes another sharp turn, then another, driving erratically. The SUV remains behind him.

Suddenly, Randall spots a gap in traffic as he gets on the 405 South onramp.

He guns the engine, swerving across lanes and down a narrow side street. Horns BLARE as he cuts off other drivers, but the SUV does not follow.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Randall's car speeds down the highway, the city skyline receding in the background. His face is set with determination, eyes focused on the road ahead.

INT. RANDALL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Randall glances at a slip of paper with Phelps' address in Long Beach. His phone buzzes, but he ignores it, gripping the steering wheel tightly.

EXT. LONG BEACH - LATER

Randall's car weaves through the streets of Long Beach, passing by the waterfront and heading towards the parking lot near the Ferris wheel.

EXT. LONG BEACH PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Randall pulls into the parking lot, the Ferris wheel towering in the background. He scans the area and spots a familiar car parked nearby.

As he gets closer, he sees DETECTIVE CHEN leaning against the car, waiting.

Randall parks his car and steps out, walking over to Detective Chen.

RANDALL

Detective Chen. Thanks for meeting me down here.

Detective Chen smirks, pushing off from the car.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Only because you asked. So who's this Phelps guy?

RANDALL

Ronny at the weapons store gave me his name. Phelps bought the bean bags and the audio weapon.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Bean bag?

RANDALL

We have some catching up to do.

EXT. PHELPS' HOUSE - LONG BEACH - DAY

Randall and Detective Chen pull up to a modest house in a quiet neighborhood. They get out of their cars and approach the front door cautiously.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Ready?

RANDALL

As I'll ever be.

Detective Chen knocks on the door. After a moment, it opens slightly, revealing a towering figure. PHELPS, 6'6" and 300 pounds, peers out.

PHELPS

What do you want?

DETECTIVE CHEN

Mr. Phelps, we need to ask you a few questions about some recent purchases.

Phelps's eyes dart around nervously. Without warning, he slams the door shut and bolts through the house.

DETECTIVE CHEN (CONT'D)

He's running!

INT. PHELPS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Randall and Detective Chen burst through the door, chasing Phelps. They race through the cluttered living room and out the back door.

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Phelps vaults over a fence with surprising agility for his size. Randall and Detective Chen scramble after him.

RANDALL

He's heading for the alley!

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Phelps barrels down the alley, knocking over trash cans to slow them down. Detective Chen and Randall struggle to keep up. Suddenly, Phelps stops and turns, ready to fight.

PHELPS

You should've left me alone.

Phelps charges at them, swinging wildly. Detective Chen dodges, but Randall gets hit hard, sprawling to the ground.

Detective Chen manages to land a few punches, but Phelps's sheer size and strength overwhelm her. He grabs Chen, lifting her off the ground and slamming her against a wall.

Randall, dazed but determined, gets back up and lunges at Phelps, tackling him.

They grapple, exchanging brutal blows. Phelps overpowers Randall, throwing him aside.

Phelps turns to run again, but Detective Chen grabs a nearby rock. Summoning all her strength, she smashes it over Phelps's head.

He stumbles, then collapses, unconscious.

DETECTIVE CHEN

(breathing heavily)

Use what's in front of you.

Randall and Detective Chen catch their breath, looking at the unconscious Phelps.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Root Films office is in a state of shock. Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head are gathered around the conference table, disbelief and frustration etched on their faces.

JENNY

This is insane. We were so close to figuring everything out.

KISHNA

We still have the information. We can't just give up.

Kishna paces the room, thinking hard. She stops suddenly, turning to face the team.

KISHNA (CONT'D)

Detective Chen. She's been working with Randall. She needs to know what we've found.

SMYTHE

You think she'll listen to us?

KISHNA

It's worth a shot. If we can get her to see the bigger picture, maybe we can still bring Marcus down.

Jenny nods, pulling out her phone.

JENNY

I'll call her.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Phelps, handcuffed and bruised, sits at a table in a sterile interrogation room.

Detective Chen and Randall stand on the other side, ready to get answers.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Start talking, Phelps. We know you bought the bean bag rounds and the audio weapon. Who put you up to this?

Phelps glares at them, defiant but visibly shaken.

PHELPS

You don't know what you're dealing with.

RANDALL

Enlighten us. Who hired you?

PHELPS

Two words - fuck and you.

EXT. SOMEWHERE - NE TO CREATE CUT AWAY SCENE HERE

Something fun to cut to to show a brief passage of time.

INT. LONG BEACH POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

The interrogation room is stark and intimidating. PHELPS, the massive 6'6" figure, sits at the metal table, looking defiant. DETECTIVE CHEN stands at one side, while RANDALL, KISHNA, SMYTHE, JENNY, and HAMMER HEAD enter the room, ready to play their part.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Phelps, you have some visitors.
They have a few questions for you.

Phelps looks at the newcomers with a sneer.

PHELPS

What is this, a circus?

RANDALL

You could say that. But this is the
part where the ring master catches
the lion.

Kishna steps forward, holding a laptop.

KISHNA

We've been using AI to analyze all
the data surrounding Sarah's and
Ben's murders. We know more than
you think.

PHELPS

Oh, yeah? Like what?

SMYTHE

We know that Vanguard is a giant
shell game. They're worth less than
10 million dollars, not the 20.3
billion they claim.

Phelps's eyes flicker with a hint of surprise, but he quickly
masks it.

PHELPS

So what? That doesn't mean anything
to me.

JENNY

Maybe not. But what if we told you
that Marcus has been using you as a
pawn in his scheme? What if we
could prove it?

PHELPS

Prove it? You got nothing.

HAMMER HEAD

Actually, we have quite a bit. And
we're about to show you.

Kishna types a few commands into her laptop, and the screen
on the wall lights up with a detailed financial analysis.

Charts and graphs illustrate the flow of money through various shell companies.

KISHNA

This is the financial trail we uncovered. It shows how Marcus funneled money through different entities, including your account, Phelps.

PHELPS

That's a lie! I never saw a dime!

RANDALL

Not directly. But you were involved. Maybe without even knowing the full extent.

Detective Chen steps closer to Phelps, her voice calm and authoritative.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Phelps, we're not here to pin everything on you. But we need to know your part in this. If you cooperate, it could go a long way in helping your case.

Phelps looks conflicted, his tough exterior starting to crack.

PHELPS

What do you want to know?

KISHNA

Let's start with the weapons. We know you bought the bean bag rounds and the audio weapon. Who directed you to make those purchases?

Phelps hesitates, then sighs.

PHELPS

It was Marcus. He told me what to buy and where to get it.

JENNY

And what was the plan?

PHELPS

The plan was to make it look like an accident. Sarah was getting too close to the truth. Marcus needed her out of the way.

SMYTHE
And Ben Shapiro?

PHELPS
Ben was just collateral damage. He
got in the way.

Detective Chen nods, satisfied with the information.

DETECTIVE CHEN
Thank you, Phelps. This will help
us build our case.

RANDALL
One more thing, Phelps. Why did
Marcus think he could get away with
all this?

Phelps smirks, leaning back in his chair.

PHELPS
Because he always did. Until now.

INT. DETECTIVE CHEN'S OFFICE - LATER

Randall and Detective Chen sit across from each other, a map
of connections and evidence spread out on the desk between
them.

DETECTIVE CHEN
Phelps's confession is solid. We've
cross-referenced everything. Marcus
is behind this, I just wish I could
catch him red handed.

RANDALL
I'll need to present all this to
the board. But we have to be
careful. Marcus still has allies in
the company. Need a plan.

DETECTIVE CHEN
I'm gonna arrest him. That's my
plan.

Randall's PHONE RINGS - Jessica is calling from the office. A
smile washes over his face.

RANDALL
I have a slightly better idea.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PRINCIPLE MEDIA CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The large conference room is filled with EXECUTIVES and TEAM MEMBERS from various departments. There's a buzz of anticipation as the weekly meeting is about to begin. MARCUS stands at the front, smiling confidently, ready to oversee the pitches.

MARCUS

Good morning, everyone. Let's get started with this week's pitches. First up, Jessica from Randall's team.

Jessica, looking determined, stands up and makes her way to the front. She faces the room, her nerves hidden by a composed exterior.

JESSICA

Good morning. Our office has been working on a new project titled "Executive Privilege." It's a crime drama that we've developed in collaboration with Root Films.

Jessica gestures towards Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head, who stand up and wave.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I'd like to introduce the talented team from Root Films. They've been instrumental in bringing this project to life.

Kishna steps forward, smiling confidently.

KISHNA

Thank you, Jessica. "Executive Privilege" is a true-to-life story inspired by recent events. We're excited to share the trailer with you today.

Jessica clicks a button, and the lights dim as a screen lowers. The animatic trailer begins, created using AI video and image generators.

ON SCREEN:

A high-rise office building at night. An EXECUTIVE stands on the rooftop, looking distressed. Suddenly, a shadowy figure fires a bean bag projectile. The executive is hit and falls from the rooftop in slow motion.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a world of power and deception,
one woman's quest for truth leads
to her untimely death.

The scene shifts to the investigation, showing a CO-CEO being framed, looking confused and desperate.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Set up by his own partner, he must
uncover the conspiracy to clear his
name.

Images of financial documents, secret meetings, and shady deals flash by, culminating in the revelation that Vanguard is worth only a few million dollars.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And the truth behind the façade of
a multi-billion dollar acquisition.

The animatic reaches its climax, showing detailed evidence pointing directly at Marcus. The room gasps as the final image freezes on Marcus's face.

BACK IN THE
ROOM:

The lights come back on, and all eyes are on Marcus. He stands there, pale and visibly shaken.

MARCUS

This is outrageous! This is
slander!

JESSICA

This is the truth. We have all the
evidence against you, Marcus.

Marcus tries to back away, but SECURITY GUARDS quickly move in, grabbing him before he can escape.

MARCUS

You can't do this! This is a setup!

Marcus struggles as the security guards escort him out. The executives and team members are in shock, whispering among themselves.

EXT. STUDIO LOT - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Randall stands with the Detective Chen. They watch as Marcus is led out of the building in handcuffs.

DETECTIVE CHEN

Marcus Holloway, you are under
arrest for the murders of Sarah
Goldstein and Ben Shapiro.

Marcus glares at Randall as he's put into the back of a
police car.

MARCUS

You'll regret this, Randall!

RANDALL

Not as much as you will, Marcus.

The police car drives away, and Randall turns to the Root
Films team and Detective Chen.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Thank you all for believing in me
and helping to uncover the truth.

DETECTIVE CHEN

It's not over yet. We still have a
lot of work to do.

Randall nods, a look of determination on his face as they
walk away together, ready to face whatever comes next.

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The famous Hollywood restaurant is buzzing with activity.
Celebrities, executives, and socialites fill the tables,
enjoying the glamorous atmosphere. At a secluded corner
table, RANDALL, KISHNA, SMYTHE, JENNY, and HAMMER HEAD from
Root Films are gathered, celebrating their hard-won victory.

RANDALL

I just want to say thank you to all
of you. Without your hard work and
dedication, none of this would have
been possible.

KISHNA

We believed in you, Randall. And in
the truth.

HAMMER HEAD

Too bad we're not gonna make any
movies though.

Randall chuckles, shaking his head.

RANDALL

Are you kidding? "Hollywood Is Dead" is gonna create a bidding war in this town. Besides, we just saved Principle Media from disaster. We'll all be more than fine.

KISHNA

I've heard that before. We want an overall deal.

RANDALL

And so it shall be.

The team exchanges smiles and nods, the weight of their accomplishment sinking in.

SMYTHE

It's still hard to believe we pulled it off.

JENNY

And exposed a billion-dollar scam. That's something you don't see every day.

KISHNA

So, what's next for you, Randall?

Randall leans back, a confident smile on his face.

RANDALL

First, I'm going to take a well-deserved break. But after that, we're diving headfirst into "Executive Privilege." I have a feeling it's going to be a game-changer.

The waiter arrives with a bottle of champagne and glasses, placing them on the table.

WAITER

Compliments of the house.

Randall lifts his glass, and the rest of the team follows suit.

RANDALL

To truth, justice, and a brighter future for all of us. Cheers!

ALL

Cheers!

They clink glasses, laughter and relief filling the air as they celebrate their victory and look forward to the promising future ahead.

EXT. LUXURY YACHT - DAY

The Tamara Twins, HANNA-BELLE and TIFFANY, lounge on the deck of their opulent yacht, anchored in the crystal-clear waters of the Mediterranean. They sip cocktails and giggle, completely oblivious to the approaching trouble.

HANNA-BELLE

(giggling)

Can you believe all the fuss over Principle Media? So dramatic!

TIFFANY

(laughing)

I know, right? But hooking up with that cute guy on the soap opera? Totally worth it.

Their laughter is interrupted by the distant sound of a horn. They look up to see a COAST GUARD cutter approaching rapidly.

HANNA-BELLE

What's that noise?

TIFFANY

(frowning)

Probably just another yacht passing by.

The Coast Guard cutter pulls up alongside their yacht, and several officers board with serious expressions. The twins look at each other, puzzled and annoyed.

COAST GUARD OFFICER

(clearly)

Hanna-Belle Tamara, Tiffany Tamara, this vessel is being repossessed due to unpaid debts and fraudulent financial activities.

HANNA-BELLE

(gasping)

What? This must be some mistake!

TIFFANY
 (indignant)
 Do you know who we are?

The officer remains unfazed, holding out a document.

COAST GUARD OFFICER

We have a court order. You have to vacate the yacht immediately.

The twins look at each other, their faces falling as the realization sets in. They begin to protest, but the officers start escorting them off the yacht.

HANNA-BELLE
 (desperate)
 But... but what about our things?
 Our clothes?

TIFFANY
 (whining)
 And my jewelry! This is outrageous!

As they are led off the yacht, the camera pulls back to reveal the yacht being secured by the Coast Guard. The twins stand on the dock, looking disheveled and out of place without their usual luxury surroundings.

HANNA-BELLE
 (sighing)
 Well, this is a disaster.

TIFFANY
 At least we still have Daddy's
 trust fund... right?

HANNA-BELLE
 I wouldn't count on it.

The twins look at each other, realizing their comeuppance has finally arrived. They watch helplessly as their beloved yacht is taken away.

INT. ROOT FILMS OFFICE - DAY

The Root Films office is filled with a sense of accomplishment and relief. Kishna, Smythe, Jenny, and Hammer Head are gathered around the table, smiling and chatting.

KISHNA

We did it, guys. Marcus is behind bars, and the Tamara Twins got what they deserved.

SMYTHE

And don't forget, we exposed one of the biggest financial scams in Hollywood.

JENNY

Yeah, we've set a new standard for investigative filmmaking.

HAMMER HEAD

Speaking of which, what's next on our agenda?

Kishna pulls out a folder and places it on the table with a grin.

KISHNA

How about an overall deal with Principle Media worth millions?

The team's eyes widen in surprise and delight.

JENNY

Are you serious?

KISHNA

Very serious. Randall Keys made it official. Principle Media is partnering with Root Films for our future projects.

SMYTHE

This is amazing!

HAMMER HEAD

We've worked so hard for this.

JENNY

We're going to make some incredible films together.

SMYTHE

Hollywood better watch out.

Kishna picks up a bottle of champagne and pours glasses for everyone.

KISHNA

To Root Films, to justice, and to a
bright future.

They all raise their glasses.

ALL

To Root Films!

They clink glasses, the room filled with laughter and
celebration. The camera pulls back, showing the team united
and ready for whatever comes next.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LUXURY BEACH RESORT - DAY

The scene opens as before: a pristine beach, waves lapping
gently at the shore. We see the same tanned hand holding a
sweating mojito, ice cubes clinking.

CAMERA PANS, but the mysterious man's face remains in shadow,
hidden by the brim of a panama hat.

Footsteps approach on the sand. The mysterious man doesn't
turn, but tilts his head slightly, acknowledging the new
presence.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

I was beginning to think you
wouldn't make it.

RANDALL (O.S.)

Your invitation was... compelling.

Randall moves into frame, standing beside the man's beach
chair. He looks out at the ocean, his expression guarded.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

You were right. 2024 was a shit
year.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

(chuckling softly)

The prelude is often discordant,
Mr. Keys.

RANDALL

If you say so.

MYSTERIOUS MAN

2025 will be better, son.

RANDALL
From your mouth to god's ears.

FADE OUT.

THE END

*