

The Morning Chair

By Anthony L. Mariani

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Cast of Characters

- Chris Flowers** 65, respected seasoned network journalist, now reduced to reporting on the morning TV, and its ratings are fluff.
- Sebastian Spector** 75, The Morning News Show’s producer. The older statesman of the network who hired and has been working with Chris Flowers for over thirty years.
- Sidney McCormack** 30’s, Associate Producer, who works directly with Chris and Sebastian developing new storylines.
- Kelly Bryant** 40's, award-winning journalist, a hard worker, years of late nights have put her in the co-host chair for the morning show.
- Janel Edwards** 40's, African American, the entertainment reporter, who drops names, It's not what she knows but who she knows that counts.
- Eric West** 30's, up-and-coming journalist waiting in the wings for Chris Flowers to retire., He is brash, compulsive, and handsome.
- The Director** 30’s, Control Room Director, never seen, only heard over the intercom system.

Time:

October 9th, 10th, 11th 2017

Place:

The set of a Network TV morning news show.

ACT I

Scene 1

The lights fade up on the morning show news set, a large round table with three chairs to one side. Sidney walks around the news table laying down outlines listing today's story lineup. She places them around the news table, leaving a few extra places around the table. She picks up a Starbucks drink carrier and walks around the table checking the names and places the drinks in front of the appropriate tablespace. The newsroom is flanked on both sides by personal offices, in the back the shows large Sun logo painted like an American Flag, next to the logo an elevator near the back of the studio. Sidney walks over to her office and wheels out, two rolling desk chairs and drags them across the studio floor and places them In front of two of the scripts on the table. The elevator dings and Kelly Bryant, 40's Co-anchor of show steps out of the elevator, with her designer handbag in one hand.

KELLY BRYANT

Good morning, Sidney.

SIDNEY

Moring, Kelly.

KELLY BRYANT

I guess another day of hurricane coverage.

SIDNEY

Nate has kind of fizzling out.

KELLY BRYANT

What else you have cooking for today?

SIDNEY

Did you hear about Pence walking out of the NFL game?

KELLY BRYANT

Staged propaganda. Sidney, What about Weinstein? Who has the story?

SIDNEY

I'm sorry Kelly, Chris has that story.

KELLY BRYANT

That's Bullshit!

SIDNEY

I know Kelly, but it came straight from Sebastian.

KELLY BRYANT

What's my lead?

SIDNEY

The Corker "Adult Day Care."

KELLY BRYANT

The White House Comment? Like that's some big fucking surprise. Well, I want to have a chat with Chris when he gets in.

SIDNEY

Oh, He is already here.

KELLY BRYANT

Oh, he is?

Kelly walks over and knocks on Chris's office door then enters and shuts the door behind her. The Elevator dings once more the doors open. Janel Edwards wearing dark sunglasses, and in a designer dress, and heels steps out. Followed by Eric who is looking a little disheveled like he has been running late, his tie loosened and he an electric razor in his hand.

JANEL EDWARDS

Good Morning, Sidney.

ERIC WEST

Morning, Sid.

Eric picks up his coffee and starts to drink it as he flips on his electric razor.

JANEL EDWARDS

Can you please shave in your little cubbyhole?

Eric turns off his razor.

ERIC WEST

Can't shave in the elevator, can't shave in the studio. What is it with you today?

JANEL EDWARDS

It's every day, Eric. Do you know how disgusting it is to walk around here shaving your beard every day?

ERIC WEST

Janel, We have Janitors.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm just saying it would be nice not have to do the news each morning with your beard shavings on my news desk. Go, shave in your cubbyhole.

ERIC WEST

I get it. You're jealous.

JANEL EDWARDS

Of you?

ERIC WEST

Of my cubbyhole.

Eric flips back on his razor and slowly strolls over to the craft service table near his office and picks up a donut and disappears into his small office.

JANEL EDWARDS

One of these days that boy is going to get what he deserves. (Beat) What's my first story?

SIDNEY

Pence walking out of the NFL game.

JANEL EDWARDS

Oh, give the black woman the national anthem story.

SIDNEY

It's a story about the Vice President.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm sorry, give the black woman the white man with a sick up his ass story. (Beat) What about the Weinstein story?

SIDNEY

Chris has that one.

JANEL EDWARDS

Of course, the golden boy strikes again.

SIDNEY

Golden boy?

JANEL EDWARDS

Yeah, every story that is gold that boy gets.

The door to Chris office opens, and Kelly exits slamming the door shut then storms across the room and swipes a lineup sheet off the table as she passes.

KELLY BRYANT

I'll be in my office! Let me know when Sebastian arrives!

She enters her offices slamming her door shut. Janel looks at Sidney.

JANEL EDWARDS

The Golden Boy.

SIDNEY

Don't instigate her today. You know what she is like when she is in this kind of mood.

JANEL EDWARDS

Instigate? Me? Please.

SIDNEY

I mean it Janel, don't press her buttons.

JANEL EDWARDS

Oh, that's right. Janel has to look out for everyone. The Golden Boy and the Red Queen.

A sound burst of microphone feedback, then The Director, speaks over the PA system.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Good Morning Sidney, Good Morning Janel.

Sidney and Janel wave hello, towards the control booth.

SIDNEY & JANEL

Good Morning!

The elevator door dings once more and Sebastian Spector, the executive producer, dressed in a dapper suit, steps out of the elevator.

JANEL EDWARDS

Good Morning, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Good Morning, All. Sidney, is Chris in yet?

SIDNEY

Yes, he is in his office. (Beat) Also, Sebastian, Kelly was looking for you.

Sebastian gives Sidney a nod as he makes a b-line to Chris's office, he knocks on his door and enters, shutting the door behind him.

JANEL EDWARDS

Two old white peas in a pod.

Sidney ignores Janel's sarcasm and walks over and knocks on Kelly's office door. Kelly opens her door.

SIDNEY

Sebastian has arrived.

Kelly storms out of her office then stops and looks around.

KELLY BRYANT

Where is he?

JANEL EDWARDS

He's in with, The Golden Boy.

Kelly lets out a huff and then storms across the studio and into Chris's Office, shutting the door behind her.

SIDNEY

I guess you didn't hear me about pressing her buttons.

JANEL EDWARDS

She asked me a question.

Eric walks back out of his office with the days' lineup paper in one hand and grabs a donut off the craft service table. He takes a bite and talks with his mouth full of food as confronts Sidney.

ERIC WEST

So once again, I'm just being thrown outside for a remote?

SIDNEY

We need a local weather segment.

ERIC WEST

So, every time there is a hurricane, I'm going to be thrown outside for a remote? How about giving me a real story?

SIDNEY

Yes.

ERIC WEST

Yes, I can have a real story?

SIDNEY

Yes, every time there is a hurricane and where short our weather person. You will be doing a remote outside. Jesus! It's, Time Square, you act like I'm throwing out into some TV station parking lot... and It's called your job!

ERIC WEST

Ok. I just wanted to make sure I was clear on that. (Beat) I'm clear on it.

Janel gives Eric a smirk. Chris door open and Kelly exits followed by Sebastian, and Chris who is waving his story lineup page.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Morning everyone looks like another busy news day!

SIDNEY

Yes, plenty of stories breaking over the weekend.

Eric dashes over to his little office and wheels a squeaky broken desk chair across the studio and up to the news desk.

SEBASTIAN

Now, that we're all here. Sidney, you may begin.

SIDNEY

We will open on Chris; Trump's strict immigration demands on Dreamers. Then, we go to Kelly and Corker calling the White House an Adult day care center. Janel is next with Pence waking out of the NFL game. Back to Chris and the NRA trying to stop legislation on "bump stocks." Kelly, then go with The U.S. suspending Visa services in Turkey. Later, Janel and the refugee boat capsizing near Bangladesh. Then back to Kelly and the Anti-secession protesters in Barcelona. Cut to Chris, and The Weinstein story. Then we end with Janel and the weakening of Hurricane, Nate. (Beat) Any questions?

JANEL EDWARDS

Shouldn't the Weinstein story be closer to the lead?

SEBASTIAN

That was my call.

JANEL EDWARDS

Your right, good call Sebastian.

SIDNEY

Any other questions?

ERIC WEST

When is my remote?

SIDNEY

Oh, yeah. Janel after hurricane story throw to Eric on his remote for the local weather update. (Beat) Good question, Eric. (Beat) Anything, else?

Silence.

SEBASTIAN

Great! Thank you, Sidney. Let's all have a great show.

They all rise from the table at once. Eric heads back to his office dragging his squeaky chair. Sidney and Chris follow him and start to graze on the craft service table. Janel immediately engrossed with her cell phone. Sebastian begins to head to the elevator when Kelly stops him.

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, can I have a minute.

Sebastian turns around, and Kelly lures him over near the sun logo.

SEBASTIAN

How, can I help you, Kelly?

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, I'll concede that with his seniority and experience Chris should have the Weinstein story. However, to bury it in the open until the end. I just don't think you understand the importance of any Weinstein story. The Me-too movement is real.

SEBASTIAN

Kelly, I'm aware of the story's importance. However, I have to judge where that story falls within all the stories of the day. Weinstein has been like this hurricane season. He has a new accusation and a new story break every few weeks. I'm letting the public dry out a little.

KELLY BRYANT

Dry out?

SEBASTIAN

Kelly, when it's your show, you can make that call. For now, the lineup order stands.

He turns and walks to the elevator and presses the button. The doors open. He steps inside and sees that Kelly is still watching him.

SEBASTIAN

Have a good show, Kelly!

Kelly turns and walks back to her office. Sidney breaks away from the craft service table and walks back towards the News

Desk and Janel. Chris watches Sidney as she walks away. The blinds in Eric's office spread open, and Eric peaks through them and watches Chris, who is watching Sidney.

JANEL EDWARDS

Yeah, woo woo! Janel is on fire today.

SIDNEY

What's up?

JANEL EDWARDS

I finally won the Hamilton ticket pool! Tomorrow, night baby!

SIDNEY

I thought you would have seen it by now.

JANEL EDWARDS

Honey, Janel may be connected, but I'm no Oprah.

The ringing of the open mic echoes from above then the director speaks.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Three-minute warning. Three minutes.

Kelly comes back out of her office and sits down in her chair in the middle of the news desk and starts to look over her script. Janel rolls her chair up to the table next to her. Eric comes out of his office dress in an oversized raincoat and an old fedora, carrying a large umbrella.

ERIC WEST

How do I look?

Everyone stops what they are doing and looks at him.

JANEL EDWARDS

Very nice Eric. (Beat) like a young Al Roker.

The room breaks out in laughter.

ERIC WEST

Very nice Janel.

SIDNEY

You look great, and it's a short segment.

Eric pressed the down button on the elevator. The doors open, and he steps in.

ERIC WEST

Well, here I go. Wish me luck.

He turns and lifts his umbrella and pops it open.

ERIC WEST

“Here's what's happening in your neck of the woods.”

The elevator door shut.

SIDNEY

I better get up to the booth. Have a good show everyone!

Sidney runs down the hall past Eric's office and exits. Janel sits down next to Kelly and begins to do vocal warmups, which breaks Kelly's concentration, and she gives Janel an annoying glare. Chris comes out of his office and sits on the far side of the News desk in position for his opening close up.

JANEL EDWARDS

Rhin. Rhin. Rhin. (Beat) Rhin. Rhin. Rowingya

CHRIS FLOWERS

Roh.

JANEL EDWARDS

Row?

CHRIS FLOWERS

No. Roh. R-O-H. Rohingya.

JANEL EDWARDS

Roh. Roh. Rowingya.

CHRIS FLOWERS

No. Roh. R-O-H. Rohingya. Rohingya: A ethnic group of Muslims from the State of Myanmar. Rowingya, or however you were pronouncing is a Polynesian drum.

Janel embarrassed is shooting glares of daggers at Chris. She is about to explode back at him when the booth mic rings out.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Two minutes. Two-minute warning. Places everyone.

Simultaneously the three anchors pull small compacts from their pockets, and they each have a different style comb as they now spend the time grooming in their mirrors.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm going to have to address these bags under my eyes.

KELLY BRYANT

I keep telling you, Shibui Spa.

She strikes a yoga pose with her arms.

KELLY BRYANT

Cleanse your body and your mind.

JANEL EDWARDS

I found a new place I want to try; it's over in Chelsea.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Ladies, there is two thing I've learned sitting in this chair all these years. One, The camera never lies. Two, you will never beat father time. If you want real cleansing of your mind except that and let your body age naturally. Find your inner beauty and age naturally.

KELLY BRYANT

That's easy for a man to say, Chris. A male Anchor with grey hair can be is accepted as distinguished, and handsome. However, grey hair on a female anchor?

JANEL EDWARDS

Kelly's right. America will hear the news from an older man, but a woman with grey hair? People would be saying "What's that granny doing on the news?"

KELLY BRYANT

I find my inner peace by hanging on to this chair as long as possible. If that means personal trainers and spas. So be it. It pays the bills, and it makes me happy.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) One minute. One minute.

The studio lights dim and only the news desk and the three news anchors illuminated. Everyone sets aside their compacts and combs.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Well, I did not mean to imply that you were aging Kelly. You still look as lovely as the first day I met you.

KELLY BRYANT

Awe, thank you, Chris.

JANEL EDWARDS

What about me Chris?

Chris pops open his compact one more time and checks his hair.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Why Janel, I just met you last year.

JANEL EDWARDS

You can be a real prick, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I've been told that, Janel.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Thirty seconds.

Chris sets aside his compact.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Can we please act civil to each other today?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sorry Sid, your right.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sorry, Sidney.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) I know it's a Monday, but let's all try to enjoy the show.

KELLY BRYANT

You got it, Sidney.

She gives a Thumbs up signal to the booth.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Fifteen seconds.

Everyone grabs hold of their script cards.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're live in five, four, three, two, one.

ACT I

Scene 3

A red light turns on, the lights brighten a little, and the show's theme music starts up, with The lights on the show's logo, like a sunrise on an American flag Sun, as Chris opens the show.

CHRIS FLOWERS

The White House announces a set of hardline immigration principles that President Trump stated must be part of any deal to protect hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants, or DREAMers, from deportation. This laundry list of demands includes funding for his promised border wall.

JANEL EDWARDS

Vice President Mike Pence walked out of an NFL game Sunday after some of the players knelt or stood with arms locked during the national anthem.

KELLY BRYANT

Republican Senator Bob Corker from Tennessee Tweeted Sunday that the White House is "an adult day care center" in an open clash with President Trump. Corker's tweet followed a flurry of tweets from the President.

CHRIS FLOWERS

The National Rifle Association's executive vice president and chief executive, Wayne LaPierre, said Sunday that the gun-rights lobbying group would oppose legislation flatly banning "bump

stocks," devices. Bump stocks make semi-automatic rifles fire nearly as rapidly as fully-automatic ones.

KELLY BRYANT

After an American consulate official's arrest, the U.S responds, suspending most visa services in Turkey. The U.S. diplomatic mission in Turkey said Sunday it was suspending visa services after an American consulate employee in Istanbul was arrested on charges of links to a cleric blamed for a failed coup attempt last year.

JANEL EDWARDS

Twelve Muslims are dead after a refugee boat capsizes near Bangladesh. At least twelve ROWINGYA Muslims, including five children, died Monday when their boat capsized as they were fleeing Myanmar. Aid. As many as thirty-five people were in the overcrowded vessel when it tipped over off the shore of Bangladesh.

KELLY BRYANT

Thousands of people rallied in Barcelona on Sunday to protest against the regional Catalan government's push for independence from Spain. They chanted in the streets of Barcelona, "Don't be fooled; Catalonia is Spain."

CHRIS FLOWERS

The board at the Weinstein company voted this weekend to remove the disgraced Hollywood Movie mogul Harvey Weinstein, form his own independent film company. Following sexual harassment allegations against him which continue to expand.

JANEL EDWARDS

Hurricane Nate is weakening as it continued to head inland yesterday. Dumping large amounts of rain on Alabama and Georgia. Nate now downgraded to a tropical depression. I'm Janel Edwards.

KELLY BRYANT

I'm, Kelly Bryant.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I'm Chris Flowers and these stories and more, in Your American Morning

The show's opening music fades.

CHRIS FLOWERS

The New York Times reports that the Trump administration has unveiled strict immigration demands as conditions for any DREAMers deal. Marc Short, Trump's legislative director said Sunday "Now is the time for Congress to adopt these immigration priorities," adding that without the changes illegal immigration "will likely increase, The wish list included funding Trump's promised Mexican-border wall, hiring 10,000 more immigration agents, and denying federal grants to so-called sanctuary cities. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said in a joint statement that

Trump "can't be serious about a compromise or helping the DREAMers if they begin with a list that is anathema to the DREAMers." For more on this story, we go to our White House correspondent, Mathew Laurence.

The red light turns off.

Director

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty seconds.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Good Opening everyone. (Beat) Janel, just a little note. It's pronounced Rohingya.

Chris gives her a sarcastic smirk.

JANEL EDWARDS

Thank you, Sebastian. (Beat) Oh, Sebastian. By the way, your entertainment reporter has no problems pronouncing the name, Weinstein.

Janel smirks back at Chris.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Janel.

DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

Reuters reported that It was a rough Sunday in the NFL and not just for the players. Vice President Mike Pence walked out of a National Football League game between the Indianapolis Colts and the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday after some of the players knelt or stood with arms locked during the national anthem to protest police violence against minorities. "I left today's Colts game because President Trump and I will not dignify any event that disrespects our soldiers, our Flag, or our National Anthem," Pence said in a statement issued by the White House. The Colts won the game twenty-six to twenty-three in overtime. For more on this story, we go to Indianapolis reporter, Brock Lockhart. Brock, it sounds like the Vice President missed a great game.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty seconds.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Nice throw to Brock, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

Thank you, Sebastian. I'm a natural Quarterback; it's like being a lead anchor.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Kelly, we have a scratch on your correspondent for the next story, you will just be throwing it back to Mathew Laurence, at the White House.

KELLY BRYANT

Thanks, Sidney, It's noted. What happened?

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) News Van had a flat in the rain. They never made it to the Capitol on time.

KELLY BRYANT

That's why when I was a correspondent; It was my rule to always showed up an hour early for a story.

CHRIS FLOWERS

That's a good rule. (Beat) Who taught you that?

KELLY BRYANT

Why I believe it was you, Chris.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Kelly.

KELLY BRYANT

The Washington Post reports, Tennessee Senator Bob Corker, Sunday called the White House "an adult day care center." Then in an open Twitter Quarrel with President Trump. Corker's tweeted followed a flurry of tweets in which Trump said the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had decided to retire because he "didn't have the guts" to run for re-election next year after he "begged" for Trump's endorsement but didn't get it. The whole twitter confrontation seems to be fall out from comments Corker made several days ago, stating that it several key Trump advisers were keeping "our country from chaos." and that The President's reckless threats to other countries could put the U.S. on the path to World War III. For more on Corker and The White House Fall out, we go back to Washington and Mathew Laurence.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We’re back in thirty.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sebastian, on this “bump Stock” Story. Do you think I should mention the efforts of the Parkland students, to put forth new legislation on gun control, Like “Bump Stocks”?

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) If you think it’s appropriate Chris.

Chris nods in agreement.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Chris, I'm not sure I would do that. Kelly has a primetime Show running this week on the Parkland Students. I don't want to overexpose the public to the point they shy away from the special.

KELLY BRYANT

That’s a good point, Sidney.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) What do you think, Chris?

CHRIS FLOWERS

I’ll go with Sidney and Kelly if they are worried about it, then I agree. I'll stay away from the cross-reference.

KELLY BRYANT

If you like Sebastian, I can give the Special a little pug instead, after Chris’s story.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) I think that might work. Chris?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Works for me.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Ok, Kelly pitch the Special when we toss it back to you for the Visa suspensions in Turkey, story.

Kelly gives the booth a thumbs up.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we’re back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Bloomberg reports that NRA chief executive, Wayne LaPierre, said Sunday that the gun-rights lobbying group would oppose legislation flatly banning "bump stocks." Vegas Authorities say the Las Vegas attacker used to make semi-automatic rifles fire nearly as rapidly as fully-automatic ones. LaPierre also stated that no additional restrictions should be made on gun accessories. Sunday LaPierre also said the bureau of alcohol, tobacco, and firearms could handle it by reversing an Obama-era ruling that said the devices were legal. "I think you want to tell ATF to do its job." Democrats disagree with the NRA stance and have proposed a new ban on "Bump Stock." For more on this story, we go out to Las Vegas to our correspondent, Rachel Beverley.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sebastian, I was thinking. A prime time special with the Weinstein victims.

CHRIS FLOWERS

That story is still developing. It might seem a little exploitive.

JANEL EDWARDS

Exploitive?

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) I'd have to agree with Chris on this one.

KELLY BRYANT

I disagree Sebastian. Janel it right. This is a big story and the other Networks already have Specials in the works.

CHRIS FLOWERS

We have always set the bar above the other Networks, we don't need to stoop to that level.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) I agree.

JANEL EDWARDS

Chris, I think you're afraid of the topic.

CHRIS FLOWERS

What do you mean by that?

JANEL EDWARDS

I've seen you out on the town.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Kelly.

KELLY BRYANT

For more on “Bump Stock bans and efforts for Gun control laws, see my primetime Special, Parkland VS The NRA, Kids taking control, Friday at Eight PM Eastern time. (Beat) Reuters is reporting that the U.S. is suspending Visa services in Turkey. An American consulate employee in Istanbul was arrested on charges of links to a cleric blamed for a failed coup attempt last year. Turkey has demanded that the U.S. extradite the cleric, Fethullah Gulen, to face charges in connection with the July 2016 coup attempt, which left more than 240 people dead. More on our diplomatic mission in Turkey, we go to Istanbul correspondent, Zehra Zavar.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in sixty.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Just what in the hell did you mean by that, “Out on the Town”, crack?

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm just saying I have Eyes, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Eyes?

JANEL EDWARDS

Please, don't act dumb to me.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Just what do your eyes see, Janel?

An uncomfortable pause.

JANEL EDWARDS

I see you out with your good old boys.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Good old boys?

JANEL EDWARDS

I told you don't play dumb.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I'm just trying to see the connections with me going out for a night of fun with my friends, and Harvey Weinstein?

JANEL EDWARDS

Please, some of your running buddies don't exactly have the best reputation in this city.

CHRIS FLOWERS

To which of my friends are you referring?

JANEL EDWARDS

(Laughs) There are too many to name. Women have a nickname for your little group. The House of Slytherin.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Janel...

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five,

CHRIS FLOWERS

Rohingya.

Chris Smirks.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Two, one.

The red light comes back on, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

The Associated Press is reporting at least twelve; Row ROWINGYA Muslims drowned when their boat capsized. Five of the dead were children. As many as 35 people were in the overcrowded vessel when it tipped over off the shore of Bangladesh; police say at least eight of the refugees on board survived. Hundreds of thousands of Ro-Ro Rohingya had left Myanmar since Aug. 25, when the military there started cracking down after an attack by insurgents that left several police officers and border guards dead. At least 155 have died in boat accidents trying to reach Bangladesh. The United Nations has accused the Myanmar military of "ethnic cleansing." For more on this ongoing emergency, we go to Our Bangladesh correspondent, Nidhi Gill.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty.

JANEL EDWARDS

What in the hell was that?

There is no answer from Chris.

JANEL EDWARDS

You are trying to throw me off my game.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Rohingya, Rohingya, Rohingya.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm warning you, Chris, you better stop fucking with me.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) That's enough, Janel!

They all sit in silence through the rest of the break. Janel's eyes are shooting darts at Chris, as she continues to boil with anger.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Kelly.

KELLY BRYANT

The BBC reports that Thousands of people rallied in Barcelona on Sunday against the regional Catalan government's push for independence from Spain. "Don't be fooled, Catalonia is Spain," demonstrators chanted. It was the largest pro-unity rally since Catalan leaders defied efforts by the Spanish government to block a referendum last week in which 90 percent of voters in Catalonia voted in favor of secession. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy has vowed not to allow Catalonia to break away. Several large businesses, including Catalonia's top two banks, have said they planned to relocate to other cities in Spain to avoid being excluded from the European Union and its common market if Catalonia breaks away. For more on this story, we go to our London correspondent, Tobey Harding.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I demand an apology.

Janel laughs.

JANEL EDWARDS

Apology?

CHRIS FLOWERS

You have insulted me in front of my co-workers that I have the same behavior as Harvey Weinstein when nothing can be further from the truth.

Janel laughs again.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm not apologizing.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Janel, apologize.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm not apologizing, Sebastian. My eyes see things, and I know what I know.

CHRIS FLOWERS

There she goes again.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Apologize!

Janel folds her arms and refuses.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, just apologize?

JANEL EDWARDS

You know Kelly, as soon as you got the Co-Host title, you started acting like a man.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Variety is reporting the Board of directors of the Weinstein Company has voted Harvey Weinstein has been forced out of his own independent film sexual harassment allegations against him expand. The Weinstein Company voted to remove him and transfer control of the studio to his brother, Bob Weinstein, and chief operating officer David Glasser, the company's board, said

Sunday. "In light of new information about misconduct by Harvey Weinstein that has emerged in the past few days, the directors of The Weinstein Company — Robert Weinstein, Lance Maerov, Richard Koenigsberg, and Tarak Ben Ammar — have determined, and have informed Harvey Weinstein, that his employment with The Weinstein Company is terminated, effective immediately." For more on this story, we go to Los Angeles and correspondent, Trent Treadway.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty.

Janel, Chris, and Kelly all start to yell at each other.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) STOP IT! STOP IT! I SAID STOP IT!

They all stop yelling and freeze.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) We have one more segment. Please, can we finish the show?

KELLY BRYANT

Your right Sidney.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Your right Sid.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sidney, you know how frustrated I'm getting all these leftover stories. Hurricane Nate, a limp dick storm that's now petering out.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Your talent dictates your copy.

JANEL EDWARDS

There he goes again!

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Stop it! Everyone stop it! Janel, we will discuss your story assignments in my office after the show, and you still owe Chris, and I think everyone an apology.

They sit in silence, Janel starts to stew and boil over. She pulls out her Cell phone and flips through it and then presses play on speaker phone and holds the phone up for

everyone to hear. It's two, twenty year old girls, talking in a bathroom. "Oh My God, did you see Chris Flowers at the Bar?" "I know, what a creeper!" "I know it was like getting hit on by your grandpa." The girls laugh, and sing, Jeepers Creeper stay away from me!" they laugh again and the recording stops. The Studio is silent.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Who the hell do you think you are?

JANEL EDWARDS

Chris, I'm your worst nightmare. I'm a nigger with a newscast.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Janel who has a big smile on her face.

JANEL EDWARDS

The remnants of Hurricane Nate pushed north through Alabama toward Georgia on Sunday, dumping torrential rains inland as its winds quickly diminished. The storm was downgraded to a tropical depression shortly after it made two landfalls as a Category 1 hurricane on the Gulf Coast, first in southeastern Louisiana and then in Mississippi outside Biloxi. For a look at our local weather, we go out to Our own Eric West who is Live in Time Square. Eric, is it storming out there yet? Because its stormy in here.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in thirty.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I want her out of here! Now!

JANEL EDWARDS

Awe, you can make fun of the way I pronounce a word, but when it comes to the truth, you can't deal with it. Jeepers Creepers.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) That's enough from both of you!

CHRIS FLOWERS

You have no right to pry into my personal life. Erase that recording!

JANEL EDWARDS

I wasn't prying into anything. I was in the bathroom stall when these girls came in talking about you and let me tell you they were not the only ones.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, please stop.

JANEL EDWARDS

Why Kelly, did I tarnish the armor of the golden boy? Don't think everyone here didn't already know the truth.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Now, what's that supposed to mean?

Silence. Chris looks at Kelly, and she looks away.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Well, that's a look at this American Monday Moring.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm Janel Edwards.

KELLY BRYANT

I'm Kelly Bryant.

CHRIS FLOWERS

And I'm Chris Flowers, get out and enjoy this American Morning. Have a good day.

The three of them all flash a fake smile to the camera and shuffle their script cards as the show's music plays out.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're out.

ACT I

Scene 3

Sidney comes darting out of the wings of the Studio and grabs hold of Chris who is screaming at Janel.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Now you listen to me. In my over forty years of journalism, I have never encountered such an unprofessional person than you! I have worked years in this business Missy! I won't have you trashing my name in front of co-workers.

JANEL EDWARDS

Missy? Missy? Fuck you! Creeper!

Chris lunges for Janel and Sidney has to grab hold of him and pull him back. Kelly tries to grab hold of Janel's arm, but she shakes her off.

SIDNEY

Chris! Chris! Calm down. Sebastian will handle this. Let's go to your office and calm down.

She leads Chris back to his office, and they go inside and shut the door.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, why did you do that?

JANEL EDWARDS

Oh, Please Kelly, Don't get on the high horse with me.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, I've known Chris for years. He is a good man.

JANEL EDWARDS

He's a creeper.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, after his wife died, Chris was crushed. It took years for him even to go back out in public. I think it's just good that he is getting back out.

JANEL EDWARDS

And hitting on young girls.

KELLY BRYANT

Janel, he has nobody his age to date. In his eyes, they are all younger than him.

JANEL EDWARDS

Kelly, when I was little I did not speak until I was Five years old. My mother never heard me utter a word. Each day she would give me a little extra money and tell me to go put it into her dream jar. Then one day she told me to go get that Jar. She took the Jar, and cracked it open. Then counted all the money. She made me get dressed up and said we were going for a ride. She took me to a speech pathologist. That was her dream. That one day I would talk. You see I was born with a lisp and early on the kids would tease me. So, I decided if I never spoke than they would never have anything to make fun of me, with. I overcame my speech impediment and thank the lord I have never shut up since. However, sometimes there are words that still trip me up. When Chris went after me today with Rohingya, it just set me off. I worked too hard for too long to be treated like I was when I was a little girl. I'm a woman who speaks my mind, and I will fight back!

The Elevator dings and the door opens, and Sebastian enters the studio.

SEBASTIAN

Janel! My office, Now!

He points down the hall off the elevator and exits in that direction. Janel like a sheep led to slaughter follows him and they exit. Chris, door opens, and Sidney steps out into the newsroom and shuts his door behind her.

KELLY BRYANT

How's Chris?

SIDNEY

I think he has calmed down. Where's Janel?

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian's Office.

SIDNEY

I'd like to be fly on that wall.

KELLY BRYANT

I'm worried about Chris.

SIDNEY

Me too.

The Elevator doors open, and a rain-soaked Eric exits in his drenched hair and the rain slicker, and a broken umbrella.

ERIC WEST

Well, that was interesting. How did it go in here?

SIDNEY

Interesting.

ERIC WEST

I got to get out of these wet clothes; my socks are soaked!

He waddles like a duck back to his office and shuts the door.

KELLY BRYANT

Sidney, Keep an eye on Chris. I'm worried about him.

Chris's office door opens, and he stands in his doorway.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sidney, can you come in here? I want to go over tomorrow's lineup of the guest.

SIDNEY

Sure thing, Chris, I'll be right in.

Sidney flashes Kelly a smile and follows Chris back into his office, and they shut the door. Kelly walks over and enters her office. The Studio is empty for a few moments. Then Chris's office door swings open and frantic Sidney with her blouse pulled out of her skirt and hair messed up stands in the doorway breathing heavy. She then runs across the studio and back into her own office next to Kelly's, shuts her door and starts to cry. Chris appears in his doorway with a panic look on his face as he listens to Sidney Crying from across the studio. Kelly's door opens, and she stands in her doorway listening to the crying, and she makes eye contact with Chris.

BLACKOUT

ACT II

Scene 1

The lights fade-up on two downstage bar stools. Chris Flowers, sitting on one of the seats in a pool of light, nervously sipping a double scotch, as he sits and waits for someone to arrive. He can hear the sound of the morning traffic jam outside the bar. He takes another sip of his drink when the street sounds momentary grow louder, representing someone, swinging a door open and entering from the road. Sebastian Spector, dress in a long trench coat walks over and give a nod to Chris.

SEBASTIAN

Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sabastian, thank you for coming.

Sebastian sits down on the stool next to Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Want a drink?

Sebastian shakes his head no.

SEBASTIAN

Under the circumstances, I better not.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Well, Under the circumstances, I'm having a double.

Sebastian looks at his watch.

SEBASTIAN

Chris, I don't have much time. I came here to find out the truth.

CHRIS FLOWERS

You, mean did I do it?

SEBASTIAN

That's precisely what I mean.

CHRIS FLOWERS

You have known me for years, Sebastian, what do you think?

SEBASTIAN

What I think is that my ass is on the line here, just like yours. Now I need you to tell me the truth. Did you do it?

CHRIS FLOWERS

It's complicated Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

These things usually are. Chris. I need to know. Did you force yourself on that girl?

CHRIS FLOWERS

No.

Sebastian pause and looks deep into Chris's eyes to see if he is telling the truth.

SEBASTIAN

That's all I need to know. I better be getting back to the booth; the show starts in ten minutes.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sabastian, thank you.

SEBASTIAN

In the old days, we would have just fired her. Now, well now we have all this Me-too crap, to worry about.

CHRIS FLOWERS

In the old days, she would not have been an associate producer.

SEBASTIAN

Ture.

Sebastian gets up from his stool.

SEBASTIAN

Sit by your phone Chris and wait for my call.

Chris rises from his stool and shakes Sebastian's hand.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Thanks, for sticking your neck out for me.

Sebastian nods and starts to exit but stops and turns back towards Chris.

SEBASTIAN

And Chris lay off the sauce, I need you sober today.

Sebastian turns back, and leaves and the sound of the street traffic grows louder for a moment as he exits. Chris sits back down and slams down his drink. He then raises his hand like he is getting the bartenders attention.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I'll have another double.

Both the sound of the traffic and the lights fade together into silence and black.

ACT II

Scene 2

The lights Pop-up on the end of the morning broadcast. Kelly Bryant is reading a network statement, and Janel has her head down with a disconcerting frown on her face. An empty chair sits between the two women.

KELLY BRYANT

Today's final note. I think we need to address the elephant in the room. Chris's chair has been emptied today for a reason. It's with troubling thoughts I must report that our colleague has been temporarily relieved of his duties pending an internal investigation over accusations of inappropriate behavior in the workplace. All of us here on the morning show are shocked and deeply saddened by this event. Chris has dedicated his life to this network. We can only hope that these allegations are false and that Chris can return to work soon. However, let me be clear, this is a problem in our society that needs fixing, and we can't ignore or condone the charges brought against Chris. Personally, I've been distraught this morning. Chris has been a mentor to me, and I have to say that in all my time working with Chris, he has never misbehaved with me or others around me. However, as we have seen in the past few weeks, these events are happening in workplaces everywhere, and we should not pass judgment until we have all the facts. (Pause) Have a good day.

The lights soften. Red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're out!

KELLY BRYANT

Whose fucking idea was it to spring this shit on us right before we're on air?
There is a small thud from a hand covering an open microphone in the control booth and
whispering.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) That would be a Sebastian call, Kelly.

*Kelly bursts from her anchor chair, sending
her news scripts into the air. She points up
to the booth.*

KELLY BRYANT

Couldn't you have just told us he was sick, then told us the truth after the show?

*There is another thud from a hand covering
the microphone, however this time,
Sebastian, the show's producer replies.*

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Kelly, the story was breaking. It already hit the other networks; I had no
choice.

KELLY BRYANT

That's bullshit! You could have told us when you found out!

*Kelly storms into her office, slamming her
door and then shutting her blinds.*

JANEL EDWARDS

It didn't bother me, Sebastian.

*The sound of the microphone being turned
off. Eric West enters.*

JANEL EDWARDS

Eric.

ERIC WEST

Hey Janel. Crazy day.

JANEL EDWARDS

Have you seen Sidney?

ERIC WEST

She has been in her office since the news broke.

JANEL EDWARDS

God, she must be heartbroken. She idolized him.

ERIC WEST

Didn't we all?

JANEL EDWARDS

How are you holding up?

ERIC WEST

I'm just kind of still in shock over all this, Chris doing that to Sid. I just feel violated, too.

JANEL EDWARDS

Well, you better snap out of it. They are not going to put three women at this desk tomorrow. So, you better get your shit together, Eric. It's your time to shine.

ERIC WEST

Thanks, Janel.

Eric goes back to work in his office. From the other side of the stage, another office door opens. Sidney slowly checks to see if the studio has emptied out yet. Janel, who is fixing her makeup in her compact, notices her in her mirror.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sidney. (Pause) Are you okay?

Sidney sheepishly melts backward into her office and shuts her door. Janel gets up, walks over, and knocks on her door.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sidney? (Pause) Come out here, baby, let Janel make it better. Sidney?

She knocks on the door again but gets no response, so Janel walks back to her desk to gather her things. Then, the door opens again, and Sidney comes out of her office.

SIDNEY

Thanks, Janel.

Janel turns and opens her arms wide to receive a hug from Sidney.

JANEL EDWARDS

“Turn your wounds into wisdom,” Sidney. Now get some love from Janel!

Sidney, like a child forced to do something she hates, creeps into Janel’s arms and is smothered with a hug.

JANEL EDWARDS

Seriously, Sidney. Are you okay?

SIDNEY

Yeah, just embarrassed.

JANEL EDWARDS

Honey, you did nothing wrong. He is the one that should be embarrassed and ashamed.

SIDNEY

Thanks.

JANEL EDWARDS

You should just go home for the day. Get out of here.

SIDNEY

I can’t.

JANEL EDWARDS

Just do it.

SIDNEY

Have you checked your email?

JANEL EDWARDS

No.

SIDNEY

HR wants us all to stay around for some interviews today.

JANEL EDWARDS

Oh, shit. Well, they better not drag their asses today. I got Hamilton tonight.

SIDNEY

Sebastian is doing the interviews himself.

JANEL EDWARDS

Fuck. He treats Chris like a son.

SIDNEY

Yeah, fuck.

Sidney starts to walk across the newsroom to the crafts service table for some coffee when Eric sees her from his office and joins her.

ERIC WEST

Hey.

SIDNEY

Hey.

ERIC WEST

Look, Sid, I'm sorry.

SIDNEY

Eric, I just don't want to talk about it for a while.

ERIC WEST

I understand. I just wanted you to know that I'm on your side.

SIDNEY

Side?

ERIC WEST

Yeah, I believe you.

SIDNEY

What's not to believe?

ERIC WEST

Well, come on, we're journalists. The story.

SIDNEY

This is not about sides, Eric.

ERIC WEST

Then why the HR thing?

SIDNEY

It's HR protocol.

ERIC WEST

Protocol, like getting to the truth.

SIDNEY

Yes.

ERIC WEST

Then like I said. I believe you, Sid.

SIDNEY

Jesus Christ, Eric, just leave me alone, okay!

Sebastian has just entered the newsroom to witness the outburst.

SEBASTIAN

Is everything okay over there?

SIDNEY

Sebastian, yes. Everything is okay. I will be in my office when you're ready to speak with me.

She exits to her office. Eric picks up a donut and eats it.

JANEL EDWARDS

Hello Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Yes, Janel, I'll get you out in time for tonight's gala. Where is Kelly?

JANEL EDWARDS

Not sure, Sebastian.

He marches over and knocks on her door. Then he enters, shutting the door behind him.

ERIC WEST

Jesus, Sebastian.

JANEL EDWARDS

He is not so bad.

ERIC WEST

Have you seen some of his old interviews? Hell, he could get the Pope to confess to boiling babies in toxic waste if he wanted to.

JANEL EDWARDS

You're sick.

ERIC WEST

I'm just saying there is a reason they call him Se-bastard.

JANEL EDWARDS

What are you worried about?

ERIC WEST

What?

JANEL EDWARDS

This is about Sidney and Chris, not you. If anything, you should have a big fucking smile on your face.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, I know I'll be in the chair in the morning.

JANEL EDWARDS

Damn, Eric, think big picture. You got them by their balls. That means a new contract.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, I got them by the balls.

JANEL EDWARDS

If I were you, I would go right into your office and order the desk chair you have been bitching about.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, you're right Janel. Thanks.

Eric exits to his office and then draws his blinds. Kelly's office doors open, and she and Sebastian walk over and knock on Sidney's door. Sidney opens the door and lets them in, before shutting the door Sebastian calls back to Janel.

SEBASTIAN

Janel, can you do me a favor have Eric wait out here with you.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sure thing, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Thank you.

Sebastian shut the door. Janel sits and listens but hears nothing. She then strolls over and knocks on Eric's doors, and he opens it.

JANEL EDWARDS

(Imitating a slave girl voice.)

Isa has been sent to fetch you to the killing field.

ERIC WEST

What?

JANEL EDWARDS

Sebastian wants us to wait out here for him.

Sidney's door opens, and Kelly, Sebastian, and Sydney enter the newsroom, with Sebastian in the lead.

SEBASTIAN

Can everyone gather in here for a minute?

Eric and Janel move closer.

SEBASTIAN

First off, I have to thank you in advance for your professionalism for what is about to happen today. Look I know this is going to be hard, that's why I asked if we could keep this first round of interviews among our sleeve, as one family.

The room grumbles a little.

SEBASTIAN

Look, I don't think we should sit down in one group, but I need to know what has been going on here. Now, HR won't let me talk to each of you alone. So, I'm going to meet with you in pairs with the three of us fulling allowed to speak freely about the topic at issue. I know you see me as this old man from the past, a journalist relic dead but just not buried. This is true; I know my days are numbers here at the network. However, I'm still in charge here. I'm in charge. I did in that position by treating people like shit. (Pause) Now, I would like everyone but Eric and Janel to return to your offices.

They follow his orders and disperse to their offices.

ACT II

Scene 3

Janel and Eric sit in the anchor chairs, and Sebastian sits across for them, at the round News table.

JANEL EDWARDS

So, you want me to go first, Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

Acutely I was planning on starting with Eric.

Eric sits up at in his chair.

SEBASTIAN

Eric, you have been out the network for what looks like a year now.

ERIC WEST

Yes, sir. I've been contributing here on the morning show for the past six.

SEBASTIAN

Yes, I'm aware of that. You have worked here with Chris enough for the last few months for me to ask you these questions. I want you to be honest, forthcoming if you have seen anything that you might think was behavior not befitting of this workplace. Understood?

ERIC WEST

Yes, Sir.

SEBASTIAN

Well?

ERIC WEST

Well, I have worked a lot with both Chris and Sidney on their projects. They seemed to me to have a healthy workplace relationship.

SEBASTIAN

Relationship?

ERIC WEST

I'm sorry, I'm they seem to just co-workers.

SEBASTIAN

So, the thought never crossed your mind that Chris's actions were in inappropriate?

ERIC WEST

Well, I guess the craft service table.

SEBASTIAN

What?

ERIC WEST

The Craft Service table, it's right outside of my office window. I like to check out and see what people are eating off it.

SEBASTIAN

Did something happen at the craft services table?

ERIC WEST

One time at the table I saw Chris...well, I saw Chris kind of grab Sidney's hand and gently caress it. She pulled away. Then he slid down closer, and she left the table.

SEBASTIAN

When was this?

ERIC WEST

About a week ago, I think.

SEBASTIAN

Did you see this ever happen again?

ERIC WEST

No, it was just that once. I thought it very weird at the time, but now I think I understand.

SEBASTIAN

Let me make this clear Eric. You are not to pass judgment here. I only want the truth in what you saw. The Network will be the one that passes judgment, Understand?

ERIC WEST

Yes, sir.

SEBASTIAN

Good, then if you have not seen anything else, we will move on. Eric, and Janel you may go to your offices.

JANEL EDWARDS

I'm I not next?

SEBASTIAN

No.

Sebastian gets up and knocks on Kelly Bryant's door, she Answers.

SEBASTIAN

Have a seat, Kelly.

Sebastian then Knocks on Sidney's door, and she opens it.

SEBASTIAN

Sidney, we're ready, would you also have a seat?

The two women sit opposite of each other leaving an empty chair between them for Sebastian.

ACT II

Scene 4

Sebastian sits down between the two women.

SEBASTIAN

This interview is going to be with Kelly, Sidney; you are here as a witness and are not to interject into the conversation. Kelly, I know this has been a hard day for you. You have known Chris for how long now?

KELLY BRYANT

Twenty-two years.

SEBASTIAN

God, has it been that long. I forgot you two knew each other back at the other network.

KELLY BRYANT

Yes, that's how we first met. I was his assistant at first. He was my mentor. I learned a lot from him back then. Tricks of the trade Chris called them. Things that other male newsmen were not willing to share to up and coming female reporters.

SEBASTIAN

So, Chris was a very giving mentor. Did he ever step over the line with you back then?

KELLY BRYANT

Step over the line?

SEBASTIAN

Inappropriate behavior?

KELLY BRYANT

No, Never. In fact, he would warn me who to watch out for. There were no social media back then. Things were a lot looser around that newsroom. He warned me who to watch out for when I was editing late at night.

SEBASTIAN

Why do you think he did that?

KELLY BRYANT

Chris is a caring person. He wears his heart on his sleeve sometimes. Never having any children, I just think he had a soft spot of me.

SEBASTIAN

You mean he was more than just a mentor?

KELLY BRYANT

Yes, I think he felt like he was a father to me.

SEBASTIAN

And how did you feel about that?

KELLY BRYANT

Well, I already have a father.

SEBASTIAN

When he came to our network did you two stay in touch?

KELLY BRYANT

No, you know how that is. Once you go to work for a competitor, then you become that competitor.

SEBASTIAN

When you came here how did Chris greet you?

KELLY BRYANT

He was wonderful from day one, that's all I really can say.

SEBASTIAN

Have you ever noticed any inappropriate work behavior with Chris?

KELLY BRYANT

Chris, no. I've seen him flirt with some of our guests. However, he is an Older single man is, and I guess he is afforded that from time to time.

SEBASTIAN

Did any guest ever complain?

KELLY BRYANT

On the contrary like most of us, they found Chris quit charming.

SEBASTIAN

Is there anything else you noticed about Chris's behavior?

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, like you, said I'd known him for a long time. That's why this is all such a shock to me. I trust your judgment on the matter, but It makes me uncomfortable, the way this has been handled, so far.

SEBASTIAN

Well, Kelly, You have my word things will be handled properly from now on, and I will get to the heart of the matter. That I can promise you. Kelly will you return to your office and Sidney; please stay.

Kelly Gets up and walks to her office and shuts her door while Sebastian gets up and walks over to Eric's and knocks on his door.

ACT II

Scene 5

Eric comes out into the newsroom.

SEBASTIAN

Eric will you have a seat with Sidney. Sidney, would you like some water?

SIDNEY

Yes, please.

Sebastian grabs two bottles of water from the craft service table. Then walks over and sits between Eric and Sidney and hands her a bottle of water. He then removes the cap and takes a sip of the other bottle.

SEBASTIAN

This is Sidney's interview. Eric knows the ground rules; However, I will warn him again. This is a very private matter. Since Sidney is the accuser here, I want to make that entirely clear. Nobody is passing judgment. Only the Network will do that.

ERIC

Yes, sir.

SEBASTIAN

Sidney, just how long have you been with The Morning Show?

SIDNEY

I got here a year and a half ago.

SEBASTIAN

And during the past year, you primarily worked with Chris?

SIDNEY

Yes, as an associate producer, I worked directly with Chris developing the daily lineup of stories.

SEBASTIAN

So, you weren't working exclusively on his work with him?

SIDNEY

No, it was mostly just divvying up the day's top stories. He would pick which stories he wanted to cover and then assign the others to Kelly or Janel.

SEBASTIAN

Alone?

SIDNEY

We worked in his office, yes.

SEBASTIAN

Was this where the advances first started?

SIDNEY

No.

SEBASTIAN

No? Then when did you first feel uncomfortable with Chris?

SIDNEY

It's embarrassing.

SEBASTIAN

It's essential that I know how this all started.

SIDNEY

It was after the White House Correspondents Dinner.

SEBASTIAN

Last April

SIDNEY

Yes. As I said, it's embarrassing. I went to the dinner with Chris.

SEBASTIAN

Did you attend as his date?

SIDNEY

No, as a colleague. Well, it was so funny, I just kept laughing and drinking. Well, I got sick in the town car on the way home. I kind of passed out. Well, the next thing I know, I'm lying in my bed. Chris came in and put a wet towel on my forehead.

SEBASTIAN

Was he in your bedroom?

SIDNEY

Yes. He asked if I was ok, and I said I was still dizzy. He took another cloth and wiped the puke off my face. I had to close my eyes because the ceiling fan was making me dizzy again. Then I felt his lips kiss my cheek.

SEBASTIAN

Did you tell him to stop?

SIDNEY

I didn't have to. That was it.

SEBASTIAN

Then what happened?

SIDNEY

Well, he left.

SEBASTIAN

Was this the only time he kissed you?

SIDNEY

No. After that night, he seemed more focused on me when we were together. Then I started noticing he liked to touch me. There was always a brush of the body or hand. Gentle but sensual. He made it a point to see me in his office first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening.

SEBASTIAN

Is that how you ended up alone the other afternoon?

SIDNEY

Yes. He had called me in to talk about the lineup for the next morning. It seemed like any other afternoon; he always liked to get a jump on the next day's show. I handed him a file, and then suddenly I felt his hand pat me on my ass. He was cupping my cheek and caressing it.

SEBASTIAN

Did you stop him?

SIDNEY

Yes, I slapped his hand away and told him to stop.

SEBASTIAN

Then what happened?

SIDNEY

He cornered me against his couch and pushed me down on it. I tried to slide between the sofa and the window to get away. That's when I felt his hand go up my skirt. I kicked him off me, then got to my feet, and ran out of his office.

SEBASTIAN

Then what?

SIDNEY

I went to my office, locked the door, and cried.

SEBASTIAN

Did you tell anyone?

SIDNEY

Not immediately. I waited until this morning to call HR. I knew this time I was going to report him. I just needed some time to get up enough courage to do it.

SEBASTIAN

Had you talked to anyone before about Chris and his advances?

SIDNEY

I mentioned something in passing to Kelly once. However, now that I know their history, it's no wonder she never helped me.

SEBASTIAN

Did you report this to Kelly?

SIDNEY

No, not reported. I just mentioned what a flirt Chris was.

SEBASTIAN

Is there anyone else you talked to about Chris?

SIDNEY

No.

SEBASTIAN

Anything you want to add?

SIDNEY

Yes, Sebastian, is Chris like a son to you?

SEBASTIAN

Well, thank you, Sidney. Thank you for being so open with me. I know this was hard. You can go back to your office now — both of you.

ACT II

Scene 6

Sebastian walks over and knocks on Janel's door, and then he walks over and knocks on Kelly's door. The two women come out and sit down in the chairs once more.

SEBASTIAN

I just wanted to thank you both for your patience today. We're almost done. Janel, this is your interview, please feel free to be as open as you can about the subject. How long have you been working with Chris?

JANEL EDWARDS

I've been here four years, Sebastian. Inappropriate office behavior with Chris? I find a lot of things Chris does to be inappropriate.

SEBASTIAN

Example?

JANEL EDWARDS

Well, I don't like how he treats people. He has this arrogance about him.

SEBASTIAN

Arrogance?

JANEL EDWARDS

Yes, he likes to put people down. Make them feel small.

SEBASTIAN

Has he done this to you?

JANEL EDWARDS

All the time, Sebastian. You have seen the show. Whenever I try to weigh in on a serious subject, he rolls his eyes at me and belittles me. I know why I'm here. I know you hired me for my Hollywood connections and ability to get the inside scoop, but I have brains, Sebastian. I can give my opinion.

SEBASTIAN

Regardless of his arrogance, have you ever seen Chris make any advances?

JANEL EDWARDS

Chris and I run into each other from time to time out at galas and parties. I've seen him out with the boys.

SEBASTIAN

The man is a bachelor, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

I know that, but whenever I do run into him like that he always takes it out on me on air the next day. That's a bully, Sebastian, not a bachelor.

SEBASTIAN

Have you ever seen him misbehave towards Sidney?

JANEL EDWARDS

No?

SEBASTIAN

Were you at the White House Correspondents Dinner last year?

JANEL EDWARDS

No.

SEBASTIAN

Have you ever seen him out in public with a coworker?

JANEL EDWARDS

No.

SEBASTIAN

Is there anything else you would like to add?

JANEL EDWARDS

Yes, now that he is gone. I want the freedom to choose my own stories to cover.

SEBASTIAN

I meant about inappropriate behavior.

JANEL EDWARDS

I find it inappropriate for me not to choose my own stories.

SEBASTIAN

Point taken, Janel. Thank you. You can go back to your office now.

Janel gets up, walks to her office, and shuts the door behind her. Kelly starts to get up.

SEBASTIAN

Kelly, please stay.

She sits back down. Then Sebastian pulls out his cell phone and makes a call. Someone answers him.

SEBASTIAN

Yes, I'm ready.

He hangs up the phone.

ACT II

Scene 7

The office elevator doors, open and Chris Flowers steps out of the elevator.

KELLY BRYANT

What is he doing here?

SEBASTIAN

Everyone deserves to be heard, Kelly. Especially Chris.

Sebastian walks over and greets Chris.

SEBASTIAN

Chris, thank you for coming in.

Chris gives Kelly a nod hello.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I thought this was going to be a private interview?

SEBASTIAN

HR. They insisted that someone else sit in on the meeting. I thought with your history with Kelly that she would be the best choice.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Under the circumstances, I'm not sure who would be the best choice but understood.

SEBASTIAN

Look, Chris. We're not here to pass any judgments on you.

CHRIS FLOWERS

No, the network has already done that.

SEBASTIAN

Suspending you from today's show was not a judgment; it was crisis management. What is said in these meetings and future HR interviews will determine your future here at the network.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Well, you better ask your questions now, Sebastian, because in the future my lawyer is going to be present.

SEBASTIAN

Understood, please sit down, Chris.

Chris is very uncomfortable as he sits back in his old TV anchor chair. He can barely make eye contact with Kelly.

SEBASTIAN

Chris, when was the first time you heard about these allegations against you?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yesterday morning when I arrived and shuttled off to HR.

SEBASTIAN

Did they explain the charges against you?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, in detail.

SEBASTIAN

Then you understand that I need to get down to the truth here.

CHRIS FLOWERS

I understand that you're worried about your ass, Sebastian.

SEBASTIAN

Then you do understand the severity of these charges.

CHRIS FLOWERS

We live in a “Me Too” era, Sebastian. Of course, I understand. In the eyes of the public, I'm already guilty until proven innocent.

SEBASTIAN

Look, Chris, we go way back. I was there when you married Gloria, and I was there when you had to bury her. I'm not doing this to cover my ass; I'm doing this because I've trusted and respected your friendship for years. I'm doing this to see that you do get some justice with the network.

CHRIS FLOWERS

“The Network of Justice” sounds like a good title for a new show.

SEBASTIAN

Chris, have you always had female assistants?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, as far as I can remember.

SEBASTIAN

Why?

CHRIS FLOWERS

It was a promise.

SEBASTIAN

A promise?

CHRIS FLOWERS

I made Gloria a promise that I would help bright female reporters get a leg up in the world. That's how I first met Kelly. She was the first assistant I ever had.

SEBASTIAN

At the other network.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes.

SEBASTIAN

And over the years you have had several female assistants.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, Sebastian, for twenty years now, and this was the first time anyone has reported accusations against me.

SEBASTIAN

Reported. (Pause) Did you attend the White House Correspondents Dinner with Sidney this year?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, as colleagues. The Morning show always gets two tickets. If you remember last year, I took Janel.

SEBASTIAN

How could I forget? What did you and Sidney do after dinner?

CHRIS FLOWERS

I guess she told you she got sick. I took her back to her apartment and made sure she did not drown in her puke.

SEBASTIAN

Why did you do that?

CHRIS FLOWERS

I was concerned with her condition.

SEBASTIAN

So, you have feelings for Sidney?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Sid is an extraordinary person in my life, yes.

SEBASTIAN

How special?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Anything that went on between Sidney and me was entirely consensual.

SEBASTIAN

Then you were sleeping with her?

CHRIS FLOWERS

No.

SEBASTIAN

Were you pursuing her then?

Chris looks over at Kelly.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, I was pursuing her.

SEBASTIAN

Did she reject your advances?

CHRIS FLOWERS

The only thing I'm guilty of is being a lonely old man who never had children of his own. Yes, I fell in love with Sidney. I fell in love with her and thought that maybe she could have my children.

SEBASTIAN

Chris, you and Gloria separated for a while.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Yes, but we worked things out.

SEBASTIAN

The rumor back then was that she caught you sleeping with one of your assistants.

CHRIS FLOWERS

That was a rumor.

SEBASTIAN

Then there is no truth to that?

CHRIS FLOWERS

No.

SEBASTIAN

Then why did you two separate? (Pause) Was there truth to the rumor?

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, I think I need to say something.

SEBASTIAN

Kelly, you know the ground rules.

KELLY BRYANT

Yes, but if you want to get to the truth here, then I need to interrupt.

SEBASTIAN

Ok

KELLY BRYANT

I was the reason that Chris and Gloria split up. I was young and did some foolish things. Chris took me under his wing and was an amazing mentor. Soon, I found that I had fallen in love with this older man. I became obsessed with Chris, and well, I tried to break up his and Gloria's marriage. I wrote her letters. Letters that I was very ashamed of for years. The first day I started at this network, Chris called me into his office. He pulled out those letters and tore them up in front of me. I was the girl that the rumors were about, and they were just that, rumors. Chris was always faithful to Gloria.

SEBASTIAN

Well, one truth revealed. Thank you, Kelly, for being honest with me. (Beat) However, Chris, it looks like you have been pursuing Sidney against her will. I think at this point we should leave the matter up to HR.

CHRIS FLOWERS

And, the Network.

SEBASTIAN

Of course. (Beat) Kelly, will you escort Chris down to HR?

KELLY BRYANT

Yes, Sebastian.

The three of them get up from the news table, Chris and Kelly walk to the elevator, and Chris presses the down button. Sebastian knocks on Eric's door. He answers.

SEBASTIAN

I'm heading down to HR. Can you let the others know they are free to leave?

Eric looks over and sees Chris.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, Sebastian. No problem.

Eric walks over and knocks on Sidney's and Janel's office doors. They both answer their doors. Sidney sees Chris.

SIDNEY

What the hell is he doing here? Sebastian, I've had enough, this is no way to handle sexual allegations. I want him out of here now! I want HR to handle this matter! Not you!

SEBASTIAN

Sidney!

CHRIS FLOWERS

No, Sebastian, Sid is right.

The elevator doors open. Chris, Kelly, and Sebastian get in, and the doors shut.

JANEL EDWARDS

Good for you, Sidney.

She hugs her. Then she checks her watch.

JANEL EDWARDS

God, this day is almost gone. I need to run.

Janel grabs a large handbag and quickly makes her way out of the newsroom, leaving Eric with Sidney.

ERIC WEST

Are you okay?

SIDNEY

Yeah, did you hear that?

ERIC WEST

What?

SIDNEY

Chris, he still called me Sid. (She laughs) That silly old man still loves me. Eric reaches over and grabs Sidney, and they embrace and intimately kiss.

ERIC WEST

By this time tomorrow, I'll have my contract for the morning chair.

There is the sudden sound of another microphone bumping in the control room above. Eric and Sidney look up at the booth.

BLACKOUT.

ACT III

Scene 1

The following morning and the lights fade in on the news desk. Kelly is in the middle, flanked on one side by Janel, and the other by Eric, who is nervously listening to the countdown to the show's start.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're live in five, four, three, two, one.

A red light turns on; the lights brighten a little, and the show's theme music startup, with The lights on the show's logo, like a sunrise on an American flag Sun, as Kelly opens the show.

KELLY BRYANT

Dozens of wildfires continue to plague the Northern California wine country. Napa and Sonoma counties authorities report at least ten dead and fear for countless still missing, as more than 34,000 acres have burned.

ERIC WEST

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has announced that the White House is withdrawing from President Obama's Clean Power Plan. Pruitt announced that the Trump administration will withdraw from the agreement regulating carbon pollution from power plants.

JANEL EDWARDS

More allegations are emerging against disgraced movie mogul, Harvey Weinstein. An audiotape of a police wire has been released revealing Weinstein soliciting a young model for sexual favors.

KELLY BRYANT

Las Vegas police have yet to agree on the timeline and motivation leading up to Stephen Paddock opening fire on the music festival. There seems to be a discrepancy between the police account and the Mandalay Bay reporting of the first shots fired. Fifty-eight concertgoers were killed, and hundreds wounded in the mass shooting.

ERIC WEST

Google has announced that they have uncovered evidence that Russian operatives bought ads on its platforms to spread disinformation in the 2016 election. The platforms that were affected were YouTube, Gmail, and the Google search engine.

JANEL EDWARDS

The ESPN Network has suspended on-air personality Jemele Hill for two weeks, for what their network calls violations of its social media guidelines. Hill criticized Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones for his comments about benching players who would not stand for the national anthem. (Beat) I'm Janel Edwards.

ERIC WEST

I'm Eric West.

KELLY BRYANT

I'm Kelly Bryant and these stories and more, in Your American Morning.

The show's opening music fades.

KELLY BRYANT

In his press conference, Gov. Jerry Brown said, "The heat, the lack of humidity, and the winds are all driving a very dangerous situation and making it worse." Those winds continued to fuel the flames last night. Our correspondent, Carlos Dietz, is on the ground in Sonoma County. Carlos.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in sixty.

ERIC WEST

Well, that was fun.

Janel flips open a small compact and checks her make up in its mirror.

JANEL EDWARDS

I always enjoy the show opening. Gives you a little rush.

KELLY BRYANT

Eric, your story is up next. You should be using this time to prep your throw to the correspondent.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, that's a good idea.

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, any word from the network? Are we making an official statement or not?

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Kelly, no statement at this time.

KELLY BRYANT

You know the other networks are watching what we do.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) I'm sure the network is aware of that, Kelly.

KELLY BRYANT

I hope the network is aware that we all have reputations on the line.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Kelly.

There is an uncomfortable silence as Eric nervously shuffles his story notes.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on, and there's a pause until Eric realizes it's his cue.

ERIC WEST

Scott Pruitt announced late yesterday that the White House is withdrawing from President Obama's clean power plan. The EPA leader gave his speech in Kentucky coal country and said, "Here's the President's message: The war on coal is over." For more on this story, we go to our White House correspondent, Mathew Laurence.

The red light goes out.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Back in forty-five.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Yes, Janel?

JANEL EDWARDS

I think Kelly has a point, Sebastian. I feel a little funny leading into the next story when we have not even addressed the allegations against Chris.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) It's the Network's call, Janel. We addressed Chris in yesterday's show.

JANEL EDWARDS

We announced it yesterday, Sebastian. Nothing has been addressed.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sebastian, I don't want to look like a fool. I told you yesterday I'm done with that.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Janel.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on.

JANEL EDWARDS

The audio tape of model Ambra Battilana Gutierrez has been released, revealing her repeatedly rebutting Harvey Weinstein's advances in a New York hotel. The Manhattan District Attorney's office continues to defend not prosecuting Weinstein, claiming they did not have enough evidence to make a case. For more on this story, we go to our Manhattan correspondent, Jodie Cahill. Jodie.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in forty.

JANEL EDWARDS

Did I sound foolish?

An uncomfortable silence.

JANEL EDWARDS

I knew it. Did you hear that Sebastian? I sounded foolish.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Janel.

More silence.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on.

KELLY BRYANT

Clark County Sheriff Joseph Lombardo said Monday, "This individual purposefully hid his actions leading up to this event, and it is difficult for us to find answers." He added that discovering the motive for the attack is "our most important goal." Lombardo also disclosed that Paddock shot Mandalay Bay security guard Jose Campos six minutes before he opened fire on a music festival crowd, not three minutes after the ten-minute shooting spree, as initially reported. For this and the growing outcry for legislators to ban the sale of bump stocks like the one used in the Vegas shooting, we head now to the Vegas strip and our correspondent, Wendy Daniels. Wendy.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in forty.

The red light turns off. The director leaves the microphone open in the control room.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) They are right, Sebastian. We look like fucking idiots. We have to address what's going on with our own show.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Sidney, I know you're emotional about this, but until I get the word from the network, we are not making another statement. I'm in charge here, Sidney. Do you understand?

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Point taken, Sebastian. Point taken.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) What are you doing, Sidney?

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) We're going to see just what the Network has to say about this.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) I would not press your luck, Sidney.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on. Eric once again looks like a deer in headlights.

ERIC WEST

Google made an announcement this morning confirming the *Washington Post* report Monday that cited persons familiar with the company's investigation which found that Russian agents had spent tens of thousands of dollars placing the ads on Google and its other social media platforms. This suggests that Moscow interference with the 2016 elections was broader than expected. We go now to back to our white house correspondent, Mathew Laurence. Mathew.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in forty.

KELLY BRYANT

A little advice, Eric. Please don't look like a deer in the headlights when the camera is on you.

ERIC WEST

It's hard to concentrate with all this bickering about Chris.

JANEL EDWARDS

Bickering? Listen to me newbie; you have not heard anything yet.

KELLY BRYANT

Just try to look unphased, Eric. That's what the network wants. Right, Sebastian? (Silent pause) Sebastian?

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on.

JANEL EDWARDS

Sports Centers Co-Host Jemele Hill has been suspended for two weeks for her social media comments on Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. Hill tweeted, "Change happens when advertisers are impacted," and urged advertisers to boycott the Cowboys due to Jones warning that he would bench players who kneeled during the National Anthem. Hill was also reprimanded early this year for a backlash after she called the President a white supremacist. (Pause) I think if the President should be allowed to tweet so should Miss Hill? What do you think, Kelly?

KELLY BRYANT

Well, it was clear she broke network policy, Janel. There must be repercussions for that.

Kelly looks sharply up to the booth and then looks back at her camera.

KELLY BRYANT

We will be back in a moment with more of your news from around America. Good morning!

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in sixty.

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Kelly, Janel, cut the personal commentary.

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, I have worked for years to get where I am today. If I feel the need to comment on a story, then I'm going to do my job. How about you do yours!

SEBASTIAN

(Off – from the Booth.) Kelly, you're way out of line here! The Network will make that call, not me, not you! Understand?

KELLY BRYANT

I understand, Sebastian. It's all perfectly clear.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

The red light comes back on.

JANEL EDWARDS

It's a lovely fall Wednesday here in New York. Let's go out to our meteorologist, Daphne Williams, who is live in the Californian wine country. Daphne, any relief in sight from those high winds? I know the brave firefighters could use some help battling these blazes?

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in forty.

Sebastian storms into the newsroom.

SEBASTIAN

I don't know what the hell you people think you're doing here today, but we have a show put on.

KELLY BRYANT

Well, it's hard to do a show, Sebastian when your producer is too chicken shit to make a statement about what's going on with the dismissal of Chris.

SEBASTIAN

Now you listen to me, Kelly Bryant, I've made harder calls than this in my forty years at this network. I'm the producer of this show. Understand?

KELLY BRYANT

Point taken, Sebastian.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

Sebastian steps out of the light and hides in the wings of the newsroom. The red light comes back on.

KELLY BRYANT

I recently had the honor to sit with some heroes from that terrible day last week in Las Vegas. Common people who did remarkable things in unthinkable situations. These are just a few of the stories of how people worked together to save lives that day. Including one story that still touches my heart.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We’re back in forty.

KELLY BRYANT

Don’t fuck with me, Sebastian! I mean it, I want a statement to read on air!

SEBASTIAN

Or what, Kelly? You going to blackmail me?

KELLY BRYANT

Sebastian, you’re the expendable one. You, Sebastian, you’re the producer who protected and enabled an environment where these allegations occurred. You’re done Sebastian, not me.

SEBASTIAN

I have no such statement from the network.

KELLY BRYANT

You are the show’s producer. Sebastian, you need to be the one making a statement.

JANEL EDWARDS

Kelly is right, Sebastian.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we’re back in five, four, three, two, one.

JANEL EDWARDS

I recently had the pleasure, and I do mean pleasure, to be invited by historian Oliver Saillard for a private tour of his new Louis Vuitton New York Exhibition, “Volez, Voguez, Voyagez.” Located at 86 Trinity Place. I wandered through three levels of the exhibition and discovered the brand’s past collaborations as well as this year’s hottest new trunks, luggage, and of course, Louis Vuitton handbags.

The red light turns off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We’re back in ninety.

SEBASTIAN

Who the fuck do you think you're messing with?

Sidney enters the newsroom.

SIDNEY

The ex-producer of the morning show. The Network has spoken. Sebastian, you're out.

There is a long silence. Sebastian checks his emails on his cell phone. He looks back at Sidney.

SEBASTIAN

(to Sidney)

Point taken.

Sebastian walks to the elevator and presses the down button. The doors open, and he steps inside. The doors start to close as the countdown starts, and Sidney exits back to the booth.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

ACT III

Scene 2

The red light turns on. Janel, Kelly, and Eric are still in their chairs.

JANEL EDWARDS

It's time for our Wonderful Wednesday concert series. What better way to celebrate Breast cancer awareness month than a Rock in the Park concert by the fabulous Pink! Let's go out to central park. Pink, rock us away, baby!

The red light goes off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in three minutes and twenty seconds.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) I'm drafting up the statement now, Kelly. I want you to read it when it's finished.

KELLY BRYANT

Thanks, Sid.

ERIC WEST

Jesus, this is a hell of a first day.

JANEL EDWARDS

What are you complaining about? By the end of the day, you will have a contract.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, that's right.

JANEL EDWARDS

I suggest you read it before you sign it.

KELLY BRYANT

Eric, I would focus on finishing this broadcast. You need to remember you're always on camera at this desk.

ERIC WEST

Yeah, thanks Kelly, that's good advice.

JANEL EDWARDS

Yes, that's good advice, Kelly. I don't remember you ever giving that advice to me.

KELLY BRYANT

That's because you're always on point, Janel.

JANEL EDWARDS

On point, how urban, Kelly, I must be rubbing off on you.

KELLY BRYANT

Oh, you're rubbing.

ERIC WEST

Listen, ladies.

JANEL EDWARDS & KELLY BRYANT

FUCK YOU!

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

KELLY BRYANT

Lubbock police arrested the 19-year-old suspect, Hollis A. Daniels, who allegedly pulled a gun and shot a Texas Tech officer in the head. The campus was placed on lockdown while the freshman student was at large on the campus grounds. A Texas Tech officer tackled Daniels near the Lubbock Municipal Coliseum and then brought him into custody.

JANEL EDWARDS

Iceland became the smallest populated country to qualify for the World Cup. The Icelandic team defeated Kosovo 2-0, giving them an automatic berth in the soccer tournament. Their fans packed Laugardalsvollur Stadium, the team's home field in Reykjavik, to celebrate their win. Team captain, Aron Gunnarson, led the crowd in a traditional Viking chant. I just love this. Go Iceland!

ERIC WEST

The Associated Press is reporting that Catalan Separatists this morning signed a document titled "Declaration of Representatives of Catalonia." The central government in Madrid responded that it did not accept the declaration of independence by the separatists and did not consider the referendum or its results to be valid. Spanish Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria set an emergency cabinet meeting called for Wednesday. For more on this story, we go to our European correspondent, Anthony Winnington. Anthony.

The red light goes off.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) We're back in sixty seconds.

Chris's office door opens, and he enters the newsroom, disheveled and hungover.

CHRIS FLOWERS

You're doing just fine, Eric.

KELLY BRYANT

Jesus, Chris, what are you doing here?

Chris pours himself a cup of coffee at the craft services table.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Came in last night to clean out my desk. Found that bottle of Jonnie Walker Blue you gave me for Christmas last year. Very smooth scotch, but I do feel a bit of a hangover.

SIDNEY

(Off – from the Booth.) Someone call security!

JANEL EDWARDS

Chris, don't you think you're in enough trouble?

CHRIS FLOWERS

No, Janel, I don't think there is much more they can do to me. I'm done.

KELLY BRYANT

Chris, you need to leave.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Why? So, you can make your statement? Finish the hatch job?

KELLY BRYANT

You're facing grave allegations, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Allegations, Kelly. Allegations. I want to tell my side of the story. You hear that, Sebastian! I want to say my side of the story!

ERIC WEST

Sebastian is gone, Chris.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Gone?

KELLY BRYANT

The network's call. Sidney runs the show now.

CHRIS FLOWERS

(Laughs)

The Network. (Pause) I never understood the full meaning of the word until now. I know in this age of disinformation, I don't have a chance of clearing my name.

ERIC WEST

Disinformation? What you did to Sidney?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Anything Sid and I did together was consensual.

JANEL EDWARDS

Chris, you can't expect anyone to believe that?

CHRIS FLOWERS

Why, Janel? I've worked for thirty years in this business, the last twenty with this network. I've been sitting up drinking all night and reading the headlines—the Washington Post, Variety, and many others. I've worked for years as a respected journalist only to be marched to the guillotine. I never physically attacked Sidney. What I did was fall in love, and for that, I've been sensationalized, and my life as a journalist has been destroyed.

KELLY BRYANT

Chris, you were her superior. You should not have put you or her in that situation.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Was I Kelly? Who took Sebastian's place? We were coworkers, and I thought we were having a workplace romance. I never forced myself on her. If anything, I was too scared even to approach her. I was in love, and she led me to believe she felt the same about me.

The elevator doors open, and two security guards and Sidney step into the newsroom.

KELLY BRYANT

Chris, until these allegations are cleared, I have to believe her.

Chris steps into the elevator with the security guards.

CHRIS FLOWERS

Goodbye, Kelly.

The elevator doors shut.

ACT III

Scene 3

Sidney stands silently looking at the anchors.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) Sidney, we're coming back from the concert in sixty.

SIDNEY

Thanks.

KELLY BRYANT

Sidney, is there any truth to what Chris was saying?

Sidney holds up a piece of paper.

SIDNEY

Kelly, this is the network's statement. This is the truth.

She walks over and hands the paper to Kelly. Then she gives another set of papers to Eric.

ERIC WEST

What's this?

SIDNEY

It's your new contract. It's official. You're the new morning chair.

JANEL EDWARDS

I would not sign that until you read it.

ERIC WEST

You know, Janel, I'm going to enjoy being your equal.

Eric picks up a pen and defiantly signs his contract in front of her.

JANEL EDWARDS

Oh, Eric, I'm going to enjoy it too.

Sidney slips off into her office.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're back in five, four, three, two, one.

Kelly addresses the camera.

KELLY BRYANT

Since we terminated Chris, we as a network have worked hard to strengthen existing systems to ensure a safe and transparent environment where everyone can do their best work. Some of the actions our network has taken have been reported publicly; some have not. We take pride in discretion and fairness, and our network takes swift action when we learn of unacceptable behavior. That said, this is an ongoing investigation, and we can't comment on the actions described in the allegations against Chris. We at the Morning Show will continue to look for ways to improve our work and use this time to reflect on past actions and to find ways to enhance management response in future allegations. We are not done with this process. (Beat) Today, we started a new chapter in The Morning Show. We would like to officially welcome our new co-host, Eric West, to the show.

ERIC WEST

Thank you, Kelly. I'm looking forward to working with both you and Janel and looking forward to being with you, America, as we start each day.

JANEL EDWARDS

Like Kelly, I'm looking forward to having you in that chair, Eric. Welcome.

ERIC WEST

Thanks, Janel.

KELLY BRYANT

And thank you, America. Have a great day!

The show's exit music cues. The three anchors pick up their cue cards. They each shuffle them until they know they're off the air.

THE DIRECTOR

(Off – from the Booth.) And we're out.

BLACKOUT

CURTAIN
END OF PLAY