

Input Lag

Pilot: "The Last 24 Hours"

by
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TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. PUB - NIGHT

1

CATHY (25) and MARK (22), suited, in a debate at the bar. CATHY's looking away, wants to get back to the drink.

Their talk is rapid-fire -- not their first verbal spar.

CATHY
I'm not saying that.

MARK
Yes. Yes you are.

CATHY
I'm intimating that.

MARK
Cathy--

CATHY
Do you know what intimating means?

MARK
Yes.

CATHY
It means to make known indirectly.

MARK
I know.

CATHY
That's what I was doing.

MARK
Cathy!

She finally turns to MARK.

CATHY
My point is, the semantics matter.
They always have, they always will,
and they matter right now. For
example: we in a pub or we in a bar?

MARK
We're in a pub, we're at the bar, and
you're saying Daniel Markowitz
doesn't deserve to keep his job.

He's not playing around. She slides her drink away.

CATHY
He doesn't.

MARK
Why?

CATHY
He killed Santa Claus.

MARK
Cathy--

CATHY
He'll kill him again.

MARK
Please.

CATHY
He committed a crime. Case closed. He committed a crime.

MARK
No one's charging him with anything.

CATHY
So?

MARK
You've never broken the law?

CATHY
I've stolen many a heart.

MARK
Stop being dismissive.

CATHY
Yeah, I would, but y'know.

MARK
If we're going to talk about this--

CATHY
We're going to be honest?

MARK
Yes.

CATHY
We're going to be open?

MARK
Yes.

CATHY nods. Adjusts her stool to face MARK fully.

MARK
You're a clever young girl. You really are. You can kick it with the best of us; we don't wanna lose you.

CATHY
And you won't, seeing as I haven't done anything wrong.

MARK
You have to take the tweet down. You have to apologise. You have to give Danny your full support.

CATHY
The bit at the top of the page, the "Opinions are my own, I sewed my name above the label" bit, that's not just
(MORE)

CATHY (cont'd)
a cute joke, it's also, y'know, me
saying that the opinions are my own.

MARK
I understand.

CATHY
I'm not speaking for the company.

MARK
No.

CATHY
There's no legal issue.

MARK
You ain't in trouble.

CATHY
'cause I haven't done anything wrong.

MARK
(beat)
You still have to take it down.

CATHY bites her lip.

CATHY
Why?

MARK
PR.

CATHY
I see.

MARK
He made a mistake. That's no reason
to virilize him.

CATHY
Vilify.

MARK
Excuse me?

CATHY
That's no reason to vilify him.

MARK
What I say?

CATHY
Virilize.

MARK
Which means?

CATHY
Something completely different yet
surprisingly relevant.

MARK
Oh, I don't--

CATHY
Look it up.

MARK
Anyway, the point I was making--

CATHY
Yes it is.

MARK
(beat)
What?

CATHY
Yes it is reason to vilify him.

MARK
Cathy--

CATHY
I'm not taking it down.

MARK
We can't--

CATHY
Mark, it was sexual assault.

MARK
It was a misunderstanding.

CATHY
I know.
(silence)
I know. Of course I know. He was drunk, she was drunk, she didn't say no, the party had "that kind of atmosphere." I can see how ambiguity might arise.

MARK
Then why is it a reason to...

CATHY
Vilify?

MARK
Yes.

CATHY
Because I'm a year older than you, I live alone in a big city, and I'm the best coder on the team. Despite that, I'm just a "clever young girl, who can kick it with the best of them."

(silence)
What happens if I don't take it down?

MARK
I don't--

CATHY
You do. What happens, how serious are they taking this?

MARK
You get released from your contract.

CATHY
 (laughs)
 I'm just going to sit here for a while and enjoy the irony.

MARK
 I doubt it's all that enjoyable.

CATHY
 Well, thank you Bergerac.

MARK
 Bergerac?

CATHY
 It's what's called a cultural touchstone.

MARK
 If you don't want to talk about this--

CATHY
 I don't want to talk about this, I want to get drunk, I'm at a bar.

MARK
 Pub.

CATHY
 Whatever.

CATHY sighs. Patience waning. She knows what's coming.

MARK
 I'm not defending him.

CATHY
 You are.

MARK
 I'm not defending--

CATHY
 You're intimating a defence.

MARK
 I just don't want you to lose your job over this.

CATHY
 I don't know if I want to keep my job over this.

MARK
 Why won't you let me help? This isn't about you, it's not that important.

CATHY
 No.

CATHY takes a breath and turns to MARK. And she gives up. Nothing holding her back.

CATHY

It's only a misunderstanding because you make it one. The party had "that kind of atmosphere" because there's fifty guys chanting at one girl to get their tits out. Except for that girl, the party started at age twelve and never stopped. It's just the world we live in. They're lads, it's banter, boys will be boys. Then if they do "get their tits out" and say, an old games boss decides to have a feel? Well, they shouldn't have created such an awful misunderstanding, should they?

(pause)

The semantics matter. You're saying he made a mistake. Therefore you're implying that it's easily forgivable, and people know they can get away with it. So yes, it is reason to vilify anyone and everyone who's defending him, and I shouldn't have to decide between basic fucking human decency and keeping my job.

(pause)

What I posted was: "Why would you focus on a recoil wound and ignore the fact you're holding a gun?"

(pause)

It's a metaphor.

MARK

Well. You're not going to consider--

CATHY

No.

MARK

You're fired.

CATHY

I know.

MARK

I'm sor--

CATHY

Don't talk to me.

MARK nods, taking a second before walking away. CATHY puts her drink down. Alone. That's just the way it goes.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT I

FADE IN:

2 EXT. STREET - DAY

2

RACHEL (27) and MIKE (22) walking away from a food truck, drinking and chatting together.

MIKE
Evan's going to be livid.

RACHEL
He's really not.

MIKE
Did you read the headline?

RACHEL
Actually, I read the article.

MIKE
And?

RACHEL
It's somehow worse.

MIKE
He's gonna kill somebody.

RACHEL
He's gonna be over the moon, you
wanna know why?

MIKE
They linked to us?

RACHEL
They linked to us.

They enter the large office ahead of them.

MIKE
That they did.

3 INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

3

The headquarters of an multinational corporation's hip and cool internet department. Shockingly, it can't pull it off.

MIKE and RACHEL scan badges as they pass the desk, and are joined by JAKE (29), who walks with them towards the lifts.

JAKE
Have you seen Evan?

MIKE
We're just walking in.

JAKE
Do you know if he's here yet?

RACHEL
We're just walking in.

JAKE
Okay, because--

MIKE
You're avoiding him?

JAKE
He's gonna kill someone, and I'd rather it be, y'know, you.

MIKE
Thanks.

RACHEL
You're wrong.

JAKE
What?

MIKE
Rachel thinks he's cock-a-hoop.

RACHEL
You're still wrong, but I am gonna give you points for appropriate use of cock-a-hoop.

JAKE
Is it because they linked to us?

RACHEL
Yeah. It's not a foreign concept.

They arrive at the lifts, MIKE presses the button.

JAKE
You did read the article, right?

RACHEL
Twice.

JAKE
They took our Markowitz story, which was a balanced report on a delicate issue--

MIKE
Thank you.

JAKE
Don't mention it. And used said news story to ask if a big-ass sex scandal actually legitimises the industry.

RACHEL
Yes. Then they linked to us.

The lift door closes.

CUT TO:

4 INT. KCG OFFICE - DAY

4

The office is bright and colourful, posters of games all around, dumb press memorabilia kinda stacked to the side, and today it is a loud, bustling hub of activity.

At one of the desks is LEWIS (39), talking into the phone. At the desk next to him, DANNY (26) sits, typing away.

LEWIS
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I'll--
(pause)
Yeah. No, I--
(pause)
Yeah. I'm sure that'll be--
(pause)
Okay, thank you. I'll let you know.

He hangs up.

DANNY
Who was that?

LEWIS
Greg Hudson, he wants to know--

DANNY
You were on the phone with Greg Hudson?

LEWIS
Yeah.

DANNY
Greg Hudson hates you.

LEWIS
Greg Hudson hates all of us, I'm the only one he has to talk to.

DING -- the lift door opens, and out step RACHEL, JAKE and MIKE. LEWIS does a combination of dashing towards them and waving them over, and they meet in the middle.

LEWIS
Rachel!

RACHEL
S'up.

LEWIS
I've been on and off the phone last forty-five--

MIKE has broken off from the gathering, and walked over to give DANNY a hi-five.

LEWIS and RACHEL turn, and just stare.

DANNY turns away, dejected. MIKE gives him an encouraging "I appreciated it" tap on the shoulder.

LEWIS
Anyway, I been on the phone to Greg Hudson from Activision and Amy Kaufman from 2K, both want guest spots on the live show.

RACHEL
What for?

LEWIS
2K want something to do with XCOM,
but Activision want a Call of Duty
multiplayer reveal.

RACHEL
Seriously?

LEWIS
Yeah.

RACHEL
The new Call of Duty game has
multiplayer?

LEWIS
Rachel--

RACHEL
I'll bring it up with Evan, see when
we can arrange a thing.

LEWIS
No, they want guest spots on today's
live show.

RACHEL
We been prepping Vanicek for weeks.

LEWIS shrugs.

LEWIS
This whole Markowitz thing, Evan's
gotta be doing cartwheels. Which,
to be fair, is a sight I wanna see.

JAKE
He here?

LEWIS
In his office, talking to corporate,
he'll be done any minute.

JAKE gives RACHEL a look. There's a long pause, LEWIS not at
all in the loop.

JAKE
20 bucks.

RACHEL
What?

LEWIS
(to MIKE)
What's happening?

JAKE
I know Evan--

RACHEL
We all know Evan.

JAKE
Look, I-- I'm saying this is his
baby, and with the time he's spent
changing and challenging common
coverage wisdom, our reporting being
(MORE)

JAKE (cont'd)
used to propagate tabloid bullshit is
gonna send him into a mood where, as
I said before--

MIKE
He's gonna kill someone.

JAKE
Yes.

RACHEL
20 bucks?

JAKE
Yeah.

RACHEL
Okay, you're on.

JAKE didn't expect RACHEL to bite, but maintains confidence.
A silent beat, as all stand there.

JAKE
Is someone gonna--

They turn as the office at the back of the room opens its
doors, and EVAN, big smiley bloke in his late 30s steps out.

EVAN
(yelling)
Where the hell is Mike, I owe him
fifteen bottles of wine and a blow
job, c'mere!

He leads a round of applause, the other people in the office
stand up and join in, as EVAN walks towards MIKE.

RACHEL turns to JAKE with the "I told you so" glance. JAKE
just looks at his shoes.

EVAN
Man o' the hour.

MIKE
Hey.

EVAN
Five hundred thousand hits, you did a
good thing.

MIKE
Yesterday?

EVAN
What? God, no-- per hour.

EVAN whisks MIKE off into the fold, to celebrate the site's
overnight success.

JAKE digs into his pocket, gets out a ten, a five, two
singles and various change. Hands it to RACHEL.

RACHEL
Thank you.

He walks to join the others, leaving RACHEL and LEWIS alone as EVAN holds court. They stand in a downtrodden silence.

RACHEL
Did you read the article?

LEWIS
They linked to--

RACHEL
No, I mean, Mike's. Ours.

LEWIS
Yeah.

RACHEL
Two paragraphs on the venue they hired, the clothes the dancers were wearing and the drinks they served.
(pause)
It's literally the same article, they don't even realise it.

LEWIS
Another win for investigative journalism.

RACHEL
Yeah.

LEWIS
It'll pass. Next week, no one will have heard of us all over again.

RACHEL smiles. LEWIS gives a friendly pat on the back, as she heads away from the impromptu party, instead towards a corridor. She enters:

5 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

5

RACHEL's engrossed in counting the change as she heads over to her desk, the noise of the office celebrations barely audible whilst she sets her stuff down.

She wipes some papers off the desk, boots up the computer.

CATHY
"The New Video Game Rockstars--"

RACHEL near enough jumps out of her skin. On the chair in the corner, CATHY had been sitting the whole time, unnoticed, a backpack by her feet, newspaper in her hand.

RACHEL
Jesus Christ!

CATHY
"Daniel Markowitz's bad boy partying is a far cry from videogames' basement dwelling origins."

She throws RACHEL the paper, who completely fails to catch.

CATHY

See, I think the worst thing there is that they didn't put a space between video and games.

RACHEL

What the hell are you doing here?

CATHY

I wanna have a stern word with whomever wrote their style guide.

RACHEL

Shouldn't you be at work?

CATHY

Yes.

RACHEL

You work on another continent.

CATHY

Yes.

RACHEL

Then, hang on, what--

CATHY

Yeah, what with everything, work was the last place I wanted to be, so I took a couple days A/L and: hello.

She breaks into a massive smile, which RACHEL returns, her brain finally latching onto what's happening as she gives CATHY the biggest hug.

CUT TO:

6 INT. KCG OFFICE - DAY

6

LEWIS leans against a desk, slightly behind the rest of the people in the office, who stand in a circle around EVAN.

EVAN

I know this is a day to celebrate and all, we're gonna get to keep our jobs for a bit longer, but I don't want to see anyone drinking. More than usual.

The group laughs. Even LEWIS does a little.

EVAN

We got lucky. Mike broke a story, that's hard work and I wanna see more of it. More stories being broken, not-- you know what I'm gettin' at here, you all work hard for a bunch of lazy nerds.

(pause)

But, it's safe to say people are watching now. More than seven people are aware of the site, which is sure to please a great many folk far richer than we.

LEWIS is tapped on the arm by a video intern, RANDY (17).

RANDY
Lewis?

LEWIS
What's going on?

RANDY
You know you said to come to you if there were any, how'd you put it, if we needed some assistance setting up the live show?

LEWIS
What's broken?

RANDY
Nothing's broken.

LEWIS
What's happened?

RANDY
Nothing's happened.

LEWIS
Then--

RANDY
Except we're double booked.

LEWIS
We're what?

RANDY
We're double booked. The studio, it's being used by filmstock.com

LEWIS
No. No we can't-- not today, the live show's already gonna-- it happens at the same time every week, how the hell?

RANDY
They have a guest.

LEWIS
Who?

RANDY shrugs.

LEWIS
Okay. Okay, I'll-- Okay.

RANDY runs back off, LEWIS and he exchange hand signals to the effect of: "There in a bit, we'll sort this out."

LEWIS returns to listening to EVAN's speech.

EVAN
...first 24 hours are crucial. This attention's gonna go away soon, it's just a news story, and we're not just a news site.

(pause)
I want everyone to start throwing away whatever they're currently
(MORE)

EVAN (cont'd)
 assigned. We'll have an pitch meeting
 in an hour, by the end of the day I
 want the best damn front page we've
 ever had, we gotta give folk a reason
 to stick around.

EVAN claps, and everyone breaks, rushes back to their desks.

LEWIS
 Well, this is gonna be a day.

CUT TO:

7 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - DAY

7

RACHEL sits behind her desk, skimming over the paper.
 CATHY's relaxing back in the chair.

RACHEL
 Holy shit, they printed this?

CATHY
 Even the link to you, which, you're
 gonna have difficulty tracking
 referrals.

RACHEL
 They seriously wasted the ink?

CATHY
 Maybe Evan closed his eyes and wished
 really, really hard.

RACHEL sits back in her chair, groans and stretches out.

RACHEL
 This job, I tell you.

CATHY
 You should quit, we could finally
 work on a thing, y'know.

RACHEL
 Nah. No.

CATHY
 Why?

RACHEL
 Because I'm good at this. Plus, my
 ideal job doesn't really exist.

CATHY
 What?

RACHEL
 The same one, but without all this
 crap.

They strain a laugh.

CATHY
 You gonna talk to Evan?

RACHEL
 What?

CATHY

You guys need to write something, you need to write something today.

RACHEL

I'm Reviews Editor.

CATHY

You host the livestream.

RACHEL

And I host the livestream.

CATHY

You're important, you have an office, there's nothing stopping you from walking into his and pitching an article. Then you can quit when he says no.

RACHEL

As noble as a battle that would be to fight, I write about video games, and I have to pay rent and eat, so.

CATHY

Alright.

RACHEL

I don't see why we should have to rock the boat when we're the ones that'll be first to go overboard.

CATHY

I said alright.

RACHEL

But in a manner that--

CATHY

You guys look like idiots. If being the voice of common sense hurts your career, it hurts your career, but have you considered for a moment that it won't?

(pause)

No one likes you 'cause you rate games out of ten. They like you because you have something to say. You used to say it well.

A tense beat. RACHEL returns to the desk, scooping the change that's over it into her pocket.

RACHEL

Son of a bitch.

CATHY

What?

RACHEL

Jake lost a bet, he owes me a whole seventeen cents.

CATHY

He bet you twenty dollars.

RACHEL
Yeah.

CATHY
He didn't have a twenty on him?

RACHEL
Nope.

CATHY
He really gave you scrunched up change?

RACHEL
Yeah.

CATHY
Well that's--

RACHEL
Don't say it.

CATHY
That's--

RACHEL
Come on.

CATHY
(beat)
That's just poor betiquette.

RACHEL gives the world's most unimpressed blank stare.

CATHY
I travelled five thousand, three hundred and sixty one miles to bring you that joke, that's a high quality import.

RACHEL smiles at that one.

RACHEL
I've really missed you.

CATHY
I know.

RACHEL
Thanks for popping in to say hi.

CATHY
Yeah.

RACHEL
Where you staying?

CATHY
Rachel--

RACHEL
You shoulda called, I mean I'd have to clean up a bit, there's always a--

CATHY
I didn't interrupt you to say hi.
(MORE)

CATHY (cont'd)

(pause)

Rachel, I came to ask for the keys to your apartment.

RACHEL

My apartment?

CATHY

Yeah.

RACHEL

(catches on)

Oh, Cathy...

CATHY

It's fine.

RACHEL

Yeah, of course, um, here.

RACHEL digs around for her keys, throws them to CATHY.

RACHEL

Seriously, whatever you need. I'm sorry, I-- was it then tweet?

Cathy nods. Then she collects her stuff, dragging the briefcase, leaving RACHEL not knowing what to say.

CATHY

I should be go, miss the rain.

RACHEL

Yeah.

CATHY

I'll see you later.

RACHEL

Yeah.

She gives a sheepish wave as CATHY exits. She sits back for a moment, makes a decision in her head. She turns to the computer. Back to work.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

FADE IN:

8 EXT. KCG OFFICE - DAY 8

To establish. You can see the meeting room through the windows, covered by the rain.

JAKE (O.S.)
Japanese role playing games.

9 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 9

The KCG STAFF sit and stand around a large table, with EVAN at the head. RACHEL sits on one side, LEWIS standing behind her, Neither are paying attention, but RACHEL's the one who's deep in thought as this scene plays out.

There's a whiteboard at the back listing the successful pitches, and an INTERN standing beside it.

EVAN
What about them?

JAKE
They're not dead--

DANNY
We know.

JAKE
That's a pre-ambule, I'm not suggesting a JRPGs aren't dead article, I do have basic cognitive function.

WRITER (BOB)
What are you suggesting?

JAKE
A collection. Impressive JRPGs from the last five years that people might have missed or undervalued: why we like them, what they mean to us, it'd be a--

MIKE
How many?

JAKE
Just, a number of them.

WRITER (VICTORIA)
Ten?

JAKE
Possibly.

MIKE
In descending order?

JAKE
Or ascending.

EVAN

Jake, I said we gotta give folk a reason to stick around, you're seriously gonna come in here with a top 10 JRPGs list?

The room gives an "oooh" as if they're a bunch of teenagers.

JAKE

(beat)

I'm just saying, I really think you guys were wrong about Final Fantasy XIII-2.

EVAN

Jake's banned from talking for the rest of the day, who's next?

DANNY

An interview with Allen Garnett.

JAKE

Who's Allen Garnett?

EVAN

What did I just say?

JAKE

I thought--

EVAN

Shut up. Allen Garnett was the lead designer on Monarchy III, he's got that kickstarter, right?

DANNY

It's finished, he failed.

EVAN

Even better. Go get it.

EVAN clicks his fingers, the INTERN writes "A. Garnett -- interview?" on the whiteboard.

EVAN

Anyone else?

Silence.

EVAN

Seriously, anything you wanna write, this is a blue sky meeting.

MIKE

It's raining.

EVAN reaches over and gives MIKE a clap round the ear, much to the amusement of the rest of the room.

A beat. Still, no one answers.

EVAN

Rachel?

At last, RACHEL looks up. She's been miles away.

RACHEL

Huh?

EVAN

Any articles?

RACHEL

Uh, I have a review to write, and two I gotta get edited for a 3PM embargo.

EVAN

That's not-- this board's a little bare.

A beat. She's waited too long. The room's staring at her now, they all know she's got something to say.

RACHEL

I--

(pause)

I think we need to seriously consider writing a follow up to the Markowitz thing.

MIKE

I'm on it, if anything breaks.

RACHEL

No, I-- the only reason our profile jumped is because we broke a story, but we're not a news site, we're a bunch of critics. That 'rockstars' piece is vile, it's harmful, and most of all if we don't say anything, it looks like our position.

EVAN

You think someone should write an opinion piece?

RACHEL

I think I should write an opinion piece.

Evan considers for a second. RACHEL's doing a very good job of hiding just how terrified she is floating this idea.

EVAN

Okay.

RACHEL

Okay?

EVAN

In my inbox by 4PM.

The INTERN writes it on the board. RACHEL breathes out.

EVAN stands up, addresses the room.

EVAN

You're all very good writers, and the only explanation for this is that it turns out you're all scared of me, which I honestly don't want. So c'mon, I don't bite, anyone else, what articles are we gonna run today?

The STAFF look to each other, waiting for someone else. BOB starts to raise his hand. EVAN gestures to him.

BOB
Five things we want to see in the next GTA?

EVAN
Yeah, we're done.

CUT TO:

10 INT. KGC OFFICE - DAY

10

EVAN strides out of the meeting room, RACHEL and LEWIS dash to catch up with him as everyone files back to their desks.

EVAN
Oh god, both of you?

LEWIS
She can go first.

EVAN
The live show's okay, right, our studio hasn't burned down, or anything like that?

RACHEL
The studio's fine. We got two calls this morning, 2K and Activision both want spots on tonight's stream.

EVAN
Why?

RACHEL
Apparently the new Call of Duty has multiplayer.

EVAN
Book 'em, what's the problem?

RACHEL
It's an hour long show, we only have one guest segment, and today's has just landed in SFO.

EVAN
Who?

RACHEL
Kate Vanicek, we're gonna interview her about his upbringing in post-soviet Czech Republic, she's gonna show off how it influenced the game, it's a whole thing.

EVAN
Can you rebook her?

RACHEL
She's already landed, plus she's the sole developer, it's not like she has a marketing team which handle her appointments, we made a deal.

EVAN

Well, welcome to a very special episode, three guest bonanza for one week only. Call 'em back, make confirmations.

RACHEL nods, walks off.

LEWIS just stands there, rocking back and forth awkwardly. He's really not been teed up very well.

LEWIS

Okay, when Rachel said the studio was fine...

EVAN

What's happened?

CUT TO:

11 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - DAY

11

RACHEL shuts the door, walks towards the desk.

MIKE

Rachel.

RACHEL

Son of a bitch!

MIKE's sitting waiting for her.

MIKE

You okay?

RACHEL

If only we had some sort of social custom designed to prevent this exact scenario.

MIKE

I wanna talk about--

RACHEL

Knock on the door.

MIKE

I'm sorry. I wanna talk about--

RACHEL

Go back out and knock on the door.

MIKE

Wait, seriously?

RACHEL

Nah, I'm ki--

(pause)

Actually yeah, go knock on the damn door.

MIKE walks out, overacting the exit. He waits two seconds. KNOCK KNOCK. RACHEL enjoys the moment. Lets him sweat.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

RACHEL
Come in.

MIKE enters.

MIKE
Hi. Did that make you feel powerful,
give you a little rush there?

RACHEL
You know, it really did. Siddown.

She gestures, he does so.

MIKE
You should get a sign.

RACHEL
What do you want?

MIKE
You can't run an opinion piece.

RACHEL
Excuse me?

MIKE
Are you crazy?

RACHEL
(beat)
No.

MIKE
This is a developing story: we're the
ones who broke it, we're still
covering it, we can't try to give the
final word before the dust settles.

RACHEL
Does Markowitz still have a job?

MIKE
Yes.

RACHEL
Then it hasn't developed in a week.

MIKE
That's just not true.

RACHEL
How?

MIKE
How do you-- it'll affect the studio,
it'll affect the staff. I don't know
how many people, if any, have left,
but I think we should be following up
with an interview of someone who's
there, not the opinion of someone who
isn't.

RACHEL
Like who? No one would have taken you
up on that a week ago, let alone now.

MIKE

Your friend. I wanna to talk to Cathy.

RACHEL

They're under NDA.

MIKE

Yes, I know, it would be anonymous.

RACHEL

What would you even write? Breaking news: it sucks when your boss is a known sexual assaulter?

MIKE

I'd write the story, I wouldn't go in with my mind up.

RACHEL says nothing. Her eyes narrow. MIKE stands up to make his next point.

MIKE

I'm as angry about that Rockstars piece as you, perhaps more, but we--

RACHEL

I doubt that.

MIKE

We can't bite the hand that feeds. That article is why people started taking this site seriously overnight. You write a takedown, we look like the assholes who don't want to be popular because that's just not cool.

RACHEL

That's not even close to what I'm going to say.

MIKE

I know that, but does how much does it matter? People are gonna be talking about a woman who thinks she's too good for the big time, and no longer about...

He stops himself before he finishes that one.

RACHEL

You?

MIKE

Yes!

(pause)

I broke the story. I know that doesn't mean much to you or anyone else, but it means everything to me. I'm the guy on this one. I wanna be the guy on this one.

(pause)

I can handle this. Rachel, I know it's my first big story, but could you just listen to me? I don't need your help.

MIKE knows he may have gone a bit too far. He sits down.

MIKE
I'm sorry, that--

RACHEL
No, that was perfect, I understand.

MIKE
You do?

RACHEL
I'm flattered, really, that you think the only reason I'm writing about sexual harassment in this industry is my maternal instinct to protect.

MIKE
That's not what I--

RACHEL
I'm writing the article because at no point in our story were the words "this shit goes on every day and the only thing remarkable about Daniel Markowitz is that he just happened to get caught."

(pause)

There is a sign on my door, Mike, it says "Rachel Holland: Senior Reviews Editor," which makes me, among other things, your boss. Now, I want you to keep that in your mind as you walk back to your desk, then as a courtesy, if you're ever gonna come in here again telling me how to do my job, you damn well better knock first.

MIKE sits there in silence. That scolding hangs in the air. He stands up, and moves to the door.

MIKE
I'm sorry.

RACHEL
For future reference, when asking someone for a favour, avoid making the crux of your argument "I don't need your help."

He exits, slamming the door shut as he goes.

RACHEL smiles. She enjoyed that perhaps a little too much. Then, she reaches for the phone, and starts dialing.

CUT TO:

12 INT. KCG CONTROL ROOM - DAY

12

LEWIS enters a high-tech control room, with a window to the STUDIO -- a nice set with a sofa, display monitor and professional lighting and cameras.

Currently in the studio is the filmstock.com team, as identified because they're all wearing shirts with the logo. The leader of the bunch is RYAN, he stands in the centre.

RYAN

Can I help ya, buddy?

LEWIS

Yes. We have the studio this afternoon.

RYAN

Nope.

LEWIS

Tuesday afternoons, 4PM, we run a liveshow which has happened for the same time every week since we launched.

RYAN

I don't think so.

LEWIS

Well, we might have waited a couple weeks, but--

RYAN

That's cute, but you are, alas, in error.

LEWIS

It's a very important show for us, any other week we could talk, but please--

RYAN

Look, we have a guest, so if you would kindly, please, just get the fuck out of my studio so we can prepare.

LEWIS

First, don't speak to me like that. Second, we have three, so--

RYAN

Ours is more important.

LEWIS

Who?

RYAN

Surely not knowing the answer is, in fact, more enjoyable than knowing the answer.

LEWIS

Please, I'm su--

RYAN

We got permission from corporate to kick you out, so stay in here ten more seconds and I will charge you.

LEWIS
 (beat)
 Okay.

LEWIS has had enough. He walks out as RYAN turns back to his crew, who all share a laugh. One even high fives him.

13 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

13

RANDY scurries to follow as LEWIS storms off.

RANDY
 How'd it go in there?

LEWIS
 I didn't know people that rude actually existed.

RANDY
 Did we get the studio back?

LEWIS
 It was like someone had plucked this guy straight out of the villain's role of an 80s teen movie.

RANDY
 Did we?

LEWIS
 No, we didn't get the studio back, we're gonna need to come up with some goddamn miracle in the next five hours, what do we need to run the show?

RANDY
 Cameras, mics, computers, lights, tricaster, capture equipment, we can run graphics through--

LEWIS
 Okay, do we have any of those outside of the studio?

RANDY
 We do not.

LEWIS
 Right, here's what we're gonna do.

They turn into:

14 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

14

They head downstairs, silent for a moment.

RANDY
 You didn't say anything.

LEWIS
 No.

RANDY
 What are--

LEWIS
It'll be fine, I'll call people,
we're in San Fransico, we'll get the
equipment.

RANDY
Okay, but where are we gonna film
without our set?

LEWIS stops beside a set of double doors.

LEWIS
That's not my problem.

RANDY
Yes it is.

LEWIS
I know. Go away.

RANDY continues to walk downstairs. LEWIS pushes open the
double doors, enters:

15 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

15

No one looks up as LEWIS walks through the bullpen. JAKE is
walking past with DANNY.

LEWIS
Do you know where Rachel is?

JAKE shrugs. LEWIS walks off but we stay with the others.

JAKE
I don't see what was wrong with it.

DANNY
I could list ten things.

JAKE
It's a frequently overlooked genre, I
have things to say.

RACHEL is walking past with a piece of paper in her hand.

JAKE
Rachel!

She stops.

RACHEL
I'm busy, what's this about?

JAKE
(beat)
Ever since the first Final Fantasy--

RACHEL doesn't let him finish before she walks away. JAKE
raises his arms in protest, but no one sees.

She reaches her office, and using blu-tac, sticks the piece
of paper to the door. It reads: PLEASE KNOCK.

She enters:

16 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

16

She heads straight towards the desk.

LEWIS
There you are.

RACHEL
Motherf--

LEWIS is sitting in the corner, he stands up to talk.

RACHEL
That was achingly predictable.

LEWIS
What?

RACHEL
Doesn't matter. I've talked to Amy Kaufman, 2K are confirmed.

LEWIS
Listen--

RACHEL takes the phone off the receiver.

RACHEL
I'm gonna call Greg Hudson now, anything you want me to tell him?

LEWIS
We don't have a studio.

She puts the phone back on the receiver.

RACHEL
That sounds like it needs some kinda explanation.

LEWIS
Filmstock went over our heads, they have a guest.

RACHEL
Who?!

LEWIS
Wouldn't say, guy was probably the rudest person I've ever met, he sarcastically said not knowing was more--

(pause)
It's JJ Abrams, the guest is JJ Abrams.

RACHEL
Do we have a backup plan?

LEWIS
Maybe.

(pause)
If I can pull this off, we're not gonna have editing, we're not gonna have an autocue, and we're not gonna have the 60 second buffer in case anything goes wrong.

RACHEL
It's fine.

LEWIS
If it goes wrong, you're the only one that'll look like an idiot, I can ask to rent a studio if you--

RACHEL
Lewis. I'll be fine.

LEWIS smiles, heads out.

RACHEL picks up the phone, starts dialing. She sits down, and waits as it rings.

RACHEL
Hi there, can I speak to Greg Hudson?
It's Rachel Holland, KCG. Thanks.

She taps the table as she waits.

RACHEL
Hi Greg. I'm returning your call from earlier, and we'd love to have you on today's show.
(pause)
What's that? No, I don't, but I'm in front of a computer. Okay.

She types as he speaks through the phone.

RACHEL
Yeah-- you see, the thing is, we've already got two guests we've booked before you, it's a big show--
(pause)
Okay. Can I put you on hold? Thanks.

She hangs up the phone. Sits there for a second, an angry expression passing across her face, then walking through to:

17 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

17

RACHEL strides through, to the office at the back.

BOB
Rachel, I need a--

RACHEL
Not now.

BOB looks down, kinda hurt at the rejection. RACHEL reaches the door, she knocks.

EVAN (O.S.)
Come in.

She enters:

18 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

18

EVAN's office is covered in old posters and merchandise. It's the office he dreamed of having when he was 13, and he never had to grow out of that dream.

He sits behind the desk, working at his laptop, not the dual monitor computer right next to it.

RACHEL
Greg Hudson's on the line, he's got conditions for the live show.

EVAN
Hi, Evan. How are you doing?

RACHEL
Hi, Evan. How are--

EVAN
I'm just joshing with you, what're the conditions?

RACHEL
They want a fifteen minute straight segment, including a five minute pre-recorded gameplay video, they want their guy their through all the other segments to promote brand engagement--

EVAN
What's he gonna do?

RACHEL
I dunno, talk about whatever we're talking about but wear a Call of Duty shirt while doing so.

EVAN
I interrupted you, what's the final condition?

RACHEL
No other guests.

A moment. EVAN considers.

RACHEL
We can't accept those.

EVAN
Hang on.

RACHEL
We can't accept those.

EVAN
You can still host the show with a PR guy there.

RACHEL
That's not so much the one that irks me.

EVAN
We can re-book 2K for next week, th--

RACHEL
Kate Vanicek is gonna arrive here sometime after lunch, she's flown half way across the world.

(MORE)

RACHEL (cont'd)

(pause)

I been prepping for weeks, we owe her.

EVAN holds his hand up.

EVAN

Alright.

EVAN stands, walks round the desk, picks up the phone. Presses a button.

EVAN

Greg? Hey, it's Evan. It's Editor-in-Chief now. I know, I'm moving on up. Listen, about tonight's live show--

(pause)

Rachel's brought me the conditions, we're fine with one and two, but-- No, we've booked other guests. One we can rebook, but one's an indie dev flying in, we can't exactly-- okay, thanks.

EVAN mouths: "Name!"

RACHEL

Kate Vanicek.

EVAN

She's Kate Vanicek, and she's promoting--

RACHEL

Before Home.

EVAN

A game called Before Home. I can wait.

EVAN's put on hold. He and RACHEL wait in silence for a good ten seconds.

EVAN

Oh. Okay, no, it should be fine. Yeah, it'll be alright.

(pause)

Thanks. Sounds good. We'll be seeing you later then. Take care, now.

EVAN puts the phone down.

RACHEL

What did they say?

EVAN

You can record a different video with her, put it on the site.

RACHEL

Evan--

EVAN

They were willing to budge on that point, but not to a game about living in the shadow of the cold war.

RACHEL

(beat)

You coulda said no.

EVAN

Our profile got raised, not our bargaining power.

RACHEL

We'd booked her weeks ago, we had a deal.

EVAN

I'm sorry.

RACHEL

Yeah.

EVAN

We need him, Rachel. When this bump passes, to keep this site running, to keep this whole floor in a job, we need him. We need Greg Hudson to invite us to press events, to send us review copies, to remember our name. Y'know? We don't need Kate Vanicek. That's the business.

A moment of silence. RACHEL stands up, chews on this.

RACHEL

I suppose you're gonna go down and explain all this to her.

EVAN

Come o--

RACHEL

It's market forces, it's out of my hands.

EVAN

Please.

RACHEL

Being from post-soviet Czech Republic, I'm sure she'll sympathise.

EVAN

Rachel.

She stops. You can see, on her face, the exact moment she decides to give up.

RACHEL

Okay.

She walks to the door, and leaves. EVAN's left, leaning against the desk, watching her go.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

FADE IN:

19 INT. CAFE - DAY

19

RACHEL and LEWIS sit at a table, eating lunch. RACHEL's attention is split between the table and the laptop into which she is furiously typing. There is a third plate and drink unaccounted for.

LEWIS
Sea shanties.

RACHEL
What?

LEWIS
They're ancient sailing songs sung on deck, boosting camaraderie with tales of drink and woe.

RACHEL
Sea shanties aren't ancient, the term originated in the mid-1800s.

LEWIS
Yeah, well-- wait, then why are you asking about them?

RACHEL
I'm really not, I just beat you at shanty trivia with the knowledge that they came some point after Aristotle, I wanna know how the hell they made it into this conversation.

LEWIS
I just said.

RACHEL
Obviously, I wasn't paying attention. What phrase works better: "complete and total failure," or "complete, systematic failure?"

LEWIS
You're seriously asking me?

RACHEL
Yeah.

LEWIS spies CATHY approaching out the window.

LEWIS
Oh, thank god.

She enters, he waves her over as he stands up to greet her.

CATHY
I swear to god, you don't stop growing.

LEWIS
Nice to see you.

CATHY has a little laugh as she sits.

CATHY
You too, hun. This for me?

LEWIS
Yup.

CATHY starts to tuck in.

CATHY
Cheers. You almost done?

RACHEL
Gimme a minute.

LEWIS
She's getting desperate, now.

CATHY
How?

LEWIS
Asking me for writing advice.

CATHY
(laughs)
What she say?

RACHEL
I'm right here.

LEWIS
What's better: "complete and total failure" or "complete, systematic failure?"

The good humour drains from CATHY's face.

LEWIS
What?

CATHY
Rachel, what happened today?

RACHEL stops writing. Looks up from her laptop, studies the eyes of the others at the table.

She shuts the laptop.

RACHEL
Nothing.

CATHY
You know I know when you're lying, right?

RACHEL
Yeah.

CATHY
What happened today?

RACHEL
Nothing.

LEWIS

It's been a nightmare all around.

CATHY

How?

LEWIS

We don't have access to the studio, so I'm having to improvise tonight's live show in some corner of the office, probably the meeting room or something.

CATHY

The glass one by the window?

LEWIS

You'll see the bullpen behind, it'll look like a news show.

CATHY

It'll look like you're putting on a live show in your meeting room.

LEWIS

Yeah. We're also not gonna have a tricaster or even any editing beyond input switching, and to top it all off, we can't access our standard music idents, and instead will have to rely--

RACHEL

On sea shanties. I remembered now, I'm all caught up.

Beat. CATHY laughs.

CATHY

That's gonna be the worst show you've ever run.

RACHEL

Tell me about it.

CATHY

Why sea shanties?

LEWIS

The only audio we can overlay is the built-in CD player, the only CD we have is the press-copy soundtrack for ACIV.

CATHY

(beat)

It's a good album, but I don't think Rachel's backing down over music choice.

RACHEL and CATHY look at each other for a moment...

RACHEL

I'm not backing down.

CATHY

You called me.

RACHEL
I'm not backing down.

CATHY
You called me, Rachel, you said Evan gave you the green light, you called me, you thanked me, and then you said you were gonna take 'em to town.

RACHEL
I'm writing th--

CATHY
It's not a systematic failure--

RACHEL
Do you mind?

CATHY
It's not a systematic failure of any kind, and I thought we were past this.

RACHEL
Cathy! Mike came into my office today with some perfectly valid -- wrong, but none the less, valid counter arguments to running this piece and I shouted him down so hard he's never gonna have the confidence to pitch again.

CATHY
Honestly, it had the opposite effect.

RACHEL
I enjoyed it, Cathy, I enjoyed it. And frankly, I don't wanna make a habit of getting high on moral superiority.

No one says anything.

LEWIS
Well, I just wanna say, it's really great seeing you again.

It doesn't ease the tension. RACHEL shoves the laptop into her bag, stands up to leave.

RACHEL
I'm writing the article I'm writing, Cathy. I know you fell on your sword, but that's a sharp point, and there's a quite lot of ground to aim at.

CATHY
Excellent metaphor work, there.

RACHEL
(to LEWIS)
Activision's getting a fifteen minute block, Vanicek got cut.. You're gonna tell her.

RACHEL moves to the door, doesn't see his silent protest.

CATHY

"For the voyage is long, and the winds don't blow, and it's time for us to leave her."

(pause)

Track three, you should listen to it.

RACHEL

Is it possible that you're only pushing so hard because you fucked up, and you don't have it in you to fuck up alone?

And she's gone, the door left swinging. That last line cut deep for CATHY, the hurt really shows on her face.

CUT TO:

20 INT. KCG OFFICE - DAY

20

JAKE's at his desk, typing. MIKE approaches.

JAKE

You ever played Hyperdimension Neptunia?

MIKE

I'm gonna assume those are words.

JAKE

Whaddya want?

MIKE indicates with his finger to follow, he and JAKE walk through the bullpen.

MIKE

I was talking to Rachel earlier.

JAKE

And?

MIKE

And, you know her, right?

JAKE

I've worked with her longer than you, if that's what your asking.

MIKE

It is.

JAKE

Where is this going?

They walk through double doors into:

21 INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

21

They head down the stairs.

MIKE

She was her usual self this morning, right? Lovable, dry, kinda apathetic but in that really cool way?

JAKE
Have you fallen in love with her?

MIKE
No.

JAKE
I am well trained in the arts of
courtship, you have come to the right
place.

MARK
This is going in a completely
different direction.

JAKE
Then what you talking to me for?

They walk into:

22 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

22

MIKE
Nothing was up this morning, right?

JAKE
I didn't notice anything, no.

MIKE
Then we had the pitch meeting, and
she was distant--

JAKE
I guess.

MIKE
--until Evan asked her for a pitch.
Then, she hesitated, and suggested
the opinion article.

JAKE
This is all alarmingly specific.

MIKE
We had a meeting--

JAKE
Sure you're not in love with her?

MIKE
We had a meeting, and--

JAKE
It's okay if you are, you're a little
young, but y'know we can--

MIKE
Shut the hell up.

JAKE
Sure thing.

They come to a stop outside an office COFFEE SHOP.

MIKE

We had a meeting, I tried to talk her down, and she kicked my ass seven ways to sunday.

JAKE

Your point?

MIKE

Something happened. Something happened in between our talking to her this morning, and that pitch meeting, that got her personally invested in the Markowitz story.

(pause)

I think something happened to Cathy.

JAKE

Shit.

MIKE

You've worked with Rachel longer than me.

JAKE knows what he's asking. He considers for a second.

JAKE

Yeah, I have her number.

MIKE

There's a story here. You're doing the right thing.

JAKE

Yeah.

MIKE walks into the line to get coffee.

JAKE

Wait, I thought you were leading me somewhere important.

MIKE

Nope.

JAKE, disgruntled, heads back, as we

CUT TO:

23 INT. FOYER - DAY

23

A WOMAN (30) in a hoodie sits on a chair, her palms interlocked, her foot tapping on the floor. The foyer is a busy place, and the WOMAN quite easily and willingly, blends into the background. Of course, her name is KATE VANICEK, and she wears that on a guest pass around her neck.

LEWIS

Hi, Kate?

KATE raises her head, LEWIS is standing over him, outstretched hand. She takes a second too long to shake it.

KATE

Hey there. There are a lot of people.

LEWIS
It's a busy office.

KATE
Can I have a minute? People see I'm nervous, they start covering for me, talking to me like I'm a child.

LEWIS
That's not gonna happen.

KATE
It's anxiety, it'll pass before the show.

LEWIS
I get what you're saying.

KATE
Can I have a minute?

LEWIS
Of course.

A long beat. LEWIS takes the seat next to KATE.

KATE
Where's Rachel? She's the one I've always talked to, she said she'd be meeting me down here.

LEWIS
Listen...

KATE
Yeah?

LEWIS
We had to cut your segment tonight. It was last minute, it came down from--

KATE
You had to what?

LEWIS
We can re-book you for another week, we can record the interview and upload it separately, it's just for this week.

KATE
Are you being serious?

LEWIS
I can't even begin to tell you how sorry I am.

KATE
You can re-book me?

LEWIS
Any week you--

KATE
I live in Prague!

LEWIS
Walked right into that, yep.

KATE
A separate video would only be worth thirty percent of my slot, it-- I flew over here for this.

LEWIS
I know.

KATE
My return flight is at 8PM, can you fit me in before check-in?

LEWIS
Our studio--

KATE
You're saying no.

LEWIS
Any other day. Any other day.

KATE swallows. It's taking everything for her to keep cool.

KATE
My game goes on sale on Friday, and nobody has heard of it. That's two years of my life, informed, may I add, by every single year prior. And now, nobody will hear of it. It will come, and it will go.

LEWIS
I know.

KATE
I'm trying to stay calm, because this isn't your fault, I know that.

LEWIS
Thank you.

KATE
Who did I get cut for?

LEWIS
Activision decided, at the last minute, to offer our site a Call of Duty Multiplayer reveal, on tonight's show.

KATE laughs a little.

KATE
They're only doing that because you're a small site, but you're not a small site, you know? You're the right size, to cut people like me, and never say a bad word.

LEWIS
I do.

KATE nods. She gives LEWIS a friendly pat on the leg.

KATE
Thanks for your help.

She stands up, walks through the crowd to the exit. LEWIS watches her go, his face scrunches up into a ball of anger.

CUT TO:

24 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - DAY

24

The door bursts open, and LEWIS storms in.

RACHEL
There's a sign!

LEWIS
What the hell is wrong with you?

RACHEL
I'm sorry?

LEWIS
I don't know what has gotten into you today, but you have to snap out of it.

RACHEL
Do I have to remind you of the organisational structure?

LEWIS
I'm talking to you as a friend!
(pause)
I know today has been atypical, I know the situation with Cathy has your head all over the place, but the Rachel I know, no matter how angry at the realities of this shitty business, or San Francisco, or the whole damn world in general she were, that Rachel would never have sent me down in her place to break someone's heart.

RACHEL's speechless.

LEWIS
We're setting up. Activision's guy will be here in ten minutes.

LEWIS exits, leaving RACHEL to chew on that. After a good few seconds, she turns to the computer. She opens her email client, attaches her article, types out the body.

She hesitates. Psyches herself up, and finally clicks send. Then walks out the door. Show time.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV

FADE IN:

25 EXT./EST. KCG OFFICE - DAY 25

LEWIS (O.S.)
How long's the cable?

RANDY (O.S.)
10 Metres.

26 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 26

RANDY and LEWIS walking to EVAN's office.

LEWIS
You sure it's 10 and not, say 10 and
a half, because I wanna get the facts
straight.

RANDY
It's 10.

LEWIS
I don't wanna walk in there without
all the facts, because if I make a
mistake of some description--

RANDY
It's 10 metres, Lew, get in the room.

LEWIS
You get in the room.

RANDY
This is one of those scenarios where
being an intern actually works out.

LEWIS
(under breath)
As opposed to when you have to pay--

RANDY
Yes, as opposed to when I have to pay
rent, get in the room.

LEWIS knocks on the door.

EVAN (O.S.)
Come in.

RANDY gives a thumbs up as LEWIS enters:

27 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 27

EVAN at his laptop, gives LEWIS a smile as he comes in.

EVAN
How's the live show?

LEWIS
Coming along.

EVAN
That's good.

LEWIS
I think, given the circumstances,
we've done an exceptional job.

EVAN
Good.

LEWIS
The only problem, is that because of
location, we might need to use your
office as a makeshift control room.

EVAN
Alright.

LEWIS
See, the cables that we're using will
only reach-- wait, seriously?

EVAN
Sure, what do I care?

LEWIS
It's your office, and we th--

EVAN
Hang on, just now, were you scared to
ask me, is that what happened?

LEWIS
Well--

EVAN
People are scared of me?

LEWIS rocks back and forth, but eventually...

LEWIS
Little bit, yeah.

EVAN
Okay.

(pause)
You know, I thought I'd have a
problem with that, but actually I'm
feeling pretty good.

CUT TO:

28 INT. KCG OFFICE - DAY

28

RACHEL waits by the lift doors, they open and out steps
ANDREW, in jeans and a Call of Duty shirt.

RACHEL
Hi.

ANDREW
Sorry I'm late, I'm Andrew Ryan, you
spoke to Greg Hudson on the phone.

RACHEL
Andrew Ryan?

ANDREW
I've heard 'em all.

RACHEL indicates, leads him towards the meeting room.

RACHEL
Here's the schedule, lemme know if everything checks out.

ANDREW
Alright.

RACHEL
We start off with introductions, little banter, then it's new releases -- you're welcome to join in, I dunno how much you can and can't say about competitors.

ANDREW
I'll be fine.

RACHEL
Cool, after that our guy Danny tags Jake out, does a bit on NPD numbers, and Jake returns where your segment comes in -- we're ending on the video right?

ANDREW
Yep. I know the video is inconvenient, I honestly don't think it's needed, but it has a hashtag in it, and it was either that or tattoo it to my forehead.

RACHEL
Well, gives us time for a break.

ANDREW
That it?

RACHEL
No, next is news and user questions in like a round-table discussion. Then the credits roll, and we all get drunk.

ANDREW
That last part is optional?

RACHEL
Sure.

RACHEL pushes open the door:

29 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

29

The table has been pushed to the side, the room is full of people making technical preparations, hooking up cameras to wires, setting up microphones etc.

The set is a chair and a sofa, it's marked by reflectors that make use of natural light, there are three cameras -- one wide and one for each seat, and between the cameras is the TV with the console hooked up. Almost professional.

ANDREW
What happened to your studio?

RACHEL
Nothing, we just love to film with a
view to gentrification.

ANDREW takes a seat, RACHEL walks back out to:

30 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

30

RACHEL grabs BOB as he's walking past--

RACHEL
Where's Jake?

BOB
He's at his desk.

RACHEL
I can see his desk, I wouldn't be
ask-- *Jake!!*

JAKE pokes his head up from under the desk.

JAKE
What's going on?

BOB gives an "I told you so" look, RACHEL moves over.

RACHEL
What are you doing down there?

JAKE
You're asking me that question, and
yet I suspect have no interest in the
answer.

RACHEL
Get in the chair.

JAKE nods, runs off.

CUT TO:

31 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

31

The makeshift studio is almost complete: there's a large
mixer on EVAN's desk.

In the audio slot is an input doubler, in which are two more
doubblers, allowing the three mics and game audio. The video
slot has a two-way switcher plugged in, and a bunch of
labelled wires around it for on the fly changing.

A single output wire is plugged into EVAN's computer, which
is running the stream.

RANDY sticks his head in the door:

RANDY
Five minutes.

LEWIS doesn't look up. RANDY exits.

LEWIS

Camera three.

She plugs a cable into the video switcher, and switches to it. The monitor cuts to the wide shot.

LEWIS

Wide shot.

HANNAH writes down CAM 3: WIDE on her crib sheet.

The door opens and DANNY enters. He holds one of those earpieces with a long wire, and he proudly reveals that he has connected it to an iPhone.

LEWIS

You're a genius, go let her know.

DANNY exits into:

32 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

32

He runs the few meters, he enters:

33 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

33

RACHEL's sitting in the main chair, JAKE and ANDREW sit on the sofa to the side. RANDY's finished clipping JAKE's mic.

RANDY

All set.

He gives them the thumbs up, and heads out.

DANNY

Rachel.

RACHEL

Yeah?

DANNY

You have your phone on you?

RACHEL

Not so much gonna be taking calls for the next hour, Daniel.

DANNY

Plug it in.

DANNY reveals the earpiece.

RACHEL

Seriously?

DANNY

We run a cutting edge show.

She snatches the earpiece, DANNY exits. RACHEL takes her phone out of her pocket -- LEWIS is calling. She plugs in the earpiece, answers.

RACHEL

A phone call?

INTERCUT WITH:

34 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

34

LEWIS has his phone to his ear.

LEWIS

Put your end on mute, lock it, and
leave it in your back pocket.

She does so. Adjusts herself in her chair. Ready to start.

LEWIS

I wanna take this opportunity then,
now that you're powerless to respond,
to tell you that you're one of my
best friends and I love you more than
you know. With that in mind that if
the first thing you do after this
broadcast isn't apologising to Cathy,
not only will I never forgive you,
but I highly doubt you'll forgive
yourself. Good show.

RACHEL goes talk back, then remembers she can't.

LEWIS turns to HANNAH and RANDY, the production team now
alone in the room, he's ready to get this show on the road.

LEWIS

Load up the single CU and the wide,
start on the CU, we're gonna cut to
wide when Rachel says "here with me
today." Rachel, don't forget to give
that cue.

(claps)

Alright, let's do the thing.

CUT TO:

35 INT. RACHEL'S BEDROOM - DAY

35

CATHY's lying on the bed, looking directly up at the
ceiling. It's impossible to tell what's going through her
head, but it's going through it at a speed of 1000MPH.

She looks at the clock -- 3:59.

She returns to staring at the ceiling, but it's not long
before she's looking at the clock again.

Screw it, she swings her legs over the bed, and walks to the
computer, boots it up from sleep.

She smiles at the desktop (a graduation photo of RACHEL,
CATHY and others) loads up the browser and types in
"kcg.com" The page loads, and she immediately clicks the
LIVE NOW button.

CATHY taps the desk, willing it to load. It finally does.

RACHEL

--I kid you not, Andrew Ryan, here to
talk with us about the multiplayer
features of the latest Call of Duty.

ANDREW
Hey, hopefully more than that.

RACHEL
Nope, you have no value outside of
being a corporate shill.

ANDREW
(laughs)
I'm happy to be here.

JAKE
Stay tuned for that, those details
are sure to leave you en-raptured.

ANDREW and RACHEL fire daggers with their eyes at JAKE.

RACHEL
You're the worst person alive.

JAKE
I'm sorry.

CATHY laughs. She's getting into the show, until--

KNOCK KNOCK. Her head turns. She has no idea who it could
be. She waits a couple seconds, returns to the show.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

MAN (O.S.)
(muffled)
Cathy!

CATHY's expression rushes from terrified, to panicked, to
confused. She stands up, walks into:

36 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

36

CATHY approaches the door. She waits a moment, takes a
breath, and opens it. On the other side, of course, is MIKE.

CATHY
Hello?

MIKE
Hi, sorry-- I'm Mike Romano, I work
at KCG, I've be--

CATHY
I know.

MIKE
Can I come in?

CATHY looks at him, pleading with him to not do this.

MIKE
Please.

She relents, opens the door fully, and he steps into the
hallway, walking past her all the way into:

37 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

37

He takes a seat. CATHY enters a moment later, and he gestures for her to do the same. She does.

MIKE waits. He leans forward. He builds up to it.

MIKE

I know about the credit card.

CATHY nods. She lets that sink in. Chooses her words.

CATHY

How?

MIKE

I set my phone to private, used your phone number to confirm your bookings. I found your flight in twenty minutes, but I couldn't find your hotel.

(pause)

Here's what I think happened. They fired you for the tweet, which set Rachel off on one today. You then drove straight to the airport, and using the company card, hopped on a red-eye to SFO. By the time you got here, they realised what you had done, and cancelled the card.

MIKE reads CATHY's reaction. He's right on the money.

CATHY

This isn't a story.

MIKE

It is.

CATHY

In what way?

MIKE

It's a story that Markowitz still has a job and you don't. It's a story that the Markowitz situation is causing office tension. And it's a story that upon your termination, you stole the company card.

CATHY

I didn't steal anything, I was responsible for the card until I had been officially released from my contract. That didn't happen for 7 hours.

MIKE

Then you don't need to worry about being arrested.

CATHY

Don't do this to me.

MIKE

It's a story, Cathy.

CATHY

The story is not only is Markowitz a monster, he's an idiot.

MIKE

I need a comment, is that your comment?

CATHY

I was an employee of the company until 6AM the next morning, and the card was in my possession because Daniel Markowitz said it should be. I did nothing wrong.

MIKE

(beat)

Then neither did he.

CATHY can't believe this is real. Mike's comment has left her speechless and struggling to hide a panic attack.

MIKE stands up, moves to leave.

MIKE

The story's gonna run in an hour. I'm sorry, Cathy. It's news.

And he's gone. CATHY lets the panic attack fully to the surface, she's hyperventilating, she's terrified. In the silence of the room, the sound of the show can be heard.

She hangs her head in her hands. She doesn't need to say it, it's clear what's going through her mind. She's fucked.

CUT TO:

38 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

38

ANDREW's preaching the good word, controller in hand.

ANDREW

As you can see, the new killstreak system has been designed for maximum player customisation.

RACHEL

Can you make lewd drawings from the smoke grenades?

ANDREW

No, but that is actually a good point.

JAKE

Really?

ANDREW

Surprisingly.

CUT TO:

39 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - DAY

39

LEWIS is pacing back and forth, listening intently.

ANDREW
 (through speakers)
 ...The new taunt system does allow
 players to get their smack-talk on.

LEWIS
 Cut back to wide.

HANNAH flicks the switcher. The stream no longer shows
 gameplay, purely the conversation.

LEWIS raises the phone.

LEWIS
 Steer him to a wrap up, we gotta fit
 the video in.

CUT TO:

40 INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

40

RACHEL
 When will players be able to get a
 hold of this for themselves?

ANDREW
 This fall, we hope players are
 looking forward to it as much as we
 are.

RACHEL
 Anything more specific?

ANDREW
 I'm way too good of a corporate shill
 for that.

RACHEL
 Well, alright, thank you very much
 to, and I can't say this enough,
 Andrew Ryan, for that exclusive look
 at--

ANDREW
 Actually, we do have one more thing.
 Is that okay, are one more things
 still cool?

RACHEL
 No, but feel free to go ahead.

ANDREW
 We have an exclusive gameplay
 trailer, taking you through the
 multiplayer features, and more.
 Enjoy.

RACHEL
 We're done.

The three relax, turning into completely different people
 now that the cameras are off.

JAKE
 How long's the video?

ANDREW
Five thirty.

RACHEL
I'll stretch my legs, then, because
these chairs, let me tell you.

RACHEL walks out into:

41 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 41

She walks the few steps to:

42 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 42

RACHEL pops her head in, the production team barely look up.

RACHEL
How's everyone doing so far?

LEWIS
I deserve an Oscar.

RACHEL
We've got user questions, right, I
got nothing to read them from, so--

RANDY
I got them.

LEWIS
I am a doer of impossible things.
Legends shall speak of them one day.

HANNAH
You've got five minutes.

She heads back out into:

43 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 43

She walks through the bullpen, not stopping as she answers.

DANNY
How's it going?

RACHEL
Way better than expected.

BOB
How's Atlas?

RACHEL
Atlas was Fontaine, not Ryan, and
he's actually pretty cool.

Small talk over, she makes it to her office door. She opens:

44 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 44

She takes two steps, before realising there's already
another meeting going on: EVAN'S at her desk, MIKE'S sitting
on the other side.

RACHEL
This has officially ceased to be
funny.

EVAN
What?

MIKE
She's been walking int--

EVAN
I couldn't honestly care less right
now. Rachel, take a seat, this
involves you.

RACHEL
This is my office.
(off EVAN's look)
Right.

She drags up a chair.

RACHEL
What's going on?

EVAN
First off, we're not gonna run your
opinion piece.

RACHEL
(beat)
Can I ask why?

EVAN
There's been a break in the Markowitz
story.

RACHEL
Is he out of a job?

MIKE
No.

RACHEL
Then I don't see--

EVAN hands RACHEL a sheet of paper.

EVAN
This is the copy of the news story
Mike's written up, have a read.

RACHEL begins, all the colour draining from her face as her
eyes go down the page.

RACHEL
What the hell is this?

EVAN
Rachel--

RACHEL
No, seriously, what the fuck do you
think your doing?

MIKE
I was following a story.

RACHEL

You were following a-- you can't publish this, you can't in a million years.

MIKE

It's a story, Rachel, it doesn't become less of one because you're friends with--

RACHEL

That's not. That's-- the headline is "Markowitz Scandal Continues: Employee Fired, Steals Company Funds."

MIKE

It's exactly what happened.

RACHEL

You run this, it's gonna make it harder for her to get another job, than the guy who, oh I dunno, sexually assaulted someone.

EVAN

That's not our problem to solve.

RACHEL

You guys do realise you're not actual journalists, right? You cover games, you're not heroically breaking a story.

EVAN

By that logic, we shouldn't have written about Markowitz in the first place.

RACHEL

By that logic, I think we should exercise some self-awareness once in a while.

EVAN

You think I'm not? This story is the only reason we're not all getting laid off this week, and you want us to respond by throwing our toys out of the pram.

RACHEL

If that's how you see it, then you're even more stupid than I thought.

Beat. EVAN takes an aggressive tone for the first time. He's not shouting though, he's far more insidious than that. Everyone is scared of him for a reason.

EVAN

Rachel, listen to me. We can't run your article when-- do you know how stupid we'll look? Do you? You can't take some holier-than-thou stance on industry sexism and then go and steal hundreds of dollars of company money.

RACHEL
We have a story that says you can.

EVAN
Do you understand what I'm saying?

RACHEL
Yes.

A long beat.

EVAN
You can't act so blatantly out of
anger and expect anyone to take you
seriously. You'll just look stupid.

Another long beat. He and MIKE study RACHEL's face, waiting
for a reaction of any kind. It doesn't come.

RACHEL
Okay.

EVAN
Okay.
(pause)
You're a great writer. You just gotta
stick to writing about games.

RACHEL
Thank you.

EVAN
Go do your job.

She stands up, barely an expression on her face, walks
straight to the door and into:

45 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

45

She walks in silence through the bullpen.

DANNY
Where you at, what segments you got
left?

She doesn't even turn to look.

She reaches the door, opens it and heads into:

46 INT. MEETING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

46

ANDREW and JAKE look up as she enters, the trailer running
on the screen in front of them.

JAKE
Thirty seconds.

She sits down, plugs the earpiece in.

INTERCUT WITH:

47 INT. EVAN'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

47

LEWIS pacing back and forth. RANDY at the monitors, slides over to him a pad of paper on which are the user questions.

LEWIS

Cheers.

(pause)

Okay, fifteen seconds, Rachel, we're gonna cut to a wide, so be ready to go. First story today, Nintendo's financials, by way of a change.

RACHEL sitting expressionless in the chair. The trailer finishes, and that's her cue: But she says nothing.

LEWIS

Rachel, you're on, what are you doing?

The awkward silence hangs in the room.

JAKE

Welcome back, everyone. Thanks for bringing by that excellent trailer.

ANDREW

No, thank you--

HANNAH

When do I take it to close up?

LEWIS

Not yet. Rachel, I don't care about the show now, you're scaring me.

JAKE

Now though, it's time to run through the latest news video gaming news, and take your questions.

JAKE looks to RACHEL, signalling the hand-off. She's silent.

LEWIS

Say something.

RACHEL

Yeah.

LEWIS

Close up, now.

RACHEL adjusts in chair. Takes out her earpiece.

RANDY

What is she doing?

LEWIS

If I knew that--

RACHEL leans forwards. Looks directly into the camera.

RACHEL

I yelled at my best friend earlier, because she was right. I really, really hurt her, y'know, friends have arguments but I--

She trails off. JAKE and ANDREW look to her, lost...

LEWIS
Get the other two out of the room.

HANNAH
But wha--

LEWIS
Now.

HANNAH bolts for the door.

RACHEL
My friend's in trouble. Or she's
about to be.

JAKE
We should take some user qu--

RACHEL
Yes we should, because I'm dying to
answer questions about just how many
different ways there are to shoot
people this year, pre-order today!

JAKE's silenced. He sees HANNAH at the door, waving him out.
RACHEL is left alone with the cameras and the city.

RACHEL
There's a story, a follow up to our
coverage of Daniel Markowitz' alleged
sexual assault. Note that the fact he
groped a nineteen year old girl
without her consent isn't up for
debate, but somehow we haven't quite
reached a consensus as to whether
that was, in fact, sexual assault.

JAKE and ANDREW burst into the office.

JAKE
This is my fault.

LEWIS
I don't--

JAKE
Mike came up to me earlier, there was
a story, I gave him Cathy's number.

LEWIS looks at JAKE in disbelief.

RACHEL
The story, however, is not about
Daniel Markowitz, the story is about
my friend, who was fired for refusing
to support him. Instead of
celebrating her principle, it
questions her right to be angry.

Heads are turning all over the bullpen.

49 INT. MEETING ROOM/EVAN'S OFFICE - INTERCUT - CONTINUOUS

49

RANDY

Lewis, I can cut the stream.

LEWIS

Evan's gonna kill her with his bare hands regardless, let her finish.

ANDREW storms out into the bullpen.

RACHEL

I wrote an article today, in response to a piece you may have seen entitled "The New Video Game Rockstars." The article called the reaction to the Markowitz case a complete, systematic failure. But that's simply not true.

50 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

50

ANDREW

Where's Evan?!

Only a few people look up to shrug.

51 INT. MEETING ROOM/EVAN'S OFFICE - INTERCUT - CONTINUOUS

51

RACHEL

The system didn't fail, it's working as intended. We're more concerned with how it affects Markowitz's next game than the wellbeing of the girl he assaulted, the system is working as intended. Fifteen whole minutes talking about something we've all played six times before whilst a kid you'll never hear of is on a plane home to Eastern Europe, the system is working as intended. My friend had the courage to stand up to a powerful bully, so I've spent the day blaming her. Make no mistake about it, the system is working as intended.

52 INT. RACHEL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

52

ANDREW bursts in--

EVAN

I know.

EVAN's at the computer. He and ANDREW share a look.

53 INT. MEETING ROOM/EVAN'S OFFICE - INTERCUT - CONTINUOUS

53

RACHEL

I yelled at my best friend earlier, because she was right. Anyway. She's in trouble. I wanted her to know she won't have to get through it alone.

LEWIS smiles. He presses play on the CD Player. The display shows track 3. "Leave Her Johnny" begins to play. The rest of the office just stare at him as he heads to the door.

RACHEL stands by the door. Breathes. Prepares to go out there. She forces a smile onto her face, grabs the handle:

54 INT. KCG OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

54

RACHEL stepping out, she notices LEWIS coming to meet her.

RACHEL
I dunno, is the song a bit much?
Like, would silence have been a more
powerful mic drop?

LEWIS laughs. RACHEL's office door opens -- EVAN steps out. He doesn't even have the energy to be angry.

RACHEL and LEWIS turn away from their staring co-workers, walk together towards the exit.

EVAN
You're fi--

RACHEL
Naaaawww?!

She doesn't turn to look.

Her and LEWIS share a quick gaze before heading through the door, the gaze that says "well, we probably made a huge mistake, but fuck it, we'll deal with that tomorrow."

The door shuts behind them.

CUT TO:

55 INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - EVENING

55

The door opens, and RACHEL steps in to her empty hallway. She looks around, peering into the living room. Empty.

RACHEL
Hello?

Nothing. RACHEL's shoulders sink--

CATHY steps out from the bedroom. They look at each other for a moment, neither knowing quite where they stand.

RACHEL
You want a job?

The question hangs in the air, as we

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW