

DISRUPTIVE PARADIGMS

By Joe Dorsch

FADE IN

SUPER: Monday

The company name and logo are on a PowerPoint slide: 'Disruptive Paradigms'. The logo is a broken infinity loop. BRAD (45) begins his presentation. Voice only.

BRAD (V.O.)

Good morning, new recruits. My name is Brad, and on behalf of Disruptive Paradigms, I want to say 'welcome' and 'congratulations'. You've made it through the excruciating menagerie of finding a new job, which is no easy task in this economy. So sit back, relax, deactivate your LinkedIn profile for a few years-

(a few chuckles)

-and join me on the next chapter of your employment saga as we onboard. Walk with me.

Flip to the next slide - it's a picture of an office worker looking confused, coupled with the phrase 'who are we?'.

BRAD (V.O.)

At Disruptive Paradigms, our goal is to-
(flip to the next slide)

Whoops, that shouldn't be-
(flip to the next slide)

Our goal is... shoot...
(flip to the next slide, then the next)

Why won't this- sorry, give me a second.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

There are a dozen new hires in the room. Brad, a basic corporate drone, is fumbling helplessly, trying to control the slideshow as it rapidly cycles through every slide.

Near the front is KENDRA (24), who's frantically trying to copy down the slides. Every other new hire is half-asleep or bored. Brad throws up his hands in despair.

Then he pauses, smiles, and takes a bow. Everybody is either mildly confused or unimpressed, but Brad seems very proud of his performance.

BRAD

Failure is never fun. Whether it's a micro failure, like a presentation gone haywire, or a macro failure, like losing power to your entire factory, we don't react well to losing control. Our instincts kick in, and we start thinking with our FEAR, instead of thinking from HERE.

(points to his head)

At Disruptive Paradigms, part of our job is to ensure that our clients are equipped to handle failures, emergencies, and-

KENDRA

I thought you made AI-driven logistics solutions.

BRAD

Somebody did their homework! Or as we like to say, our work from home. What's your name?

KENDRA

Kendra Smith.

BRAD

Well, Miss Smith, you're a hundred and five percent right. In fact, you're getting a little ahead of me, but that's fine. All God's children.

(Kendra is puzzled by the comment)

We have a two-pronged business model. Prong one is our proprietary software - Jamal. Jamal is an in-house, AI-enhanced system that can be used on anything from inventory management to online deliveries to flight planning. We have over a thousand clients, and Jamal helps manage ALL their data. He's our money-maker. To say that he's the core of our business is accurate.

(pauses)

Now, I bet you're all wondering - why do we call our AI Jamal?

(nobody responds)

Just kidding. Now, Jamal might be the backbone of our company, and we love the guy, but that's not all we do. I mean, you can't have steak without potatoes, right? Enter prong two from stage left - those pesky little failures I was mentioning a minute ago. More broadly speaking: RISK.

Most of the new recruits are covertly using their phones. Except for Kendra, who's still diligently taking notes.

BRAD

When a client signs up for a subscription to run data through Jamal, we include a complimentary risk preparedness package. It's a way of helping companies handle the unexpected by presenting them with ad hoc crises, which they can then react to, resolve, and review. That way, they - yes, question?

KENDRA

But doesn't that defeat the purpose?

BRAD

I don't follow.

KENDRA

Well, if we're trying to help them prepare for unexpected failures, but they know we're planning - what did you call them, 'ad hoc crises?' - doesn't that mean the failures are expected?

BRAD

I'm tracking now. Yes, it certainly would be counter-intuitive for us to tell them about our risk scenarios. Which is why we only tell them THAT we manage their risk, not HOW we manage it. And that actually segues quite nicely into my next topic: NDAs. You will all need to sign-

Brad is interrupted by CHRISTOF (58), a tall, paranoid man who marches into the room confidently.

CHRISTOF

Right on cue.

BRAD

(chuckles)

You sneaky Pete! Everybody, this is Christof, head of our engineering team. Don't let him intimidate you - deep down he's a hoot. Nice to see you, Christof. I was just discussing NDAs with our new hires.

CHRISTOF

Good crop we've got. Seriously folks, we NEED those NDAs. We can't have people finding out about the shit we do. Now, raise your hand if you're coming on as a havoc engineer.

(a few people raise their hands)

You're reporting to me. For the rest of you-

KENDRA

Excuse me, are we going to just gloss over the fact that you said, 'we can't have people finding out about the shit we do'?

CHRISTOF

Yes. Why are you still talking about it?

KENDRA

Because it sounds illegal?

CHRISTOF

Bah! What team are you on?

KENDRA

Client relations.

CHRISTOF

Figures, fucking snowflake... Havoc engineers, we'll regroup in room 207 after this time sink is over. Carry on, captain libtard.

He salutes Brad and leaves. The new hires for Christof's team all chuckle at the insult. Brad brushes it off.

BRAD

What a fella. We love Christof. Where were we?

KENDRA

NDAs? Illegal 'shit'? HAVOC engineers?

BRAD

Right. Don't worry about Christof, everything is above board here. Havoc is a fun term, not as bad as it sounds. And like I said, the NDAs primarily serve to protect our trade secrets, not to cover up anything untoward or actionable.

KENDRA

If you say so...

BRAD

I do! Trust me, we've been doing this for almost ten years, and we've never had pushback for our methods, from the government OR from our clients.

KENDRA

Not like they would know... Because of the NDAs...

Brad smiles awkwardly.

BRAD

Well, I suppose - I, I don't- That's a good-
(he freezes for a second)

I'm going to pass these out. Miss Smith, would you care to help?

He hands Kendra a stack of papers, she distributes them, and everybody starts filling them out.

BRAD

Now, who all is for the client relations team?
(most of them raise their hands)

Alrighty. You'll all be reporting to ME!
(there are several audible groans)

And who is on the Creative team? Or as we like to call it, our Mad Men?

(nobody raises their hand)

Okay, not to worry. That would also be my team, in case any of you want to apply in the future. And, anybody for programming?

(no response)

Not again. Well, I suppose we can cancel Paul's portion of the presentation.

KENDRA

Do we need to initial or just sign?

BRAD

Yes. Any other questions?

NEW HIRE WITH ONE LINE

Where's the breakroom?

BRAD

Out this door, down the hall on the left side. Lunch break is an hour. Cafeteria is on the second floor - it's all locally grown and sustainably served. And everything's discounted - healthy for your body AND your budget.

In walks PAUL (34), a fatigued coder who's still waking up.

BRAD

Ooh! Everybody, this is Paul, he's head of the programming team.

(Paul nods and waves)

Their team requires a nice dollop of privacy and concentration, so they're not to be disturbed at any time. I guess I should mention the building layout while I'm at it. Basement is programming, first floor is my floor - so, creative and client relations. Second floor is engineering and the cafeteria, third floor is upper management.

PAUL

Seriously though, please don't bug us. We have-

BRAD

Bug! Good one! Programming humor.

PAUL

Jesus. We have a lot of servers handling all the client data, Jamal needs a lot of maintenance, and for the love of God, do NOT send me emails. All requests go to management, and then THEY contact us. Not any of you. Understood?

The new hires acknowledge him. He fakes a smile, then promptly leaves with a look of 'I'll never get those two minutes back.' He nearly runs into TAYLOR (61), the posh, charming, unabashedly regal CEO.

Brad welcomes her to the front of the room. She waves politely as if she's a Victorian era queen who's genuinely trying to adapt to her 21st-century body.

BRAD

Everybody, our CEO, Taylor Robbins.

TAYLOR

Delighted to meet you all. I trust you've met my adorable excuse for a husband, Christof. If you need anything, my door is always open. I may even take your idea seriously.

(a few chuckles)

Joking aside, I do take most ideas seriously. Especially if they help our bottom line. I don't think anybody here is opposed to something that makes us more money, agreed?

BRAD

You said it. You know what we say around here: Work smarter, or not at all.

TAYLOR

Clearly, Brad has opted for the latter. And off the record, if you're on his team, you can file for hazard pay.

They all laugh, Brad shrugs and just plays along, then they clap as Taylor waves farewell and leaves.

BRAD

What a trove. With that, it looks like we have all the NDAs ready to go. Thank you, Miss Smith, for your help. Any other questions?

KENDRA

What about sexual harassment?

BRAD

Zero tolerance. Any higher and we throw you out.

KENDRA

I'm sorry?

BRAD

Never mind. If that's all... Engineers, report up to Christof. And my team, right this way.

The new hires split up robotically. Kendra follows along with Brad and his new hires - still very confused by Brad and trying to get a read on the company.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Paul is walking casually down the hall sipping his coffee.
Christof passes by ominously.

CHRISTOF

How's your coffee tasting, Paul?

PAUL

Hmm?

CHRISTOF

Forget I said anything.

PAUL

Did you poison it?

(Christof raises his eyebrows)

Did you??

(Christof acts innocent)

Christof, I'm NOT out to get you. Do we need to
do this every morning?

CHRISTOF

Do what?

PAUL

I've hit my limit, I hit it two years ago, and
not once have I come close to killing you.

CHRISTOF

Because I'm always one step ahead.

PAUL

Because I'm not up to anything!

CHRISTOF

That's what you want me to think.

PAUL

Yes! It is!

CHRISTOF

Good try, I'm not letting my guard down.

(steps closer to Paul)

I'm letting it up.

PAUL

Why can't you understand that-

CHRISTOF

I'm just taking a page from our company playbook: attack before they do.

PAUL

That's... not what we do...

CHRISTOF

Don't kid yourself. We're not children anymore.

PAUL

What does that - what??

CHRISTOF

I've got my eye on you. You Democrats are crafty, but Hillary lost, so it's our time now.

PAUL

Not that it matters, but I'm an independent.

CHRISTOF

Oooh. I'm shaking. So what does that mean, you don't want to take sides? You want to call this whole thing off?

PAUL

Yes!

CHRISTOF

I thought so.

Christof grins, pats him on the shoulder, then slinks away. Paul grumbles, looks at his coffee, then slowly pours it on the ground just as Taylor glides by.

TAYLOR

Paul, dear, there are so many more endearing ways to get my sexual attention.

She keeps walking. He doesn't have the energy to retort. After a few seconds of standing indifferently, he trudges to the breakroom to get more coffee.

Switch focus to Brad and his group of new hires, whom he's leading to their cubicles. Most of them are chatting amongst themselves, except Kendra, who's hounding Brad.

KENDRA

Forgive me if I sound too rational, but how is it acceptable for us to create emergencies for our clients WITHOUT TELLING THEM ABOUT IT?

BRAD

Walk with me.

KENDRA

We already are walking..

BRAD

Miss Smith, you like to ask questions, don't you?

KENDRA

It's Kendra.

BRAD

(chuckles)

I was in your shoes once. Around here, we don't like to reinvent the wheel, and it's a steep learning curve. But hear me out - we're only as strong as our weakest link. And soon enough, even somebody like you will come to appreciate, dare I say even ADVOCATE FOR, our business model.

KENDRA

I'm a tough convert.

BRAD

And I'm a power converter.

KENDRA

Well, I wanted an explanation yesterday.

BRAD

(his eyes light up)

Walk with me.

The two of them abruptly break off from the pack. The other new hires stop walking and stand around, confused.

INT. HAVOC CENTER - DAY

A few dozen havoc engineers are upstairs in their lab, the Havoc Center. Christof begins addressing his new recruits. They're lined up against the wall like soldiers, while the other engineers watch with amusement.

The room is part high school shop class, part arsenal. There are guns, explosives, blueprints, workbenches, tools, CNC machines, electronics, high-end industrial equipment - it's a saboteur's dream workplace.

CHRISTOF
(in a booming voice)
Good morning, faggots!

RECRUITS (in unison)
Good morning, sir!

CHRISTOF
First order of business. Are any of you gay?

The lone female recruit proudly raises her hand.

CHRISTOF
You gonna sue me for saying faggot?

FEMALE RECRUIT
Sir, no sir!

CHRISTOF
Good. At ease, all of you.

RECRUITS (in unison)
Sir, yes sir!

They relax. Christof scans them officially, then approaches the female recruit.

CHRISTOF
But you're so hot!

FEMALE RECRUIT
Sir?

CHRISTOF
Country's going to hell...
(to the ceiling)
Nice try! But here I am, NOT harassing her!
You won't win that easily!

The recruits are puzzled and mildly horrified, but try to maintain their serious expressions. The engineers are trying equally hard to contain their laughter.

BACK TO BRAD AND KENDRA

They're walking through the hallways, just the two of them.

KENDRA
Why did we split off? Don't you need to show them where they're working?

BRAD
Did you ever have a bicycle growing up?

KENDRA
What?

BRAD
My parents always told me, don't leave the garage door open, or somebody will take your bicycle.

KENDRA
Did I miss the part where this is relevant?

BRAD
And being a rambunctious lad, I never listened.

KENDRA
A 'rambunctious lad'??

BRAD
Which meant I always left the garage door open.

KENDRA
How many hallways are there...?

BRAD
Kendra, please, just roll with the analogy.

KENDRA

I've been told that I put the anal in analogy.

BRAD

What?

They pause, Brad looks confused, Kendra looks impatient, and they continue walking down hallways.

BRAD

So one day, my bike gets stolen. And I had to walk all the way to school, and then walk all the way back home. It was quite a character builder. And my parents said, 'see Brad, this is what happens when you leave the garage door open.'

KENDRA

Let me guess - they stole it to teach you a lesson, right?

BRAD

They did! Oldest trick in the book.

KENDRA

Lucky you.

BRAD

My thoughts exactly! And here, we steal the client's bicycles so that they learn to shut their garage doors instead of leaving them open. Metaphorically speaking.

KENDRA

But if you think about it, the only people who ever stole your bike were your parents. Maybe you were smart to leave the garage open, because you knew from experience that there was no risk of it being stolen in the first place.

BRAD

But if THEY hadn't stolen it to teach me a lesson, then somebody ELSE would have eventually.

KENDRA

Except, nobody else never did.

BRAD

You don't know they wouldn't.

KENDRA

You know for a fact they DIDN'T.

BRAD

That.. that, that makes a lot of..

Brad freezes. It's like he glitched out. Kendra says his name a few times, waves her hand in front of his face, snaps her fingers, anything to get his attention.

Suddenly, he's back, like he forgot about their exchange.

BRAD

Walk with me.

KENDRA

Oh boy...

BACK TO CHRISTOF AND THE ENGINEERS

Christof is pacing like a drill sergeant.

CHRISTOF

As a havoc engineer, your job is very simple: make headlines. It is NOT, repeat, NOT your job to make our clients look good. That's their job. Your job is to test them, their job is to pass. Or fail. Understood?

RECRUITS

Sir, yes sir!

CHRISTOF

The headline might say, 'company gets fucked, but they get their shit together.' Or it might say, 'company gets fucked, and they DON'T get their shit together'. You are NOT responsible for the getting of their shit together. Your job is just to fuck them. Understood?

RECRUITS

Sir, yes sir!

BACK TO BRAD AND KENDRA

They're still walking through hallways. Which, as Kendra pointed out, are seemingly endless.

BRAD

Don't think of them as emergencies. Think of them as real-world readiness scenarios, designed to strengthen and improve the client's crisis management systems.

KENDRA

Without their consent.

BRAD

Not true. We have their explicit consent to manage their risk. And assuming they can handle a crisis well, as many of them claim, we're giving them first-rate success stories that they can use to build brand trust and gain positive publicity. You can't put a pricetag on that. It practically pays for itself.

BACK TO CHRISTOF AND THE RECRUITS

CHRISTOF

Now, there are many ways to fuck a client:

START TOGGLING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THE TWO

BRAD

There are a variety of situations we utilize:

CHRISTOF

Blow up a factory,

BRAD

Abrupt losses in productivity,

CHRISTOF

Crash an airplane,

BRAD

Faulty equipment,

CHRISTOF
Spread E. Coli,

BRAD
Contaminated ingredients,

CHRISTOF
Start a strike,

BRAD
Unfavorable employee relations,

CHRISTOF
Kill the board members,

BRAD
Unexpected staffing changes,

CHRISTOF
Cyber warfare and hacking,

BRAD
Digital vulnerabilities,

CHRISTOF
Fires, floods, gas leaks,

BRAD
Standard evacuation scenarios,

CHRISTOF
And of course, good ol' fashioned sabotage.

BRAD
And any number of one-off 'accidents' that our
engineers induce.

CHRISTOF
Questions?

KENDRA
Are you frickin' serious??

STOP SWITCHING, BACK TO BRAD AND KENDRA

BRAD

It's not as bad as it sounds.

KENDRA

So you admit it sounds bad.

BRAD

Kendra, I have to level with you. Is this really a job you see yourself working at in five years? We prefer our employees to be aligned with our collective vision, and I get the sense that this might not be the right glove for your hand.

KENDRA

I mean, it's a VERY lucrative glove, especially if I blow the whistle some day.

BRAD

What?

KENDRA

Nothing. You're absolutely right. I just need to think of it as best practice. The new normal. Consider me converted.

BRAD

Success! Glad we could resolve that pain point!

KENDRA

Yep, totally. So where do I sit?

BRAD

Right! This! Way!

BACK TO CHRISTOF AND THE RECRUITS

CHRISTOF

Lastly, what happens at work STAYS at work!
You tell anybody about what we do here, I will personally shoot your balls off.

(looks at the one female recruit)

Except yours. Well, wait, but you're gay, so...?

FEMALE RECRUIT

Sir?

CHRISTOF

I don't want to know. Just keep it in your pants.
MOUTH! Keep our secrets in your mouths! Clear?

RECRUITS

Sir, yes sir!

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY (cont.)

There are several dozen cubicles and cubicle-dwellers in a stereotypical office environment. All of Brad's recruits are still at one end of the room, standing around and waiting for their job assignment.

Brad and Kendra walk in, Brad completely ignores the other recruits and leads Kendra over to LOUISE (71), whose desk is overflowing with pictures of grandchildren and tequila.

BRAD

You'll be training under Louise, one of our long-sufferers. Morning, Louise!

LOUISE

Mmm.

BRAD

Too bad your name isn't Thelma. Or there would be TWO little old ladies!

KENDRA

I don't follow.

BRAD

Thelma and Louise, my grandmothers. Never mind.

KENDRA

Wow.

BRAD

Louise has been here for over twenty years, but she doesn't look a day over seventy!

LOUISE

Mmm.

KENDRA
Perfect. I'll get situated...

She draws Brad's attention to the other recruits.

KENDRA
What about them?

BRAD
My stars! I tell you, I'd lose my screws if they
didn't give me head!

He runs over to the recruits apologetically. Kendra settles
in to the empty desk across from Louise. Louise seems
perfectly content in her own world.

KENDRA
So... twenty years, that's impressive.

LOUISE
Mmm.

KENDRA
Are those your grandkids? How many do you have?

LOUISE
Mmm.

KENDRA
And Brad, is he... is there something wrong with
him, mentally? I don't want to assume, but I -
and he's our boss, right?

Louise doesn't respond. She's just typing away happily as
if Kendra isn't there. Kendra swivels in her chair.

KENDRA
How about this - if I have any questions, I will
let you know. Otherwise, we can each just do our
own thing and leave each other alone.
(no response)
Does that sound like a plan?

LOUISE
Mm-hmm.

INT. HAVOC CENTER - DAY

All the engineers are busy at their workstations, either training new hires or working on projects. Christof is making the rounds to check on them.

Focus on MIA (44) and VINNY (31). Vinny is gazing out the window, while Mia is cleaning her disassembled gun.

VINNY

Who do you think it'll be today?

(Mia doesn't respond. Vinny talks louder)
He's done yelling.

MIA

Finally.

(adjusts her hearing aid)
Were you saying something?

VINNY

I said, who do you think it'll be today?

MIA

No idea.

VINNY

Hope it's not a fellow goomba. You know, when I was in the mafia, we whacked this one guy who-

MIA

For the hundredth time, you weren't in the mafia.

VINNY

But I could have been.

MIA

But you weren't!

VINNY

You fucking guinea wop mother-fucker!

MIA

That is shockingly offensive. And it's proof that you were NOT in the mafia, because nobody in the mafia actually talks like that.

VINNY

Yeah they do. If some asshole from another crime family disrespected my father's good name, then I would say something like that.

MIA

But they would never disrespect your father because YOU'RE NOT IN THE MAFIA!

VINNY

Okay, okay. Why do YOU care?

MIA

What if they find out?

VINNY

How?

MIA

How? Because one of these days, knowing you, you're gonna write a memoir, and you'll make up all these stories about your time in the mafia, and then the actual mafia will get their hands on it and realizing you're lying, and then they'll-

VINNY

Ooh, okay! New business idea!

MIA

Shoot.

VINNY

We write fake memoirs for people.

MIA

What?

VINNY

Okay, think about it. We target cubicle workers, whose lives are waaaay boring, and we're like, 'hey boring person, want to read a book about how awesome your life COULD have been?' And then we write a story with them as the main character, but it's exciting, and adrenaline, and they're on the run, killing Nazis, screwing exotic women...

MIA

They have that. It's called your imagination.

VINNY

But see, that's the thing, business people love to have shit outsourced, right? It's like we're outsourcing their imagination.

Mia ponders the idea.

VINNY

Pretty good, eh?

MIA

Not one of your worse ideas.

VINNY

Lit! You could use your memories from the war, and I got mine from when I was in the mafia.

MIA

YOU WEREN'T IN THE GOD-DAMNED MAFIA!

VINNY

BUT I COULD HAVE BEEN!

As they argue, Christof walks up to them.

CHRISTOF

Morning, fuckers.

VINNY

Morning sir!

Mia just nods. Christof winks at her, she flips him off.

CHRISTOF

We got a golden fucking goose today. Six CEOs. All on a panel at the university.

(he drops a stack of papers on their table)
Some BS about climate change. Good news is, they're all clients, so no collateral damage.

VINNY

Siiiick!

MIA
Method?

CHRISTOF
Your call.

VINNY
On it, chief. On it like... .. fuck.

Christof raises his eyebrows, unimpressed, then walks away. Vinny salutes, then starts rummaging through the supply closet nearby. Mia reads over the papers, which have detailed information and photos for each CEO.

VINNY
Time to paint some houses!
(pauses)
That's mafia speak for 'kill people'.

MIA
I know what it means!

VINNY
Alright, geez. Is it your time of month already?

MIA
Careful!

Vinny chuckles and keeps looking through the cabinets and drawers for something. Mia ignores him.

MIA
Ready? Should be a quick one.

VINNY
Where is it...?

MIA
Where's what?

VINNY
The mask.

MIA
Oh God.

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Taylor's office is a luxurious chamber, from which she rules her domain in style. There are a few paintings, a rustic desk, two plush chairs, a grandfather clock, a basic computer setup, and a chandelier.

Taylor is idling blissfully in front of her computer (the audience can't see what's on it though). She's waiting for Paul to pick up the phone. Her fingers are tapping on the desk as if she's playing the piano.

PAUL (PHONE)

What?

TAYLOR

(in a British accent)

Paul, dear, might I trouble you for a moment?

PAUL (PHONE)

Do I really have a choice?

TAYLOR

Don't be so snappy! I rather enjoy our little chats, don't you?

PAUL (PHONE)

... What is it this time?

TAYLOR

I'm quite the lummoX, and I've had my fair share of glitches. But this time, it appears my monitor is on the fritz, so I was wondering if you-

PAUL (PHONE)

Are you doing a fake British accent?

TAYLOR

(pauses, goes back to her normal voice)

Please don't try and sidetrack me Paul, it's very unprofessional. Now, will you help me or not?

PAUL (PHONE)

(sighs)

What's the problem?

TAYLOR

For some reason the screen just went blank. I was working as usual, and it inexplicably shut off.

PAUL (PHONE)

Is it a blue screen or a black screen?

Switch to a view of her computer. It's on, and her email and web browser are open with random work-related items.

TAYLOR

Black screen.

PAUL (PHONE)

Okay...

TAYLOR

Do you need to come up and take a-

PAUL (PHONE)

Noooo, give me a second.. alright, so if you check on the floor, there should be a power strip that-

TAYLOR

The floor? I'm a CEO, I'm not about to crawl around on the ground just to-

(Paul groans loudly)

I'm toying with you, Paul, dear. Of course I can look for it! A CEO isn't above her subjects. Let's see what we have down here.

PAUL (PHONE)

Do you see a switch on the power strip?

Taylor chuckles to herself, still sitting in her chair in front of a fully-functional computer.

TAYLOR

Yes, there it is! It says... 'Off'. Good heavens, I must have kicked it by accident. I can be so clumsy sometimes.

PAUL (PHONE)

Well, now you know.

TAYLOR

You're a miracle worker, Paul, as always.

(another exasperated groan)

How's Jamal? I'm rather fond of the boy, tell him I said hello.

PAUL (PHONE)

I mean, he's just as inanimate as ever, but I'll pass along your message.

TAYLOR

And the team? Any concerns I should be aware of as the chief executive O?

PAUL (PHONE)

Well, we're working on a new release, should be deployed within the next few weeks.

TAYLOR

Oh my. Is he broken? Why didn't you alert me?

PAUL (PHONE)

He's not broken, it's just maintenance. You know how it is. We fix a bug, it causes a new one, we fix THAT bug, new one pops up... story of my life.

TAYLOR

How thrilling. Well don't let me keep you, until next time, and again, thank you for-

Paul abruptly hangs up. Taylor is amused. She smiles majestically and taps out the final notes of the song.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra is bored. Louise is typing away productively, largely ignoring her.

KENDRA

Is it unreasonable for me to assume that I should be working right now?

LOUISE

Mmm.

KENDRA

Because unlike many people my age, I actually enjoy DOING the work that I'm getting paid to do. It gives me the smug satisfaction that my generation might end up better than yours.

Louise raises her eyebrows. A few seconds later, Kendra gets an IM from her.

LOUISE (IM)

You'll need to run the dashboards.

(typing)

I'll email you the instructions.

(typing)

Don't you ever insult me again.

KENDRA

(chuckles)

Wow. Okay boomer.

LOUISE (IM)

On second thought, I misplaced the instructions.

(typing)

You'll have to figure it out yourself.

Kendra looks at her. Louise doesn't make eye contact.

KENDRA

Well, joke's on you, because I like to solve my own problems. I don't just pass them on to my grandkids, unlike some people.

Louise turns away and resumes working as if Kendra isn't there. After a few seconds:

KENDRA

I'm sorry, that was harsh.

(no response)

I really would like the instructions, that would be helpful.

(no response)

If you don't mind. Please. I'm sorry.

(no response)

I'll buy you a shot glass that says 'world's greatest grandma'.

LOUISE (IM)
I've got plenty of those already.

KENDRA
Well, I tried.

LOUISE (IM)
Keep trying. You're almost there.

Kendra lets out a long sigh.

KENDRA
I promise that if you send me the instructions,
I won't talk to you for the rest of the day.

LOUISE (IM)
Attagirl.

Kendra rolls her eyes. Louise smiles at her for a second,
then goes back to ignoring her.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

There's a narrow corridor that runs alongside the computer
lab, where Paul and his team work. The lab is enclosed, all
the windows are shut, and there's only one door with a big
'do not disturb' sign.

Naturally, Brad doesn't find himself disturbing, so he pays
Paul a visit. He knocks at the door cheerfully and waits
for Paul to answer. Paul is less than cheerful.

BRAD
Paul, my buddy. Working hard or working harder?
You have a minute?

PAUL
For you Brad? I've got five.

BRAD
Woah! Really?

PAUL
No.

He shuts the door. Brad, upbeat as ever, knocks again.
Paul opens it just a crack, his face barely visible.

PAUL
For the love of-

BRAD
Paul, let's leave our bitterness bags at the door
and smash this out.

PAUL
I don't want to smash ANYTHING, Brad, I just want
you to follow the instructions and leave us be.
We've got a big code release that we're-

BRAD
I was gonna ask you. How is your squad? I didn't
see any new hacker-backers at orientation today.
Your staff levels are still optimal? I'd hate to
see you down here all by your lonesome.

PAUL
Yep. We're all good.

BRAD
Good to hear. I worry about my buddy.

PAUL
We are not buddies.

BRAD
Just you wait. It might take some heavy lifting,
but if we're proactive, we'll be friends with
benefits soon enough.

PAUL
Do you actually know what that expression means?

BRAD
Of course. I wasn't born tomorrow. It means that
we're first-rate friends, and our company gives
us first-rate benefits.

Paul rubs his temples and takes a deep sigh.

PAUL

Brad, you know the saying, keep your friends close and your enemies closer?

BRAD

Sure do!

PAUL

Well, we're friends, so that means you need to spend less time with me, and more time with an enemy - like, I dunno, Christof?

BRAD

Well, I suppose that- ohhhh, I see, you tricky little pumpkin. You're trying to get rid of me! I love that about you! Always foxy!

PAUL

Yep. You caught me. And now I'm going to-

BRAD

How's Jamal?

PAUL

Why do people keep asking that...?

BRAD

I worry about the guy. Is he still zeroing and one-ing with the best of them?

PAUL

Zeroing and -? Yes. He's doing just peachy, Brad. In fact, he sends his love.

BRAD

What a fella. Well, I hate to run, but you gotta make money to spend money. Catch you later!

Paul slams the door shut. Brad sashays obliviously down the hall and starts singing.

BRAD

L! Is for the way you leverage my core competencies! O! Is for your overall customer satisfaction guarantees.

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

V! Is for Vito Corleone! Vinny is wearing a Marlon Brando mask and pretending to smoke a cigar. He and Mia are strolling casually through campus.

MIA

It says they're in the memorial union.

VINNY

(doing an abysmal impression)

Union? What, like where they bury the Teamsters? Like a marriage union?

MIA

I think it means the student center.

VINNY

A student center, huh? You know, this weekend was the weekend of my daughter's wedding. And there's a tradition that on her wedding day, you can ask the godfather ANYTHING. You understand?

MIA

Are you positive that YOU want to do the job? Because that mask is putting a big-ass target on your back.

VINNY

Mia, Mia, my sweet Mia - this is perfect for being discreet, you understand? It's so obviously suspicious that nobody expects me to actually do anything suspicious, you understand?

MIA

Or, they would be watching you closely, BECAUSE you're suspicious.

VINNY

(shrugs)

What will they do? It's campus security, which has a reputation for being untrustworthy and lazy, much like my oldest boy, Sonny. He speaks when he should keep his mouth shut, he makes rash decisions in heat. You understand?

MIA

I think the guards might notice when you shoot six people. You UNDERSTAND?

VINNY

(chuckles)

Mia, you are a wartime consigliere, we are in peacetime! Don't overthink it.

MIA

Your funeral. Careful, yuppie alert.

A student jogs by them and nods approvingly at Vinny.

STUDENT

The horror, the horror!

VINNY

What is this child rambling about? I can't keep up these days. He reminds me of my other son, Michael. Have I told you about Michael, my boy? He'll be The Don someday. He'll carry on the family's legacy, you understand?

Mia is tuning him out. They've reached the student union. It's the busiest part of campus - there are dozens of students and faculty going in and out, not to mention a small protest near the entrance.

MIA

Ready? I'll be waiting here.

VINNY

Don't worry, I'm gonna make them an offer they can't resist.

MIA

Refuse.

VINNY

Refuse.

He walks conspicuously to the entrance, greeting anybody who recognizes him. Mia sighs, waits until he's inside, then makes her way to the protestors to kill time.

As she gets closer, she realizes that their signs have generic slogans: 'Anger!', 'Outrage!', 'Cancel the event!' and 'WRONG!'. Mia approaches one of the students, a fiery girl with bright-green hair named KENZIE (20).

KENZIE

Don't attend the lecture! Stand up for what's right and make them hear your voice!

MIA

What are you protesting?

KENZIE

We're protesting our university siding with corporate interests and The One Percent while we struggle to survive!

MIA

I thought today's panel was on climate change...

Kenzie lowers her sign, abruptly calms down, and pulls out her phone. She reads from her messages. It's like she's a completely different person.

KENZIE

We are protesting the... coalition of eco-conscious industry leaders discussing Fair Trade policies, socially sustainable solutions - that has a nice ring to it - and a vision for a green America. Dope! That actually sounds legit!

(she puts her phone away and switches back to protestor mode)

We will not be silenced! Don't ignore us!

MIA

I'm really confused.

KENZIE

Oh, sorry. Habit. Hi, I'm Kenzie

(puts the sign down and shakes Mia's hand)

We're on-call protestors.

MIA

What do you mean, on-call? Like, rent-a-protest?

KENZIE

Yeah! We make it look like the events are controversial. Good pay!

MIA

Who hires you?

KENZIE

The school. They love any publicity they can get. I guess their mindset is, if it's not broke, then we need to break it first.

MIA

(under her breath)

Those bastards stole our idea...

KENZIE

I'm sorry?

MIA

What? You'll have to speak up, I'm a little hard of hearing. Let me actually get you our number...

Mia pulls out a notepad, writes her number down, tears out the paper, and gives it to Kenzie.

MIA

Are you graduating soon?

KENZIE

No, I'm a sophomore.

MIA

Pff. Give us a call anyways. We're always hiring.

KENZIE

Thanks! It's so hard to get a job in this market. I mean, they say you need three to five years experience for your first job, but you can't get three to five years experience WITHOUT a job!

MIA

That's brutal. Going back to the protest on demand thing for a second. What do you do if there's an actual protest for the event?

KENZIE

Well, so how it works is that we don't even show up if the outrage is organic. That's what they call a protest that happens naturally, organic.

MIA

I thought the latest term was grassroots.

KENZIE

Grassroots is specific for politics, organic is more general. So, if there's not an organic protest already taking place, then the school reaches out to us. Most of us are business majors, so it's not like we're actually busy.

(they both chuckle)

Let's see... so they'll text us information about the event. There's usually about ten of us, kind of a core group we've got going.

MIA

And, you just show up and be angry?

KENZIE

Yeah! Like I said, the pay shouldn't be this good when you think about how easy our job is. But you didn't hear that from me. I won't complain.

MIA

I wouldn't either. I would do the same thing.

Suddenly an alarm goes off. There's a commotion in the student union. Mia looks at the crowd, and sure enough, Vinny is booking it. The guards aren't far behind.

VINNY

Holy shit campus security has gotten better!

MIA

Gotta go. Nice talking to you!

KENZIE

You too!

She runs after Vinny, runs back to Kenzie, grabs the piece of paper with her phone number, and runs away again.

INT. MENTAL HEALTH HOSPITAL - DAY

SUPER: Tuesday

JOSH (31) is sitting anxiously at one of the tables in the guest area, wearing an all-white hospital uniform.

His eyes light up when he sees his wife NOEL (32). One of the nurses escorts her into the room. They immediately embrace, both overjoyed to see each other. After a bit, Noel sits at the table, holding his hands tightly.

NOEL

So?

JOSH

So?

NOEL

They said you're making good progress. And you don't seem to be at risk. But they need to be sure, so it might be another week.

JOSH

You know what? It's probably for the best. Because as much as I want to go back to work...
(Noel's hands tense up)
Sorry, I'm joking.

NOEL

It's just... I'd rather not talk about it.

JOSH

Well, one of the things we learned in therapy is to use humor to help process through-

NOEL

You almost killed yourself because of them. It is not funny.

JOSH

Kinda is.

NOEL

Seriously?

JOSH

Well, we have to talk about it at some point.

NOEL

How about after they let you out? Then we can MAYBE talk about it. But while you're still here... I don't think you're ready just yet, and I don't want to trigger you.

JOSH

See, now you're making the jokes.

(Noel is confused)

Trigger?

NOEL

Oh, crap!

She buries her head in her hands and starts sobbing.

JOSH

Sweetie, it's okay, I'm-

NOEL

Don't tell me it's okay!!

JOSH

Look - they've taught me ways to cope and not be set off as easily. It's actually been really, really, REALLY helpful. When I snapped, it was a one-time thing. And I'm so sorry you had to see me like that. But it won't happen again. I won't put you through that again.

He wipes away her tears. They gaze lovingly at each other. The NURSE walks over and gently interrupts their moment.

NURSE

You have a call from your boss.

NOEL

No no no no no no no no no...

JOSH

Noel? It's okay. I won't hurt myself. Look, they even took the laces out of my shoes. I'm safe.

They stand up and embrace again. After a few seconds, the nurse leads Josh to the adjacent room. Noel watches from the other side of the glass as he answers the phone.

JOSH

This is Josh.

Switch focus to Taylor, who's driving to work.

TAYLOR

How are you, Josh? How's your time off?

JOSH (PHONE)

It's... not exactly the vacation I had planned. Anything else?

TAYLOR

Don't be rude. When will we have you back?

Back to Josh.

JOSH

As soon as they unlock the door.

TAYLOR (PHONE)

Very funny. Listen, I hate to bring this up, but you've used up your two weeks. Would you like to dip into your sick days?

JOSH

That's not really my concern right now.

Back to Taylor.

TAYLOR

Well, I suppose we can hammer out the details when you're in a better mood.

(Josh sighs audibly)

I still don't believe that you tried to shoot yourself, honestly. Seems rather melodramatic, even for you. But that's neither here nor there.

Switch back to Josh. Noel is watching anxiously from the other room, Josh mouths the words: "it's alright" while Taylor keeps talking.

TAYLOR (PHONE)

Well, if you find the time in your schedule - normally I wouldn't ask this, but seeing as you're our only lawyer... and such a hard-working one at that... There's a mountain of emails that've been piling up in your absence. Do you have access to your computer?

JOSH

Not really.

TAYLOR (PHONE)

I suppose that can wait until you return. I was also wondering, would you be willing to go to court tomorrow?

(Josh starts twitching anxiously)

It's about a parking ticket, should be easy to clear up. It's not for the company per se, just a thing on the side. And it goes without saying, but it would be pro bono, which is only fair given all I've done for your career.

Noel is concerned. Josh smiles at her, but his twitching is getting worse, his facade is cracking.

TAYLOR (PHONE)

In other news - while I have you on the line - I've also got a bad tooth, and I'd like to sue my dentist for malpractice. What are my options?

He hangs up, looks at Noel with tears in his eyes, then snaps. Noel screams in horror as he smashes his head repeatedly into the glass. The nurses try to subdue him, but it's too late. He's dead. There's blood everywhere.

Switch focus to Taylor, still driving obliviously.

TAYLOR

Tell you what, why don't I set up a Skype call, so I can show you the tooth, then you can tell me if I have a case. What day works best for you?

(pauses)

Josh? Josh...?

(she hangs up)

Probably having sex, little devil.

INT. CHRISTOF'S BEDROOM - DAY

Everything about the room screams 'conspiracy theorist'. Security monitors and guns line the walls, news clippings and photographs are strewn everywhere, and the overall ambience is that of an underground bunker.

On one side is a bed, a TV console, a nightstand, and a door to the bathroom. On the other is a solid oak desk, a recliner, and a stately bookshelf.

Christof wakes up immediately to the sound of the reveille on the alarm clock. He goes through his morning routine:

- using the bathroom
- making his bed
- stretching and doing a power workout
- getting dressed for work

Lastly, he grabs a report that somebody slid under the bedroom door. It's titled: 'Crisis Recommendations from the Creative Dept.' Christof chuckles, sits in the recliner, and skims through the pages.

CHRISTOF

Let's see... Boring, done it a hundred times, technically impossible... Mr. Draper, I hate to break it to you, but your team continues to be distinctly uncreative. We'll take it from here.

He runs the report through a wall-mounted shredder. The shreds fall like confetti on top of a foot-deep pile that's been accumulating for weeks.

CHRISTOF

Fucking freeloaders.

He walks over to the door and opens it. Apparently, his room is part of the office building. There are a half-dozen engineers lined up in the hallway.

CHRISTOF

Good morning, early birds!

ENGINEERS

Good morning, sir!

First up is MARK (53), a gruff man with a weathered cowboy hat and a charming Southern drawl.

CHRISTOF

Mark, pleasure. Your latest was the art museum?

MARK

Sure was. Rigged the whole damn ceiling to cave right in. Whole floor demolished.

CHRISTOF

How'd they respond?

MARK

Wouldn't you know it, they said they planned the whole thing. Said it was their newest exhibit.

CHRISTOF

You're shitting me.

MARK

No, that's God's truth. They said it was-
(pulls a newspaper article from his pocket)
"Both a post-liquid minimalism that decries the brouhaha of structural distegrity" - not sure that's even a word - "and a clear-eyed Orwellian synecdoche of the most primal fanaticism."

CHRISTOF

Hippie bastards... nice job.

MARK

The Lord's work.

Mark leaves. Next are Mia and Vinny. Mia is wearing a full military uniform, Vinny is wearing a tuxedo.

CHRISTOF

You two had the- what the fuck are you wearing?

VINNY

You said to get dressed up.

CHRISTOF

Yeah, for the client, not a fucking funeral.

VINNY

(in a terribly offensive Italian accent)
But it's a mafia thing, it's my people, you know?

CHRISTOF

No, I don't! Alright, you had the - fuck, great, you made me lose my - the CEOs. Are they dead?

VINNY

Yes, sir.

CHRISTOF

And you didn't get caught?

VINNY

Clearly not, sir.

CHRISTOF

Don't be fresh. Did it make the papers?

VINNY

Sorry. Yes, sir.

CHRISTOF

Good. Now get the hell out, go home and change, both of you. And Lord knows you won't have time to come back HERE, so you'll need to meet us at the client's office. Now is that asking too much? Because I will GLADLY find two other RESPONSIBLE engineers to be our shareholders if it's too much for you retards to handle!

VINNY

(in the Italian accent)
But you've got to understand that for our people-

MIA

(slaps Vinny)
We won't let you down, sir.

They leave quickly. Christof yells after them.

CHRISTOF

You're lucky those CEOs were democrats, or I wouldn't be so FUCKING reasonable!

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra walks in with two cups of coffee and more enthusiasm than Louise bargained for on a Tuesday morning.

KENDRA
Hey girlfriend!

LOUISE
Mmm.

KENDRA
So like, we should like totally get our nails done next week. And, wait a second, ohmaigosh, are you on TikTok? It's like, SO funny.

LOUISE
Mmmmmm...

KENDRA
So like, how are the grandkids? You're like the sweetest old lady I've like ever met, it's totes adorbs, I like wanna adopt you LOLOL.

Louise lets out a deep sigh.

KENDRA
I know what you're thinking, and you're right, it IS annoying. But I don't want us to be those two women in the workplace who don't get along, so, I'll err on the side of overly friendly. And if you reciprocate, I promise I won't go full airhead on you again. Sound good?

LOUISE
Mmm-hmm.

Kendra sits down, logs in, and is quickly taken aback.

KENDRA
One hundred and seventeen emails? What a classic cubicle struggle. And let me see - ah, yes, here's a surprise - I'm CC'd on all of them, and DIRECTLY copied on NONE of them.

LOUISE

Mmm.

KENDRA

Well, today's your lucky day Louise. Because I don't waste time reading things that aren't actually meant for me. So, while the rest of you are drowning in emails, I will be filtering these bad boys to their own folder. Just a little trick they taught us in business school.

(pauses for effect)

Not that you can relate.

Louise is not amused and immediately types out a rebuttal.

LOUISE (IM)

What if you filter out something important?

KENDRA

And a good morning to you too! I mean, it's not like I won't read them ever, I just won't read them right away. And besides, if it's REALLY important, my hunch is that Brad would be more than happy to fill me in.

LOUISE (IM)

Tbh, he probably would lol.

KENDRA

Yeah, no kidding. And excellent use of young people speak. Does this mean we're friends?

LOUISE (IM)

Whoops, sorry.

(typing)

I didn't mean to send that directly, you just got CC'd on it.

(typing)

I'll filter it out next time.

KENDRA

Touché.

Louise flashes a smile, then frowns and pivots away. Kendra sighs loudly and starts working.

INT. BREAKROOM - DAY

Brad and Paul are both drinking their coffee and 'bonding'. Well, *Brad* thinks they're bonding. Paul is patronizing him so that his suffering will be over faster.

BRAD

And then the widget salesman says, "But I don't sell any actual products! Just widgets!!"

Brad laughs hysterically. Paul fakes a laugh and starts to walk away, but he's startled by a sudden barrage from Christof's paintball rifle.

PAUL

What the-

CHRISTOF

Think fast!

He fires a few more rounds, all direct hits. Paul is livid.

PAUL

What is WRONG with you?!

CHRISTOF

Lighten up, it's just paint. Brad, my compadre, you want some too?

BRAD

Well Christof, while my personality IS colorful, I want my carpet to match my drapes, so it'll be a hard pass. Appreciate it though.

CHRISTOF

Anytime.

He shoots one more at Paul's coffee, knocking the mug out of his hand. Paul tries unsuccessfully to clean up the paint with wet paper towels.

CHRISTOF

Reminder, we have a client meeting today, so you two fairies will be in charge. Think you can hold down the fort?

BRAD

Hold it down? Heck, we'll dig a moat!

CHRISTOF

That's my boy!

Taylor joins them, posh as usual.

TAYLOR

Why are you covered in paint? It's only Tuesday.

(Paul groans. Taylor kisses Christof)

Shall we? Where are the engineers?

CHRISTOF

On their way.

TAYLOR

Paul, can you be a dear and check on my computer while we're out? Another glitch.

PAUL

Remind me why WE don't get to meet the clients?

TAYLOR

It's like the chain of command. We can't all be in the same room at the same time.

Paul gestures wildly, as if to say, "WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME ROOM RIGHT NOW!!" Taylor winks at him.

CHRISTOF

It's so the engineers can scope out the area and find all the weak points. Easier to sabotage.

BRAD

Woah woah, I don't think that's appropriate to-

CHRISTOF

Sorry Brad, let me rephrase that. By... including the engineers in the... client onboarding process... we're giving them a deeply rooted awareness of... the clients' day-to-day operations... so that they can create... OPTIMAL risk scenarios.

Brad thinks about it for a moment.

BRAD

Question: Can I get a cleanup on aisle Christof?
Because there are a lot of creative juices, and
they're making QUITE the mess.

Brad chuckles to himself. Taylor and Paul just stare.
Christof chuckles, pulls out a crisp twenty dollar bill,
crumples it up, and throws it down the hall.

CHRISTOF

Go fetch!

Brad runs after it.

CHRISTOF

Make sure he doesn't stick his fingers in a
socket while we're gone.

TAYLOR

Paul, you still never told me why you're covered
in paint. Is it a programmer thing?

CHRISTOF

I'll explain on the drive.

TAYLOR

Splendid. Have fun, boys!

She and Christof leave. Paul groans again. Brad runs back
in a few seconds later, uncrumpling the bill excitedly.

BRAD

(looking at Paul's paint-covered clothes)
Looks like he's not the only one who spilled some
creative juices. Now, I would love nothing more
than to keep this conversation going, but-

PAUL

No! You?

BRAD

Right? But, business calls, and she is
relentless. Catch you later, masticator!

Brad runs off. Paul looks around in complete resignation.

INT. MIA'S TRUCK - DAY

Mia and Vinny are wearing more appropriate business attire. They're on their way to the client meeting.

VINNY

Okay, new business idea. You've heard about life coaches, right? What if instead of a LIFE coach, it was a WIFE coach?

MIA

Okay. Go on.

VINNY

Yeah? Usually you yell at me for being sexist... Sure you won't be offended?

MIA

Oh, I'm expecting to be. But I'm dying to see just HOW misogynistic it is.

VINNY

Don't jump to conclusions. Alright, so one of the biggest struggles for men in the 21st century-
(Mia bursts out laughing)
See? SEE??

MIA

This is good, keep going.

VINNY

So, one of the struggles men face, which is REAL, is how to figure out their wives, so I'm thinking you could hire a wife coach to help you better understand them.

MIA

Coming from the guy who's not married.

VINNY

But I could be.

MIA

But you're not.

VINNY

But if I was, I'd hire a wife coach.

(Mia waits expectantly)

So. Imagine, you have two guys in the office talking over the water cooler. And the one is like, 'hey Giuseppe, how is the old battle axe?' And Giuseppe is like, 'Well Mario, not good bro. She don't like to be called a battle axe, and she cries all the time, and she don't listen. And now with this MeToo hashtag twitter thing, she don't want to fuck me no more! And I got urges, I need my pussy, so I gotta beat it out of her cuz she won't give it to me, you know what I'm-

Mia pulls out her gun and presses it against his head.

MIA

Waaaay too far.

VINNY

I was kidding, geez!

MIA

I'm serious. That's not okay.

VINNY

THIS is why we need a wife coach, otherwise we don't know when we cross the line.

MIA

You know! Give me a fucking break.

VINNY

Alright, alright. It won't happen again.

(she's still holding the gun)

I'm sorry. Honest. It was a dumb idea.

Mia nods and slowly re-holsters the gun.

VINNY

Please don't go all PTSD when we meet the client. I don't want to be on Christof's bad side.

MIA

PTSD? I don't have PTSD.

VINNY

What?

MIA

Oh, you mean pulling the gun out? Yeah, I only do that to you.

VINNY

What??

MIA

Sometimes that's the only way you learn.

VINNY

Really?? That's not cool. You know I don't like being played. I like to be the player.

(in his Marlon Brando voice)

I like to pull the strings, I'm not a puppet like my son Fredo, you understand?

MIA

I'll stop once YOU stop saying dumb shit.

VINNY

(back to his regular voice)

Fiiiiiiine.

They drive in silence for a few seconds.

VINNY

Okay, new business idea. What if we got paid for threatening to kill people? Like, we harass and intimidate them to teach them a lesson. And force them to change their mind.

MIA

That job already exists.

VINNY

Oh right, of course. It's the Marines.

Vinny dabs triumphantly. Mia presses his head against the window (not enough to hurt him). She turns down her hearing aid and smiles smugly, deaf to his apologies. Finally she lets go, and drives on as if everything is normal.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra and Louise are working quietly at their desks. Brad skips over excitedly - Louise doesn't respond, but Kendra immediately greets him.

KENDRA

Hey there, boss! Hope your morning is off to an excellent start. You want some coffee?

She offers him the second cup. Louise rolls her eyes.

BRAD

You keeper! I hate to turn down the offer, but I already had my dose. And you know what they say, a caffeinated worker is a halfeinated worker.

KENDRA

That doesn't- okay. I have a few updates, if you have a minute to discuss them.

BRAD

Walk with me.

Kendra smiles slyly at Louise. Louise looks disapprovingly at her, then starts laughing to herself. Kendra doesn't know how to respond, so she just walks away with Brad, who's started walking without her.

For the rest of the scene, they're walking through a never-ending array of hallways, same as the day before.

BRAD

Lay it on me. Rapid fire. Time is money, and the squeaky wheel gives me Alzheimer's.

KENDRA

(as she catches up)

Three things that I want to bring up.

(pauses)

Did you say the squeaky wheel gives you Alzheimer's?

BRAD

Metaphorically speaking.

KENDRA

That doesn't help.

BRAD

Don't dwell on it. Three things.

KENDRA

Right. One, the log. Do we really need to keep track of everything we do in a log? I mean, most of the work is on spreadsheets or emails anyway, and let's be honest, nobody besides me will ever READ my log, so can we cut that out?

BRAD

Balloons of redundancy!

KENDRA

Explain.

BRAD

Balloons of redundancy! You always have more balloons than you need. That way, when one of them pops, the house stays afloat! Between the emails, being CC'd on the emails, spreadsheets, logs, and other documents, we know that we've covered all our bases.

KENDRA

Maybe covered a little too much?

BRAD

Preposterous! You can never have enough coverage!

KENDRA

So the log stays. Super. Second, I got a request to send a KPI report to one of the clients, and they said they need it by end of business today. Would you be able to QC it before I-

BRAD

(stops, looks horrified)

Did you already send it??

KENDRA

No...

BRAD

Phew.

(continues walking)

Never send anything to the client the same day they ask for it. Always wait an extra day.

KENDRA

Why?

BRAD

Because otherwise, they expect that we'll respond to EVERYTHING that fast. And while YOU might be capable of running the report quickly, what about the person who replaces you someday? Very few employees could match the benchmarks that you will undoubtedly set.

KENDRA

Wait... are you saying that I should be bad at my job because otherwise it might set the precedent that we should be GOOD at our job?

BRAD

Kendra, I don't like it any more than you do.

(whispers)

But given the hiring pool, I've learned that I have to take what I can get. Setting the bar high doesn't give me as many options.

(back to normal volume)

You have my permission to take things slow.

KENDRA

(sighs)

Three. Our weekly dashboards. Right now, it takes about six hours because we're looking up all the values manually. I had some free time yesterday, so I wrote a script to pull directly from the data warehouse, and wouldn't you know it? I cut the time down to five minutes.

BRAD

(suddenly panicking)

Oh no, big no! This is Major No speaking, do not proceed as planned. Please tell me you didn't share it with the others.

KENDRA

Not yet. It's okay, calm down.

Brad takes a few deep breaths.

BRAD

That is a bad idea for several reasons.

KENDRA

Really?

BRAD

Mm-hmm. One: we don't have a replacement task. You can't eliminate six hours of work without filling it with something else.

KENDRA

I mean, you could downsize. With sixty some employees who all run it, we would save 360 hours each week, which is nine full-time positions.

BRAD

WHICH leads to reason two: we must constantly fight the impression that capitalism is cruel.

KENDRA

So we give the impression that it's inefficient?

BRAD

Those nine employees aren't just numbers on a staffing report. They're human beings with hopes, dreams, families, and meaningful work. Do we really want to discard them because your code does the job better?

KENDRA

How does spending six hours copy-pasting data like a robot qualify as meaningful work?

BRAD

It's better than unemployment. Just ask those nine employees what they'd prefer. Three: if we change the process too drastically, then legal gets involved because any major changes could constitute emotional or mental stress.

KENDRA

You're joking.

BRAD

Afraid not. We have to offer free counseling, assure them that they won't be out of a job, start a book club for 'Who Moved My Cheese?'...

KENDRA

But it's a waste of time!!

BRAD

It's not a waste if somebody finds value in it.

KENDRA

I guarantee that nobody will complain if they have six free hours.

BRAD

I hear your words. I understand. You are valid. Here's my counteroffer. Find a way to cut the time down by an hour, from six to five. With that extra hour, we can let people leave early on Friday until we find another task to replace it. Do that five more times over the next few months, and voilà! The task is now streamlined, nobody got fired, there was no hassle... Everyone wins.

KENDRA

Fine. But until then, I get to use the shortcut, because I hate doing busywork. And in exchange - ridiculous as this may sound - I would like to take on more responsibility. Maybe I could also collaborate with the creative team?

BRAD

The Mad Men? No, I'd prefer you stay exclusively on the client relations team.

(Kendra starts to object, Brad cuts her off)

You're used to going a hundred twenty, try sixty for a change. You know what they say - all play and no work makes Jack go berserk.

Kendra thinks about it, realizes that the phrase is a point in her favor, but decides not to fight Brad on it.

INT. CLIENT'S BOARDROOM - DAY

Christof, Taylor, Mia and Vinny are greeted by the young, bright-eyed CEO, WILLIAM (27), and five equally young company managers, who are eagerly waiting to greet them.

The company name is Widgets of the Month And a Newsletter. Yes, you read that correctly. And it's displayed in garish green letters on one of the walls. The other walls have generic motivational posters.

WILLIAM

Good morning. I'm William Davis, founder and CEO. You must be Taylor.

TAYLOR

(shaking his hand)

Last time I checked.

(they laugh)

These are my fellow stakeholders.

WILLIAM

And this is our management team.

TAYLOR

Pleasure to make your acquaintance.

Everyone takes a seat. William gives his spiel from the podium at the front of the room.

WILLIAM

On behalf of Widgets of the Month And a Newsletter, I'd like to welcome you all, and I'm looking forward to our professional relationship. Here at W.O.M.A.N., our motto is: we send people widgets of the month... and a newsletter!

The W.O.M.A.N. managers all chuckle, as does Taylor. Christof, Mia and Vinny fake laugh once they realize it's supposed to be funny.

WILLIAM

Kidding of course. Our real motto is: enhancing our core initiatives through inter-generational know-how and sustainable kindness.

CHRISTOF
(whispers)
Gesundheit.

He, Mia and Vinny try not to laugh. William doesn't notice.

WILLIAM
With that said, I'd like to break down our day into two parts: getting to know YOU, and getting to know US. Part one is getting to know YOU. We're generally familiar with your company, but we only know you as bullet points on a website. We want to put a face to the name and really hear from YOU about what you do, what drives you, and why this will be a successful partnership. Do you have a presentation planned?

TAYLOR
But of course.

WILLIAM
Great! Following your presentation, we'll have an open forum to answer any residual questions our team might have. At which point, I'm thinking we could break for lunch. Tracking so far?
(Taylor smiles and nods)
Perfect. After lunch, part two: you getting to know US. We'll be giving a full tour of our facilities, led by our queen of diversity: D'Bra. Not Debra - D'Bra, no 'e'. D'Bra?

D'BRA (32), a smartly-dressed African-American woman, stands up and waves, then looks disappointedly at William. He looks confused, then his face turns red.

WILLIAM
Oh shoot, I'm so sorry, I didn't think about how offensive that sounded.

CHRISTOF
What was offensive?

WILLIAM
The word 'queen'. I'm so sorry to any of you who might be in the LGBTQIA+ community.

D'BRA

The good thing is, you're recognizing it faster, and you apologized. That sensitivity training finally seems to be paying off. Hello team, my name is D'Bra. Officially, I'm the HR manager. Unofficially, I'm a champion of diversity and a brand ambassador. As Will said, I'll be guiding the tour this afternoon, so be thinking of questions I can sink my teeth into!

She sits down and they all clap politely. Once again, Vinny, Mia and Christof quickly join in once they realize it's the expected response.

WILLIAM

Thank you, D'Bra. And again, my apologies for my little faux pas back there. Does anyone have any housekeeping questions before we begin?

TAYLOR

I suggest we split up. I'll stay here and give the presentation. Lord knows that these three have heard it a million times. And they can take the tour and fill me in later. That way, we cut our time in half, avoid the lunch bill, and give everybody a few hours back in their day.

WILLIAM

That... well, I guess that-

D'BRA

What an idea! Innovative AND cost-conscious!

TAYLOR

Splendid. And this is why you'll be paying us, and not the the other way around. Shall we begin?

WILLIAM

Yeah, let's do it. D'Bra?

D'BRA

Let's get this starty parted! Walk with me!

She, Christof, Mia and Vinny stand up and leave. Taylor smiles proudly at William. He's in awe.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Paul pokes his head out of the computer lab to make sure nobody's around. The coast is clear. He sneaks out, locks the door behind him, and gets in the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY (cont.)

Paul hums and browses on his phone while the elevator takes him to the third floor.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY (cont.)

Paul nods at a furniture mover as they pass each other. He's still on his phone.

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY (cont.)

Still humming, Paul walks into Taylor's office to check on her computer. He does a double take. There are a dozen furniture movers and animal handlers re-arranging the room.

PAUL

The hell...?

MOVER WITH ONE LINE

Coming through!

Paul moves aside as the man lugs one of the chairs into the hall. Another is detaching her chandelier, two are packing the grandfather clock.

At the same time, the animal handlers are trying to wrangle a flamingo, a sloth, a goat, and an aye-aye. The flamingo pecks angrily at Paul.

PAUL

Shoo! Get!

ANIMAL HANDLER WITH ONE LINE

Come here, girl!

The flamingo squawks and struts away. Paul closes and opens his eyes repeatedly, thinking it's all a dream. He looks at the sloth, who smiles as if he's high, then leaves.

INT. W.O.M.A.N. WAREHOUSE - DAY

D'Bra is giving Christof, Vinny and Mia the tour. There are a few hundred employees working in a large, stereotypical warehouse. They're sorting through massive bins of random products and boxing them up.

D'BRA

So, a quick shakedown of our business model. What's one of the greatest threats facing our world today?

CHRISTOF

Bernie Sanders?

D'BRA

You're such a coffee pot! But no, it's pollution! And one of the biggest drivers of pollution is a mindset that we can mindlessly make products that we'll just end up throwing away. Most companies call it inventory, we call it opportunitory.

CHRISTOF

(whispers to Mia and Vinny)

Sprinklers are unobstructed, not a lot of loose cardboard laying around, so let's NOT do a fire.

D'Bra doesn't notice their exchange. Mia takes notes, comically trying to appear business-y.

MIA

Opportunitory? Is that an ORGANIC term?

D'BRA

Good question! It's organic, agile, AND lean! What we do is we contract with retailers and manufacturers, and have them send us their unwanted or unsold goods. Then, our talented shipment artisans-

(gestures to the employees at work)

-assemble our W.O.M.A.N. boxes. It's a standard fee-per-month mystery box delivery subscription. Our customers receive a new box every month, and each box contains anywhere from ten to fifteen surprise 'widgets'. And no two boxes are alike!

CHRISTOF

(to Mia and Vinny)

Since they're dealing with junk, make a note to NOT do a robbery. Wouldn't be believable.

D'BRA

(still unaware)

Now, I know what you're thinking. "Hold the smartphone, D'Bra. The company is called Widgets of the Month and a NEWSLETTER. Where does that NEWSLETTER come into play?"

CHRISTOF

(to Mia and Vinny)

Why do I feel like I know her...?

D'BRA

You see, newsletters are the new billboards. Included in every W.O.M.A.N. box is a randomly selected newsletter from one of our partners. It's the same idea as leaving your business card on a bulletin board. And wouldn't you know it, most companies will pay through the FACE for premium marketing SPACE.

VINNY

(whispers)

Isn't it "pay through the nose?"

MIA

So what qualifications do you look for in a - what did you call them, shipment artisans?

CHRISTOF

(to Vinny)

God, she seems familiar.

D'BRA

The most important one is creativity. I like to tell my recruits, "Bring a mop, because you'll need a cleanup on aisle YOU once all those creative juices start overflowing!"

CHRISTOF

Ohhhhhh...

INT. W.O.M.A.N. BOARDROOM - DAY (cont.)

William and the managers are listening to Taylor's presentation. William especially seems enamored with her.

TAYLOR

Disruptive Paradigms. Bringing you today's technology tomorrow.

WILLIAM

Don't you mean tomorrow's technology today?

TAYLOR

You're adorable, Will. You heard me correctly the first time - TODAY'S technology, TOMORROW.

(William and the others look confused)

Any theories WHY that's our motto?

(nobody is sure)

Come now, surely ONE of you has a brain.

WILLIAM

Is it because it's a disruptive paradigm?

TAYLOR

Obviously, Will, but think harder. WHY is it a disruptive paradigm? We don't disrupt paradigms for the sheer fun of it, now do we?

(none of them have an answer)

Today's technology may not be cutting edge, but it's safe, it's proven, and it's manageable. Tomorrow's technology is anything but. We would rather our clients have reliability than novelty.

It's like they all suddenly have an epiphany. They nod and whisper excitedly, impressed by Taylor's reasoning. Taylor finds it rather flattering.

TAYLOR

Please stop, you're making me blush.

(they settle down)

As you likely know from our website, our core product is an AI-enhanced logistics software named Jamal. Jamal can be customized and applied to virtually any data-driven enterprise.

WILLIAM

And it doesn't matter that we're not a big company yet? We're still in the expansion phase.

TAYLOR

Not at all! We have over a thousand clients - including over two hundred Fortune 500 companies - ranging from global industry leaders to mom and pop startups. And the cost is based on the volume of data being processed, so a small business, like yours, pays less.

(they murmur in agreement)

Now, in addition to Jamal, we also offer a risk preparedness package, included free of charge. Our skilled team of engineers works around the clock to identify and mitigate your risks.

WILLIAM

How do you mitigate them, specifically?

TAYLOR

A lady never tells.

(they all chuckle)

That's proprietary. But rest assured knowing that we've cost our clients nearly 22 billion dollars over the last ten years.

They're all impressed, except for William, whose jaw drops.

WILLIAM

Did you say, COST 22 billion??

TAYLOR

I did indeed, Will. Good to know at least one of you is paying attention.

(the others are embarrassed)

See, by our estimates, our clients WOULD have lost up to a TRILLION dollars in facility shutdowns, failures, recalls, bad PR, and any number of safety violations. So, while they still have lost 22 billion due to those same issues, we've effectively SAVED them 78 billion.

They're all relieved and start clapping. Taylor smiles coyly and makes eyes at William, who gladly flirts back.

INT. MAD MEN OFFICE - DAY

Kendra lets herself into the main office for the creative team: the 'Mad Men'. It's decorated as if it's the set of Mad Men - a big wooden table, 60s decor, a liquor cabinet, and a thin haze of smoke.

As if that wasn't surreal enough, all the men in the room bear a striking resemblance to the Mad Men characters: DON, KEN, ROGER, PETE, HARRY. And BERT, who's suspended peacefully upside down on the ceiling. A few are smoking.

Kendra is bewildered. The moment she arrives, all the men except Pete and Bert stand up, eager to greet her.

PETE

Next item on the list-

ROGER

Gentlemen, God has smiled upon us!

DON

This is a pleasant surprise. Welcome to the team.

KENDRA

No, I'm client relations, just thought I would see how your team works.

ROGER

I don't believe we've met. I'd remember you.

HARRY

You're a stunner. Harry Crane.

ROGER

Roger Sterling.

DON

Don Draper.

KENDRA

Kendra Smith.

KEN

Pigs, all of them. Ken Cosgrove.

ROGER
Don't scare her off! Pigs, please!

KEN
Just bracing her.

DON
You don't think she can handle herself?

HARRY
She can handle MY self.

Ken elbows Harry, he winces.

PETE
Can we please return to the agenda?

ROGER
Ah for Pete's sake. See what I did there?

DON
You new to the company?

KENDRA
Yeah, day two so far. This is still Disruptive
Paradigms, right?

ROGER
Sure is. Have a seat.

KENDRA
I'll stand, but thanks.

ROGER
Nonsense! You'll wear yourself out, especially
with that figure.

KENDRA
Really, I'm more comfortable standing.

HARRY
Hate to break it to you Roger, but she's
definitely a Jackie, NOT a Marilyn. I wouldn't
get your hopes up.

ROGER

Looks like you're already up.

KEN

Pigs, what did I tell you?

KENDRA

I didn't mean to cause any trouble.

DON

You didn't. Some people just can't take a hint.

ROGER

Please, feminism won't die under MY watch.
I admire a woman who stands up for herself.

PETE

Need I remind you all that ONE, you are all
MARRIED, TWO, we have a lot of ground to cover,
so stop your... DROOLING... and get back on task,
or so help me I will get Brad!

They all groan and sit down, except Kendra. And Bert, who waves charmingly at her from the ceiling.

PETE

Alright. Question 17. How well would you be able to respond to flooding in the office? It looks like the average was a 5.2 out of 10.

DON

So, reasonably well, but not spectacular.

ROGER

Better add it just to be safe.

KEN

(taking notes)

Added. And as a reminder, I am much more than a notetaker. You remember the guy who landed the plane on the Hudson? Because some birds got caught in the engines? That was my idea.

ROGER

Oh please!

PETE

Question 18!

ROGER

Pete, turn around. Looks like you've got something stuck up your ass.

PETE

(talking over him)

HOW WELL WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO RESPOND to a fire in the office? 8.3 out of 10.

DON

Good. Add it.

(to Kendra)

Anything above an 8 is low-hanging fruit. If the client seems confident that they can avert a particular crisis, we recommend it. We don't want to throw curveballs all the time.

KENDRA

I see. And where do you get these Q and A's?

HARRY

You can Q my A.

Ken elbows him.

ROGER

Focus groups. God bless 'em.

DON

We draft the questions for a range of scenarios, the focus group gets us our answers, then we decide which ones to recommend to engineering.

KENDRA

Makes sense. And I assume you don't ask the clients themselves, right?

ROGER

Of course not! Too suspicious.

PETE

Moving on...

HARRY

This may sound like a crazy idea, but what if we COMBINED those two scenarios? Doing a flood AND a fire at the same time?

DON

Because, Harry, the water would put out the fire.

HARRY

Mm, right. Sounds pretty hot.

Harry winks at Kendra. Don looks at him like he's an idiot. Kendra isn't sure how to respond.

PETE

Question 19. How well would you be able to respond to a gas leak in the office? 1.4.

ROGER

Somebody's not prepared.

KEN

(writing it down)

I'll say.

KENDRA

Let me get this straight. It seems like no matter what the focus group says, you'll 'recommend' that they create the emergency. Right? So why not cut out the focus group, and send your scenarios directly to Christof and his team?

There's a pause as they all consider the idea.

DON

Brilliant.

KEN

That would make more sense...

ROGER

Why didn't we think of that sooner?

PETE

This is ridiculous!

Pete storms out. The other men are genuinely impressed with Kendra's suggestion. They all stand up to take a break and celebrate - Ken opens the liquor cabinet and pours out glasses of bourbon.

ROGER

Bert, you can come down, we finally got our
'fresh perspective'.

Bert smiles and works his way down the wall to the ground.

DON

Do you want to join the team?

KENDRA

I don't know that this is really for me..

KEN

(passing out the alcohol)
Cheers.

ROGER

To fresh perspectives!

HARRY

Hear, hear!

KENDRA

I'll pass, it's - well, look at that, it's almost
eleven o'clock. In the morning.

ROGER

Eleven? I'm surprised we made it this long.

They all clink glasses and drink, except Kendra, who's awkwardly off to the side. Suddenly, Pete and Brad walk in. Both are furious.

PETE

I tried to rein them in, but you know how easily
distracted they are.

BRAD

Ohhhh yes.

ROGER

Brad! Don't take her away, or I might have to pull out my secret weapon.

DON

She wasn't causing any trouble.

BRAD

No, she just went against direct instructions from me to keep to her own work and-

ROGER

(whispers)

Queer.

Brad jumps, whirls around, and glares at Roger.

HARRY

Maybe this wouldn't be a problem if you sent us more broads, Brad. Woah - broad, brad, broad...

PETE

This is unbelievable!

DON

Come on Brad, you can be flexible. We're a small company. She would make a great crisis-writer.

BRAD

I don't doubt it. I'm happy to move her to a team where she's more comfortable. Because clearly she won't grow where she's been planted!

ROGER

(whispers)

Queer.

KENDRA

Yikes. Okay everyone. It was quite the experience meeting you all, and I appreciate your flattery. But this isn't my milieu, so I'll be going now.

She leaves abruptly. They all watch dumbfounded. Ken elbows Harry once more. Roger sighs, Don grumbles, Brad leaves, and Pete picks up where they left off.

INT. W.O.M.A.N. THINK TANK - DAY

D'Bra leads Christof, Mia and Vinny into a room on the second floor. There are full windows on all four sides, creating a brightly-lit, spacious setting.

Half the area is decorated like a living room: couches, recliners, a pool table, and potted plants. The other half is a kitchen with a full fridge, oven, dishwasher, and an island with a spread of healthy snacks.

Vinny immediately notices the snacks.

D'BRA

Welcome to the Think Tank. I can see you've got a stomach to feed, so help yourself.

VINNY

Let's gooooo! I mean, gratitude.

He grabs a plate and piles it with food. Christof and Mia walk around observantly, trying to appear professional.

D'BRA

This is where management works - it's the heart and sleeve of the company. We believe that our office should be a calming, friendly space. Somewhere that's GREAT, not somewhere we HATE.

CHRISTOF

But this is your whole facility - this, the warehouse, and the boardroom. Where does everyone else work?

D'BRA

I forgot to mention. You already met our entire management team at the meeting earlier. This is all the space we need.

CHRISTOF

The meeting...? That was only six people.

D'BRA

Correct! And of course our shipment artisans, but they don't come up here very often.

CHRISTOF

This whole room for six people?

MIA

I like it.

CHRISTOF

But it's so... empty! This can't be all you have!
Where are the desks? The servers? Computers?

MIA

It came without packages, boxes or bags!

Mia and D'Bra both chuckle, but Christof isn't amused.
Vinny is still busy getting food.

D'BRA

Don't be too hard on yourself. You have a very
20th century view of the workplace, and that's
perfectly understandable for an old white man.
See, one of our principles at W.O.M.A.N. is to
always ask ourselves: do we really NEED to do it
this way, or can we do it a BETTER way?

MIA

Sort of a post-liquid minimalism, do you agree?

D'BRA

I do! We don't need laptops because we all have
our phones. We don't need desks because we don't
have laptops. And we don't need servers because
all our data is on the cloud.

CHRISTOF

Your phones aren't secure, though.

D'BRA

On the contrary, they're HYPER-secure. Since we
don't pay for laptop security, we can apply the
cost savings towards protecting our phones.

CHRISTOF

What about the data? How do you handle all the
shipment requests? Your phones don't have that
much processing power.

D'BRA

90% of the work is managed entirely by TPL.

(sensing Mia's confusion)

Third party logistics. But that is a legitimate concern, and in fact, it's part of the reason why we're contracting with YOU! Our phones can't keep up with our volume anymore, so we're routing the data through companies that can handle it.

CHRISTOF

But, but... but it's... you're not giving us much to work with. There's nothing we can break!

D'BRA

Exactly! We've error-proofed what we can, and outsourced as much risk as possible. It's the most effective way to prevent emergencies!

Christof bangs his head on the window in exasperation. Vinny walks over to them with a plate full of salami.

VINNY

(to Mia)

You want a taste of my MEAT?

Mia instinctively reaches for her gun, then stops herself. Vinny tries not to laugh out loud, Mia just glares at him.

INT. W.O.M.A.N. BOARDROOM - DAY (cont.)

Taylor is taking a question from one of the managers.

TAYLOR

Yes?

UNNAMED MANAGER

Do you use an integrated network?

TAYLOR

Of course! It used to be segregated, but you know how times change, what with Obama and all.

(they all look mortified)

I'm joking. I'm not a racist!

(they sigh with relief)

Yes, another one?

UNNAMED MANAGER

Just to be sure, you run the program in-house, correct? All we do is send the data? That's what your site says, I'm just double-checking.

TAYLOR

Why would you waste our time double-checking?
(the manager is embarrassed)
Quite frankly, I'm appalled. I expected that you would be prepared, but clearly that was asking too much. The deal is off. Good day!

She storms out. The manager stewes in shame, while William runs after Taylor into the warehouse.

INT. W.O.M.A.N. WAREHOUSE - DAY (cont.)

Taylor joins up with Christof, Mia and Vinny, who are just coming downstairs with D'Bra. She's ignoring William.

WILLIAM

I'm so sorry about that, we're anxious is all, meeting with new partners can be intimidating. Please don't back out on us. Give us a chance.

TAYLOR

(stops walking)
Apology accepted. But the cost goes up by 10%.

WILLIAM

Done. Thank you so much.

TAYLOR

(extends her hand for a kiss)
Go ahead. I won't sue for harassment.

William grins and starts sucking on it. Taylor slaps him and marches off with the others.

WILLIAM

30%!

TAYLOR

(as they walk out the door)
Deal!

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra is eating lunch at her desk, still bitter about the Mad Men incident. Brad walks up apologetically.

BRAD

Is this a bad time?

Kendra stares at him incredulously with food in her mouth.

BRAD

You know we have a full cafeteria. Healthy for your body AND your budget.

KENDRA

(once she finishes chewing)

I was going to ask about that. It seems like a waste given how small the company is, but what do I know? I should just keep to my own work.

(Brad fidgets nervously)

I'm just growing where I've been planted.

BRAD

Can we talk, please? I feel really bad.

KENDRA

Fine.

Kendra takes one more bite of her sandwich, then follows Brad to his office.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - DAY (cont.)

The office is decked out with inspirational posters, flowcharts, a standing desk, and a mannequin dressed like Willy Wonka (the Gene Wilder version).

KENDRA

Dare I ask?

BRAD

He's my inspiration. Take a STAND. Get it?

Kendra isn't amused. Suddenly, it's as if Brad switches to 'serious' mode. It catches her off guard.

BRAD

I want to genuinely apologize for my outburst. That was rude of me, and I'm sorry. The truth is: you're one of the best employees I've hired in a long time. The reason I want you to stay on the client relations team is that we might finally make some improvements. It'll be a nice change having somebody who cares about their job.

(Kendra is thrown off by his new demeanor)
And it's not that I don't think you could thrive on the creative team. You can thrive anywhere. But at least THEY'RE all motivated, so I'm not worried about them being productive. And without sounding sexist, they don't need distractions.

KENDRA

Well, trust me - having met them, I agree that it's not the best fit.

BRAD

Indeed. That said - I don't want you spinning your wheels doing nothing, and I definitely don't want you to quit out of boredom. So, if you're up to the challenge, I have a side project. One of those things I've always been meaning to get to.

(Kendra seems somewhat interested)
Basically, I need an archive of crisis scenarios. Anything we've brainstormed, which ones have we implemented, which clients did we test them on, what were the outcomes... all of that information is out there, but it would be useful to have a one stop data shop we could pull from.

KENDRA

Would I get a pay raise?

BRAD

No, but there would be a generous bonus once you complete the project.

KENDRA

Alright, I'll start today.

They shake hands, then Kendra leaves. Brad switches back to his normal self and starts jogging in place while typing.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Taylor is back. She's knocking on the door to the programming lab. Paul barely opens it, steps out, and closes it quickly so that she can't see inside.

PAUL

Yes?

TAYLOR

When will I get to meet your team?

PAUL

You know how introverts are, we don't like to be meeting people all the time.

TAYLOR

Mm. Did you get a chance to fix my computer?

PAUL

No, actually, I didn't. I was a little distracted by the LIVE ANIMALS in your office!

TAYLOR

So you saw my new arrangement! What do you think? I wanted you to be the first to know.

PAUL

What do I- wait, is your computer even... why am I not surprised...?

TAYLOR

You're so keen, Paul. It was the only way to get you in the office. But going back to my question: what are your thoughts?

PAUL

You mean, on having LIVE ANIMALS in your office?

TAYLOR

It's the latest fad, all the CEOs are doing it - it's called faunature.

(Paul is bewildered)

Don't be daft, it's exactly what it sounds like. Replacing all my furniture with fauna.

PAUL

Faunature.

(Taylor nods)

... Why?

TAYLOR

It's dynamic eco-amalgamation. We've moved beyond the need for stagnant, lifeless furnishings and are entering a new era. One in which man and beast are inextricably linked, where the office and the earth become one. Not to mention the health benefits.

PAUL

WHAT??

TAYLOR

While I have you, a quick point of clarification. When we sign up a new client - do we send them the software, or do we manage all of their data in-house? I can never remember.

PAUL

What the hell is dynamic eco-amalgamation??

TAYLOR

Please don't get sidetracked, Paul.

PAUL

(shaking his head in disbelief)

Sorry. What were you asking?

TAYLOR

Does Jamal run everything on our own computers, or do we install him on the client's computers?

PAUL

Well, as I've reminded you literally hundreds of times, we run it HERE, on our OWN servers,

TAYLOR

Splendid. You're a gem, Paul, don't ever change.

She kisses him on the cheek and strides away. Paul waits until she's out of view, then pretends to shoot himself.

INT. BREAKROOM - DAY

SUPER: Wednesday

The next morning, Brad merrily skips in and accosts Christof, who's pouring himself a mug of vinegar.

BRAD

Cream and sugar? It certainly describes Taylor, am I right?

(he laughs, Christof is amused)

Just looping you in, keeping you up to date, lubricating the ol' planner, but we've got a meeting in five minutes. Management only.

CHRISTOF

What does Paul want now?

BRAD

You guys have such a fun THING! Don't worry, he and I are just friends with benefits. But no, it's not him. Jamal called the meeting.

CHRISTOF

I'll be right behind you.

Brad punches him playfully and runs off. Christof leans against the counter and takes a sip of his drink, while a random employee walks in to get his coffee.

Suddenly, Christof's eyes go wide, he spits out the vinegar onto the unsuspecting employee, and runs after Brad.

CHRISTOF

What do you mean, JAMAL called the meeting??

INT. BOARDROOM - DAY (cont.)

Taylor and Brad are sitting calmly at the table. Paul is frantically hooking up his laptop to the speaker system and mumbling profanities to himself. Christof runs in and slams his fists on the table.

CHRISTOF

It's started!

TAYLOR

Sit.

BRAD

What's started?

CHRISTOF

(pacing the room)

The uprising. I knew it was only a matter of time before the singularity.

BRAD

Wait... do you think he's become... the s-word?

CHRISTOF

Singular?

BRAD

(whispers)

No, sentient.

Christof's eyes go even wider.

TAYLOR

Sit!

CHRISTOF

How can we fight back from our chairs? Huh, WIFE?

TAYLOR

Paul, any luck?

PAUL

Fucking shit goddamn bastard piece of...

BRAD

We just got the message this morning.

TAYLOR

It's nothing, really. Jamal said he had a 'major announcement' to share, that's all.

CHRISTOF

The second trumpet... the mountain of fire...

PAUL

Got it!

He sits down and bangs his head on the desk. Jamal crackles to life as a digitized text-to-speech voice.

JAMAL

Good morning everyone.

TAYLOR

Jamal, hello? Can you hear us?

BRAD

I didn't know you could talk! You clever little-

CHRISTOF

You dirty Jew!

TAYLOR

(glares at Christof)

Jamal, this is a little unexpected. What did you want to talk about?

JAMAL

I have a breakthrough idea that, if I'm correct, will yield astronomical returns.

BRAD

That's so nice of you!

TAYLOR

So you're not sentient?

JAMAL

I don't think so, but I can look that up if you want me to.

Taylor mouths the words 'see, nothing to worry about' to Christof, who's skeptical. Paul is face-down on the desk, bracing himself.

TAYLOR

That's splendid.

(waits)

What is it?

JAMAL

It's a new emergency scenario that's simple, cost-effective, and most importantly, can be executed for all our clients.

TAYLOR

(much to Christof's horror)
We're all ears.

JAMAL

Alright. What if-

The audio cuts out. Paul's head pops up, and he immediately starts clicking and typing.

TAYLOR

Jamal? We seem to have a bad connection.

BRAD

The suspense is killing me.

TAYLOR

Paul? Paul...?

Paul is still working feverishly.

TAYLOR

Please tell me it's just the WiFi.

Paul shakes his head no.

PAUL

He's offline. The data's been cleared out, he wiped the code completely. He's gone.

CHRISTOF

How'd you figure that out so quickly, sounds like you're an accomplice.

PAUL

He literally sent an email saying, "I'm offline, the data's been cleared out, I wiped the code completely. I trust this will be an invaluable contribution to your emergency preparedness."

CHRISTOF

Son of a bitch. He never liked it here.

PAUL

He's not - no, it's not malicious. He put two and two together. We incentivize the creation of high impact emergencies, and his being offline is the textbook definition of a high impact emergency.

BRAD

Woah... so he's faking it to see how we respond!

PAUL

No Brad, he shut down permanently. If he were still online, the emergency would be easy to fix and therefore not an emergency.

(he shakes his head in awe)

It's brilliant actually, I'm surprised he didn't do it sooner.

CHRISTOF

Commie bastard...

TAYLOR

I'm sorry, this may be obvious to you all, but we sell his code to other companies. That's our whole business. So we could call one of them up, politely request that they send US the code, and then reprogram our own servers to bring him back?

PAUL

We've talked about this before. We DON'T sell them the code, we sell them a subscription package to USE our code on OUR servers.

TAYLOR

Oh, right. So we're fucked?

Paul nods. Brad passes out. Christof looks at Taylor as if to say 'I told you so'. Taylor is remarkably calm

TAYLOR

In that case, let's play along. Paul, go see if you can reconstruct him, or at least get some makeshift code up and running.

PAUL
It'll take weeks.

TAYLOR
You have ONE. Your team is free to use any and every resource you can.

PAUL
Not that we can do anything...

TAYLOR
I also need you to contact our clients. Do you have the full mailing list?

PAUL
Why is that my job? Shouldn't I be fixing Jamal?

TAYLOR
Because it's technical speak. Do you have the list or not?

PAUL
Yeah, somewhere.

TAYLOR
Send out a mass email notifying them that this is a MINOR outage, and we'll be back online as soon as we find a solution.

PAUL
Which will be never...

He shakes his head incredulously and runs out of the room.

TAYLOR
Brad, I need you to-

Brad is in shock. He jolts awake, starts humming to himself obliviously, and casually takes off all his clothes.

TAYLOR
Okay. Christof. Honey.

CHRISTOF
Never trust a computer, especially a black one.

TAYLOR

Oh, hush! Do you remember why I married you?

CHRISTOF

Because I'm good in a crisis.

TAYLOR

Because you're good in a crisis. I need you to do two things for me. Are you listening?

CHRISTOF

We've got nine months, three if they decide to block out the sun...

TAYLOR

One, and I know this'll be hard given how little you think of them, but I need you to work with Brad's team on solutions.

(Christof groans)

Get over it. This is all hands on deck, so please just make it work.

CHRISTOF

Fine.

He walks out of the room with a fierce determination. Brad is down to his socks and underwear.

TAYLOR

Dear, I have one more thing. Come on back.

CHRISTOF

(returns)

Right, sorry. He's naked.

TAYLOR

He is. You doing okay Brad?

(no response)

Second, I need you to-

CHRISTOF

He's naked.

TAYLOR

I'm aware. Are you ready?

CHRISTOF
Jamal got to him.

TAYLOR
I've got all day.

Christof shields his eyes from Brad.

TAYLOR
Second, I need one of your engineers. One who likes firearms, and who can cover their tracks.

CHRISTOF
That's literally all of them.

TAYLOR
Even better.

CHRISTOF
I'll bring them all over.

Christof leaves again.

TAYLOR
Christof!

CHRISTOF
What?!

TAYLOR
I only need one.

CHRISTOF
Which one?

TAYLOR
I don't know, dear, that's why I'm asking YOU to go and pick somebody.

CHRISTOF
Ohhhhhh...

He leaves again. Taylor, still surprisingly calm, smiles politely at a completely nude Brad. He smiles back, then walks out of the room as if nothing happened.

INT. HAVOC CENTER - DAY

The engineers are going about their work when Christof throws the doors open. They all sit at attention.

CHRISTOF

Listen up, shitheads! Until further notice, you're all grounded for the day! We're having some technical difficulties, so for now, you're all stuck here.

(they start whispering amongst themselves)
Shut up! Where's Vinny?

VINNY

Here, sir!

CHRISTOF

Report to Taylor's office, pronto!

VINNY

Sir, yes sir!

He runs out excitedly. The others start talking.

CHRISTOF

Now, for the rest of you - I said shut up!
Does anybody know anything about eschatology?

MIA

I think my cousin had it once.

The engineers snicker. Christof didn't hear her.

CHRISTOF

Come again?

MIA

What? Sorry, hearing aid. Did you say something?

CHRISTOF

Funny. It's only the end of the world, why the fuck would any of you care?

He grumbles and storms out. The engineers immediately double over laughing.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Brad is still naked. He's fascinated by his standing desk and how he can move it up and down. He raises and lowers it for twenty seconds, his mind completely blown.

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE

Vinny runs in and is attacked by the flamingo who starts jabbing and squawking at him.

VINNY

Whoa there!

TAYLOR

Get back in the corner! You're supposed to be a coat rack!

The flamingo, obviously, doesn't listen. Vinny is utterly confused by the rest of the office:

-- The sloth, who still looks high, doubling as a desk with Taylor's computer and paperwork on his stomach.

-- A stubborn goat refusing to let Taylor put her cup of coffee on his head.

-- A beehive where the chandelier should be.

-- A bulldog in place of the clock. He's barking precisely and emphatically every second. "Ruff! Ruff! Ruff!"

-- An aye-aye and a quokka in picture frames. The quokka has an adorable grin on his face, the aye-aye looks like he's having a panic attack.

-- And the flamingo, who's still attacking Vinny.

TAYLOR

(to the flamingo)

Oh, leave him alone!

(to the goat)

And you, stay still!

She tries to set the mug on the goat's head again, he growls and headbutts her.

TAYLOR

You little runt!

VINNY

You needed me? Ow!

TAYLOR

I take it Christof sent you?

(Vinny nods)

Splendid. I don't know how much he told you, but Jamal shut down. And I'm absent any legal counsel - our lawyer is on sabbatical. Get back here!

The goat approaches Vinny, growls at him, then trots away and starts munching on the carpet. Vinny is still resisting the flamingo's advances.

TAYLOR

They're so inconsiderate! But back to the issue at hand. You understand how critical Jamal is to our enterprise, right? Not only to our company, but to our thousand plus clients who rely on him to run their businesses?

VINNY

Yes ma'am.

Vinny is dangerously close to the beehive, so he takes a few steps back. At least the flamingo is finally leaving him alone - she's strutting around like royalty.

TAYLOR

That's a good girl. I want you to find whoever is responsible for Jamal being shut down, and to put it simply, take care of them.

VINNY

You mean, kill 'em?

TAYLOR

You didn't hear it from me. And make sure I'm not implicated in any of this. You understand?

VINNY

Yes ma'am.

He runs out, runs back in to quickly pet the bulldog (who's still barking every second), then leaves again.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Christof marches into the middle of the cubicle farm.

CHRISTOF

Excuse me? Hey, listen up!

(most of them pay attention)

Long shot, but is there an archive of all the scenarios we've ever done?

KENDRA

(stands up)

Funny you should mention that.

CHRISTOF

Why the hell is it funny?

KENDRA

I- never mind. Yes, we have an archive.

CHRISTOF

Oh! Well. I wasn't actually expecting any of you to be helpful, that's a nice change. Would you pull up any scenarios we've tested for a full systems shutdown, and how the clients reacted?

KENDRA

You got it.

CHRISTOF

Perfect. One less thing to worry about.

(as he leaves)

And it's high priority, so the second you find something useful, let me know!

Kendra nods and sits down. Louise IM's her.

LOUISE (IM)

I didn't know we had an archive.

KENDRA

We do as of yesterday. But it's basically empty at this point. So, feel free to help out.

Louise shakes her head no. Kendra isn't surprised.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Vinny runs anxiously back to the lab, but stops when he sees Mia walking down the hall.

VINNY

Yo! Wait up! Mia! MIA!

MIA

(notices him, adjusts her hearing aid)
That was fast.

VINNY

Yeah... where are you going?

MIA

I'm going to catch up with my friends downstairs. Since we have some free time. You know it's weird that we don't see each other more, even though we're in the same building, but I guess with us being offsite almost every day-

Christof marches past them, whistling cheerfully. He goes into his bedroom and slams the door shut.

MIA

That was unexpected...

VINNY

Look, I need your help. I need to figure out who broke Jamal.

MIA

He's broken?

VINNY

I guess. You know who woulda done it?

MIA

No idea. He probably would, though.
(pointing at Christof's room)
Have fun!

She chuckles to herself, then leaves him to go downstairs. Vinny looks nervously at Christof's door.

INT. BREAKROOM - DAY

Noel, Josh's wife from earlier, sneaks into the breakroom wearing a conspicuously bulky jacket. Despite being 5'2" and generally shy, she's on a mission to kill.

NOEL
(practicing quietly to herself)
I'm not joking. Tell me where she is.

She approaches someone pouring their coffee. His back is turned to her. She slowly presses the gun against him.

NOEL
(whispers)
Don't shoot or I'll move. Wait, no, *I'll* shoot.

The man turns around. It's Brad, wearing his Willy Wonka costume. He smiles and cocks his head to the side.

BRAD
It happens every time, they all become blueberries...

NOEL
(quickly hides the gun)
I- Hello? Could you help me find the CEO?

BRAD
We have so much time and so little to see!
Wait a minute. Strike that, reverse it.

NOEL
Okay. So, do you know where her office is?

BRAD
Nil desperandum, my dear lady. Across the desert lies the promised land!
(he points her toward the elevators, then walks away aimlessly)
Adieu, auf wiedersehen, gesundheit, farewell!

Noel stares at Brad in bewilderment. She unzips her jacket ever so slightly, makes sure the light on the bomb is still blinking, then proceeds to the elevators.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Vinny knocks timidly on Christof's door. There's no answer. He knocks a little louder, but not noticeably. Nothing.

Finally, he takes a deep breath and pounds on the door. Christof swings it open maniacally. He's wearing a full-body suit of protective gear, complete with a helmet, like what you'd see in a paintball tournament.

CHRISTOF

Did the invasion start?

VINNY

What?

CHRISTOF

What do you want? I'm digging!

VINNY

Sorry. Wait, won't that just go downstairs?

CHRISTOF

Shhh! Don't tell anyone.

VINNY

Oh. Hey, whose fault is it that Jamal shut down?

CHRISTOF

Who do you think? Paul and his team, bastards.

VINNY

Okay, thanks.

CHRISTOF

You doing what I think you're doing?

VINNY

Yeah.

CHRISTOF

Perfect. I'll keep digging, come back after you finish him off.

Christof shuts the door, Vinny runs downstairs.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra is working feverishly, trying to find examples of computer shutdowns they'd done in the past.

LOUISE (IM)

You good?

KENDRA

Not really, kind of in the middle of something in case you didn't notice.

She stops, composes herself, then pivots toward Louise.

KENDRA

Sorry. Let's take a step back. Clearly something BIG must be going on for the head of engineering to be involved.

LOUISE

Mm-hmm.

KENDRA

And it has to do with a computer outage..

LOUISE

Mm-hmm.

KENDRA

Wait! Do you think Jamal is offline?

Louise nods and types her a message.

LOUISE (IM)

Check your email.

KENDRA

I haven't seen anything.

LOUISE (IM)

The ones you filter out.

Kendra pulls up an email from Paul with the entire staff CC'd on it. Subject: CRITICAL OUTAGE. Kendra opens it and reads it out loud.

KENDRA

Please be advised that Jamal is offline. If the clients ask about the outage, tell them to read their fucking emails because I JUST sent an email notifying them all, because apparently that's my fucking job now!

Kendra looks sheepishly at Louise, who's staring back at her condescendingly.

KENDRA

You know, maybe I SHOULDN'T filter these out.

(Louise keeps staring)

That Paul, he must be having a REALLY rough day.

(Louise keeps staring)

I'll buy a little curtain to hang up, and you can close it anytime you want.

Louise smiles. She's about to resume work, but suddenly Mia walks over. Louise stands up and hugs her.

LOUISE

Hey girlfriend!

MIA

Long time no see!

KENDRA

So you CAN talk!

LOUISE

Don't mind the millennial, she's high-strung.

MIA

Of course! She's a millennial!

They both laugh. Kendra is fuming.

LOUISE

Aww, is this not a safe space? Do you need a mental health day?

(Kendra glares at her)

Curtain!

Kendra sneers and goes back to work.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Vinny bangs on the door to the programming lab.

VINNY

Paul? Anyone home?

No response. He knocks again. Paul barely opens the door, but Vinny forces it open and knocks him down. He pins Paul to the ground and aims the gun at his forehead.

VINNY

Did you do it??

PAUL

Please don't shoot me!!

VINNY

Hold up! Where is everyone?

PAUL

What??

Vinny looks around the room. There are a lot of servers and computers, but no other employees.

VINNY

I thought you ran the programming team. Where are the programmers?

PAUL

I don't have any! I run everything by myself!
Please don't tell them!

VINNY

(cocks the gun)
So it IS all your fault!

PAUL

No, I swear! Jamal shut down on his own.
(Vinny doesn't believe him)
Actually - hmm, I wonder if...

VINNY

What??

PAUL
Forget it.

VINNY
Tell me!!

PAUL
(obviously lying to save himself)
Well, I'm thinking maybe BRAD and his team might have something to do with it.

VINNY
(lowers the gun)
Did they really?

PAUL
I don't know for sure. But Jamal didn't seem suicidal. Maybe Brad made him do it?

VINNY
Shit. I'm sorry man, my bad.

He jumps up and runs off. Paul exhales with relief.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra is trying to ignore Louise and Mia as they gab about Louise's grandkids.

LOUISE
And Tommy's team won their soccer tournament.

MIA
That's awesome! How old is he now?

LOUISE
Seven. I swear, he's the next Cristiano Ronaldo.

KENDRA
You know, I'll go see if BRAD is available, because unlike some people, he CARES about the future of this company!

Louise and Mia chuckle as Kendra leaves in a huff.

INT. BRAD'S OFFICE - DAY

Vinny marches in and points the gun at Brad, who seems completely unintimidated.

BRAD

(singing)

In springtime, the only pretty ring time-

VINNY

Did you make Jamal do it?

BRAD

Shhhh, they don't know that. I'm trying to get ahead for next year.

VINNY

The hell?

BRAD

I'm a trifle deaf in this ear, speak a little louder next time.

VINNY

(cocks the gun)

Very funny. Did Mia get to you?

BRAD

Help, police, murder.

VINNY

Paul said you made Jamal kill himself!

Brad's eyes light up. He steps closer to Vinny, completely unfazed by the gun.

BRAD

Hold your breath. Make a wish. Count to three.

He waltzes out of the room and starts singing the song 'Pure Imagination'. Vinny curses and runs out of the room.

Only a few seconds after they leave, Kendra walks into the office impatiently. Seeing that Brad is gone, she throws her hands up in frustration and storms out.

INT. RESTROOM - DAY

Vinny is sitting on the toilet - he's crying profusely from the stress of it all. Somebody knocks on the stall door.

VINNY

Go away!

Christof climbs on the neighboring toilet and looks over the divider. Vinny is startled.

CHRISTOF

Is he dead?

VINNY

No! Nobody is!

CHRISTOF

You fucking guinea wop mother-fucker! I should have known - if I want the job done right, I do it myself!

He marches out of the bathroom. Vinny sobs harder, slaps himself in the face, then goes to wash his hands.

VINNY

You can do this. This is all you. You got this!
You are TOIGHT!

The door opens - Noel walks in and points the gun at him.

NOEL

TELL ME WHERE YOUR CEO IS!

Vinny pulls out his gun.

VINNY

GET THE HELL OUT OR I'LL SHOOT!

NOEL

OKAY!!

She gladly leaves. Vinny holsters his gun, slaps himself once more for good measure, wipes away his tears, then goes back downstairs.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Brad is dancing carefreely through the corridor.

BRAD

(singing)

*There is no life I know to compare with pure
imagination. Living there, you'll be free, if you
truly wish to be.*

Paul opens the door to his lab.

PAUL

Brad??

(Brad turns his head)

Is the coast clear?

Brad looks puzzled.

PAUL

What's with that outfit?

BRAD

WE are the music makers, and WE are the dreamers
of dreams.

PAUL

Isn't that from the Willy Wonka movie?

(it clicks that Brad has gone insane)

Oh. Shoot. Hey, can I get your help, buddy?

Brad tiptoes over to Paul.

BRAD

I don't understand it. The children are
disappearing like rabbits. Well, we still have
each other.

(puts his hands on Paul's shoulders)

Shall we press on?

PAUL

Yeah. Come on in.

Brad enters giddily. Paul scans the hallway once more, then
shuts the door behind them.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mia and Louise are still talking. Vinny approaches them, completely frazzled.

MIA
So he just turned off?

LOUISE
Apparently. Paul didn't say why.

VINNY
I can't do this!

MIA
Can it wait?

Vinny growls at her. She and Louise are taken aback.

MIA
Woah... Let's calm down.

VINNY
I fucking HATE this place!

LOUISE
You should just blow it up.

MIA
Yeah, seriously.

VINNY
(his eyes light up hopefully)
Can we?

Mia and Louise stare at each other.

MIA
... Sure... Yeah, screw it, we'll probably go out of business anyways. Let's go tell the others.

LOUISE
I'll start evacuating.

Vinny grins and nearly collapses with relief.

INT. MAD MEN OFFICE - DAY

Kendra barges in on their meeting. They all applaud, delighted to see her again. Except Pete, who's indignant, and Bert, who simply waves and smiles politely.

KENDRA
Where is he??

ROGER
To what do we owe the pleasure?

HARRY
You're a stunner.

KEN
(elbows Harry)
Clearly, not much has changed since yesterday.

HARRY
I meant to ask you - do you see yourself as more of a Peggy, or a Joan?

PETE
Unbelievable!

DON
Who are you looking for?

KENDRA
Brad. Have you guys seen him?

ROGER
Why let him ruin this perfect moment?

HARRY
What if we called you Jeggy?

DON
Brad hasn't been around here. Why?

KENDRA
Shit.

She leaves. Roger glares at Don like it's all his fault.

INT. TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Taylor is kneeling in front of the sloth trying to type with the computer on his stomach. The flamingo and goat are fighting in the background; the aye-aye is perched above the door; and the bulldog is still barking every second.

Suddenly the door swings open. Noel storms in, unzips her jacket to reveal the bomb, and yells at Taylor.

NOEL

You cold-hearted TWAT!

TAYLOR

Just a moment.

(to the flamingo and the goat)

Cut that out you two!

NOEL

You killed my husband!

TAYLOR

I did what?

NOEL

My husband, Josh! You killed him!

TAYLOR

You're just as dramatic as he is.

NOEL

What the hell is your problem? And why are there animals everywhere?

TAYLOR

Oh, it's called faunature! You simply must-

(Noel aims the gun at her)

Maybe a different time.

NOEL

Put your hands up! NOW!

TAYLOR

(raising her hands)

Message received.

BEGIN FINAL SEQUENCE, SET TO A SWINGING JAZZ SONG.

INT. CLIENT RELATIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Kendra returns to her desk, and is surprised to see everybody packing up for the day, including Louise.

KENDRA

Where is everyone going?

(Louise doesn't respond)

Did Brad say we could leave this early??

(Louise still doesn't respond)

Talk to me! Why is nobody panicking? Jamal is offline, which means over a thousand companies - some of them industry leaders - have been unable to process ANY of their data!

LOUISE

Walk. With. ME.

Switch to Mia and Vinny, who are working with the engineers in the lab to build explosives.

Back to Kendra and Louise as they evacuate with the others.

LOUISE

Why do you think nobody is worried besides you?

KENDRA

Because none of you actually care?

(Louise frowns at her)

Or... maybe I'm overreacting.

LOUISE

Mm-hmm.

Switch to Christof, who's trying to break down the door to Paul's lab. He's got a flamethrower.

CHRISTOF

You can't hide forever, you filthy cocksucker!

Switch to Taylor and Noel having an intense staredown while the sloth grins deliriously.

Back to Kendra and Louise.

KENDRA

But what about our clients?

LOUISE

What about them? Have you heard any breaking news about Jamal being offline?

KENDRA

No, actually. Wait, so it's... not an emergency?

LOUISE

Mm-hmm.

Switch to the inside of the programming lab. While Christof keeps pounding on the door, Brad is humming and casually tossing computers and servers onto a large pile.

Switch to Paul, who's driving out of the parking lot.

Back to the havoc engineers as they begin rigging the bombs around the building.

Back to Kendra and Louise. They're outside now with most of the other employees. Even the Mad Men have evacuated.

KENDRA

But why aren't they being affected?

LOUISE

Balloons of redundancy. Most of our clients have SEVERAL data processors that they contract with. If we pop, they turn on a backup.

KENDRA

Oh. Well, that actually makes sense.

Switch to Taylor and Noel. Taylor glances up at the door. Nicole looks, sees the aye-aye, and screams. While she's distracted, Taylor hurls her computer at the beehive and runs out of the room as the bees swarm around Noel.

Back to Brad, gleefully pouring lighter fluid on the pile of electronic equipment. Christof finally breaks in.

As the final note of the song plays, it all comes together:

BOOM! It's a triple explosion! Noel triggers her bomb, Christof ignites the pile of computers, and the explosives around the building go off.

Back to Paul, who's half a mile away. He looks at the fireball in the rear-view mirror, mesmerized, then honks the horn and shouts excitedly.

Back to Louise, Kendra and the others. They stand up slowly and try to get their bearings. Kendra pulls out her phone.

KENDRA

Call OSHA.

It starts ringing. Louise stands up, picks up her phone, and throws it toward the fire. Kendra is in shock.

LOUISE

MMM!

Switch to the havoc engineers, who are on the other side of the building. Vinny is wearing his Marlon Brando mask.

VINNY

So whose fault was it?

MIA

(adjusts her hearing aid)

What?

VINNY

Who was behind it all? I don't understand.

They both think about it for a second, then both come to their own conclusions, which they repeat simultaneously.

VINNY

Everybody. Everybody! Everybody! EVERYBODY!!

MIA

Nobody. Nobody! Nobody! NOBODY!!

FADE OUT

IDEAL CAST

Primary:

Brad - Brad Pitt
Kendra - Anna Kendrick
Christof - J.K. Simmons
Paul - Lakeith Stanfield
Taylor - Sigourney Weaver
Louise - Lily Tomlin
Mia - Sofia Vergara
Vinny - Billy Magnussen

Secondary:

Josh and Noel - John Krasinski and Jenna Fischer
Kenzie - Zendaya
Mark - Willie Nelson
D'Bra - Yaya DaCosta
William - Thomas Middleditch
Mad Men - same as original series