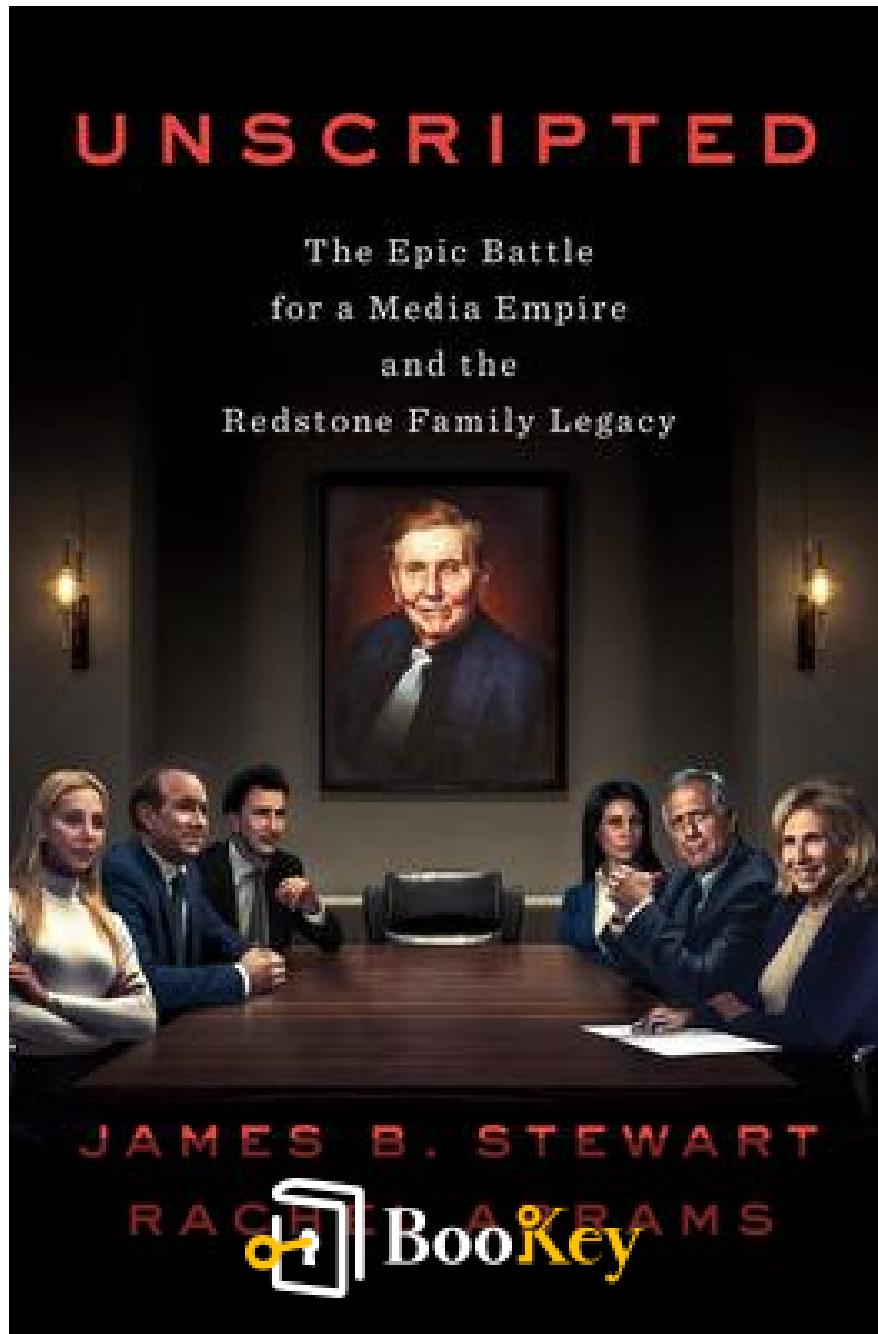


# Unscripted PDF (Limited Copy)

James B. Stewart



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# **Unscripted Summary**

Inside the Power Struggles and Scandals of Paramount Global.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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## About the book

In "Unscripted," acclaimed journalists James B. Stewart and Rachel Abrams intricately detail the internal turmoil within Paramount Global, a major force in the entertainment industry that has long been influenced by the powerful Redstone family. At the heart of the story is Sumner M. Redstone, the aging 93-year-old patriarch, whose health and judgment have come under scrutiny due to a high-stakes lawsuit. This legal battle threatens not only his legacy but also the stability of the empire he has built.

As tensions rise, Sumner's daughter, Shari Redstone, steps into a challenging leadership position at a time when the company is facing external pressures and internal conflicts. Her ascension is marked by a clash with CBS CEO Les Moonves, who is embroiled in his own scandal involving serious allegations of sexual misconduct. Moonves's maneuvers to undermine Shari's authority reflect a larger, often ruthless struggle for power within the company, highlighting the gender dynamics at play within corporate governance.

The narrative unfolds against a backdrop of significant societal change, as movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter reshape public discourse and challenge longstanding norms within corporate culture. This compelling tale not only chronicles the personal and professional sagas of its characters but also reveals the broader implications of their actions in an industry

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grappling with its values amid a rapidly evolving landscape. With its focus on ambition, conflict, and the quest for dominance, "Unscripted" offers a vivid portrait of the lengths to which individuals will go in the relentless pursuit of influence and control.

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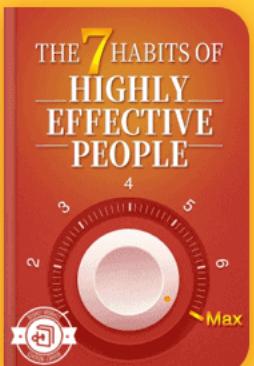
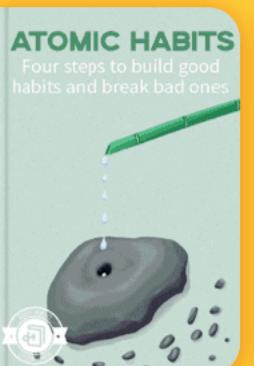
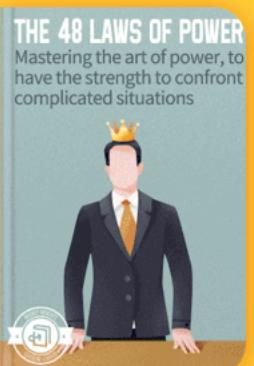
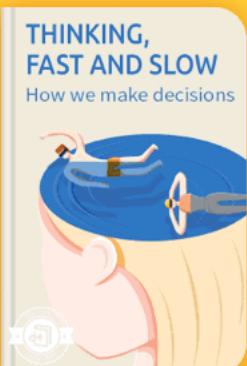
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# Episode 1 Summary: “I’m Going to Hell Anyway”

## EPISODE 1: “I’m Going to Hell Anyway”

### Overview of Key Players

The episode introduces major players in the life of Sumner Redstone, a billionaire media mogul whose influence spans Hollywood and Wall Street. Sumner is entangled in a complex web of personal and professional relationships. His fiancée, Holland, along with her ally Manuela Herzer, seeks not only to care for him but also to manipulate his media empire for their own benefit. Meanwhile, Shari Redstone, Sumner’s daughter, grapples with her father’s diminishing judgment, particularly in light of his romantic entanglements and the ambitions of Holland and Herzer.

### Holland and Herzer's Influence

Holland and Herzer are strategically positioned in Sumner's life, leveraging their closeness to him for opportunities that extend well beyond personal affection. They are intent on manipulating his estate planning, eyeing future control of National Amusements, which underlines the intersection of intimacy and ambition in their relationship with Sumner.

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## **Shari Redstone's Complicated Relationship with Sumner**

As the narrative unfolds, Shari's relationship with her father is cast into sharp relief. She feels increasingly sidelined by Holland and Herzer's growing influence, struggling with a blend of disapproval and reluctant acceptance of her father's choices. This emotional tug-of-war deepens her character while illustrating the complexities of family loyalty amidst personal turmoil.

## **Sumner's Rise and Fall**

The episode also traces Sumner's journey from modest beginnings to being a titan in the entertainment industry. His erratic behavior and obsessive pursuit of youth and immortality dominate his later years, reflecting a man whose ascent has been marked by both power and instability. His ambition knows no bounds, but it also leads him down a path where his personal choices have dire implications.

## **Personal Life Scandals**

Redstone's numerous affairs cast shadows over his personal life, as relationships with past partners like Christine Peters and Delsa Winer become sources of media scrutiny and personal strife. These scandals not only complicate his love life but also intertwine with his professional

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decisions, painting a portrait of a man caught between public perception and private desire.

## **Marriage and Developments**

Following contentious discussions with his ex-wife, Sumner marries Paula Fortunato. However, this new union is fraught with tension, as the demands of public life and personal differences lead to a tumultuous and highly publicized relationship.

## **Conclusion**

Ultimately, the first episode serves as a characterization of Sumner Redstone's life, underscoring the fierce ambition, overwhelming wealth, and tangled personal relationships that define his existence. It paints a vivid picture of the dualities of love and power that permeate the entertainment industry, setting the stage for deeper exploration of themes in subsequent episodes.

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# Episode 2 Summary: “Sumner in a Skirt”

## EPISODE 2: “Sumner in a Skirt”

In this episode, the unexpected marriage of Shari's father, Sumner, to Paula disrupts the family dynamic, particularly given Sumner's prior commitment to remain single. As the heir to the family's theater empire, Shari grapples with the changes alongside her brother, Brent. Both siblings pursue legal careers outside National Amusements, aiming for independence while still tethered to the family business through a trust.

### Family Business and Marital Changes

Brent takes on the role of a prosecutor, while Shari explores various legal sectors until her third child's birth in 1987. During this time, Shari's husband, Ira A. Korff, gradually becomes entwined with National Amusements, ultimately rising to the position of president. Although he plays a key role in the company's expansion into the UK, his life takes an unexpected spiritual turn. This shift leads to his divorce from Shari, yet he maintains his influence within National Amusements due to his role as a grandparent.

### Shari's Entrance into the Business

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After her divorce, Shari, encouraged by Sumner, steps into National Amusements part-time, progressing to a full-time role as vice president of corporate strategy by 1994. She champions modernizing the family theaters by implementing luxurious amenities, significantly transforming the patron experience. While Sumner acknowledges her contributions publicly, conflicts arise concerning the future leadership of the company.

## **Conflict with Brent**

In stark contrast to Shari's increasing involvement, Brent resists fully engaging in the family business. Following a tumultuous divorce settlement, tension mounts as Shari is designated as Sumner's successor, leaving Brent feeling sidelined and gradually withdrawing from company leadership.

## **Sumner's Resistance Against Shari**

Despite Shari's growing authority, Sumner often dismisses her insights, perceiving her as a competitor rather than the heir she aims to be. This tension escalates, particularly during public disagreements on critical corporate strategies, such as the controversial decision to split Viacom into two separate entities, which Shari staunchly opposes.

## **Strained Father-Daughter Relationship**

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As the relationship between Shari and Sumner deteriorates under the weight of constant criticism, Shari suffers emotionally from his disregard.

Complicating matters further, Sumner makes financially questionable decisions regarding Midway Games, repeatedly ignoring Shari's objections and increasing her feelings of powerlessness in both familial and business contexts.

## **Final Breakdown and Compromise**

The onset of the 2008 financial crisis presents serious challenges to their enterprises. In response to mounting tensions, Shari initiates legal action against Sumner's alleged mismanagement, leading to negotiations for a less adversarial agreement. This arrangement allows her to retain her stake and some managerial roles, though her day-to-day influence within the company significantly wanes, resulting in a fragile truce between father and daughter.

## **Key Takeaways**

This episode captures the intricacies of family loyalties, business rivalries, and the power struggles inherent within the Redstone family. It emphasizes Shari's quest for recognition and respect in an organization shaped by her father's dominant personality and the pervasive tradition of male leadership.

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# Episode 3 Summary: Sumner Will Live Forever

## Episode 3: Sumner Will Live Forever

### Background

In 2008, Malia Andelin, a makeup artist struggling to break into the industry, pivoted her career by becoming a flight attendant for private jets. This shift introduced her to influential figures, including pilots who connected her with high-profile clients flying for networks like CBS and Viacom.

### Encounter with Sumner Redstone

Malia's journey took a significant turn when she encountered Sumner Redstone, a media mogul known for founding companies like Viacom and CBS. Following his recent divorce, their first flight together quickly turned uncomfortable. Sumner made unwelcome advances and behaved inappropriately, leaving Malia feeling vulnerable. Despite her clear refusals, he persistently contacted her, ultimately leading her to agree to dinner in a bid to improve her professional situation.

### The Dinner Incident

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The dinner proved to be a disaster. Sumner continued his unwanted advances, prompting a shocked Malia to leave the vehicle in haste. Even as he later extended an apology, Malia struggled with feelings of entrapment, aware of Sumner's considerable power and influence in the industry.

## **Relationship Developments**

Malia's relationship with Sumner became a complicated blend of discomfort and dependency. She found herself frequently at his mansion, where he showered her with attention and financial gifts. However, Sumner's disdain for his own children often surfaced during their interactions. In an unexpected twist, Sumner's daughter, Shari, encouraged Malia to voice her opinions and stand her ground, perhaps seeing a reflection of her own tumultuous relationship with her father.

## **Public Appearances**

In April 2009, during a conference, Sumner projected an image of health and vitality while being interviewed by Larry King, contradicting the signs of aging and questionable conduct that accompanied his behavior. This façade of robust life clashed with reality, revealing the vulnerabilities hidden behind his bravado, particularly in his relationships with considerably younger women.

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## Controversial Projects

Amidst personal turbulence, Sumner embarked on dubious promotional ventures, including efforts for a girl group named the Electric Barbarellas. These projects faced resistance from his executives but led him to lavish spending and obsessive attempts to trace critics of his initiatives, highlighting his often-childlike impulsiveness.

## Resulting Media Attention

The increasingly scrutinized relationship between Sumner and the Electric Barbarellas attracted significant media attention, which painted Sumner's behavior in a juvenile light. This coverage intensified focus on the troubling dynamics of power often at play in the entertainment industry.

## Conclusion

This episode underscores the intricate interplay between power, harassment, and influence in Hollywood, as exemplified by Malia Andelin's troubling experiences with Sumner Redstone. Set against his public persona, the narrative reveals the darker complexities behind the glamour of the industry, illustrating how personal struggles can manifest in professional relationships.

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## Episode 4: The Inner Circle VIP Social Club

### ### Episode 4: The Inner Circle VIP Social Club

In the autumn of 2010, Brandon Korff, grandson of billionaire media mogul Sumner Redstone, sought the expertise of Patti Stanger, famed as the "Millionaire Matchmaker," to address his grandfather's tumultuous love life. Sumner's unpredictable dating history often put Brandon in awkward social situations, leading him to believe that a stable romantic partner could provide Sumner with companionship while alleviating some family stress.

Having recently relocated to Los Angeles for work, Brandon found it challenging to cope with Sumner's emotional volatility and his inclination to date women within Brandon's own social circle. Recognizing the need for professional assistance in finding a fitting match for his grandfather, Brandon turned to Stanger, who had gained prominence for her matchmaking skills through her association with a successful Bravo reality TV show. Stanger's service, while tailored for affluent clients, operated under strict protocols designed to foster genuine connections while still adhering to the entertaining aspects of reality television.

During their initial meeting, Stanger noted Sumner's advanced age and health issues but saw an opportunity given his willingness to explore

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relationships with older women. The two developed a rapport, with Sumner often expressing admiration for Stanger's efforts. However, as he encountered a series of disappointments on arranged dates, including a notable attempt with actress Renee Suran, Sumner's frustration began to surface, sometimes aimed at Stanger herself.

Despite Stanger's best efforts, Sumner struggled to find a meaningful connection. Yet, over time, their bond deepened, ultimately leading Stanger to introduce him to Sydney Holland, a friend who bore similarities to Stanger. Their relationship flourished, culminating in Sumner's proposal to Sydney, accompanied by lavish gifts that significantly improved her financial standing.

As Sydney became more integrated into Sumner's life, she adeptly navigated multiple roles—companion, caregiver, and social organizer—while meeting his demands for loyalty and companionship. However, the dynamics of their relationship were complicated, reflecting a mix of genuine affection and the exertion of control typical of Sumner's interactions.

### ### Key Characters

- **Brandon Korff:** Sumner Redstone's concerned grandson, striving to improve his grandfather's romantic prospects.
- **Patti Stanger:** A savvy matchmaker who merges her expertise with the

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dynamics of reality television to help wealthy clients find love.

- **Sumner Redstone:** An aging billionaire grappling with the vicissitudes of dating and seeking a meaningful connection amidst his complex social life.

- **Sydney Holland:** A friend of Stanger's who becomes Sumner's

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# Episode 5 Summary: “What’s Mine Is Yours”

## Episode 5: What’s Mine Is Yours

### Paramount’s 100th Anniversary Celebration

In June 2012, Paramount Pictures marked a significant milestone with a grand centennial celebration at its Hollywood studio, graced by high-profile guests such as Shari Redstone and her father, Sumner Redstone. The event not only celebrated Paramount's illustrious history in film but also stirred underlying family tensions when Sumner, at 89, publicly appointed Philippe Dauman as his successor. This pronouncement left Shari feeling marginalized, igniting a sense of competition for her father's legacy.

### The Role of Women in Sumner’s Life

In the intricate web of Sumner’s personal and professional life, two women played critical roles: Holland, his dedicated aide, and Herzer, his former romantic partner. Their increasing involvement in Sumner’s affairs began to shape his relationships significantly, especially with family members. As they orchestrated more control over his daily life, tensions rose, particularly with Shari, who sensed her diminishing role in her father’s world.

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## **Malia Andelin and Sumner's Affections**

Amid these dynamics, Sumner developed a notable affection for Malia Andelin, which complicated the relationships further. Simultaneously, Holland and Herzer, while tightening their grip on Sumner, encouraged him to shower Andelin with gifts. This led to a tangled atmosphere of jealousy and rivalry among the three women, each vying for a place in Sumner's affections.

### **Surveillance and Control**

Herzer's presence brought an oppressive mood to Sumner's mansion, characterized by intimidation and monitoring of staff. Holland and Herzer worked together to sever Sumner's ties with his family, deepening their control and reinforcing their dominance over his life, which alarmed Shari and stoked her concerns about her father's well-being.

### **Strained Relationships**

Despite the intimacy he shared with Holland and Herzer, Sumner's repeated expressions of affection for Andelin put strain on these relationships. This rivalry peaked as Sumner's infatuation with Andelin intensified, prompting a hostile environment marked by intrusive measures, including hiring private detectives to follow her, which led to a breakdown in trust and burgeoning

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animosity.

## **Andelin's Withdrawal and Legal Threats**

As the pressure escalated, Andelin ultimately felt threatened by the surrounding manipulation and harassment, prompting her to sever all communication with Sumner. In a desperate move to reclaim control, Sumner contemplated legal action against Andelin for alleged exploitation of his feelings for financial gain, showcasing a significant deterioration in their once-affectionate relationship.

## **Family Dynamics and Succession Planning**

Amidst these developments, Sumner's declining health prompted him to amend his estate plans, favoring Holland and Herzer over Shari. This shift not only altered the familial structure but also encapsulated the larger themes of loyalty, power struggles, and the intricate consequences of financial entanglements that echoed throughout Sumner Redstone's complicated life. The episode provides a lens into how personal relationships can be irrevocably impacted by ambition and the quest for power.

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# **Episode 6 Summary: “You Know How He Is about Women”**

## **EPISODE 6: “You Know How He Is about Women”**

In March 2014, a significant and strategic maneuver unfolded involving Holland and Herzer, who set their sights on acquiring over \$200 million in stock from media mogul Sumner Redstone. The stock in question, unlike the shares controlled by Redstone's holding company National Amusements, was held in an unrestricted account. Their plan hinged on persuading Redstone to liquidate these assets and immediately allocate the proceeds to them.

To facilitate this complex financial maneuvering, they enlisted the expertise of Richard B. Covey, a trusts and estates lawyer. He was brought in to advise on adjustments to Redstone's trust and foundation, which they argued were necessary to secure their desired financial backing. Amid their efforts, they pressured Redstone with insinuations that his daughter Shari would contest any future inheritance, suggesting that if he wanted to ensure their loyalty and support, he needed to act quickly.

Initially, Redstone was hesitant, influenced by his longtime attorney, David Andelman, who raised concerns about the tax implications of any stock sale.

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However, the dynamic shifted when Redstone hired Leah Bishop, a new tax lawyer, thereby sidelining Andelman and providing the opportunity to move forward with the sale.

On May 16, Redstone executed the sale of \$236 million in stock, resulting in \$45 million each for Holland and Herzer. This transaction marked a turning point, as soon after, Redstone exhibited signs of depression. Simultaneously, Andelman, now out of the picture, became aware of the sale and expressed growing unease about the influence Holland and Herzer were exerting on Redstone. Despite these claims, Redstone insisted that his decisions were made without coercion.

As the ramifications of the stock sale began to take shape, Shari Redstone grew alarmed by the tax implications and the apparent sway that Holland and Herzer held over her father's decisions. Feeling the urgency of the situation, she hired investigators to probe into the women's influence on her father, heightening the ongoing tension within the family.

The narrative reached a climax during a family gathering for Redstone's ninety-first birthday. What should have been a celebratory occasion was marred by escalating conflicts, particularly between Shari and other family members. Despite the mounting animosity and impending legal disputes, Redstone's focus remained on reinforcing the ties with Holland and Herzer, further deepening the rift with Shari and her children. Their attempts to

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connect with him were met with indifference, highlighting the growing estrangement within the family and the power dynamics at play.

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# Episode 7 Summary: "I Want My \$45 Million Back"

## Episode 7: "I Want My \$45 Million Back"

In this gripping chapter, the legal battles surrounding Holland's lawsuit against Naylor and Martinez gain momentum, drawing media attention and stirring public intrigue. The initial dispute centers on a stolen laptop, but quickly escalates as Naylor levels a counterclaim against Holland, accusing her of seizing control over the life of media mogul Sumner Redstone. This twist captivates tabloid journalists, prompting an investigative feature by *\*Vanity Fair\** that seeks to uncover the truth behind the power dynamics at play.

Amidst the chaos of legal disputes and media scrutiny, Holland begins a high-profile romantic relationship with reality TV star George Pilgrim. This affair complicates both her personal and professional lives, as she finds herself entangled in infidelity and jealousy from those around her in Redstone's circle. Despite the demands of her position overseeing Redstone's care, Holland grows serious about Pilgrim, lavishly showering him with gifts, including a luxurious home, which raises questions about her motivations and priorities.

As Holland attempts to balance her tumultuous personal life with her

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caregiving responsibilities, Redstone's health takes a worrying downturn. His mental and physical condition deteriorates, leading to frequent hospitalizations that alarm his nursing staff. Concerns arise over the quality of care being provided to him by Holland and her associate, Herzer, particularly during incidents that suggest neglect, such as Redstone's choking episodes.

A particularly disturbing moment occurs when Redstone expresses a desire to retrieve his \$45 million while hospitalized, hinting at the financial motivations that may underpin Holland's involvement in his life. This revelation sows seeds of doubt regarding Holland's true intentions, especially when she is seen attempting to sedate Redstone to safeguard discussions about his estate from his family's scrutiny.

Reports from nurses paint a distressing picture of the environment surrounding Redstone—marked by allegations of emotional and physical abuse. Tensions escalate as Redstone's family, particularly his daughter Shari, struggle to assert their roles against Holland and Herzer's firm control, leading to feelings of alienation and urgency to protect their father.

Shari's attempts to visit her father reveal the depths of Redstone's compromised health and autonomy, underscoring the chapter's themes of familial loyalty, manipulation for financial gain, and the perilous challenges of ensuring the welfare of an elderly individual amidst exploitative

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relationships. The narrative intricately weaves legal, personal, and ethical dilemmas, highlighting the fight for power and control in the face of deteriorating familial bonds.

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# Episode 8: “This Is Your Family”

## EPISODE 8: This Is Your Family

In the unfolding drama of familial and romantic entanglements, Holland finds herself at the center of competing commitments. Though she is engaged to Sumner, her heart is entwined with Pilgrim, who had proposed marriage in secrecy. As their clandestine relationship blossoms, they exchange romantic texts, playfully calling each other “husband” and “wife,” and even begin to discuss having a child together through artificial insemination. This step complicates matters further, especially considering Holland’s existing ties to Sumner and her daughter, Alexandra.

At a family gathering in Sedona, tensions surface when Holland's mother makes a tactless comment regarding weight, creating an uncomfortable atmosphere. However, amidst this strain, Holland and Pilgrim find solace in each other, deepening their bond. Pilgrim's anxieties about becoming a father and his uncertainties regarding Holland's past create friction, prompting him to seek clarity from her. When he raises these concerns, Holland skillfully changes the subject, avoiding deeper discussions.

Christmas adds another layer of complexity; rather than sharing the holiday with Pilgrim, Holland chooses to spend it with Sumner and her children at

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his mansion. This choice stirs feelings of nostalgia and emotional turmoil for Sumner, highlighting the fractured nature of their family dynamics.

As the story unfolds, significant tensions emerge surrounding the negotiation of a buyout of Sumner's stake in National Amusements. Both Holland and

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# Episode 9 Summary: “You Want to Go to War?”

## EPISODE 9: “You Want to Go to War?”

### Introduction to the Conflict

In this episode, tensions mount within the Redstone family as Vanity Fair reporter William Cohan approaches Carl Folta, Viacom's head of public relations. Cohan seeks to avoid spotlighting Sumner Redstone, the ailing media mogul at the center of family and media clashes. Despite Folta's attempts to shield Sumner from media scrutiny, the women involved in Sumner's life, specifically his companions Holland and Herzer, opt to share their side of the story, resulting in a damaging portrayal of him.

### Media Exposure

The resulting article titled “Endless Sumner” captures the essence of Sumner as fragile and elderly while contrastingly celebrating Holland and Herzer's glamorous images. Holland hints at a romantic connection with Sumner, painting him in a somewhat positive light, whereas Herzer openly discusses their unconventional familial dynamics, stirring the pot further.

### Family Tensions

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Amidst this media frenzy, Shari Redstone, Sumner's daughter, observes the unfolding drama with increasing unease. While she remains publicly silent, her worries about the women's influence over her father and their potential financial motivations become palpable. The article exacerbates existing family rifts, particularly as whispers circulate about Holland and Herzer's ambitions regarding Sumner's estate.

## **Emotional Fallout**

Simultaneously, Holland's boyfriend, Pilgrim, grapples with jealousy and feelings of betrayal over her public comments about Sumner. His emotional turmoil intensifies their relationship strain, culminating in arguments that manifest against the backdrop of Sumner's escalating demands.

## **Celebrating Sumner's Birthday**

In a bid to bring some cheer to Sumner, Holland and Herzer organize a birthday party. However, the event feels hollow and lacks genuine joy, further underscored by the absence of family members. This omission amplifies the discord surrounding Sumner's choices and relationships.

## **Control Over Funeral Arrangements**

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Following the birthday celebration, Holland and Herzer seize control over Sumner's funeral arrangements, a move that alarms Shari and the rest of the family. Their apprehension stems not only from their religious beliefs but also from fears of being marginalized in final decisions regarding their patriarch's legacy.

## **Breaking Point**

As tensions reach a boiling point, Pilgrim's relationship with Holland unravels. After a tumultuous escape from rehab, he confronts Holland in an emotionally charged showdown, marking a dramatic escalation in their conflicts. This confrontation reveals deep-seated insecurities and challenges in their relationship, adding layers to the already fraught dynamics.

## **Conclusion**

This episode illustrates the intricate web of loyalty, familial ties, and personal desires interwoven with wealth and power struggles. The clashing ambitions of individual characters reveal a backdrop of emotional turmoil and familial discontent, highlighting the delicate balance between personal relationships and the overarching influence of legacy.

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# Episode 10 Summary: “I’d Better Not Tell Manuela”

## Episode 1: I’d Better Not Tell Manuela

### Rekindling Love and Tensions

In this episode, Pilgrim grapples with the realization of his enduring love for Holland following a heated argument. Their relationship takes a romantic turn when they spend a blissful weekend together on June 26, 2015; Pilgrim even proposes again, and Holland joyfully accepts. However, their happiness is short-lived. During a July 4th gathering, tensions reemerge when Holland denies Pilgrim access to their house, igniting a major fallout that ultimately results in a painful breakup filled with escalating conflicts.

### Legal Trouble for Holland

Amidst the turmoil of their separation, Holland faces her own struggles as she wraps up a legal battle against individuals named Naylor and Martinez. This legal dispute ends quietly but leaves her with substantial bills, which are taken care of by Sumner, a key figure in her life. Meanwhile, Pilgrim, navigating the emotional aftermath of the breakup, seeks comfort in staying with his ex-girlfriend Amy Shpall. He contemplates taking legal action against Holland after discovering her infidelity, seeking counsel from

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attorney Bryan Freedman.

## **Negotiations and Manipulations**

As Pilgrim shares evidence of Holland's affair with Freedman, negotiations commence with Holland's legal team. Initial settlements are floated, and Pilgrim becomes increasingly entangled in his feelings for Holland, complicating his legal pursuits. Meanwhile, Holland, now aware of Pilgrim's consultations, cautions him against making any public moves regarding their tumultuous affair, adding tension to their already fraught relationship.

## **Unraveling Secrets**

At a social gathering, Pilgrim unwittingly reveals details of his past with Holland to Matt Marciano, a friend who then communicates this to Manuela Herzer, a powerful figure in the social landscape. Herzer's reaction is explosive; she threatens to expose Holland's infidelity to Sumner, which sends shockwaves through Pilgrim's legal strategy. As the situation escalates, settlement discussions between Pilgrim and Holland's team break down, leaving both parties in a precarious position.

## **Confrontation and Consequences**

In the aftermath of Herzer's accusations, Holland confronts Sumner,

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attempting to minimize the gravity of her affair and framing it as a mere indiscretion. However, the tension escalates when Herzer bursts into their conversation, leveling serious accusations against Holland. This confrontation leads Sumner, frustrated and hurt, to expel Herzer from the house. Within just 48 hours, the repercussions of these events force Holland and her daughter to leave their home, signaling a significant turning point in their lives and marking the beginning of a difficult new chapter away from Sumner.

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# Episode 11 Summary: “Operation Freedom”

## Episode 2: Operation Freedom - Summary

On September 2, significant changes occurred in the life of media magnate Sumner Redstone when his estate lawyer, Leah Bishop, executed a crucial update to his will. This amendment replaced Ann Holland, Sumner's longtime companion, with Manuela Herzer as the primary beneficiary, bestowing Herzer with an astonishing estate valued at \$70 million. This shift marked the beginning of a power struggle within Sumner's personal life.

Following her installation as the primary heir, Herzer quickly asserted her influence over Sumner, blocking all family interactions and canceling scheduled visits, particularly with Shari, Sumner's granddaughter. She displayed a manipulative control over the household, even employing hidden cameras to monitor the environment within his mansion. Herzer strategically introduced Heidi MacKinney, a personal assistant who bore a resemblance to Holland, effectively deepening Sumner's isolation while masquerading as a substitute for his lost intimacy.

Sumner, though fondly reminiscing about his past with Holland, found himself subjected to Herzer's schemes. Under her strict orders, staff were told to mislead him about Holland's availability, further clouding his

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judgment and emotions. Each gesture from Holland, including heartfelt letters attempting to reconnect, was sabotaged by Herzer, who subtly undermined Holland's loyalty and intentions.

As Herzer's oppressive regime wore on, creating a toxic environment that alienated staff members, the whispers of rebellion began to arise. This collective discontent birthed "Operation Freedom," a clandestine effort among the staff to liberate Sumner from Herzer's manipulative grasp and to restore his autonomy. United by a shared desire for justice, they resolved to unveil Herzer's deceptive tactics and protect the integrity of Sumner's connections with his family and true friends.

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## Episode 12: “I Never Thought I’d See You Again”

### Episode 3: “I Never Thought I’d See You Again”

As of October 2015, Viacom found itself in a precarious position. Its stock had plummeted nearly 40%, primarily due to significant shifts in the media landscape, notably the trend of cord-cutting and the rapid growth of streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon. This dramatic decline placed increasing scrutiny on CEO Philippe Dauman, who had once been hailed as a forward-thinking leader but was now seen as failing to adapt to the industry's evolving demands.

Under Dauman's leadership, Viacom's strategy shifted away from pursuing strategic acquisitions to prioritizing stock buybacks. This decision left the company increasingly vulnerable and lagging behind competitors that were actively acquiring valuable content and franchises. Dauman's disconnect with Hollywood talent and troubled relationships with cable operators further exacerbated concerns about his position and effectiveness. Both talent and corporate partners grew frustrated with his leadership style, leading to a dismal atmosphere within the company.

Amid these internal struggles, Shari Redstone, the daughter of Viacom's founder Sumner Redstone, became increasingly antagonistic towards

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Dauman. She was particularly irked by his perceived dismissive attitude and ambition to undermine her family's legacy in the company. Despite her attempts to work collaboratively with him, their relationship deteriorated to the point where Shari felt compelled to confront Dauman about his failures as CEO.

Sumner Redstone's steadfast public support for Dauman further exacerbated tensions within the company. His blind backing created a rift between the actual performance of Viacom and the perceived reality among other executives. There was a growing concern that Dauman was lacking a viable strategic plan, leading many to question if he was simply stalling for time.

Compounding the issues at Viacom were rising personal tensions for Sumner Redstone at home. His long-term companion, Manuela Herzer, became a source of concern, with allegations surfacing about her manipulative behavior. Key staff members courageously brought Herzer's misconduct to Sumner's attention, paving the way for a turning point in his personal life.

On October 10, Sumner's inner circle conducted an intervention, exposing Herzer's deceit affecting his finances and personal affairs. Shocked by these revelations, Sumner made the profound decision to exclude Herzer from his will and appoint Dauman as his new health care proxy. This decisive action not only severed ties with Herzer but also allowed Sumner to reclaim agency

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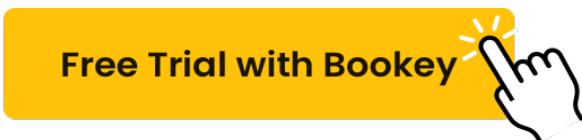


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over his life.

In the aftermath of these events, a heartfelt reunion occurred between Shari and her father, facilitating a restoration of family bonds. Sumner's bold decision to distance himself from Herzer not only represented a personal reclamation of autonomy but also paralleled the struggle for Viacom's relevance in an ever-evolving media environment. This junction of familial and corporate conflict showcased the intricate connections between personal relationships and business dynamics as Viacom grappled with its future.

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# Episode 13 Summary: “I’m Not Going to Fire Him”

## ### Episode 4: “I’m Not Going to Fire Him”

### Overview

This episode centers around Shari Redstone's decision to move to Los Angeles to support her ailing father, Sumner Redstone, the influential media mogul behind Viacom and CBS. As Sumner's health declines, Shari steps into a pivotal role, navigating the complex interplay of family loyalty, corporate strife, and legal challenges that threaten her father's legacy and control over his businesses.

### Shari’s Involvement

In this critical chapter, Shari deepens her relationship with Sumner, emphasizing the importance of family during troubling times. Heavily involved in his care, she assembles a team of medical professionals to ensure his well-being while keeping him apprised of developments at Viacom and CBS. However, her efforts are met with resistance from other parties, especially from Bloom and Dauman, who question her authority and intentions regarding her father's health and estate management.

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## **Herzer's Lawsuit**

The plot thickens when Manuela Herzer, Sumner's former health care proxy, files a lawsuit claiming that Sumner lacks the mental capacity to terminate her role. This lawsuit casts a shadow over Sumner's cognitive health, portraying him in a fragile state and raising alarm about his ability to manage his affairs. In a show of support, Shari reassures her father that Herzer's influence in his life is over, yet this legal battle threatens their family's unity.

## **Legal Maneuvering and Media Attention**

Herzer's lawsuit garners considerable media attention, with reports highlighting her previous intimacy with Sumner while scrutinizing his current mental state. This public exposure forces Shari and Sumner to take action, as they work to reinforce their bond and defend against Herzer's claims in both the legal arena and within public perception.

## **Dauman and the Board's Reaction**

As tensions rise, Dauman, who had once maintained a close relationship with Sumner, begins distancing himself, presumably eyeing the changing power dynamics within the company. Concerns from activist investors regarding Sumner's ability to effectively lead Viacom and CBS exacerbate

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the situation, prompting discussions about potential changes in management structure—a clear shift in the corporate landscape that challenges familial ties.

## **Investor Pressure and Board Dynamics**

With Viacom's stock steadily declining, major shareholders voice their worries about Sumner's competence as chairman. This financial turmoil stirs up conflicts among board members, particularly highlighting the growing divide between Shari and the other influential figures in the company. The CBS board contemplates radical actions to diminish Sumner's controlling interests, signaling escalating tensions that threaten both the familial bond and the future of the corporations.

## **Conclusion**

As Shari strives to regain her family's influence in Sumner's life amid mounting external pressures from Herzer's lawsuit and shareholder scrutiny, she finds herself at the intersection of personal loyalty and corporate strategy. The episode sets the stage for forthcoming family conflicts and corporate upheaval, illuminating the challenges of safeguarding both family integrity and business interests in the face of diminishing health and increasing competition.

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## Episode 14 Summary: “This Is Your Battle, Not Mine”

### Episode 5: “This Is Your Battle, Not Mine” – Summary

In this chapter, we witness the decline of Sumner Redstone, a once-mighty figure in the entertainment industry known for his leadership of CBS and Viacom. His companion, Shari Redstone, oversees his care as his mental faculties increasingly deteriorate. The anxiety surrounding Sumner's cognitive health prompts an evaluation by Dr. Stephen Read, who ultimately diagnoses him with severe dementia. While Sumner retains moments of clarity, he fails critical cognitive tests, raising significant concerns about his ability to fulfill the responsibilities of executive chairman.

In light of Dr. Read's assessment, Sumner resigns from his high-profile positions but maintains the honorary title of chairman emeritus, paired with substantial financial compensation. As Shari acknowledges the necessity for fresh leadership, Viacom's board appoints Philippe Dauman, a seasoned executive, as Sumner's successor. However, Dauman's ascent to leadership quickly faces challenges as Viacom's financial performance wavers.

Simultaneously, Dauman embarks on contentious negotiations concerning the potential sale of a significant stake in Paramount Pictures, which causes tension with Shari. She feels blindsided by his maneuvers, particularly given

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her father's failing health and lack of understanding of the implications. Sumner becomes aware of Dauman's plans, igniting his outrage and escalating the conflict between the two. In this fraught environment, Shari commits to standing by her father, emphasizing her support with the declaration, "This is your battle, not mine." This statement underscores the familial loyalty amidst corporate chaos, setting the stage for the ensuing struggle between personal and professional interests in the Redstone legacy.

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# Episode 15 Summary: “A Public Spectacle”

## EPISODE 6: A Public Spectacle

### Summary

On March 11, 2016, a crucial meeting unfolded at the Beverly Park mansion of Sumner Redstone, the media mogul and former executive chairman of Viacom and CBS. Attorneys Gabrielle Vidal and Amy Koch, accompanied by litigation attorney Rob Klieger, navigated severe weather to consult with Redstone, whose frail appearance worried Klieger. Initially cautious, Klieger sought to establish a rapport with him, knowing that their attorney-client relationship was vital given the ongoing legal battles.

The backdrop of this meeting was the contentious lawsuit brought by Sumner's ex-lover, Manuela Herzer, a key player in the unfolding drama. Judge Cowan had ruled against Sumner's motion to dismiss her claims, allowing the lawsuit to proceed. Sumner was resolute in his desire to maintain control over his empire, particularly rejecting any notion of selling Paramount Pictures—a cornerstone of his legacy.

As the legal landscape evolved, the possibility of a settlement hovered over the proceedings. Herzer had initially shown willingness to mediate,

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proposing to drop her claims for a sizable financial settlement. However, her subsequent demands grew increasingly unreasonable, leading her to retract her offer and complicating negotiations. This escalation reflected her contentious relationship with Sumner, characterized by drama and legal entanglements.

In a significant move, Sumner updated his health care directive to appoint his daughter, Shari Redstone, as his health surrogate, indicating the trust and support he placed in her amidst his battles. As the trial date approached, the judge authorized a videotaped deposition to collect Sumner's testimony, but restricted public access to shield him from further public scrutiny and embarrassment.

When the day for the deposition arrived, Sumner's health appeared to decline further. His fragmented responses raised alarms about his cognitive state, and the session concluded abruptly after questions regarding Herzer, underscoring the toll that legal pressures and personal turbulence were taking on him.

This episode captures the intense legal and personal struggles faced by Sumner Redstone as he contended with his deteriorating health, complex family dynamics, and the relentless pursuit of his former lover in the courtroom. The narrative paints a vivid picture of a man grappling with both his legacy and his vulnerability in the face of rising legal challenges.

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# Episode 16: “A Modern-Day Love Story”

## A Modern-Day Love Story: Summary of Key Chapters

### Trial Overview

The legal battle concerning Sumner M. Redstone's advance health care directive began on May 6 at the Los Angeles Superior Court. Central to the trial were two significant figures: Manuela Herzer, Sumner's former companion, and Shari Redstone, his daughter, who was accompanied by her son, Brandon. The trial quickly escalated into a conflict filled with emotional disputes over Sumner's intentions and well-being.

### Opening Statements

Herzer's attorney, Pierce O'Donnell, characterized the relationship between Herzer and Sumner as a "modern-day love story," arguing that their deep bond had been crucial to his happiness. He contended that Herzer's removal from Sumner's life devastated him emotionally and contradicted his true wishes.

### Defense Claims

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In contrast, Shari's lawyer, Rob Klieger, accused Herzer of emotional manipulation, claiming her influence had led to Sumner's isolation from his family. He suggested that after her departure, Sumner flourished, implying that Herzer was detrimental to his health and happiness.

## **Sumner's Deposition**

The tension escalated as the court viewed a videotaped deposition of Sumner, where his frustration and clear disapproval of Herzer were evident. His speech was noticeably impaired, but his message was powerful, reflecting a strong rejection of Herzer's presence in his life.

## **Judge's Observations**

Judge Cowan acknowledged the weight of Sumner's testimony, suggesting it severely weakened Herzer's claims. Despite past disagreements, the enduring connection between Sumner and Shari was evident, underscoring the family's resilience amid turmoil.

## **Verdict and Reactions**

In her ruling, Judge Cowan dismissed Herzer's claim to be reinstated as Sumner's health care agent, a decision celebrated by Shari, who expressed relief and gratitude. In contrast, Herzer was left mourning the loss of her

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place in Sumner's life, particularly during his vulnerable moments.

## **Herzer's Legal Counterattack**

In response to the judge's ruling, Herzer launched a new lawsuit against Shari, alleging deceitful practices aimed at dismantling their long-standing relationship. She sought to reinstate her status as a beneficiary in Sumner's will, intensifying the conflict.

## **Emerging Conflicts**

The family drama deepened with the involvement of Philippe Dauman, CEO of Viacom, who emerged as a formidable opponent to Shari's efforts to safeguard her father's legacy. As court battles raged, Dauman's intentions for a potential Paramount sale added an extra layer of tension to the already fraught family dynamics.

## **Board Dynamics and Shifts in Power**

In a strategic response, Shari took decisive actions to revamp Viacom's board by ousting members loyal to Dauman. This maneuver not only demonstrated her assertiveness in securing her father's interests but also marked a pivotal shift in the corporate landscape of the media empire.

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## **Dauman's Retaliation**

Undeterred, Dauman retaliated by filing a lawsuit against Shari, alleging manipulation of Sumner's fragile health for her gain and seeking to reverse the board changes. This escalation underscored the intertwining of family feuds with corporate power struggles, highlighting themes of inheritance, loyalty, and the quest for dominance within an intricate web of personal and legal conflicts.

Overall, this narrative reveals the complexities of familial and corporate relations amidst trials of love, loyalty, and the quest for control over an influential legacy.

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# Episode 17 Summary: “No One Likes Drama”

### EPISODE 8: "No One Likes Drama"

## Summary of Events

On May 27, 2016, the ninety-third birthday celebration of Sumner Redstone, the influential media mogul and founder of Viacom and CBS, was marked by notable absences, including key figures like former Viacom CEO Philippe Dauman and CBS head Les Moonves. This exclusion underscored the escalating tensions rooted in Dauman's ongoing lawsuit against the Redstone family, which clamored for control within the vast media empire. The celebration took on an intimate, familial atmosphere, and surprisingly, Sumner's mood appeared to improve when caregivers were absent, highlighting the nuances of his declining health.

As the head of Paramount Pictures, Brad Grey and Moonves made subsequent visits, further revealing Sumner's deteriorating mental state. This decline raised alarms among Viacom's board about new advisors purportedly acting on Sumner's behalf. In a letter of concern, Viacom's lead director, Salerno, expressed dismay over restricted access to Sumner, prompting National Amusements, the holding company controlled by the

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Redstone family, to implement changes ensuring that Shari and Sumner maintained decision-making authority over any potential sale of Paramount Pictures. This shift effectively marginalized Dauman and showcased the growing power dynamics within the company.

The ongoing struggle for control engulfed the Viacom board, leading to significant upheaval as National Amusements replaced five directors, including key allies of Dauman. This shake-up occurred amidst rising stock prices yet left Dauman's leadership increasingly scrutinized due to the company's unsatisfactory performance.

## **Shari's Role and Negotiations**

In a parallel development, Shari Redstone, Sumner's daughter, attended the esteemed Allen & Company media summit, where she unexpectedly secured support from Moonves following Dauman's abrupt cancellation. Meanwhile, discussions between Tyler Redstone—Sumner's grandson—and Dauman took place in secret, as both parties aimed to evade the spectacle of a prolonged and damaging trial. The negotiations included terms that would see Dauman resign from Viacom with a considerable severance package. However, this proposed settlement was rejected by the Viacom board, further illustrating the widening rift between Dauman and the board members.

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After Viacom reported disappointing earnings, Dauman faced increasing backlash, particularly from former CEO Tom Freston, culminating in his ousting from the company. Eventually, a negotiated exit allowed Dauman to receive a generous payout while retaining the right to address the newly formed board. Following his departure, Dauman distanced himself from the operations of Viacom, marking a significant shift in the company's governance.

## Conclusion

In the conclusion of this dramatic episode, Shari Redstone emerged as a formidable force, successfully defending her father's legacy and orchestrating a significant transformation of the company's leadership and board structure. Despite the considerable pressures and challenges of the year, she reflected on her accomplishments in securing the Redstone family's control over Viacom. The tumult of the past months highlighted not only the stakes involved in the media industry but also the personal sacrifices made in the pursuit of power. By November, Shari's resilience became evident, as she navigated the complexities of familial loyalty and corporate governance, culminating in a hard-fought sense of achievement, albeit at a significant personal cost.

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# Episode 18 Summary: “An Overwhelming Stench of Greed”

## EPISODE 9: An Overwhelming Stench of Greed

In this chapter, we witness the evolving dynamic between Sumner Redstone and his daughter Shari following the ousting of former executive Philippe Dauman. With a newfound sense of comfort, Sumner, now experiencing reduced pressures, enjoys quality time with Shari during her bi-monthly visits. To improve their communication, Shari introduces a Microsoft Surface Pro, equipping Sumner with a programmed voice that allows him to express his wit, even including playful remarks about Donald Trump.

Amidst these personal changes, Shari takes on the mantle of leadership for Viacom, actively pushing for a merger with CBS under CEO Les Moonves. This strategic move aims to enhance their competitive edge against industry titans like Netflix. Despite Sumner's longstanding opposition to such an idea, Shari manages to persuade him, prompting him to send a letter advocating the merger to the boards of both companies.

As Viacom prepares for this pivotal merger, the company faces a leadership void due to the unexpected departure of CEO Tom Dooley. Robert Bakish emerges as the interim CEO, bringing with him a solid strategic outlook that

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emphasizes rebuilding relationships with cable operators and modernizing company practices. Shari, keen on signaling a fresh start, refreshes the Viacom headquarters, reflecting her optimism in Bakish's leadership abilities.

However, while corporate ambitions progress, family tensions bubble beneath the surface. Sumner's legal battle against his former companions, Holland and Herzer, for alleged financial manipulation colors his relationships with Shari and the ongoing business initiatives. Shari attempts to separate from her father's vengeful pursuits, yet Sumner remains fixated on retaliation, complicating their bond. This tension escalates as Holland countersues, claiming Shari's involvement in the disputes exacerbates the familial discord.

In the backdrop, experts assess the situation through a psychological lens, noting themes of elder abuse and manipulation. They point out that Sumner's mental vulnerabilities, worsened by his lifestyle choices, inform the legal strategies surrounding the case. To bolster their evidence against Holland and Herzer, Sumner enlists a retired FBI agent, underscoring the lengths he is willing to go in this battle.

As the litigation spirals, Holland and Herzer momentarily unite against the Redstones, while Holland navigates complications stemming from her past relationship with George Pilgrim, who threatens to interfere with both her

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legal issues and personal life.

Ultimately, this episode intricately weaves together the personal and professional struggles of the Redstone family, illustrating a complex narrative rife with ambition, betrayal, and the weight of familial obligations amidst ongoing legal turmoil.

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# Episode 19 Summary: “Don’t Go Near This”

## Episode 19 Summary: Don’t Go Near This

### Boardroom Tensions at CBS

In February 2017, CBS's board meeting was fraught with tension, primarily driven by Shari Redstone's plans to merge CBS with Viacom. Facing opposition from board member Chad Gifford, who questioned her strategy, Shari felt both uncomfortable and undermined despite her position as a controlling shareholder. The dynamics of the board were marred by longstanding patterns of disrespect directed towards her, which hearkened back to the legacy of her father, Sumner Redstone, who had also maintained a complicated relationship with the board.

### Moonves' Reluctance

While Shari believed she had the backing of CBS CEO Les Moonves for the merger, he privately opposed it, considering CBS's strong position as a major deterrent. He perceived the merger as potentially more beneficial to Viacom rather than CBS, leading to stalled negotiations, especially when the CBS board insisted that the Redstones cede control—something they were unwilling to consider.

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## **Shari's Quest for a Diverse Board**

After Frederic Salerno's exit, Shari's commitment to diversifying CBS's predominantly older and male board led her to nominate Martha Minow, the respected dean of Harvard Law School. Although they held differing political views, Minow accepted the role of independent director. Yet, her entry was met with skepticism from other directors regarding her independence and suitability.

## **Interactions with Gifford**

Tensions escalated further when Gifford displayed blatant disrespect towards Shari at a Super Bowl event, prompting a public confrontation. The prevailing culture at CBS showcased deep-rooted struggles to acknowledge Shari's influence, further complicating her ability to navigate board dynamics.

## **Getting to Know Minow and Klieger**

Martha Minow's initial experiences within the CBS board underscored a pervasive atmosphere of coolness from other directors, while Shari increasingly felt marginalized despite her title as vice chair. In an effort to strengthen her internal support, Shari later nominated her lawyer, Klieger, to

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the board, attempting to establish a counterbalance to the existing distrust within the ranks.

## **The Weinstein Scandal Ignites Attention**

The narrative shifted dramatically following the explosive allegations against producer Harvey Weinstein that surfaced in October 2017. His history of sexual misconduct ignited a widespread conversation about power dynamics and abuse in Hollywood, giving rise to the #MeToo movement, which advocated for accountability.

### **Initial Allegations Against Moonves**

Actress Illeana Douglas drew troubling parallels between the Weinstein scandal and Les Moonves, recounting a disturbing encounter with him from years prior. Her decision to speak out marked a significant shift, empowering other women to share their stories and exposing the endemic nature of sexual harassment in the entertainment industry.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter encapsulates the tumultuous atmosphere at CBS, where internal power struggles intersected with a burgeoning cultural shift toward accountability in the wake of the Weinstein scandal. It signaled a crucial

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moment in recognizing and addressing women's experiences within Hollywood, forever altering the landscape of the industry.

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# Episode 20: “We All Did That”

## Episode 1: “We All Did That”

In the opening episode, the focus is on Gil Schwartz, the head of corporate communications at CBS and a key player in navigating media crises. Known for his charm and adeptness in corporate politics, Schwartz, who previously penned works under the pseudonym Stanley Bing, enjoyed a close rapport with CBS CEO Les Moonves, gaining the nickname "Leslie whisperer." However, as rumors surrounding Moonves's personal life began to surface, Schwartz remained focused on safeguarding CBS's public reputation amidst growing concerns.

The pivotal moment arrives when former producer Phyllis Golden-Gottlieb, motivated by the revelations of sexual misconduct exposed by the Weinstein allegations, comes forward to report her own experiences with Moonves, detailing incidents of sexual assault dating back to the 1980s. Her police complaint sends shockwaves through CBS, signaling potential repercussions that could tarnish the network's image in the wake of the #MeToo movement, which advocates for victims of sexual violence to speak out.

As the allegations unfold, Schwartz takes proactive measures to prepare CBS for media inquiries. Despite Moonves labeling the allegations as consensual,

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Schwartz emphasizes the need to inform the CBS board members about the situation, highlighting the gravity of the crisis. To fortify his defense, Moonves enlists a criminal defense attorney to navigate the implications of the emerging accusations.

The narrative introduces Dr. Anne Peters, Moonves's physician, who also shares her troubling experiences with him. In a conversation with her friend Arnold Kopelson, she recounts her trauma, underscoring the personal toll of such incidents. Although she urges Kopelson to take her concerns seriously, he dismisses her claims, paralleling the challenges many victims face in being believed and supported.

As the fallout from various allegations against figures like Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose amplifies, CBS finds itself under increasing scrutiny. During a board meeting, Moonves attempts to project confidence, assuring members that CBS is free from similar troubling issues, while also participating in discussions promoting workplace equality. However, the mounting pressure from ongoing revelations threatens to undermine his attempts at damage control and poses significant challenges to the integrity of CBS's leadership and management.

In conclusion, the episode encapsulates the intersection of personal accountability and corporate responsibility, setting the stage for the unfolding drama in the broader context of the #MeToo movement and its

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impact on the entertainment industry.

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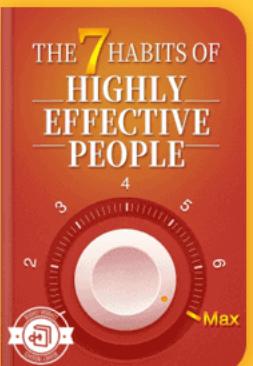
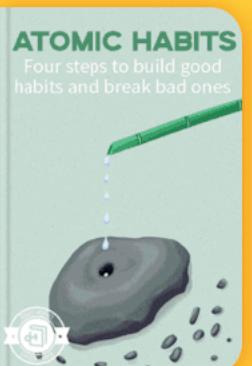
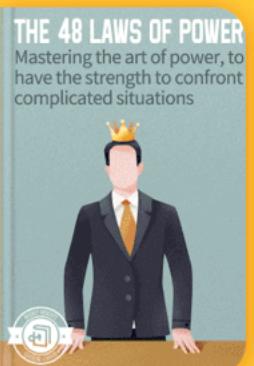
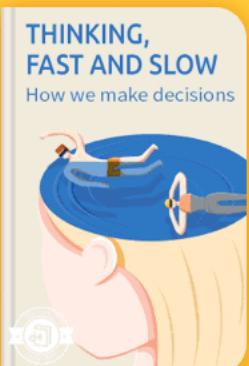
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# Episode 21 Summary: “If Bobbie Talks”

## EPISODE 2: If Bobbie Talks

### Marv Dauer’s Persona and Background

Marv Dauer, a Hollywood talent manager, has crafted a successful image in the entertainment industry, boasting an impressive roster of clients. His journey began in Austin, Minnesota, but his current lifestyle in West Los Angeles showcases the fruits of his labor: he enjoys golfing, drives a convertible, and maintains relationships without the commitment of marriage.

### Struggles with Finances and Submissions

However, Dauer's success hits a rough patch as his income plummets due to a decrease in client commissions and an unsettling inability to submit his clients for new roles. A troubling revelation comes to light—an embittered former client has undermined his work by stealing his email password, further complicating his professional landscape.

### The #MeToo Movement's Impact

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As the #MeToo movement gains momentum, spurred by the revelations about Harvey Weinstein and others, Dauer receives unsettling calls from reporters inquiring about allegations surrounding Les Moonves, a powerful figure in Hollywood whom he has only interacted with at social gatherings. This growing scandal leaves Dauer anxious, particularly regarding the potential involvement of one of his clients: actress Bobbie Phillips.

## **Bobbie Phillips' Career Journey**

Dauer first recognized the star potential in Phillips back in 1993. Initially typecast in “bimbo” roles, she broke through with her performance in the series *\*Murder One\**. However, a troubling encounter with Moonves deeply affected her confidence, resulting in anxiety during auditions and her eventual departure from acting in 2001.

## **Moonves and the Past**

Years later, Phillips' name surfaces again amid inquiries relating to Moonves. Seeing an opportunity, Dauer reaches out to him, recalling the incident with Phillips. During their discussion, Moonves admits to a consensual sexual encounter with her but expresses concern about the reputational damage that could ensue if she were to speak out, especially in the current climate shaped by the #MeToo movement.

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## Potential Outcomes

Amid these revelations, Dauer senses Moonves' vulnerability and carefully mentions Phillips' openness to re-enter the industry if new opportunities arise. This strategic suggestion hints at the possibility of leveraging their shared history, with the shifting dynamics of Hollywood under scrutiny due to the fallout of recent allegations. Thus, the chapter sets the stage for a complex negotiation of power and agency in the evolving narrative of Hollywood and personal redemption.

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# Episode 22 Summary: “I Was a Good Guy”

## Episode 3: “I Was a Good Guy” - Summary

In this chapter, the intricate dynamics of the entertainment industry come to light as business relationships and personal struggles intertwine against the backdrop of shifting corporate strategies and the emerging #MeToo movement.

The chapter opens with talent agent Justin Dauer engaging in clandestine discussions with CBS executive Les Moonves, concerning actress Bobbie Phillips. Amid the chaos of California wildfires, Dauer and Moonves communicate discreetly regarding potential clients, establishing a foundation for their alliance. Dauer, however, expresses his discomfort with press interactions and reassures Moonves of his commitment to ensuring confidentiality.

From Phillips' perspective, her situation is complicated by the aftermath of personal trauma, particularly due to the suicide of her son. This loss weighs heavily on her desire to move forward without reigniting past grief through media scrutiny. Friends urge her to speak out, but she remains resolute in her intentions to forgive and seek closure rather than revenge. Dauer suggests that Phillips could help mend Moonves' image, hinting at Moonves' desire

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for reconciliation.

As the holiday season approaches, Dauer utilizes his industry connections to orchestrate an initiative that could benefit both Moonves and Phillips. He proposes featuring Phillips on CBS, arguing that this could not only serve Moonves' interests in making amends but also help Phillips personally.

After some hesitation, she agrees to reconnect with Dauer, signaling a potential shift in her public stance.

The chapter also explores the broader challenges facing CBS within the rapidly evolving media landscape, particularly with the rise of streaming services. To remain competitive, CBS is contemplating mergers, notably with Viacom, but internal tensions bubble to the surface. Shari Redstone, a key CBS board member, feels marginalized during strategic discussions that overlook Viacom's significance, leading her to question the future direction of the company under Moonves' leadership.

As pressure mounts against Moonves, the chapter concludes with a tweet from June Seley Kimmel that recounts an unsettling encounter with him, reinforcing the pervasive issues connected to the #MeToo movement and hinting at the implications for Moonves' career and reputation.

Overall, this chapter intricately weaves personal dilemmas with the corporate machinations of the entertainment industry, setting the stage for

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the characters' evolving dynamics against a backdrop of societal change.

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# Episode 23 Summary: “I Feel Sick All the Time”

## EPISODE 4: “I Feel Sick All the Time”

### Moonves' New Year and Reflections

As the New Year unfolded at his Malibu beach house, CBS CEO Les Moonves reflected on a controversial past with actress Bobbie Phillips, acknowledging their interaction was consensual, yet maintaining that no assault occurred. In the backdrop of his personal introspection, Moonves expressed gratitude toward his associate, Dauer, while lamenting the lack of a promised gift for his son, underscoring his complex emotional state during this transitional time.

### Shari Redstone's Strategic Concerns

Amid competitive pressures in the media landscape, Shari Redstone, a key figure in CBS's strategic direction, grew increasingly frustrated with the board's hesitance to pursue a merger with Viacom. Seeking clarity on Moonves' standing, she consulted with Rob Klieger, pushing for a more constructive collaboration with him to align their visions.

### Tensions Between Moonves and Redstone

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In private discussions with Moonves, Klieger urged him to embrace Redstone's strategic ideas, given the looming merger. However, Moonves' dismissive attitude hinted at deeper tensions, as he publicly claimed not to oppose the merger while privately obstructing progress, driving a wedge between himself and Redstone.

## **Continued Reflection and Anger**

Meanwhile, Phillips, disheartened by Moonves' characterization of their past, resolved to reclaim her narrative. Empowered by Oprah Winfrey's inspiring speech at the Golden Globes, Phillips grew determined to resist being further victimized in the aftermath of her experiences.

## **Janet Dulin Jones' Experience**

Writer Janet Dulin Jones stepped forward to recount her unsettling encounter with Moonves, highlighting the grave power imbalances prevalent in the industry that often silence women. Reflecting on these systemic barriers, she emphasized the challenges faced by less prominent women in speaking out against such experiences.

## **The CES and Rising Rumors**

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At the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in January 2018, speculation surrounding Moonves intensified, particularly concerning a potential exposé from journalist Ronan Farrow. Shari Redstone raised these concerns with fellow board members, who, although skeptical, acknowledged the necessity of initiating an official investigation into the mounting allegations.

## **Board's Investigation into Moonves**

In response to the escalating scrutiny, the CBS board approved an investigation into Moonves, appointing attorney Michael Aiello to lead the inquiry. While Moonves acknowledged “decades-old incidents” that he insisted were consensual, the lack of detailed information left room for ambiguity.

## **Challenges in Handling Allegations**

As Moonves recounted incidents involving Phillips, he downplayed their severity. Aiello’s investigation came under fire for its inadequacies, particularly its failure to pursue thorough follow-ups with potential witnesses, raising questions about the sincerity of the board’s efforts.

## **Redstone's Strategic Discussions with Moonves**

Shari Redstone convened with Moonves to discuss their strategic vision and

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the merger's feasibility, which hinged significantly on his collaboration. While he expressed readiness to advance their plans, both were acutely aware of the overshadowing #MeToo allegations threatening their ambitions.

## **Doubts on the Investigation**

Board members began expressing concerns regarding the depth of Aiello's investigation, particularly as societal attitudes toward sexual harassment transformed and intensified. Growing unease reflected their apprehension about the investigation's potential shortcomings.

## **Conclusions and Board Dynamics**

Despite Shari's push for a thorough inquiry, the board displayed a questionable complacency, often falling back on Moonves' reassurances. This dynamic revealed a troubling readiness to minimize the urgency of addressing the serious harassment allegations emerging against him, hinting at a prioritization of corporate stability over accountability.

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# Episode 24: “This Is Insanity”

## ### Episode 5: “This Is Insanity”

### Shift in Corporate Dynamics

As the corporate landscape shifts, Shari increasingly scrutinizes CBS's stagnation under its outdated reliance on Nielsen ratings, while Viacom, under Bakish's leadership, is making significant strides in streaming. This evolution creates a sense of urgency for CBS to adapt or risk falling further behind.

### Merger Developments

On February 1, CBS and Viacom formed special committees aimed at exploring a merger, a move that strategically excluded Shari and her supporters. National Amusements, the parent company overseeing both networks, argued that this merger could enhance shareholder value. While Shari and CBS CEO Les Moonves publicly displayed solidarity at the Super Bowl, whispers of doubts surrounding Moonves's leadership and personal reputation began to circulate more widely.

### Board Tensions

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With the potential publication of a damaging article, board member Klieger urged the group to discuss its ramifications. However, in a surprising turn, Gordon canceled a meeting right before the article's release, which, interestingly, did not implicate Moonves directly. This unexpected move fueled Moonves's paranoia, leading him to suspect that Shari was behind the rumors swirling about him.

## **Interpersonal Frictions**

The tension between Shari and Moonves escalates as their private conversations become fraught with distrust. After Shari addresses the board about her concerns regarding the rumors, she becomes convinced that someone has leaked her intentions to Moonves, deepening the rift between them.

## **Legal Reprieve and Continuing Concerns**

Although Los Angeles County district attorneys dropped charges against Moonves, his troubles were far from over, especially with ongoing scrutiny from attorney Dauer. While Moonves sought to strengthen connections with casting directors, progress on resolving his issues with Dauer's clients remained stalled.

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## **Negotiating Power Dynamics**

Meanwhile, as the impending merger loomed, Shari and Moonves found themselves in a tense negotiation regarding the management structure. Moonves's desire to install his favored team in leadership positions faced resistance, particularly concerning Bakish's role, leading to mounting frustration from both sides.

## **Controversial Contracts**

CBS's bid for Viacom included contentious terms that raised eyebrows among stakeholders. As negotiations progressed, substantial loopholes were discovered in Moonves's contract. These included vague definitions regarding what constituted "cause" for termination, a critical clause particularly under scrutiny in the wake of the #MeToo movement.

## **Dauer's Birthday Celebration**

As the personal dynamics in the business world continue to evolve, Dauer marked his seventy-fifth birthday with a gathering that attracted attention from powerful figures, including Moonves. This event allowed for crucial networking, further solidifying Dauer's influence in the industry and creating connections that could benefit both personal and professional goals moving forward.

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## Reflections on Relationships

In the aftermath of the celebration, Shari's emerging collaboration with Moonves takes on a new light as he offers to assist Dauer's clients. This promise emphasizes the interconnectivity of their ambitions amid the corporate strife, highlighting the importance of strategic alliances in a shifting landscape. Both Moonves and Shari recognize that fostering relationships will be essential if they hope to navigate the challenges posed by the merger and the scrutiny of their actions.

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# Episode 25 Summary: “Pencils Down”

## ### EPISODE 6: “Pencils Down”

### Dr. Anne Peters’ Disclosure Efforts

In a poignant reflection on ethical dilemmas within the medical field, Dr. Anne Peters, an internist, grappled with her responsibility to disclose a troubling incident involving a powerful, unnamed patient while adhering to doctor-patient confidentiality. In her essay published in *\*Annals of Internal Medicine\**, Peters candidly expressed her feelings of shame and conflict stemming from the patient's harassment. After the incident, the patient acknowledged his behavior and admitted to facing similar issues with other women, prompting Peters to urge him to seek professional help. However, her courageous essay went largely unnoticed by major media outlets, such as CBS and Viacom, raising questions about the visibility of such critical discussions in the healthcare system.

### CBS and Viacom Merger Challenges

As negotiations unfolded regarding a proposed merger between CBS and Viacom, CBS’s special committee faced significant hurdles, particularly in terms of power dynamics and leadership roles. Despite some board members

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recognizing Viacom's potential for recovery, the overall sentiment leaned toward viewing the company as a failing venture. Shari Redstone, a key player in the merger discussions and daughter of the controlling shareholder, sought to elevate the influence of Viacom's CEO, Bob Bakish. However, her efforts were met with resistance from Leslie Moonves, CBS's CEO, who aimed to maintain his stronghold on leadership during a period of instability.

## **Strained Negotiations**

Tensions escalated as Shari Redstone sought a compromise that would allow both Bakish and Moonves to retain important positions in the newly formed entity post-merger. Moonves, unyielding in his stance, expressed unease at any arrangement involving Bakish. As discussions became increasingly strained, Shari worked to navigate the situation delicately to secure collaborative support for the merger while distancing herself from accusations of conspiring against the CBS board.

## **“Nuclear Option” Proposal**

Amidst the deadlock, CBS's special committee considered a controversial strategy termed the "nuclear option," proposed by the prominent corporate lawyer Martin Lipton. This radical approach involved diluting the Redstone family's controlling stake by issuing a special voting dividend to shareholders, a plan fraught with ethical and legal uncertainties.

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Nonetheless, board members felt an urgent obligation to act in the best interests of shareholders, reflecting the heightened stakes involved in the merger negotiations.

## **Moonves' Inner Turmoil**

As the tension ramped up, Moonves found himself increasingly introspective, despite his initial endorsement of the plan to undermine the Redstones. Confiding in trusted associates, he disclosed feelings of anxiety and isolation, grappling with the fear of potential backlash. His quest for peace amid the tumultuous atmosphere surrounding the merger and his role within CBS highlighted the personal toll that corporate power struggles can inflict on leaders in high-stakes scenarios.

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## Episode 26 Summary: “All Out War”

### Episode 7: All Out War

In the turbulent atmosphere surrounding CBS, CEO Les Moonves found himself grappling with mounting pressures as tensions rose with Shari Redstone, the influential figure behind Viacom. Moonves's associates voiced their concerns about his emotional state, noting the heavy weight of an impending "all out war." He recognized Shari's capacity to instigate major changes yet felt ill-equipped to tackle the public conflict that would likely ensue.

As he confronted the growing threat of Shari's influence over CBS, Moonves expressed his reluctance to pursue legal avenues. He feared that engaging in a drawn-out legal battle could damage his reputation irrevocably. However, the CBS board believed that firm action was necessary to prevent a merger that could jeopardize the company's future, and they resolved to challenge the Redstones through legal means.

In a critical board meeting, Moonves wavered, hesitant to fully back the proposal to block the merger due to his concerns about the personal ramifications. However, encouraged by fellow board member Gordon, he ultimately consented to take a stand against the merger, despite his lingering

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anxiety regarding the consequences of such a decision.

After much deliberation, the committee unanimously decided to initiate a lawsuit against the Redstones, aimed at preventing them from asserting control over CBS. They believed it was essential to protect the company and its shareholders. Meanwhile, Moonves's trepidation persisted, particularly regarding potential retribution from Shari.

The following morning, Shari Redstone was blindsided to discover that she had been sued. Her feelings of shock and betrayal deepened, especially regarding the betrayal she sensed from Moonves, whom she considered a confidant. Seeking clarity and support, she contacted her legal team, expressing her emotional distress in response to this unexpected and contentious turn of events. This breach marked a significant escalation in their conflict, setting the stage for an intense battle over control of CBS.

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# Episode 27 Summary: A “Blatant Abuse of Power”

## EPISODE 1: A “Blatant Abuse of Power”

### CBS Lawsuit Highlights Power Struggle

The tumultuous landscape at CBS is marked by a significant lawsuit against its controlling family, the Redstones. CBS claims that Shari Redstone, the daughter of media mogul Sumner Redstone, has compromised shareholder democracy by appointing her own lawyer to the board and discussing management changes without proper authorization. In response, National Amusements, the company that controls CBS through a voting trust, defends its governance practices and counters CBS's allegations.

### Reaction to the Lawsuit

Shari updates her father, Sumner, on the situation, who, instead of faltering, expresses a readiness to fight back. However, the ongoing lawsuit complicates discussions around a potential merger with Viacom, particularly concerning board member Chad Gifford, whose role is pivotal in navigating these turbulent waters.

### Board Meetings and Tensions

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As CBS grapples with the lawsuit, attempts to engage independent board directors yield little resolution. There is a palpable tension over Shari's perceived influence within the company, prompting CBS executives to voice concerns about a toxic atmosphere, detrimental to corporate health.

## **Legal Maneuvers and Initial Wins**

National Amusements reacts swiftly to CBS's concerns by attempting to alter corporate bylaws to bolster its control. A temporary court ruling appears to favor CBS, but subsequent legal decisions allow Shari and National Amusements to maintain significant leverage, continuing the battle for power.

## **The Upfront Presentation**

In the midst of corporate conflict, CBS holds its annual upfront presentation, usually a highlight for showcasing upcoming programming to advertisers. CBS President Les Moonves receives an enthusiastic welcome from advertisers, a moment of professional triumph that contrasts sharply with his struggles back in the boardroom.

## **Board Dynamics and Dividend Proposal**

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A pivotal board meeting unfolds, focusing on a committee's recommendation to issue a special dividend designed to dilute the Redstone family's control. This move exemplifies the ongoing power struggle within CBS. While Moonves vents his frustrations about Shari's influence, Shari defends her strategic vision for a merger, highlighting the complexity of their differing agendas.

## **Voting Outcomes**

In a formal vote, the board approves the special dividend, albeit under the shadow of ongoing legal disputes. This decision provides short-term relief for those wishing to curb Shari's influence, yet it simultaneously underscores the intricate balance of power within the organization.

## **Continued Operations Amidst Chaos**

Amid the governance upheaval, CBS remains steadfast in its mission, continuing to produce content and scout for new projects. This determination to push forward is a testament to the resilience of the company, even as internal strife looms over its operations.

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# Episode 28: “I Was Never a Predator”

## EPISODE 2: “I Was Never a Predator”

### Overview of Legal Action

On May 29, National Amusements and the Redstone family launched a lawsuit against CBS, aiming to protect their voting authority amidst a power struggle. The legal documents claimed that threats made by Shari Redstone regarding the management shakeup were based more on speculation than reality. Furthermore, the suit criticized CEO Les Moonves for his attempts to undermine the Redstones' control of CBS while highlighting his lucrative gains from the company's dual-class share structure, which disproportionately favored the Redstones.

### Janet Dulin Jones's Experience

In the backdrop of these corporate tensions, screenwriter Janet Dulin Jones found herself grappling with her own conflicted feelings. She was approached by journalist Ronan Farrow, who was compiling reports on Moonves's alleged misconduct, including her personal experience. Initially hesitant to come forward, Jones was encouraged by a supportive network of peers, including actress Mira Sorvino, leading her to agree to speak

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anonymously about her troubling encounter with Moonves.

## **Concerns Among CBS Executives**

Within CBS, the atmosphere was charged with apprehension as rumors surrounding Moonves's behavior circulated. Shari Redstone, along with her ally, Klieger, pushed for a thorough investigation into claims of harassment and bullying involving high-level executives, criticizing previous inquiries as inadequate. Their concerns underscored a need for accountability in an organization facing increasing scrutiny around its leadership.

## **Response to Investigation Requests**

CBS's chief legal officer, Lawrence Tu, rejected Shari and Klieger's calls for a more exhaustive investigation, suggesting that the ongoing inquiries were sufficient. He hinted that their appeal might be influenced by the ongoing litigation against the Redstones, prompting Klieger to firmly defend their position as concerned fiduciaries, disconnected from any retaliatory intentions.

## **Moonves's Attempts to Manage Fallout**

Amidst these rising tensions and impending investigations, Moonves attempted damage control by reaching out to actress Bobbie Phillips. He

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expressed regret over their past encounter and sought to discuss future projects, insisting that he did not view himself as predatory. However, the pervasive undercurrents of pressure and the threat of allegations loomed over his communications.

## **Impending Investigative Pressures**

The pressure continued to mount as CBS was informed of an impending major investigative report from *The New Yorker* set to focus on Moonves. This looming article heightened tensions within CBS's leadership and board, as they braced for the impact of public allegations and the potential fallout that could ensue amidst an already volatile corporate environment.

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# Episode 29 Summary: “What the Hell Are You Doing?”

## Episode 3: What the Hell Are You Doing?

### Overview of Initial Reports

In this critical chapter, Sean Lavery brings forward serious allegations against Les Moonves, the then-CEO of CBS, involving multiple incidents of misconduct with women, including prominent figures in the industry like Illeana Douglas and Christine Peters. The emergence of these accusations ignites urgent alarms within CBS, compelling the corporation to swiftly address this brewing crisis and its potential fallout.

### Handling the Controversy

Ender, aware of the gravity of the situation, promptly relays the detailed reports to his superior, Schwartz. In response, Schwartz reaches out to Moonves, who, in disbelief, insinuates that these allegations might be the machinations of his estranged wife, Shari. This sets off an immediate internal investigation at CBS, with the hiring of legal advisors and consultants aimed at navigating the turbulent waters of public relations and corporate governance.

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## Backstage Dynamics

As tensions mount, there's a flurry of interactions among key figures in Hollywood, including casting director Dauer, who finds himself entwined in the intricate and murky corporate dynamics. In a frantic attempt to mitigate damage, Moonves begins to delete any digital traces of discussions pertaining to the allegations, showcasing the desperate measures taken by those in power amidst the unfolding scandal.

## The Role of Mike Marvin

Mike Marvin, once a confidant of Moonves, becomes a significant player when Lavery reaches out to him seeking insights on his experiences with Moonves. Although initially reluctant to share, Marvin acknowledges his suspicions regarding Moonves's behavior, grappling with the larger implications of the #MeToo movement that was gaining momentum at the time. This internal conflict illustrates the moral quandary faced by many during the rise of this cultural reckoning.

## Fact-Checking and Pushback

Amidst the escalating drama, Moonves and Marvin delve into a back-and-forth of fact-checking, each contesting the details surrounding the allegations. This ongoing verification process reveals conflicting accounts,

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as Marvin's memories clash with Moonves's defenses, which only heightens the mounting tensions and distrust between the two.

## Corporate Response and Board Dynamics

As speculation about Moonves's conduct permeates the corporate atmosphere, CBS board members express growing frustration over the opaque communication from their executive leadership. With the publication date for the exposé in *\*The New Yorker\** looming, Moonves makes a last-ditch effort to connect directly with journalist Ronan Farrow, seeking to manage the anticipated fallout and protect his reputation.

## The Turning Point

In a pivotal shift on the eve of the exposé's publication, Marvin reconsiders his position and decides to go on record in support of the allegations against Moonves. This critical decision signals the intensifying stakes and marks a turning point in the narrative. As the thread of Moonves's story begins to unravel, the implications stretch far beyond an individual, reflecting a broader corporate culture grappling with serious allegations and a reckoning with accountability.

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# Episode 30 Summary: “Let’s Not Get Ahead of Ourselves”

## EPISODE 4: “Let’s Not Get Ahead of Ourselves”

In late July, Ronan Farrow’s investigative article in The New Yorker brought grave allegations of sexual misconduct against Leslie Moonves, the chairman of CBS, to light. The report detailed claims from six women, spanning from the 1980s to the late 2000s, describing instances of harassment, forcible advances, and retaliation against those who rejected Moonves. This revelation had immediate financial consequences, resulting in a significant drop in CBS's stock value.

Moonves responded with a statement asserting his commitment to fostering a respectful workplace and acknowledged past mistakes, though he refrained from admitting to any wrongdoing. His comments, however, did little to quell the growing concerns about the pervasive culture of misconduct within CBS, particularly in its news division, 60 Minutes.

Despite the gravity of the allegations and increasing public pressure for accountability, the CBS board displayed hesitance in taking decisive action against Moonves. Citing the importance of due process, some members defended him, including his wife, Julie Chen, who publicly voiced her

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support.

The fallout from Farrow's exposé ignited widespread outrage, leading to calls for an investigation into Moonves's conduct and even disassociation from his alma mater. For victim Bobbie Phillips, the resurfacing of trauma was palpable as she processed the article's disturbing revelations.

Meanwhile, board member Shari Redstone and Rob Klieger expressed their disbelief at the leniency shown by independent directors towards Moonves.

### ### Board Dynamics and Tensions

Within the boardroom, discussions revealed a deep divide on Moonves's future at CBS. Members like William Cohen resisted any immediate suspension, while Klieger pushed for a thorough investigation into the allegations. Ultimately, the board opted to form a special committee to oversee the inquiry, though they delayed any decision regarding Moonves's leadership role—an approach criticized as indecisive and cowardly by observers.

As speculation grew about Moonves's status, the new committee aimed to fairly represent opposing views among board members. Despite the escalating tension and scrutiny surrounding Moonves, he remained in place, underscoring the intricate dynamics of power, loyalty, and public perception within CBS's leadership structure. The situation set the stage for an ongoing

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struggle between maintaining corporate loyalty and addressing the urgent calls for accountability.

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# Episode 31 Summary: “He Wants to Destroy Me”

## EPISODE 5: He Wants to Destroy Me

### Board Disagreements and Investigation

In a turbulent phase for CBS, board chair Shari Redstone sought to foster unity among board members as they faced mounting tensions over allegations against CEO Les Moonves. Despite her call for collaboration, conflict remained over the decision to hire outside law firms for an investigation into the accusations. Ultimately, two firms were enlisted, and the board chose to keep Moonves in place, diverging from initial recommendations to temporarily suspend him during the inquiry.

### Moonves’s Earnings Announcement

Despite the turmoil, Moonves projected an image of stability, confidently presenting strong earnings reports to Wall Street analysts. He skillfully avoided addressing the allegations directly, while analysts, perhaps too eager to ignore the controversies, continued to emphasize CBS’s future prospects under his leadership.

### Meeting Between Shari and Moonves

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A pivotal meeting occurred between Shari Redstone and Moonves, facilitated by Dick Parsons, a respected mediator. During their discussion, Shari expressed her feelings of betrayal regarding Moonves's behavior amid ongoing legal challenges. Moonves, seemingly unfazed by the gravity of the situation, appeared taken aback when transition plans were suggested, indicating a disconnect between his perceptions and the board's concerns.

## **Board Meeting Tensions**

The atmosphere in the boardroom grew increasingly fraught, with deepening discontent among board members over how to handle Moonves's precarious standing. Although a full board meeting was scheduled, Shari took it upon herself to convene a special meeting to directly address Moonves's situation. This move, however, faced pushback from other directors who were hesitant to confront the issue head-on.

## **Emerging Allegations**

Compounding the situation, journalist William Cohan of *\*Vanity Fair\** reported emerging allegations that deepened the scrutiny on Moonves. These included disturbing details linked to a potential #MeToo incident involving him and a diabetes doctor. Cohan's thorough investigation prompted serious discussions within CBS about the implications of these revelations and the

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potential for Moonves's resignation.

## **Sensitive Conversations and Legal Concerns**

As allegations escalated, Moonves grew increasingly alarmed by an actress who had retained legal counsel, fearing the impact of her potential testimony. His anxiety illustrated a broader concern about the legal ramifications he was facing, prompting him to express dread about the consequences should she speak out. His legal team was briefed on the gravity of the situation, underscoring the need for a robust defense strategy.

## **Moonves's Interview with Lawyers**

In a lengthy interview with his lawyers, Moonves attempted to navigate the storm of allegations by downplaying past incidents, insisting that prior encounters had been consensual. However, beneath his confident exterior, a sense of paranoia emerged as he worried about possible betrayals from those closest to him. This interview not only sought to control the narrative surrounding the accusations but also highlighted Moonves's crumbling self-assurance.

## **Concluding Thoughts**

The session left Moonves feeling besieged, grappling with suspicions toward

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both the investigative team and even his own legal counsel, fearing they could be used against him. The unfolding drama painted a complex picture of corporate governance, personal accountability, and the challenges posed by severe allegations, weaving a narrative of distrust and impending crisis at the highest levels of CBS.

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# Episode 32: “This Is a Deal Breaker”

## EPISODE 32: This Is a Deal Breaker

### Summary of Events

This episode unfolds amidst a tense atmosphere as key figures navigate serious allegations against Leslie Moonves, the CEO of CBS, concerning inappropriate behavior towards an actress and potential cover-ups that involve her manager.

### Key Points

**- Disclosure Concerns:** The episode opens with Dan Petrocelli, a seasoned legal representative, conveying to his colleague Aiello that Moonves had reluctantly discussed certain interactions with the actress but hesitated to reveal full details due to confidentiality issues. This highlights the complex nature of the allegations, as Aiello decides to update his legal team about significant insights, including Moonves's inappropriate advances towards the actress and her manager's recent frustrations regarding the actress's limited role opportunities.

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**- Legal Reactions:** The revelation concerning Moonves's interactions sparks alarm within his legal team. There is an urgent call for a follow-up discussion with Moonves, prompting a re-evaluation of their strategic approach to his position as CEO. The implications of potential misconduct complicate the already fragile trust and transparency regarding Moonves's leadership.

**- Moonves's Follow-Up Interview:** During an intensive follow-up interview, Moonves is pressed about his dealings with the actress's manager. He admits to feeling compelled to assist the actress in light of the #MeToo movement, expressing anxiety over the possibility of her making public accusations against him. This conversation serves to deepen the gravity of the situation and reveals Moonves's awareness of the repercussions on his professional standing.

**- Concerns Highlighted by Lawyers:** Legal advisors White and Kestenbaum express serious concern over Moonves's evasiveness and decision-making, perceiving them as indicative of a troubling pattern of behavior. They emphasize that this lack of transparency significantly jeopardizes his credibility and position within the company.

## Conclusions

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**- Recommendations:** As tensions mount, the legal team arrives at a critical juncture where they recommend reassessing Moonves's status as CEO. Kestenbaum candidly remarks, "This is a deal breaker," marking a pivotal turn in the ongoing investigation into Moonves's conduct and its broader implications for CBS's reputation.

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# Episode 33 Summary: “A Once-Unfathomable Outcome”

## Episode 7: A Once-Unfathomable Outcome

In a week that would become pivotal for Les Moonves, the media executive facing severe allegations, journalist Ronan Farrow sought to interview Phyllis Golden-Gottlieb, an 81-year-old woman who had accused Moonves of sexual assault three decades earlier. Farrow identified her after a police complaint involving her claim became public. Despite initial difficulties, he succeeded in securing an interview, which proved vital as investigations into Moonves's conduct advanced.

As the investigation unfolded, damning evidence emerged concerning Moonves's attempts to conceal his relationships with former associates and legal advisors. He instructed his legal team to obstruct inquiries and erased critical text messages, further reflecting his attempts to manipulate the surrounding narrative. The support from the CBS board, which had initially backed him, began to erode significantly when reports surfaced detailing his efforts to silence accusers through job offers.

Discussions regarding Moonves's departure from CBS grew increasingly convoluted, particularly surrounding whether he would leave 'for cause,' an issue that affected his potential severance package. In the face of mounting

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allegations, Moonves ultimately agreed to resign, accepting a considerable payout of \$70 million, highlighting the gravity of the situation.

The atmosphere intensified as more allegations emerged just as the board was preparing to finalize Moonves's settlement. Fueled by Farrow's revelations, additional women came forward, sharing experiences ranging from sexual harassment to physical intimidation, compelling the CBS board to reassess their position.

In light of the evolving narrative, Moonves was interviewed by his legal team, where he denied many allegations, insisting that his interactions had been consensual. However, the contrasting accounts from his accusers painted a dismal picture of his behavior, undermining his defenses.

The story escalated into a media frenzy, highlighted by simultaneous exposés from *\*The New Yorker\** and *\*Vanity Fair\** that portrayed Moonves in an unflattering light. This barrage of negative press ultimately led CBS's board to rescind any severance agreement, effectively ending Moonves's tenure at the company.

In the aftermath of the investigation, CBS underwent significant changes, including a revamped board and pledges to donate to women's charities. These developments marked a critical shift in the dialogue surrounding sexual misconduct within the entertainment industry, reflecting a growing

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insistence on accountability and change.

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