

Los Angeles Times

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To the judges,

For years, film producer Randall Emmett had carved a successful niche in Hollywood by making low-budget action movies with aging stars, including Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, Al Pacino and Robert De Niro. Emmett also achieved a measure of stardom through his relationship with reality TV star Lala Kent, a romance that became fodder for Bravo's hit show, "Vanderpump Rules."

In early 2022, Times reporters Amy Kaufman and Meg James began receiving tips alleging abusive behavior by Emmett. They systematically tracked down former business associates, former assistants from his production company and women who'd once been in his orbit. The reporters soon learned about the deteriorating health of Emmett's cash-cow actor, Bruce Willis. They began reaching out to dozens of crew members, many of whom expressed concern that Willis was not physically or mentally able to perform. The day that the Willis family shared news of his aphasia diagnosis, James and Kaufman wrote an exclusive and widely read article that exposed the concerns about Willis' health.

The Bruce Willis story paved the way for their larger exposé, which would come a few months later. It was a deeply reported account on the rise and fall of a once high-flying producer. Through an exhaustive review of hundreds of court filings and internal company records, as well as interviews with three dozen former associates, James and Kaufman painted an extraordinary picture of a crumbling empire and disturbing allegations of abuse against women, former assistants and business partners. The investigation not only revealed sexual misconduct that persists in Hollywood after the #MeToo movement, but provided a rare glimpse into the murky world of B-list producers and the perils of working in the movie business, especially for those who toil far from the limelight.

Kaufman and James encountered numerous challenges in reporting the story, including overcoming the fear that Emmett had instilled in those who knew him. It was difficult to convince people to go on the record; some feared that Emmett – despite his waning power – would destroy their lives if they went public with their experiences. People who had agreed to be named sources became too fearful to be quoted and dropped out. Then, as the story began nearing publication, the reporters became aware that Emmett was offering large financial settlements to entice people not to participate with The Times' project. When the reporters reached out to Emmett for comment, he responded in part by supplying several signed declarations from individuals refuting the allegations or defending the filmmaker's character. One

of the individuals said in their sworn declaration that they had lied during an interview with a Times reporter – when they had not been interviewed at all.

The story was a big success for the paper, with more than 4,000 people purchasing subscriptions to read the Emmett investigation online. It attracted widespread praise. “Phenomenally well-reported piece from [@AmyKinLA](#) and [@MegJamesLAT](#) on Randall Emmett. Worth setting aside some time for this one” [tweeted](#) New York Times reporter Nicole Sperling. “A must read story on one of the strangest figures in Hollywood by two of the greats,” [tweeted](#) Bloomberg’s Lucas Shaw. The Times is now in development to produce a documentary with ABC News on Emmett to air on Hulu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin E. Merida". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue shadow effect behind the text.