COVER STORY



Candace Singh
Director, Writer,
Producer, and
Financier,
Emerald Tree Filmworks LLC

CANDACE SINGH

Writing the Stories Hollywood Has Yet to Tell

The Visionary To Watch In 2026

How a former Goldman Sachs Vice President turned a personal loss into a filmmaking mission rooted in culture, family and the responsibilities of adulthood!

Hollywood has long struggled to move beyond a narrow view of family structures, especially when young adults remain deeply involved in caring for parents while building lives of their own.

For **Candace Singh**, that gap became impossible to ignore after the loss of her grandmother during the COVID-19 pandemic, when she began to understand how quickly family history can fade with the elders who carry it. Her response was deeply personal: she returned to her Guyanese roots and began creating stories drawn from experiences rarely given an honest place on screen.

That decision led to **Emerald Tree Filmworks** and *Once a Man, Twice a Child*, her debut professional short film about love, responsibility and the ever-changing relationship between a parent and child. After more than a decade on Wall Street, Candace chose a very different kind of investment: preserving stories that could otherwise disappear.

From Wall Street to the Director's Chair

Candace is an independent filmmaker and founder of Emerald Tree Filmworks, a production company dedicated to telling stories about family, culture and modern adulthood, often using dark humour to confront life's hardest truths.

Before entering film, the former Goldman Sachs Vice President spent more than a decade on Wall Street determining which companies were worth backing. She later made what became the biggest professional bet of her career: herself.

> Building a World Where Stories Inspire, Voices Matter, and Cinema Creates Impact.

The loss of her grandmother during the COVID-19 pandemic became a turning point. Candace was struck by how fragile the connection to ancestral and cultural history can be, particularly when family stories and traditions depend on a shrinking circle of elders. When those voices disappear, pieces of that history can disappear with them.

She decided to put pen to paper and write, produce and direct stories rooted in her Guyanese heritage and family experiences she rarely saw authentically represented on screen.

That decision was also rooted in a larger question about the stories being told and the people who could see their own family experiences reflected in them.

Stories Hollywood Rarely Tells

The way families live and care for one another can vary greatly across cultures. Yet popular ideas about adulthood often leave little room for those differences, especially when independence is treated as the expected measure of growing up.

Candace aspires to tell stories that Hollywood is not already telling. People of colour are now the global majority, she observes, but mainstream Hollywood has been slow to catch up in its depictions of what those family structures can look like.

That gap sparked her mission to make the kind of movie she wanted to see but could never find: a film that unflinchingly immerses viewers in the role reversal between a young adult and an aging parent.

Her story speaks to a wide group of people in their twenties and thirties who have quietly assumed responsibility for looking after their parents out of love and gratitude for their parents' sacrifices.

Many of these young adults either immigrated to America or are first generation. Amid Western society's strong emphasis on individualism, they can feel “othered” for staying rooted at home because their collectivist family units do not fit neatly into Hollywood's familiar picture of independent living.

Some may live in their childhood homes, oversee their parents' health or take responsibility for household finances.





In Hollywood's view, Candace observes, people in their twenties and thirties living at home can be labelled failed-to-launch moochers or overgrown children.

Candace's own family experiences tell a very different story. She recalls her 20-something-year-old cousin who rescued her father from a heart attack by delivering life-saving chest compressions. She remembers her 30-something-year-old cousin who visited the hospital daily for months while her mother recovered from a heart transplant. She also remembers working a Wall Street all-nighter from her living room when she heard her father's distressed cry from bed at 4 a.m. and dropped everything to take him to the ER.

Her perspective was further shaped by more than 10 years at some of the largest firms on Wall Street. Working with colleagues across the UK, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mumbai and Bangalore, she observed a similar pattern among international workers, many of whom balanced demanding careers with significant responsibilities to parents and extended family.

> Where Creativity Meets Courage, Extraordinary Stories Come to Life.

As both a screenwriter and due diligence expert, Candace sees herself as being uniquely positioned to identify common patterns across large datasets. She found that many of her colleagues abroad shared a frustration that their family lives could feel inscrutable or misunderstood through a Western lens. To avoid judgement or potentially derisive comments, some found that saying less during office small talk was easier.

Candace wanted to help bridge that knowledge gap. Her short film, *Once a Man, Twice a Child*, became her way of spotlighting the experiences of young adults who have taken responsibility for looking after their parents.

The film presents an unapologetic portrayal of how she advocates for her father when accompanying him to a doctor's visit. The seemingly mundane appointment becomes a representation of the push and pull of living under the same roof: the good, the bad and the ugly.

She hopes the film can help illuminate how the other half lives, making it easier for young adults like her to be fully themselves in Western spaces without having to explain their family lives.

Creating that film while maintaining a demanding professional career, however, presented a challenge of its own.

When Two Careers Collide

Candace learned that firsthand. At a certain point, dividing her attention between her corporate career and filmmaking was stalling the latter.

As a young woman who hopes to marry and build a family of her own one day, she knew that further delay risked allowing indecision to outweigh what she hoped to achieve in film. She had already chosen to prioritise her career over family-building, and if that sacrifice was going to be worthwhile, she knew she had to go all in.



She therefore left corporate finance to pursue filmmaking full-time and brought *Once a Man, Twice a Child* to life as its writer, director and producer.

The confidence to make that decision was influenced by what she had witnessed during her years assessing companies and investments on Wall Street.

Learning to Bet on the Vision

Investment decisions rest on a belief in what a company could become, even when the outcome remains uncertain. Being close to that process offered a rare window into what it takes to turn ambition into reality.

Candace credits her conviction in her film career partly to her supportive parents and partly to her time on the front lines, greenlighting new business dealings and investments at Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan.

She describes those positions as being as close as one could get to time travel. They offered an advance read of the future and a first look at which changemaker companies earned Wall Street's financial backing and were positioned to transform industries and become household names years in advance.

She cites companies such as OpenAI and SpaceX. Each was founded by someone who dared to dream, and watching those founders transform their visions into reality reinforced her belief that she could do the same.
That conviction extends beyond building a film career. It also informs the scale of the cultural experience she hopes her films can eventually create.

Making Stories into Shared Moments

Candace wants her films to transcend borders and serve as a vehicle for bringing people across the globe together through a shared cultural experience.

> Through powerful storytelling and bold creative vision, I strive to bring meaningful stories to life, amplify diverse voices, and create films that inspire audiences and leave a lasting impact.

She aspires to recapture the days when entertainment could become a genuinely global or national event, pointing to Michael Jackson's 1993 Super Bowl performance, Live Aid and the collective suspense around “Who Shot J.R.?”

Those moments brought millions of people from different backgrounds and across borders into the same cultural conversation at the same time.

That is the dream for Candace: to create new moments like those, with stories that people experience together and that become part of shared cultural memory.

Her desire to tell culturally rooted stories, however, became particularly personal during the pandemic, when an experience within her own family changed how she viewed what needed to be preserved.

The Loss Which Changed Everything

During the pandemic, investment banking deal activity boomed and Candace was busier than ever. Moving from working in the office to working remotely from home made her work more frictionless, and she was reachable around the clock. Then her grandmother passed away.

The loss made Candace realise how thin the tether can be between people and their ancestral and cultural history. That tether depends on the few remaining elders, who themselves face the constraints of time and mortality.

So, she decided to put pen to paper and write, produce and direct stories rooted in her Guyanese heritage and family experiences she rarely saw represented on screen.

Turning her filmmaking ambitions into reality meant making choices that ran counter to conventional wisdom surrounding filmmaking.

When the Family Became the Cast

Her experience with setbacks has taught her to distinguish between her true goal and the temporary stepping stones along the way. Keeping that perspective can turn a perceived setback into fuel for continuing forward. She sees setbacks as opportunities for honest introspection. Taking time to examine the larger vision has often led her to recalibrate and revise her plans in ways that feel truer to herself.

That mindset shaped her approach to *Once a Man, Twice a Child*. Conventional thinking suggested that known actors could improve the chances of the film making an impact. Candace searched widely, worked with casting directors and organised her own casting calls, but nobody captured the magic and cultural specificity of her Guyanese father and uncle.

So, she cast her actual father and uncle as brothers and herself as the daughter. She spent months leading improv sessions with her father and uncle, observing their idiosyncrasies and reshaping scenes around their natural inclinations. She also cast herself as the daughter to maximise her father's comfort and harnessed the full strength of more than 60 years of brotherly chemistry between her father and uncle.

The final product was greater than she could have imagined: a living snapshot of their family dynamic at that particular moment, one she will forever cherish. That project was just one of several accomplishments that bridged Candace's two professional worlds.

A Record Across Finance and Film

Achievement can take different forms depending on the stage of a career.

For Candace, her professional record includes advancement within major financial institutions, recognition for her work and the creation of an entirely new professional path.

In 2026, she was recognised by P.O.W.E.R Magazine and the Influential Women platform for her career achievements, including founding Emerald Tree Filmworks and writing, directing and producing films.

Between late 2024 and 2026, she wrote, directed and produced her first short film while juggling due diligence for alternative investments at JPMorgan.





At Goldman Sachs, she progressed rapidly from Analyst to Associate to Vice President in consecutive years, advising on conflicts and business selection relating to financings and mergers and acquisitions.

In 2017, she was selected for Goldman Sachs' Women's Career Strategies Initiative, a programme focused on career advancement for the top-performing female associates.

Across these experiences, Candace has developed a particular view of what should guide a person when the external markers of success become less important than the choices behind them.

Four Lessons for Aspiring Leaders

Candace's first piece of advice is to **never lose sight of who you are building for**. It is easy to feel that there is always time, but she specialises in dealing with hard truths both on Wall Street and in her films, and she believes the truth is that time is limited.

She learned that after losing her last surviving grandparent during COVID. Work will always be there: the next deal, deadline or achievement. Unlike work, time with loved ones is finite. That understanding drove her to write, direct, produce and act in a film with her father.

Her second principle is to **protect your vision**. If someone has been given a vision, she believes they should trust it before the world validates it. Drawing on her Wall Street experience, she compares life to the market: by the time everyone recognises an investment opportunity, much of the biggest upside has already evaporated.

Third, she advises people to **avoid confusing external markers of success with fulfilment**. A job title, company, dream school or expectation to marry by a certain age can become a timetable that looks impressive without necessarily reflecting what matters most. She encourages people to ask whether they are pursuing what truly matters, such as the right partner and meaningful work, rather than simply what looks impressive.

Finally, she advises people to **let setbacks redirect them, which she experienced first-hand when** casting her short film. She spent months searching for known actors to play her father and uncle before recognising that nobody could play them better than themselves.

For Candace, the obstacle became an opportunity to re-envision the project and arrive at something she considered greater than what she had initially imagined.

That approach also informs the simple message she harbours from her school years.

Keep Showing Up

Candace's high school yearbook quote, attributed to Abraham Lincoln, continues to guide her: “Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing.”

For her, conviction and consistent action matter more than the noise surrounding a goal. Success is not about speed; it is about refusing to quit. Better days remain possible, even after the hardest ones.
Her own journey has taken her from Wall Street to filmmaking, but the short film is just the start of her next chapter.

Only the Beginning

A first film can represent years of personal experiences, professional preparation and creative work, while also leaving room for a much larger story to develop. For Candace, *Once a Man, Twice a Child* is both a finished project and the beginning of what she hopes will become a longer filmmaking career.

She is currently submitting the short film to the international film festival circuit. It was a hard-fought project that she wrote, directed and produced while working full-time in alternative investments at JPMorgan.
She is now developing her feature project, which expands upon the world introduced in the short.