

A PARADISE IN PIECES

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE, DARK HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Open in the middle of action. The house is dark and appears to be abandoned.

DETECTIVE VICTOR HILL, a 32-year-old police detective, young but experienced, rounds the corner, gun drawn. He is alone and alert

INT. HOUSE, LONG HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Victor sees THREE DOORS in the hallway. He opens the first one, sees that it's just the bathroom and moves on to the next door. He stops at the second one and opens it.

INT. HOUSE, CHILD'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Victor stops in the entryway of the room. It looks as if it belongs to a child but has been clearly unoccupied for a while.

He notices a BOOK on the floor and picks it up. The front cover is torn, the only part of the title that can be read is "PARADISE".

He hears a noise from another part of the house, drops the book and runs out of the room.

INT. HOUSE, LONG HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Victor slowly walks toward where the sound came from, which was a door at the end of a hallway. He reaches for his RADIO.

VICTOR

This is Detective Hill, requesting
backup. I'm about to make possible
contact with the suspect.

Instead of hearing a person's voice on the other side, all he hears is gargles.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

What the hell?

He hits the radio but the gargles continue. Frustrated, he puts the radio away and continues forward.

He reaches the door and pauses.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

POLICE

No response. He opens the door.

INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

He enters the bedroom, gun drawn. He sees someone lying in bed with the covers over them. He slowly walks towards the person and pulls the cover's back. Under them is his wife, dead. Victor staggers back and screams.

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAWN

Victor's bedroom is small but very clean and organized. We see a BED, NIGHTSTAND, CLOSET and DRESSER.

On the wall there are a few DECORATIVE PICTURES and his nightstand holds his PHONE, a LAMP, and a FRAMED PICTURE.

Victor wakes up in his bed, alone and in a panic.

VICTOR

(panicked)

TARA!

He looks around frantically and realizes it was all a dream. Once he gets his bearings, he notices his PHONE RINGING.

Next to his phone we see that the framed picture is of him and his wife on their wedding day. When reaching for his phone, he accidentally knocks it over and the frame cracks.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Shit

He answers the phone.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Hill speaking

We can't hear the person on the other line but it is established that there has been a murder.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(on the phone)

Who was it?

He is shocked by the response.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
And this happened tonight? Shit...

He sighs

VICTOR (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Isn't Collins on duty, shouldn't
you be-

He's interrupted by the person on the other end

VICTOR (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Drunk, no surprise there

He shakes his head

VICTOR (CONT'D)
(on the phone)
Is Moore there?
(beat)
Alright, I'll be right over.

He hangs up the phone and places it back on the nightstand. He looks down at the broken picture frame and sighs. He stands the now cracked picture back up.

He walks over to his closet and opens it. We see that the interior of the closet is organized, with all of his DRESS SHIRTS and DRESS PANTS hung up and organized by color.

He grabs a LIGHT BLUE DRESS SHIRT and a pair of NAVY BLUE DRESS PANTS and lays them down on the bed. He quickly changes.

He grabs a NAVY BLUE TIE from the closet, puts it around his neck and closes the door.

He grabs a PAIR OF SOCKS from inside a dresser drawer and his WATCH from the top of the dresser. He puts the watch around his wrist. He ties his tie while looking in the MIRROR.

Finally, he grabs his phone from the nightstand and exits the room.

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN -- DAWN

The kitchen, unlike the rest of the house, is messy. There are UNWASHED DISHES in the sink and remnants of last night's DINNER still on the counter.

Victor brews himself a cup of COFFEE. While it's brewing, he throws away the food on the counter and checks his phone.

He sees a TEXT from GAVIN MOORE. It simply reads:

263 W 131st St, New York, NY

He clicks his tongue and puts his phone into his pocket. He pours the coffee into a TRAVEL MUG, takes it and walks out of the kitchen.

INT. VICTOR'S APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR -- DAWN

Victor stops at his front door. There are TWO PAIRS OF SHOES sitting by the door, a man's pair and a woman's pair.

Victor sits on a BENCH by the door and puts on his shoes. He gets up and grabs a COAT from the COATRACK. He opens the door, hesitates, looks back into the house and then leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY -- MORNING

We follow Victor as he makes his way to the crime scene on foot.

EXT. AB INTERNATIONAL, OUTSIDE THE BUILDING -- MORNING

The building is a 14 story building made to look like it is mostly made of glass. There is an AMBULANCE and multiple POLICE CARS parked out front with their lights on. There are also police BARRICADES blocking people from entering the building.

GAVIN MOORE, a 40-year-old police detective. Blunt and sarcastic but very good at his job. He is currently waiting, arms crossed, for someone outside the building.

Victor is walking on the sidewalk opposite from the building. He immediately spots Gavin and crosses the street over to him.

Gavin uncrosses his arms and turns to face Victor.

GAVIN

Glad to see at least one person
stayed sober last night.

VICTOR
(annoyed)
I'm gonna kick Collins ass the next
time I see him.

GAVIN
(sarcastically)
Join the club.

They start walking towards the front door.

GAVIN (CONT'D)
Prepare yourself, it's not a pretty
sight.

VICTOR
Is it ever?

Gavin shakes his head as they both walk into the building.

INT. AB INTERNATIONAL, THOMAS'S OFFICE -- MORNING

The office is seemingly normal. The DESK is piled high with FILES and PAPERWORK and a closed LAPTOP sits on the corner of it. There are several full BOOKSHELVES along the right and left sides of the office. The back wall is a giant window that overlooks the city skyline.

There are EVIDENCE MARKERS placed in several areas around the office. A MAN'S BODY is laying face down on the floor in the middle of the room. It has been visibly left untouched.

Gavin and Victor enter the office, they are now wearing gloves.

VICTOR
What do we have so far?

GAVIN
Victim was 36-year-old Thomas
Alberton. He was stabbed 4 times in
the abdomen.

They walk over to the body. Victor squats down and examines it.

GAVIN (CONT'D)
It appears that nothing has been
left behind. No prints, no murder
weapon, no evidence of a break
in... nothing.

Victor stands and turns to face Gavin.

VICTOR
So the suspect was let in
voluntarily?

GAVIN
Either that or the world has been
blessed with another Harry Houdini.

VICTOR
(sighs)
God knows that's the last thing we
need right now.

They both begin to search the office for possible missed evidence. Victor gets down on the floor and searches under one of the bookshelves. He finds a crumpled up PIECE OF PAPER.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Hey Moore, I got something.

Gavin walk over as Victor smoothes out the paper. They find it's a page from an unknown book.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Any clue where it's from?

GAVIN
(sarcastically)
Do I look like the type to read for
fun?

Victor rolls his eyes. He pulls out his PHONE and takes a picture of the page.

VICTOR
Alright, first we should go
question some of the witnesses, see
if we can create a profile for the
suspect. Then, do some research and
find what book this page came from.

Gavin takes the page out of Victor's hand.

GAVIN
In the meantime we should get this
to evidence, see if they can pull
anything off of it.

Victor nods and they both walk out of the office.

CUT TO:

INT. AB INTERNATIONAL, OUTSIDE THOMAS'S OFFICE -- MORNING

The only people outside the office are a couple POLICE OFFICERS and the two witnesses, Thomas's secretary, EMILY BLAKE (48) and a CUSTODIAN (60).

They individually question the witnesses. Victor interviews the secretary while Gavin interviews the custodian.

VICTOR

Good morning Ms. Blake, I'm
Detective Victor Hill. Is it ok if
I just ask you a couple questions.

EMILY

Of course, but please just call me
Emily.

VICTOR

Alrighty then.

He pulls out a small NOTEBOOK and PEN and begins to take notes.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I understand that you've been
Thomas's secretary for about 4
years now.

EMILY

Yes I have, but i've known him and
his brother since they were
children.

VICTOR

Family friends?

She sadly chuckles

EMILY

You could say that. I was Thomas's
father's secretary for over 20
years before I became his. Really
great people...

She begins to tear up.

EMILY (CONT'D)

...I can't believe this happened.

Gavin is in the middle of interviewing the custodian, he is also writing notes in a small notepad.

GAVIN

You were the one that found the body, correct.

CUSTODIAN

Correct. I entered his office at around 6:30 this morning to do my usual rounds. That's when I found him, already dead.

GAVIN

Did you happen to come across anyone that you previously haven't seen in the office at this time?

CUSTODIAN

Not today but Thomas was known to have quite the number of "female friends" that would come and go during these hours.

GAVIN

Seems like quite the playboy.

The custodian snorts

CUSTODIAN

Like you wouldn't believe.

Back to Victor's interview

VICTOR

Did you notice him meeting with anyone odd recently?

EMILY

So many people came in and out of his office, I wouldn't know if anything was strange.

VICTOR

How about the relationship between Thomas and his brother?

EMILY

Oh they were really close. You could tell they really cared for and loved each other.

Back to Gavin's interview

CUSTODIAN

Oh they hated each other.

GAVIN

According to others they were really close.

CUSTODIAN

HA! That was all for show.

GAVIN

And you know this how?

CUSTODIAN

These walls are thin, let me tell y'a. They got into arguments like you wouldn't believe.

GAVIN

What were their arguments about?

CUSTODIAN

Mostly about the business. They didn't seem to agree on how the company should be run in the future after it was passed down to them.

GAVIN

Did these arguments ever get violent or physical?

CUSTODIAN

Not that I know of but I wouldn't be surprised. Seemed like the family put a lot of pressure on the two of them. All that stress was bound to lead to a breaking point.

The custodian shrugs. Gavin closes his notebook and reaches out to shake the custodian's hand.

GAVIN

Appreciate your time.

They shake hands and Gavin walks over to Victor, who just finished his interview.

GAVIN (CONT'D)

What'd you get?

VICTOR

Just that Thomas and his brother were very close and came from a practically perfect family. You?

GAVIN

Eh, just that Thomas and his brother hated each other and had a lot of pressure put on them to run the company a certain way. Oh and apparently Thomas was quite popular with the ladies.

Victor sighs

VICTOR

You think one of the "ladies" had anything to do with this?

GAVIN

Well, jealousy can be one hell of a motivator.

VICTOR

It really can but I doubt it was that simple. Let's head back to the station.

They head towards the lobby.

INT. AB INTERNATIONAL, LOBBY -- MORNING

The lobby of the building is clean and decorated in a modern but very classy style. At the moment, the lobby is very chaotic, with POLICE OFFICERS trying to contain the wave of REPORTERS asking questions about what happened.

Victor and Gavin walk into the lobby and are immediately swarmed by the reporters. They keep walking towards the exit.

REPORTER #1

Is it true that Thomas Alberton was murdered this morning?

REPORTER #2

Are there any suspects at this time?

REPORTER #3

Do you believe this was an inside job?

GAVIN

(annoyed)

At the moment, we are working as fast as we can to figure out what happened to Mr. Alberton. We cannot answer any questions at this time.

Victor and Gavin exit the building as the reporters follow them, continuing to ask multiple questions. They get inside a marked POLICE VEHICLE and drive away, leaving the reporters behind.

INT. POLICE STATION, LARGE OFFICE -- DAY

The interior of the station is dull and lifeless. The walls are bare, aside from NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS and achievements of the station. The main portion of the station is a large, open office holding multiple DESKS for the officers. There is also a separate office that is occupied by the chief of police.

There are only two police officers in the office at the moment. OFFICER BEN COLLINS and OFFICER TERRY KLINE, ages 36 and 34 respectively, are engaged in friendly conversation at Collins desk.

Gavin and Victor enter the station and spot Collins and Kline.

VICTOR
(sarcastically)
Well would ya look at that. Someone actually decided to come into work this morning.

Collins and Kline stop their conversation and turn to face Victor and Gavin.

COLLINS
(scoffs)
Why don't you take a picture, it'll last longer.

VICTOR
Does the picture come with the smell too?

He steps closer to Collins, standing inches from his face

VICTOR (CONT'D)
You smell like you took the whole fucking bar home.

Collins pushes Victor away

COLLINS
Fuck off Hill. Why do you even care?

VICTOR

Oh I don't know, maybe because you decided to get drunk on duty and then I had to cover your ass?

COLLINS

And who are you to tell me how to spend my time? You know ever since your wife-

Victor interrupts him and grabs him by the collar

VICTOR

Bring up my wife again, I fucking DARE you-

Gavin pulls Victor off of Collins as Kline pulls Collins back.

GAVIN

THAT'S ENOUGH, both of you.
(beat)
Collins you're lucky we're in a rush or else I would have let Hill knock you on your ass.

COLLINS

(scoffs)
Yeah, yeah

Gavin ignores him and turns to face Kline

GAVIN

Kline, where's the Chief?

COLLINS

What are we his babysitters?

GAVIN

Did I fucking ask you Collins?

Collins smirks and sits down at his desk.

KLINE

He's in his office

GAVIN

Thank you

He turns, faces Victor and puts his hand on his shoulder

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Let's go before i'm the one that knocks him on his ass.

VICTOR
Good thinking.

They turn in the direction of the office only to find CHIEF FINLEY (50), an intimidating, but respected man, standing outside his office, arms crossed.

CHIEF FINLEY
Moore, Hill. In my office, NOW.

He turns and walks into his office. Victor and Gavin look at each other

VICTOR
Shit...

They walk to the office.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, CHIEF'S OFFICE -- DAY

The interior of the chief's office is more lively than the rest of the station, but not by much. The walls are decorated with the chief's COLLEGE DIPLOMA'S and achievements. His desk is neatly organized with PAPERS, a LAPTOP and a couple of FRAMED PHOTOS of him and his family.

Chief Finley is standing by his desk, visibly angry. Victor and Gavin enter.

CHIEF FINLEY
The fuck was that?

GAVIN
Sir-

Victor cuts him off

VICTOR
I started it sir. I was pissed at Collins so I started shit. That was unprofessional of me and I apologize. Moore was just trying to help.

The Chief sighs and sits down at his desk

CHIEF FINLEY
Considering that both of you are working on a very high profile case at the moment, that needs to be your main priority.
(MORE)

CHIEF FINLEY (CONT'D)

(beat)

While I understand that Collins is an asshole, next time you're gonna fight someone, do it on your own fucking time. Understood?

VICTOR & GAVIN

Understood.

CHIEF FINLEY

Good. Moore, you're free to go, I would like a minute to speak to Hill privately.

Gavin nods and leaves. The chief motions towards a chair and Victor sits down.

CHIEF FINLEY (CONT'D)

How are you holding up?

VICTOR

I have my good and bad days but then again who doesn't.

The chief chuckles

CHIEF FINLEY

Y'a got that right.

(beat)

I'm gonna be frank with you Hill. With as big of a case as this is, if you aren't ready to give it your full attention, i'm going to have to-

VICTOR

With all due respect sir, whatever is going on in my personal life has never and will never affect my work. I've always kept them separate.

CHIEF FINLEY

(sighs)

Alright, as long as you think you can handle it, you're free to remain on the case.

VICTOR

Thank you sir.

The Chief nods, picks up a file on his desk and begins to read through it, signaling the end of the conversation.

Victor exits the office and meets Gavin by their desks.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, GAVIN AND VICTOR'S DESK -- DAY

Gavin and Victor's desks are right next to each other and on the complete other side of the office from Collins.

Gavin's desk has scattered FILES, a LAPTOP, an EMPTY CUP OF COFFEE and a FRAMED PHOTO of his family.

Victor's desk on the other hand, is neat with FILES stacked in a pile and a CLOSED LAPTOP.

Gavin is sitting at his desk, using his laptop. Victor walks over to his desk

GAVIN

Forensics just called, they didn't find any prints on the page we found.

VICTOR

Shit...Guess we'll have to do this the old fashioned way

He pulls up a chair and sits next to Gavin.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Do we know of any possible motives for Thomas's murder?

GAVIN

Well, it was rumored that he was next in line to inherit his family's company, AB International. That could be a pretty strong motive for someone who felt robbed of that position.

VICTOR

So who would have been in the running?

Gavin pulls up information about the company.

GAVIN

Say's here since his great grandfather started it in 1947 the company was handed down to the eldest son in each generation.

(MORE)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Thomas's father, Jackson Alberton,
is the current CEO.

VICTOR

Hold on, wasn't there just a big
scandal about who he was going to
hand the company down to.

Victor pulls out his phone and searches "Alberton Scandal" on
a search engine. He pulls up a recent article explaining the
scandal.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

According to this article, Jackson
was getting ready to retire this
year and hand the company down to
his eldest son, Brandon. However,
at the last minute he changed his
mind and decided to hand it down to
his second eldest, which was
Thomas.

GAVIN

What did Brandon do to make him
change his mind?

Victor shrugs

VICTOR

Doesn't say, but it must have been
something god awful to cause him to
stray from a long standing
tradition like that.

Gavin closes his laptop and faces Victor

GAVIN

I think this scandal and the fact
that there was some distain between
the brothers would suggest we have
our first suspect.

VICTOR

It seems we do

Gavin gets up from his chair.

GAVIN

Alright then what are we waiting
for?

Victor gets up from his desk and they both exit the station

CUT TO:

EXT. BRANDON ALBERTON'S RESIDENCE, FRONT DOOR -- AFTERNOON

Brandon's house nice but relatively small for someone who comes from money. It has a well kept LAWN and a BLACK 2021 BMW M4 is parked out front.

Victor and Gavin park in the driveway, get out of the car, walk up to and knock on the front door. A WOMAN answers the door.

WOMAN

Can I help you gentleman?

Victor and Gavin hold up their badges

VICTOR

Detectives Victor Hill and Gavin Moore...

They lower their badges.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

...is Brandon Alberton home?

WOMAN

He's in his study, is everything alright?

GAVIN

We just want to ask him a few questions, it won't take too long.

WOMAN

Of course, i'll show you guys to the study.

The woman opens the door and lets Victor and Gavin inside.

INT. BRANDON ALBERTON'S RESIDENCE, STUDY-- EVENING

Brandon's study is spacious and clean. Every wall is lined with BOOKSHELVES and they are filled to the brim with BOOKS. The wall behind his desk has a display of PHOTOS of AB International over the years.

BRANDON ALBERTON (38) is sitting at his desk, focused on paperwork. We hear the woman knock on the door of the study.

WOMAN

Honey, there are some detectives here that would like to speak with you.

BRANDON

Let them in.

The woman opens the door. Victor and Gavin enter the study.

VICTOR

Mr. Alberton, I'm Detective Victor Hill and this is Detective Gavin Moore.

BRANDON

Nice to meet you both. Any particular reason why you two are here in my study right now?

GAVIN

Yes well we just have a few questions for you about your brother and may we say we are very sorry for your loss.

Brandon stands up from his desk

BRANDON

Thank you...now what did you want to ask me?

GAVIN

We know that your brother had a lot of connections given his position in the company. Is there anyone in particular you can think of that might have somewhat of a grudge against your brother?

Brandon chuckles

BRANDON

How much time you guys have?
(beat)
Thomas was a good business man don't get me wrong, but he had a temper that often got the best of him.

VICTOR

Was his temper also the cause of the tension you guys allegedly had over who was going to take over the company?

BRANDON

I beg your pardon?

VICTOR

We were just curious as to how all that ended. Must have been pretty difficult to have been skipped over for the succession of the company.

Brandon stares at the detectives for a moment.

BRANDON

Skipped over....Are you seriously insinuating that I would murder my own brother over some stupid ass family tradition?

GAVIN

All we are saying is that you, more than anyone, would have reason to be pretty upset over losing that position.

BRANDON

Did it ever occur to ANYONE that maybe I turned down the fucking position.

GAVIN

And why the fuck would you do that?

Brandon stares at the floor for a moment and sighs

BRANDON

(Sighs)

I never wanted to go into the family business, in fact it was my dream to be a writer. When I told my father that I wanted to be a writer full time, he was of course upset but understood my passion. We came up with a compromise, I work for the company part time so that I could support myself and then could still write on the side.

The detectives look at each other in confusion.

VICTOR

Why have I never seen anything you've written?

BRANDON

Ever heard of a pen name?

VICTOR

Point taken.

BRANDON

Look, I honestly don't have any idea as to who could be behind this. Our family's company has been in business for a long time and we have a lot of clients from multiple countries.

GAVIN

So you're saying that if Thomas had made any enemies, they could be from any where.

BRANDON

Basically yes.

Gavin rolls his eyes

GAVIN

Lovely...

Gavin turns away from Brandon as Victor reaches out his hand

VICTOR

Thank you for your time Brandon.

They shake hands.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Just know we are doing everything in our power to find whoever is responsible for this.

BRANDON

Thank you, my family and I really appreciate it.

Victor nods. He turns to leave when he stops and turns back to Brandon.

VICTOR

Actually, there may be something else you can help us with right now.

He takes out his phone and pulls up the picture of the book page.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

This page was crumpled up and left at the crime scene.

(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Judging by the amount of books you have here and your writing background, I'd say you have a pretty good chance at figuring out where this came from.

BRANDON

Let me see the picture.

He looks at the picture of the page and scans through the writing.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

"Then and only then shall a fragmented land turn into a paradise for all to benefit from". I've seen this quote before...
(beat)
...Shit where is this from?

He starts pacing around the room.

GAVIN

Wait, do you actually know where this is from?

BRANDON

I definitely do. It's William...William...

He paces for a few more seconds and then stops.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

William Mayer! That's his name! His style of writing is one that always intrigued me. I can't seem to remember which one of his books it's from but...

He crosses the room to one of the bookshelves. He pulls down some books and sets them on his desk.

BRANDON (CONT'D)

...I actually own all the books he's written. In all fairness, it wasn't hard to do since he's only written five but his books are usually centered around social ideals.

Gavin's phone begins to ring

GAVIN

Excuse me...

He steps outside the office. Brandon picks up one of the books and starts to skim it.

BRANDON

By any chance, does the page have a number on it?

Victor looks at the picture and sighs

VICTOR

No, it was ripped off.

BRANDON

Damn.

VICTOR

We could always help you look through them. It would be quicker with 3 people instead of one.

Gavin steps back into the room.

GAVIN

Actually we have to get back to the station. The medical examiner finished their exam and wants to speak to us.

Victor pulls out a BUSINESS CARD and hands it to Brandon.

VICTOR

Keep looking through these and if you find anything, contact me.

BRANDON

Sure thing.

Victor and Gavin leave the study as Brandon continues looking through the books.

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE, EXAMINATION ROOM --AFTERNOON

The examination room is as dreary as you would expect from a place that handles corpses. In the middle of the room is an EXAMINATION TABLE and MEDICAL EQUIPMENT. On the table is a BODY covered by a SHEET.

Victor and Gavin are standing on one side of the table while the MEDICAL EXAMINER is on the other side. The examiner is reading off a CHART.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Time of death was placed at around 5 am and cause of death was excessive blood loss due to multiple stab wounds to the abdomen. Nothing unusual was found in his system and there were no prints found on his body or clothing. The only thing out of the ordinary was this.

She pulls back the sheet, exposing Thomas's body. She points to his chest where a small DOLLAR SIGN was carved into his skin.

GAVIN

What the hell?

VICTOR

Looks like a dollar sign

MEDICAL EXAMINER

We believe it was carved post mortem.

Victor and Gavin look at each other

GAVIN

You think it was some sick joke because the bastard was rich?

VICTOR

It could be, but why would they go through the effort of carving that on him, especially if he wasn't alive to see it.

GAVIN

It was probably left there to send a message.

VICTOR

To who?

GAVIN

Probably us.

They look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION, GAVIN AND VICTOR'S DESK -- EVENING

Victor and Gavin are sitting at their desks. Victor is searching something on his LAPTOP while Gavin is repeatedly tossing a STRESS BALL in the air and catching it.

Victor is visibly annoyed.

VICTOR
Hey Moore?

GAVIN
Yeah?

VICTOR
You want to actually do some work
instead of fucking around?

Gavin scoffs

GAVIN
Hey I'm being productive, this
helps me think.

Victor rolls his eyes and goes back to typing on his laptop.

Silence.

Suddenly Gavin stops tossing the stress ball and sits up straight.

GAVIN (CONT'D)
Hey what was the name of that
author Brandon was talking about?

VICTOR
William Mayer, why?

Gavin pulls out his laptop and searches the name WILLIAM
MAYER. Several results pop up and he clicks on one.

GAVIN
Brandon said something about this
author mainly writing about social
issues, right?

VICTOR
Yeah, and?

GAVIN
Well it looks like most of these
"social issues" that he writes
about are more so about economic
systems.

(MORE)

GAVIN (CONT'D)

Now I'm no expert but I think the dollar sign maybe related to economics.

VICTOR

So you think that the book page has more to do with this murder than we may have thought?

GAVIN

All i'm saying that this murder may be a part of something bigger. So we need to figure this shit out quickly.

Victors phone chimes. He pulls it out and sees a text from an unknown number. It reads:

"THE DEMISE OF THOSE WHO PERPETUATE THE SINS OF THIS WORLD IS INEVITABLE. THEN AND ONLY THEN, SHALL A FRAGMENTED LAND TURN INTO A PARADISE FOR ALL TO BENEFIT FROM". THE BOOK IS CALLED "A PARADISE IN PIECES". -B ALBERTON

Victor stands up from his chair and walks over to Gavin.

VICTOR

Brandon found the book. It's called "A Paradise in Pieces".

He shows the text to Gavin

GAVIN

"The demise of those who perpetuate the sins of this world is inevitable"... that's fucking dark.

VICTOR

Tell me about it

Gavin pulls up a review for the book.

GAVIN

"A Paradise in Pieces is an interesting look into the possibility of a prosperous economy through the abolishment of capitalism and all that perpetuate it.

VICTOR

Jesus, these people are seriously against capitalism.

GAVIN
Seems so. You think capitalistic
ideals are the "sins" that were
mentioned in that excerpt?

VICTOR
I assume so...

Victor's phone rings. He answers it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
Hill speaking.
(beat)
Shit. We'll be right there

He hangs up and turns to Gavin.

VICTOR (CONT'D)
There's been another murder.

END OF ACT 1

START OF ACT 2

INT. SKYES INC. BUILDING, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Skyes Inc. is a 12 story building located not so far from AB International. The interior of the building is decorated very minimalistic and gives off a very professional feel.

There are REPORTERS swarming POLICE OFFICERS in the lobby asking questions about what happened. The officers aren't responding and instead just trying to control the crowd.

Victor and Gavin are away from all the chaos in the lobby and are in a hallway walking and chatting with an OFFICER at the scene. He is leading them to the scene of the crime.

OFFICER
Victim was identified as 50-year-old Hope Skyes.

VICTOR
Skyes? As in the CEO?

OFFICER
That's the one.
(beat)
She was found about 45 minutes ago. Cause of death is assumed to be blood loss due to a stab wound in the chest.

GAVIN
Any witnesses?

OFFICER
The secretary was the one to find her but he didn't see anyone come in or out of the office. We haven't found any prints or a murder weapon. It's like a ghost got to her.

Victor turns to Gavin.

VICTOR
Sounds familiar.

Gavin shakes his head. They walk into the office.

INT. SKYES INC. BUILDING, HOPE SKYES OFFICE -- NIGHT

HOPE SKYES (50) the CEO of Skyes Inc., is laying dead, face up in the middle of the floor. She is laying in a pool of BLOOD and it appears she has been stabbed in the chest. The FORENSIC TEAM is still working on the scene but there are already several EVIDENCE MARKERS placed in multiple places around the office.

The officer, Victor and Gavin enter the office, Victor and Gavin are wearing gloves.

VICTOR
Jesus...
(beat)
You think this could be the same person that killed Thomas?

GAVIN
Could be. Same cause of death and both were in powerful positions within their respective companies.

He walks over to the body and squats down. He pulls down her shirt a bit to reveal her collarbone. Right beneath it is a DOLLAR SIGN carved into her skin.

GAVIN (CONT'D)
It's another dollar sign.

VICTOR
Fuck. At least we have the beginnings of a pattern.

They walk around the office looking at the evidence left behind. On the desk is a EVIDENCE MARKER.

Victor walks over to it and looks at what was left behind. He finds a PIECE OF PAPER covered in BLOOD.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Ah shit...

He picks up the paper and flips it over. On the other side is writing but the only a couple of words are legible through the blood.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Moore, it's another page.

Gavin walks over to him. He reads off some of the words on the page.

GAVIN

"Down, act, society, now..." You think this page is from the same book?

VICTOR

Considering that we also have the same carved symbol on the victim, i'd be willing to bet that it is.

He look back down at the page and notices it has a page number on it.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

At least this page has a number on it. Lets get our hands on a copy of the novel and then we can cross reference them.

GAVIN

In the meantime, we should probably interview the secretary. See if we can get anything out of him.

Victor nods in agreement and they walk out of the office.

INT. SKYES INC. BUILDING, HALLWAY -- NIGHT

Victor and Gavin interview Skyes SECRETARY (28). The secretary is pretty distraught.

SECRETARY

I-I didn't see anyone come in or out. I was getting her lunch since she forgot hers today.

He begins to tear up.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

If I had been here than maybe she wouldn't be...she wouldn't have...

Victor hand the secretary a tissue and puts his hand on his shoulder.

VICTOR

Listen, this isn't your fault. These people are dangerous, who's to say they wouldn't have hurt you too just to get to her.

The secretary wipes his face with the tissue.

SECRETARY

You're probably right. I just can't believe this happened. Ms. Skyes was not only a great boss but just a great person. You would think that being a CEO would give you a complex but she always stayed humble.

GAVIN

Can you think about anyone unusual that stopped by recently? Someone you hadn't seen before?

The secretary thinks for a minute.

SECRETARY

Well considering she had a lot of clients, there were always new people coming in and out.

He pauses

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

But there was this one lady that kept coming around the office for about a week. It got to the point were we had to call security because she was practically stalk-

He pauses

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Oh my god... do you think it was her?

VICTOR

Possibly, can you describe her?

SECRETARY

Yeah, she was tall, blond, of a normal build. Oh and she had an accent, english I believe.

VICTOR

Alright, thank you for your time.

They shake hands and Victor and Gavin leave.