

LIBERTAD

Written by

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The following is based on true events.

The names and dates have been changed, to protect those involved.

You may not believe it.

But remember, it's Florida.

EXT. CARIBBEAN OCEAN (FLORIDA STRAIT) - DAWN

The ocean at dawn. The water is tranquil. A rich cobalt blue. It's the kind of photo-op that sells cruise ship packages.

In the distance, a teal 1959 Buick floats along the water.

INT./EXT. 1959 BUICK - DAWN ("FLOATING")

Inside this fine, still-intact piece of American handcrafted steel, (built by the callused hands of a Republican senator's grandfather) sit a group of five Cuban Refugees:

A MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE (Isabel & Alberto, 40s); A YOUNG DAUGHTER (Mila, 8); a MUSCULAR YOUNG ADULT (Carlos, 25) and---

ALEXEI (22), reedy, handsome, soft-spoken, slightly jittery.

He's the guy to pay attention to.

Alexei and Carlos slowly paddle the "boat" towards the Florida coast, just visible at the end of the horizon.

The *italicized* dialogue is spoken in Spanish and subtitled in English.

MILA

Daddy, how close are we?

ALBERTO

Almost there, baby girl.

MILA

Daddy, I'm hungry.

ISABEL

Quiet. They have lots of extra food in America.

We hear A LOUD INDUSTRIAL HONK in the distance.

ALBERTO

Fuck! I'm too old for prison.

Everyone in the boat (car) is dead silent. A tense moment. But it seems the coast is clear (Pun intended).

ALBERTO (CONT'D)

Thank God.

Another TWO HONKS. A huge Coast Guard ship drives up to them. An OFFICER shines a spotlight on the Buick.

COAST GUARD OFFICER
 This is the United States Coast
 Guard! You are committing a crime!
 We are required by law to evacuate
 your boat and return you to Cuba.

He REPEATS the instructions in SPANISH. Which isn't
 necessary, as everyone inside the boat perfectly understands.

MILA
*Daddy, what's happening? Are we
 going home?*

ALBERTO
I hope so, chiquita.

The Coast Guard pull their ship right next to the Buick to
 offload the Cubans, one by one. The waves rumble and flop
 underneath them.

Alexei twiddles his fingers, looking downward. He slides over
 to the car window on the far side of the Coast Guard ship.

ISABEL
Alexei.

ALEXEI
I'm not going back there.

He grabs a makeshift lifejacket (more of a flutterboard) and
 ducks out the far side window, as Isabel leaves. He dives
 into the ocean softly, like a penny into a water fountain.

IN THE OCEAN

Alexei keeps a tight hold on the life jacket. His family
 watches him from the ship, scared but completely silent. He
 bobs his head above water every few seconds. Barely breathing.

COAST GUARD CAPTAIN
 All out?

One of the Coast Guard OFFICIALS nods his head.

COAST GUARD CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
 Fire it down!

COAST GUARD OFFICIALS fire machine guns at the Buick, sinking
 it. (Perhaps this could be read as a poetic rendering of the
 government's role in destabilizing the economy that ultimately
 killed the manufacturing sector. Doubt it'll show that way.)

Alexei hears the shots, and sees the gunfire coming his way.
 He dives underneath the car-raft, for self-protection.

INSERT POV SHOT FROM ALEXEI UNDER BUICK - GUNSHOTS REIGN DOWN THROUGH THE WATER

He darts up for a quick breath and then dives back under. He watches the Coast Guard ship drive away, back towards Cuba.

The car begins to sink, submerging on top of Alexei.

Alexei tries to swim away, barely keeping his head above the water. But the HUGE WAVES, created by the Coast Guard's departure, parachute him across the water.

One CHOPPY wave hits him and he loses grip of his lifejacket.

He's tossed into the ocean's undertow like a loose surfboard.

He fades in and out of consciousness, choking and flailing.

MOMENTS LATER--

The bright sun is out. Alexei is alive, gently floating in the placid blue water. Somehow, he grabbed hold of his "lifejacket"! However, he's very disoriented. He sees a large raft-like object, only a few yards away from him.

He latches onto the small raft and climbs onto it.

ON THE RAFT

Bags of American money. And HARVEY SIEGEL (60), wrinkled, tan, butt naked. Dead.

On his chest are fresh knife wounds in the shape of a Jewish Star. They're etched in blood, two inches deep.

Alexei turns around, now facing the coast. Seven miles away, he sees it: the Miami skyline at sunrise. Welcome to America.

OPENING CREDITS

Over the credits, we watch Miami wake up:

-- Older Cubans sit curbside, read the paper and argue.

-- Young shirtless hardbodies jog along the beach.

-- Housekeepers and gardeners of all ages dust, manicure, and polish vast palatial estates.

-- Elderly Jews play shuffleboard and settle by the pool.

-- Dockworkers unload shipping crates from the busy port.

-- Homicide detectives circle the body of a DEAD BLACK TEEN, lying in the bloody street, in a district of abandoned homes.

-- Yuppies of all stripes walk to work in the shiny business district, each building newer and taller than the last one.

INT. MIAMI HOMICIDE - DAY

A beautiful place to solve a murder. Floor-to-ceiling windows, modernist furniture in Ikea color palettes (eggshell white, gunmetal grey), laptops. Very 21st-century.

SANDY TATE (42), lithe, shaggy hair, tailored tan suit--you get the sense he joined the force to meet girls--watches a HEAVYSET COP (55), rumpled, make coffee.

SANDY

You should try tea.

The cop frowns as he dumps in his third cup of creamer.

SANDY (CONT'D)

It's a more effective stimulant.

A YOUNG COP/LACKEY (25), in a windbreaker, comes in.

COP/LACKEY

Detective Tate. We got a balsero.

Sandy casually bobs his teabag, unmoved by the news.

SANDY

John Doe or Juan Doe?

COP/LACKEY

The Cuban's alive. Floated in on a raft at 5:30 this morning.

SANDY

So? Welcome to America. What does he want, a fucking fruit basket?

The Cop/Lackey turns on the FLAT-SCREEN TV mounted on the wall.

ON SCREEN

A FEMALE REPORTER is giving a report from the waterfront.

FEMALE REPORTER

The coroner's office has yet to officially confirm it, but sources say the deceased is Harvey Siegel--

INSERT PHOTO: Harvey in a tuxedo, posing with an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN at a lavish party. Her smile appears to be synthetic.

FEMALE REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The billionaire founder of Noesis Capital, and highly-regarded entrepreneur who was considering running for governor in the upcoming election.

BACK TO OFFICE

The office of COPS is shocked. They all gather around the TV.

NICHELLE PATRICK (37), fit, Haitian, tomboy-ish with short hair, dark navy pant suit--you'd think about hitting on her, but you're afraid she'd punch you in the face--rolls her eyes.

NICHELLE

Guess we won't be getting those in-car Blu-Ray players next year.

There are PHOTOS around the office which reveal Harvey as a proud supporter and patron of the police.

BACK TO TELEVISION

FEMALE REPORTER

The cause of death is unknown, but, this appears to be a murder, and, I believe we have a photo--this might be very disturbing to some viewers--

INSERT PHOTO: A bad cellphone shot from a Dutch angle that shows the etched-in-blood Jewish Star on Siegel's chest.

BACK TO OFFICE

GASPS from the office. Sandy clenches his jaw, smugly.

SANDY

That's not good for Israel.

Captain HECTOR Ruiz (55), still suave, but crumplier and puffier than in his prime, marches out of his office.

HECTOR

Tate. Nichelle. You're up on the board. Siegel's yours. This is the Redball of the century. Don't fuck this up. Please.

A look of discomfort between Sandy and Nichelle. Checking each other to see if the other one is going to speak up.

NICHELLE

You got us a Rabbi at City Hall?
Because if we end up digging under
the wrong mattress, the three of
us'll be working security for the
Marlins by next spring.

SANDY

He wants the case closed, Nichelle.

NICHELLE

I make sure I warn people before
the wrecking ball lands.

A scowl from Nichelle to Sandy. Hector's phone RINGS.

HECTOR

That's the mayor. The whole country
will be trying to solve this thing
from their couch. No fumbles.

INT./EXT. HOMICIDE CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Sandy drives them to the Siegel mansion. Nichelle stares out
the window, refusing to make eye contact.

Nichelle tries to turn up the Police RADIO which picks up
some CHATTER, but Sandy turns it off.

SANDY

Department gossip. Only gets in the
way of good policework.

She pops open a change compartment in the front of the car.

It reveals a diamond engagement ring. Nichelle is unimpressed.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Safest place to keep a diamond ring
is in the front seat of a squad car.
(then)
She checks my sock drawer.

NICHELLE

It's been four weeks. You still
haven't asked her?

SANDY

I kind of have a love/hate
relationship with love.

He thinks what he said is charming. Not to Nichelle.

NICHELLE

Might want to post that on your
bedroom door. Warning all visitors.

EXT. SIEGEL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

As the car drives through the opulent Miami neighborhood, a FLEET of PRESS TRUCKS and PAPARAZZI have surrounded the home.

A POLICEMAN slowly escorts their car through the muck, and the grand gate splits open for them.

EXT. SIEGEL ESTATE - DAY

Nichelle and Sandy exit the car, and cast an eye over the estate. It's glorious: a grand circular driveway, a yardfront waterfall, palm trees that touch the tip of the sun.

And the home itself is high glamor: flat roofs, floor-to-ceiling windows, painted in a crisp and shiny white.

A MAID (40), round, Hispanic, opens the door.

MAID

Ms. Angela, they're here!

ANGELA SIEGEL (48, but her breasts and facial features are replaced bi-annually) glides down the central staircase.

ANGELA

Detectives, please, come in!

INT. SIEGEL LIVING ROOM - DAY

Angela lets Sandy and Nichelle walk into the room. Angela's Pilates and silicon-enhanced body casts an eye over Nichelle as she walks by.

ANGELA

You're very pretty, you know.

A look between Nichelle and Angela. Different life choices.

Nichelle and Sandy sit across from Angela. Untouched lemonades. Million-dollar pieces of abstract art. The Miami sun glares in, as they sit in silence.

SANDY

Again, Ms. Siegel, we're so sorry
about your husband.

ANGELA

Oh please. Harvey's always had a target on his head. I knew he'd never make it to sixty-five.

NICHELLE

Do you know of anyone who had a particular problem with Mr. Siegel?

ANGELA

Anyone who thinks that hard work and entrepreneurship are what's wrong with this country. What are they calling themselves these days? Oh yes, the 99 percent.

Angela is angry, but cold and assured. Hardly mourning.

NICHELLE

But no one had any real motive to kill Mr. Siegel? That you know of.

ANGELA

Envy, Detective. They're practically pumping it into the water supply.

SANDY

When was the last time you saw your husband?

ANGELA

Tuesday. At the Rainbow Trust gala.

NICHELLE

You haven't seen your husband for an entire week?

ANGELA

We kept our own lives. My love with Harvey was not built around "face time". It was...much deeper than that. We were so...alike.

It's unclear if she's being genuine or Clintonian.

SANDY

Do you know if your husband's run for Governor was going to interfere with his businesses?

Angela looks around for a second. HOUSEKEEPERS are preparing the home for a Shiva/Extravaganza. Simultaneously covering the mirrors and preparing the fine china.

ANGELA

Of course it was. Politics is the discipline of sacrifice, and the art of compromise.

NICHELLE

Was he planning to sell his stake in Noesis?

RON (O.S.)

That's enough, Detective.

RON GREENSPAN (55), tall, nerdy but powerful, two thousand-dollar suit, five thousand-dollar cufflinks, enters the room.

RON (CONT'D)

Angela has been through a tragedy. She deserves her privacy.

EXT. SIEGEL MANSION - DAY

Ron has his arm around Angela as they walk the detectives out.

RON

We'll speak with you again when Ms. Siegel is ready.

They close the door as Nichelle and Sandy walk to their car.

They can see Ron and Angela, through the house's modernist floor-to-ceiling windows. He's still huddled around her.

SANDY

If my husband was murdered, I'd probably want some alone time.

NICHELLE

She doesn't strike me as the independent type.

SANDY

No woman ever became a feminist because too many rich guys wanted to fuck them.

They get into the car. As they leave, Ron and Angela watch the car through the window.

INT./EXT. HOMICIDE CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Sandy drives with a cool, confident smile.

NICHELLE
You missed the exit.

SANDY
No, I didn't.
(then, smirking)
Hunch.

"Going to American Front" Montage:

The skyscrapers and gauche properties fade from view.

We drive through Little Havana, an all-day carnival. Rich colorful murals. Loud music. Chickens waddling on sidewalks.

Then, through Flagami and Doral. Nicaraguans and Venezuelans in lower-middle class bungalows; spacious but dilapidated.

SANDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Got a CI I want to check in with.
Might know a few things about a
case like this.

But, suddenly, we're on I-95. Vast strip malls: half Old Navys, half-abandoned. Arby's serve as the mile markers.

Sandy pulls off the highway, onto a more rural road.

The road is gravelly, surrounded by swampy marsh. Some of the homes are cute cottage-style properties, others are trailers.

A LOCAL walks by, smiling at Nichelle in the slow moving car. He's 82% neckbeard; you could fit a Twizzlers through the gaps in his teeth.

SANDY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Never been out here before, have
you.

NICHELLE (O.S.)
Every little Haitian girl knows:
try to leave Miami, you just end up
in fuckin' Florida.

Sandy pulls off onto a side road. From the lush greenery surrounding the road, it appears we're going to summer camp.

The car approaches a vast wooden gate. Sandy drives up to the intercom. Surveillance cameras are everywhere.

INTERCOM VOICE (V.O.)
This is private property! Get lost!

SANDY

Miami Homicide. Here to ask a few questions. Detective Sandy Tate.

A beat. Some MURMURING behind the intercom. The cameras MOVE.

NICHELLE

You going to get us killed?

She grasps her gun, protectively.

SANDY

(smiles) They're threatened by you.

The gate opens and the cop car ambles inside....

EXT. AMERICAN FRONT COMPOUND - DAY - CONTINUOUS

A historic plantation meets a militia training camp, with a touch of a Southern vacation resort.

As Sandy and Nichelle drive down the cobble road, we see:

-- Flags and Insignia are everywhere. Some are merely Confederate, others are more "nationalist" in nature.

-- A fleet of LARGE SHIRTLESS MEN take target practice with assault rifles on a variety of NON-WHITE targets.

-- CHILDREN seated in a circle receive instruction from a RELIGIOUS LEADER.

SANDY

Worse places to live.

NICHELLE

For you, it's a choice.

They drive up to the main lodge. It's ornate, wide-set and freshly painted with roman columns. Very Antebellum South.

MITCH HARMON (45), country handsome, sinewy, walks out of the main jag. He greets Sandy with a friendly smile.

MITCH

Detective Tate. Haven't seen you 'round these parts in a while.

NICHELLE

You two know each other?

MITCH

We members of American Front have great respect for law and order. In fact, you might call it one of our guiding principles.

SANDY

Got a homicide, Mitch. Like to ask you a few questions about it.

MITCH

Well, come on in. No reason the pursuit of justice can't occur in a leisurely setting.

He looks at Nichelle and smiles.

MITCH (CONT'D)

You're welcome to come in too. Officer Monique.

A glare from her.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Our kind ain't interested in interbreeding.

As they walk in...

NICHELLE

(under her breath) I wouldn't fuck him with Rush Limbaugh's dick.

INT. AMERICAN FRONT MAIN LODGE - DAY

An ostentatious southern mansion. In a room off the main foyer, CHILDREN and ADULTS are engaged in a religious ceremony. It looks and sounds OCCULT-ish.

Mitch sits Nichelle and Sandy down on a grand couch.

MITCH

So what can I do you for, Detective?

SANDY

Harvey Siegel was found dead this morning five miles from Miami Beach.

MITCH

Jewish fella. Very successful in the financial industry. All his friends in the media think it's a hate crime.

SANDY

You saw the news.

MITCH

No. Just an educated guess. I've never heard of the man. But once you've seen one, you've seen 'em all.

(then)

If history is any indicator, probably just a couple teenage vandals who got carried away. Low IQ. Lack of impulse control. Not raised with proper discipline. Boys like that are practically bred for violent behavior.

NICHELLE

Where were you last night?

Sandy looks at Nichelle. She may be fucking up his source.

MITCH

I was here. Teaching. Worshipping. You can ask anyone here in our community. Heck of it, we probably got it all on tape. We like to make a video, for our pals on the 'net.

SANDY

And you've never had any interactions with Harvey Siegel?

MITCH

I wouldn't know this man if he was selling me overpriced diamonds or underpriced real estate. Though that'd be the case for most of us, wouldn't it?

A sly grin from Mitch.

NICHELLE

How much new business are you looking at, now that he's dead?

MITCH

Excuse me, Miss Cleo?

NICHELLE

A Jew gets chopped in half on live TV, and you get what, twenty new recruits?

MITCH

You're suggesting I arrive at my motives with a sinister intent?

NICHELLE

Who's funding this cult of yours?

Mitch laughs. Sandy gently slides over, protecting Nichelle.

MITCH

Detective, I'm clean as the cross. My life is based around three principles: worship, honesty, and purity. I'm willing to die for that. The Jew has infected us all with the idea that he can wash the blood from his wealth, simply by making more of it.

He stands in front of Nichelle and Sandy.

MITCH (CONT'D)

When an empire is built on rotten land, decay and destruction are only inevitable.

YURI (PRE-LAP)

Is beautiful jacket, here. Perfect American jacket.

INT. CARGO SHIP - DAY

YURI (42), like a champion bodybuilder gone to seed, examines a rhinestone-studded leather jacket. He puffs a cigarette.

YURI

Is big metal plate in back, say Versace, so when you wear it, everyone know, this jacket is Versace.

The jacket has a big metal plate in the back engraved Versace.

YURI (CONT'D)

Is exactly why I come to America. You are what you wear. Versace.

Yuri is in the bowels of a cargo ship, surrounded by boxes of similar jackets and other high-priced wares.

MARCO (40), heavysset, seems to have a handle on the situation alongside Yuri's henchmen: one is LEAN, one is HEFTY.

MARCO

I bring you the best shit, Yuri.

YURI

Even in land of opportunity: is
always good to have friend in
government. Russian wisdom.

Yuri laughs. Then the Henchmen do too, upon cue.

MARCO

Sixty-Five for all of it.

YURI

No can do.

The henchmen pull guns out on Marco.

MARCO

You don't want to do that.

Hefty nudges his gun into Marco's stomach. Marco puts his
hands up, trying to defuse the situation.

MARCO (CONT'D)

It's not me you're going to have to
answer to.

YURI

Answer? We thieves. This, like,
customer reward.

MARCO

Yuri. Just give me the money and no
one will get hurt.

YURI

Marco. Just give me the jacket.

The Russians LAUGH.

LEAN

You go. Call it armed robbery.

Marco leaves, disturbed. He shuts the bowel door behind him.

The Russians start lugging the boxes of jackets to the door.

Yuri isn't done with his gloating.

YURI

(in American accent) It's not me
you're going to have to answer to.
It's the boss! Accounting violation!

The Russians LAUGH. They sort through the goods, pirates bathing in their bounty.

Then a POUNDING at the door! Another POUNDING.

POLICE (O.S.)
Police! Open up! We have a warrant!

The henchmen ready their guns at Yuri's cue.

Yuri tiptoes to the door. The henchmen are ready to fire, guns aimed forward.

He opens it. There's no one there.

Yuri looks into the hallway of the ship. He signals to Lean and Hefty to follow behind him. They do.

Then, ISAIAH emerges from a hatch. He's sinewy and stolid, in an all black jumpsuit. His expressionless face suggests a clinically diagnosed lack of empathy, and his worked-in, leathery skin, is the product of laboring in the hot sun.

He stands up, nearly silently. And walks towards them, in a Frankensteinian march. He's holding an assault rifle.

The three Russians turn around, perplexed. The cops were nowhere in sight.

They see him. Large weapon aimed right at them.

There's a moment of silent recognition. Just a soft second.

A relentless mist of bullets spray across their bodies. It sounds like a JACKHAMMER.

They sink to the ground, bloody as used bandaids. Dead.

Yuri is barely breathing. He dove behind his henchmen right before the gun was fired.

Isaiah stalks forward. Beads of moisture drip from his face, but it's still and block-like, like a defrosting slab of meat.

YURI
Take it. The jackets. The money.
Take it all.

ISAIAH
What am I supposed to do with an
surplus of material goods?

Da-da-da-da-da-da-da! The sounds of rapid gunfire over black.

SANDY (PRE-LAP)
So what do we know?

EXT. LAKESIDE MEMORIAL PARK - DAY

Nichelle and Sandy lay in the deep pocket of an elaborate Jewish funeral.

NICHELLE
Coroner had the time of death at
10:34 PM Tuesday. Cause of death
was extended strangulation. Both
the collarbone and the neck
ligatures were broken, which
suggests he strangled him from the
front. Siegel knew his killer.

The RABBI blesses the coffin of Harvey as he's carried over
an open gravesite.

RABBI
Yit G'adal, V'Yit Gadash Shamay
Rabba.....

The Mourner's Kaddish continues in the background.

SANDY
Think he's here?

The scene is lavish. 500 MOURNERS surround the gravesite, in
designer black-and-white. Lincoln limousines by the dozen.

NICHELLE
She's sitting in the front row.

Most notably, Angela is draped in grief chic: an elegant all-
black dress, shawl and sunglasses. Jackie O, but Jewish.

SANDY
She's a widow. Be kind.

She takes off her glasses to wipe a lone, dribbling, tear.

NICHELLE
You can look out of those eyes, but
you can't look into them.
(then)
Walked away with twenty-five
million from the life insurance.

SANDY

Half the bean counters here could
pick that up with a lucky stock
tip. Not a reason to kill somebody.

In Jewish tradition, the mourners bury the body with dirt. So
Angela gingerly flecks a few scoops of dirt onto the coffin.

She drops her shovel and edges herself toward the grave, in
an act of high drama.

Ron enwraps her in a hug. He's on her skintight, like human
Cellophane. He glares at Sandy and Nichelle, though they're
lurking from half a football field away.

NICHELLE

With a boyfriend like that? I've
known guys who'd kill their own
brother for the fat chick from
Applebee's.

SANDY

You're being cynical.

NICHELLE

You've had a charmed life.
(then, after a beat)
What's your read?

SANDY

Business dispute. Some guy he
screwed over on the federal interest
rate. Explains the...iconography.

NICHELLE

That's the hitch. Most of Siegel's
wealth is kept tied up in Noesis,
but that's not where any of his
cashflow came from.

SANDY

How does he make his money, then?

FITNESS MODEL (PRE-LAP)

But we don't just want to get you
lean; we want to get you...

AUDIENCE

SHREDDERED!

FITNESS MODEL

SHREDDERED!

INT. HANDHELD STUDIOS - DAY

A FITNESS MODEL (30), buff and shiny, hosts an infomercial. He's got FEMALE FITNESS MODEL SIDEKICKS (25), toned, bronze.

The studio is PACKED with COLLEGE KIDS. He's hawking something that looks like a cross between an elliptical trainer and a cable machine.

The MACHINE NAME: The INCINERATOR

FITNESS MODEL

And to do that, we can't just work off the fat. We have to work beneath the fat--right down to the bone.

Nichelle and Sandy watch the studio from the top landing--kind of a balcony above the set. They're with GLORIA (45), "Handheld" polo shirt, average--a company pro.

SANDY

He actually use that thing?

GLORIA

Twelve minutes, twice a week. That plus daily weight training, a ketogenic diet and a highly calibrated regimen of clenbuterol, and Bovine Growth Hormone, and you can look like him in four to eight months. If you got the right genetic blueprint, of course.

NICHELLE

That's what you mean by an active lifestyle?

GLORIA

Oh, your doctor will prescribe all of that. It's Florida. We don't let big government get in the way of the human body. Thank the lord.

Nichelle, Sandy and Gloria walk and talk through the top balcony, which overlooks the entire studio.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Shame we lost Harvey. I always thought he'd go out like most of 'em do in this business: bankrupt and shot in a marina by an ex-wife. But hey, life is full of surprises.

Nichelle and Sandy notice there are OTHER STUDIOS shooting infomercials at the same time, right next door.

SANDY

He owned the Power Hour too?

We flash on a P-90X style INFOMERCIAL. They're shooting an ad for home workout videos in the STUDIO right next door.

GLORIA

That was Harvey's genius. He bought up all the infomercial products and put 'em in competition with one another. Every customer felt like they found their own secret weight loss trick.

NICHELLE

That's illegal.

GLORIA

Nothing more American than fingerprint, Detective.

SANDY

Same model as Hardee's and Carl Jr.

NICHELLE

What are you talking about?

SANDY

Hardee's and Carl's Jr. It's the same burgers, just a different logo.

NICHELLE

No, it's not.

SANDY

You ever been in a Hardee's and a Carl's Jr. at the same time? Exactly.

The detectives and Gloria reach the end of the hallway. They turn left into a more professional-looking area....

INT. HANDHELD OFFICES - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The nucleus of infomercial sales. SALESPEOPLE are on phones, printing out orders, filling packages.

Posters are on the wall for: household cleaning products (MAGIC MOP); financial products (OVERNIGHT MILLIONAIRE; STOCK-GENIE); diet pills (CARBOCONVERTER).

GLORIA

We do about 100-120 million in annual profits, once you add it all up. Not bad, if I do say so myself.

SANDY

No one ever went broke underestimating the American dream of self-improvement.

GLORIA

Harvey spent less time around here the last few years, it being Kissimmee and all.

A look around reveals a lower-middle class group of EMPLOYEES: non-whites; overweight; tattered clothes; etc.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

But he was very proud of the work we did.

NICHELLE

You must have got a few unsatisfied customers--

GLORIA

We offer an 100% money-back guarantee on all of our products.

NICHELLE

You can't just refund a man's pride.

Gloria leads them into a small, side room.

GLORIA

We have a special department devoted to customer service complaints.

INT. HANDHELD CUSTOMER SERVICE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Covered in sacks of mail. JARRETT, (30), boney, with patchy skin and crooked teeth, enters data into a computer.

GLORIA

Jarrett, these folks are from the murder unit.

JARRETT

I ain't actually killed nobody!
Them's just jokes at the radio
station.

GLORIA

Not you, hon. They wanna ask you if
we've been getting any threats.

JARRETT

Me.

(then, after a second)

No. I'm fine.

SANDY

Any customers write in, angry about
the products?

JARRETT

Sure. Plenty of 'em. That's my job.

It takes him a second but, he nods to the bags. Nichelle and
Sandy pick up letters and start mangling through them.

One catches the eye of Nichelle. It's written in ragged pen.

NICHELLE

You scumbag pee-on, all your
products are worthless junk. You
took my moneys and shipped it out
to your Jew cronies in Israel.

JARRETT

That guy writes in all the time.
Had a real rough time in the stock
market. I sent him some free Alpha
Shred, but he sent it back and told
me I was a fat bastard. Faggot.

SANDY

You got a return address?

INT. AMERICAN FRONT MAIN LODGE - DAY

Mitch sees Nichelle and Sandy's car drive along the trail
through a window. He's displeased.

He looks over a CONGREGATION in the main sanctuary, deep in
the throes of quiet worship.

He walks to the front of the lodge as they pull up.

EXT. AMERICAN FRONT MAIN LODGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nichelle and Sandy get out of the car. Mitch is there to greet them, holding a fake smile: wide and motionless.

MITCH

Detectives! Come by for a helping of sweet potato pie?

SANDY

We want to talk with one of your boys.

MITCH

They're in the midst of afternoon prayer. It's not a good time.

Nichelle and Sandy blow past Mitch into the lodge.

INT. AMERICAN FRONT MAIN LODGE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Mitch chases after Nichelle and Sandy, trying to look calm.

MITCH

You got a warrant?

NICHELLE

Don't need one. Just want to ask a few questions.

Nichelle and Sandy look around, watching for shifting souls.

MITCH

You know we're all about peace and goodwill here. No one's done anything that can't be explained, now.

Sandy looks down at a sheet of paper.

SANDY

Matthew Cobb. Made a number of purchases from Handheld Productions. Filed a few angry complaints. We need to know where he was the night of the 11th.

MITCH

Now, even our boys aren't immune to the allure of commerce. What he needs is some worship to cleanse his soul.

NICHELLE

Which one is he, Mitch? (louder)
The one with the murder rap.

They look over the 200 ANONYMOUS BODIES, quietly mawing in the temple. Mitch is in Nichelle's way. Still as a statue.

Then, THREE SKINHEADS, all identical, all get up, and dash out the side exit.

Nichelle and Sandy sprint out the front door.

EXT. AMERICAN FRONT COMPOUND - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nichelle and Sandy chase after the THREE BOYS, through a lush green field.

NICHELLE

Hey! Miami Homicide! Stop!

SANDY

Matthew Cobb! We just want to talk!

The boys don't look back, heads down, breaths growing louder and belaboured. They rush into the woods.

EXT. AMERICAN FRONT WOODS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

From Nichelle and Sandy's POV, we see the three boys separate through the maze of trees. The dirt is thick and mulchy.

Sandy gently shoves Nichelle to the left, as he runs right.

She looks at him, slightly concerned. He pulls out his gun and keeps running. She does the same.

We follow Nichelle, chasing after one of the SKINHEADS she can barely track, as he's far off in the distance.

She hurtles through the muddy woods, skipping through branches, shrubbery, saw palmetto leaves hitting her face. She shuffles down a sudden hill, thinking she sees him...

EXT. THE EVERGLADES - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nichelle finds herself in an open plain of Everglades swamp.

The water's almost waist high. Grimy: the browning color of day-old guacamole. She trudges forward, inhaling with steady rhythm to calm her leaping nerves.

Nichelle grasps her gun TIGHTLY, with two hands.

She scans the horizon. The open water. Endless woods in all directions. 10-foot high grass surrounds her. It's eerily silent.

A LOUD SHUTTERING.

She jumps and turns around.

It's just a Pelican, taking a drink.

She exhales, steady and calm. She steps forward, patrolling.

NICHELLE

Sandy?.....Sandy?

She's a good fifteen yards from the woodland, ready to go back, but there's a sudden CRACKING and a ROAR.

She turns around, abruptly. Her gun is primed and pointed.

A SKINHEAD. 25 years old, lean and white as ivory. He holds a giant log in his left hand, which he's jammed inside the angry gaping mouth of a writhing ALLIGATOR.

NICHELLE (CONT'D)

Don't move!

She aims her gun squarely at his eyes. He doesn't flinch.

MATTHEW

See, I let go of these snakes in your direction--

In his other hand, he grasps two snakes by their midsection.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

And toss off this here log, and this crocodile bout to get a real hungerin'.

The snakes are striped red and black, like Hot Wheels cars.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Could make you for wishing we just hung your ass off a tree long ago, don't it?

NICHELLE

Back away.

MATTHEW

I'll do well as I damn please.
Thicklips.

She looks around. No sign or sound of Sandy--or anyone. She's cast her eyes downward, looking around Matthew's navel.

NICHELLE

Why'd you kill that man, Matthew?

Matthew gulps. But then smiles, with guilt and pride.

MATTHEW

He was a cancer on the whole town.
Stole everything he could get his
hands on.

Nichelle slowly treads toward him. She's confused.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Ransacked my parent's store. Tried
to fuck my sister. Porchmonkeys
like him ran up and down my town
with no regard for the rule of law.

He steps towards her, ominously. The alligator lurches ahead.

NICHELLE

Don't move!

He's getting angrier, and more fearless. He steps again.

MATTHEW

That's the thing with you niggers.
You ain't got no mind for
respecting another's property.
That's why I had to kill--

He swings his log-yielding arm, and the alligator lashes--

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Nichelle shoots Matthew straight in the gut. He lands in the water with a THUD, blood streaming from his stomach.

The alligator bites through the log, and takes a crawl towards Nichelle.

She looks in its eyes, and backtracks quickly but calmly, readying herself for another shot when--

POW! POW! POW!

Sandy puts three in the back of the alligator's head. He's standing about fifteen yards away, covered in slime, dung and earthguts. It's as if he emerged from the swamp.

He hustles over to Nichelle, who's silent and frozen. As he straddles her, he sees Matthew's dead body.

He squeezes Nichelle's arm, warmly. He looks in her eyes.

SANDY

Good shot.

NICHELLE

You too.

INT. AMERICAN FRONT COMPOUND - DAY

An onslaught of investigation: MEDIA; SQUAD CARS; AMBULANCES; surround the compound.

The members of American Front watch in quiet shock, an indistinguishable mass of white males on a rich green lawn.

Matthew's body bag is zipped up and put into in a Police Van.

There are endless flashes from CAMERAS. NEWS REPORTERS doing On Site reports.

Nichelle sits quietly, alone on a porch. She sees a car pull up. Out runs JULIET (30), blonde, yoga fit, yoga pants. She leaps into Sandy's arms. She kisses him like it's the last moments before the apocalypse. (Nichelle wishes it were.)

Nichelle looks at the ground, trying to quell whatever physical reaction is coming up inside her.

Hector, wearing a camera-ready suit-and-tie, walks over to her.

HECTOR

Not a lot of other people coulda
shown the courage you did out
there. Hell of a job, Patrick.

He pats her on the back. She quietly receives his praise, in part out of modesty, and in part out of shame.

A look between her and Mitch, who's being questioned by MULTIPLE OFFICERS. He shakes his head at her, ever so slightly. Nichelle averts her eyes.

EXT. LITTLE DORAL - NIGHT

A lower-middle-class neighborhood. Rundown bungalows. The streetlamps light dusty sidewalks and half-chewed lawns.

NICHELLE (O.S.)

You know when your best friend is marrying an asshole? And everyone knows he's an asshole, but she's blindly in love with him, and so fucking desperate, that she can't see she's just going to be dragging around this asshole who treats her like shit for the next forty years? Well, that was the woman I was gonna be. Just an asshole's tow-truck.

We approach a black sedan, parked on the street.

NICHELLE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There are more important things than getting married, Mom!

INT./EXT. NICHELLE'S CAR - NIGHT

Nichelle sits inside her car. Alone. Lights off.

NICHELLE

Well maybe, your daughter shot and killed a white supremacist mass murderer today and I thought you might say "I'm proud of you" or "you're a good cop", or even call me because you were worried about me when you saw it all over the news because you actually care about what's going on in my life!

She's wearing the same clothes she was just hours ago. The vague remnants of swampy bits remain on her face.

She looks at the bungalow beside her. The lights are off.

She drives away.

INT. LOUIS ESTATE - NIGHT

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

A 300 acre white supremacist compound in the Everglades was invaded today by Miami Police.

MYRON LOUIS (60), too handsome and happy for his seniority, as if he's dry-aged in his own wealth, watches TV in his palatial mansion.

ON SCREEN

Scenes from the aftermath at American Front. Cops searching skinheads, scowering the premises for weapons, etc.

He looks to a **SURVEILLANCE VIDEO FEED.**

ON VIDEO

A jet-black SUV pulls up to his gates. He speaks into a mic.

MYRON

It's Yuri. Let him in.

Myron continues watching television.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Matthew Cobb, the 24 year-old murderer of noted Miami businessman Harvey Siegel, was being housed there. Cobb had sent Siegel a series of increasingly angry and threatening letters after using a variety of Siegel's personal improvement products and failing to experience the desired results.

Isaiah walks in, holding a duffel bag. Myron is panicked.

MYRON

Who are you?

Isaiah sits down in a push leather chair, calm as can be.

ISIAIAH

You don't remember me. That suggests you have no interest in the real answer to that question.

MYRON

Where's Yuri?

ISIAIAH

Are you happy with yourself?

MYRON

I'm calling my security.

He calls into his intercom. Isaiah is steady as a thermostat.

MYRON (CONT'D)
Jared, Jared---

Myron looks at his feed. Sees something shocking. Bloody.

MYRON (CONT'D)
How many of you are there?

ISAIAH
You place such a premium on facts.

Myron scrambles around, looking for a weapon.

MYRON
I'll have you killed, you know.

ISAIAH
You could have had me killed
already.
(then)
Is that what you value. Power?

Myron tries dialing 911. His phone line's been cut.

MYRON
I can get you all the money you
want.

ISAIAH
I don't want your money. In fact, I
brought some of it back to you.

He pulls out a large gun, with a silencer. Points it at Myron.

ISAIAH (CONT'D)
In life, at times, a situation
appears pre-destined. One is forced
to accept the natural order of
things.

He places the gun on the table. Out of his arms' reach.

ISAIAH (CONT'D)
But sometimes, the situation
changes.

Myron looks at him. Isaiah's hands are up. Myron grabs the
gun and starts firing it at Isaiah. But it's empty. No ammo.

ISAIAH (CONT'D)
And yet, it is in those situations,
where one tries to combat his pre-
destined fate, that one's true
nature is revealed.

MYRON

Who are you?

Isaiah slides forward the bag.

ISAIAH

Look inside the bag, Myron.

INT. POLICEMAN'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Sandy ties a tie in the mirror. He looks great: poised, hunky.

SANDY

You gonna make a speech? Or do we just smile and nod up there, like we won the lottery?

He looks sharp. He puts his policeman's jacket over it. Nichelle sits on a bench in her uniform. She's morose.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Hey, Nancy Drew, I know you're not the cheerleader type, but least you could do is pretend to be excited.

NICHELLE

I killed the wrong guy.

SANDY

What?

NICHELLE

Cobb. The skinhead. That's not who killed Harvey Siegel.

SANDY

You just got cold feet. First time you shot someone. PTSD whatever.

NICHELLE

He told me. Right before I shot him. He killed a Black kid in Georgia. That's why he fled to the compound.

Sandy turns around.

SANDY

You tell anyone else this?

NICHELLE

No. Not yet.

SANDY

Don't say anything to anyone--

JULIET (O.S.)

Sandy?

Juliet, the girl who embraced Sandy at the compound, walks in. Her high heels CLACK LOUDLY as Nichelle and Sandy are silent.

JULIET (CONT'D)

Am I interrupting something?

(then, after silent nods)

I just wanted to make sure you didn't forget your badge.

She pins it to Sandy's chest, with pride.

JULIET (CONT'D)

That's better. Wow. There he is, my handsome Detective. And Nichelle, you look so...strong. Ready to kick ass!

NICHELLE

Thanks.

SANDY

Give us a minute. We'll be out soon.

Juliet dangles her left arm obnoxiously. Displaying her ring.

JULIET

Okay, I'll be waiting outside for you. Hero. Or should I say, hubby.

She waves the diamond again. Nichelle saw it the first time.

NICHELLE

You guys are finally getting married. That's great.

JULIET

Nichelle, thank you so much! Sandy told me you helped him pick it out. I love it! It's gorgeous!

Juliet wraps her in a faux-hug. A facsimile of affection.

NICHELLE

I never thought he'd get around to asking you.

JULIET

Well, I'll leave you two be. And
Nichelle, congratulations, again!
You're such a...powerful woman!

She walks out. The CLACK Of her heels again.

SANDY

Look, I---

He looks at her. There's nothing to say. It's finished.

NICHELLE

What? I'm happy for you.

SANDY

It's the right place and time.

NICHELLE

Wasn't for Matthew Cobb.

Sandy sighs. He's not sure how to deal with this.

SANDY

You gotta let this one rest. You
can't go digging holes when we're
standing on quicksand.

NICHELLE

Harvey Siegel's murderer is still
out there.

SANDY

Look, you leave the house trying to
kill Hitler, end up shooting
Mussolini--it's still a good day.
Smile out there. You're a good cop.

EXT. MIAMI POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

In a ceremony, both Nichelle and Sandy are bequeathed with
medals of honor by the MAYOR and the CHIEF of POLICE.

Cameras flash. People applaud. Nichelle receives her medal
with stoic countenance.

INT. MYRON'S MANSION - DAY

A CLEANING LADY walks in. She wears a "proper" uniform.

CLEANING LADY

Hello? Mr. Myron? Ms. Lydia?

She puts on her headphones, sneaking a moment of pleasure.

(We HEAR Katy Perry, or something equally earworm-y.)

She begins to dust around a grand statue, in the foyer. It might as well be Michaelangelo's David, it's so marbled and regal.

While her dusting is mindless, she notices her rag is growing oddly moist. She looks at it. Morsels of wet blood, are gathering on her rag.

She looks up. A human arm dangles from the statue. Its loose filaments are visible, freshly ripped from a rotator cuff.

CLEANING LADY (CONT'D)

Ahhhhh! Ahh!

She rips off her headphones, gasping. And she looks around...

Camouflaged in the landscape of a wide canvas painting, a leg lies across its base.

Hanging from a chandelier, loose toes and fingers.

Mounted on some sort of African antique sword: a neck.

And on a picturesque family portrait, amongst the flat faces full of health and prosperity, is Myron Louis' human head.

She faints. We HEAR the headphones, still playing.

INT. RON'S OFFICE - DAY

Ron, pacing, wearing a headset, barks orders like a chef.

RON

If I wanted a guarantee for the future, I'd put five million on a Florida State running back being accused of rape. But I want my money now.

\$25,000 oak desk. Two huge Mac screens. Leather chairs. Photos with celebrities. The life of high finance.

Nichelle walks into the office, examining its wares. Ron recognizes her. He waves a finger in her face and tries to project steel-eyed confidence, but he flinches, for a second.

RON (CONT'D)
 Yeah, you do that and call me back.
 (then, to Nichelle)
 Do we know each other?

Nichelle casually waves her badge in his eye.

NICHELLE
 Detective Nichelle Patrick. Miami
 Homicide. We met at Ms. Siegel's.

Ron takes a half second, pretending he needs to remember.

RON
 Right, right. You're the one who
 shot the Nazi. You're a very
 courageous girl.

He walks over to her, as she looks at the photos of him
 ensconced with various celebrities. She doesn't look up.

NICHELLE
 Part of the job.

RON
 Well, I'm--we're all--very
 grateful. Obviously, what happened
 to Harvey is a horrific tragedy,
 but there's a little less evil in
 the world now. All thanks to you.

She turns and faces him.

RON (CONT'D)
 I appreciate you coming down here
 to tell me this in person.

NICHELLE
 Oh, I'm not here for that.

RON
 I thought it was department custom
 to notify the family.

NICHELLE
 You're not family. Besides, you
 watch the news.

Ron's taken aback.

RON
 Well then. I have to ask you,
 Detective, what exactly are you
 doing in my office?

NICHELLE

There are some loose ends that remain dangling with regard to Mr. Siegel's life. I was hoping you might help me tie them together.

RON

We all have our skeletons in the closet. Now that Harvey's passed on, I think it's best that we just let sleeping dogs lie.

NICHELLE

Sleeping dogs have a habit of waking up and biting whoever's left to babysit for them. What do you know about the Hialeah Housing Development.

He knows what she's talking about. He tries to look confused.

RON

Doesn't ring a bell.

NICHELLE

\$138 million dollars to build low-income housing in Hialeah. Look at that: photo's right here.

She nicks one of Ron's celebratory photos with her fingers. Harvey's prominently featured in the shot, as is Angela.

RON

Oh right. Hialeah. You know what they say Detective, you do too much charity work, you can't tell all your good deeds apart.

NICHELLE

I don't think they say that.

RON

It's a Jewish saying. An ancient Jewish saying.

NICHELLE

How is that project going?

RON

It's going well. Lots of revitalization, lots of growth. But, I'm afraid I have to ask you to leave, Detective.

(MORE)

RON (CONT'D)
 (then)
 I have a very busy afternoon.

He walks her to the door.

RON (CONT'D)
 Good meeting you.

INT. NOESIS FINANCIAL LOBBY - DAY

Nichelle waits for the elevator. It arrives.

INT. NOESIS ELEVATOR - DAY

Nichelle walks into the elevator. She's about to press the lobby button, but it's already pressed. 88 floors down.

She looks to her left and sees a Janitor. It's Isaiah.

INT. PRADA - DAY

Angela carries a fleet of high-end goods: blouses, leather pants, a dress towards the dressing room. She gets the attention of a PRADA EMPLOYEE, as she goes towards the door.

ANGELA
 Michelle. Sauvignon Blanc.
 (then)
 Double.

PRADA EMPLOYEE
 Yes, Ms. Siegel.

Angela opens the dressing room door.

INT. PRADA DRESSING ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Ron is sitting there, in a cold sweat.

RON
 There's no where else I could talk to you.

He tries to give her a kiss. She turns away, vaguely disgusted: the face of someone tasting day-old sushi.

RON (CONT'D)
 I came in the back entrance. Took my gardener's Civic. No one saw me.

ANGELA
Well, what is it? I'm grieving.

RON
I think they know.

ANGELA
Who?

RON
The mulatto detective. She came by
my office. She was asking me
questions.

ANGELA
All detectives ask questions. They
never figure anything out.

RON
And what if they find out about us?

A KNOCK at the door.

PRADA EMPLOYEE (O.S.)
Ms. Siegel?

RON
(muffled) Shit!

PRADA EMPLOYEE
I brought you a glass of wine. And
some Jordan Almonds.

ANGELA
You get an A for effort! Please
leave it at the door.

The SOUND of food and drink being put down.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
We've done nothing wrong.

RON
The optics are criminal.

ANGELA
It's not the first time a pair of
billionaires has been unfaithful.
What we've done wouldn't make the
back page of any decent society
paper.

RON
And what about the money?

ANGELA

What about it? Everything Harvey owned is now yours or mine.

RON

She knows about Hialeah.

ANGELA

That's your problem to fix. You told me that you were the world's greatest accountant. So do some accounting.

RON

I got you something.

He hands her a shitty-looking Bonsai tree from his seat.

RON (CONT'D)

Just to say....congratulations!

ANGELA

You got me a happy funeral present?

RON

Sort of a happy your husband's dead, the funeral's over, you can move on with your new life present. It's a...re-juvenation!

ANGELA

What am I supposed to do with this? Fucking plant it for Israel?

RON

You'll think of me every time you look at it.

ANGELA

That's fucking swell, Ronald. Now I will make a phone call. And you will make our problem go away.

INT. HECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Nichelle walks into Hector's office. He's on the phone.

HECTOR

I'll call you back.

He hangs up the phone. Displeased to see her.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Why are you bothering Angela Siegel?

NICHELLE

I haven't spoken to her.

HECTOR

Then why is her lawyer calling me and asking for a restraining order?

NICHELLE

I went to see Ronald Greenspan.

HECTOR

What are you playing, pin the tail on the billionaire?

NICHELLE

There are some lingering questions about Harvey Siegel's death. Some of his business dealings are less than upstanding.

HECTOR

Lingering questions. Less than upstanding. Hmmn.

(then)

You know the story of the dog and the wolf, Nichelle?

NICHELLE

No.

HECTOR

In ancient Rome--though I don't see why every fable has to take place in ancient Rome. What the fuck: in the suburbs of Tampa, in...1997, there was a hungry wolf, just wandering the streets.

I know. Tampa, right?

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Wolf hadn't eaten for days. He sees this beautiful labrador retriever, just roaming around: gorgeous coat of hair, full of energy. Wolf says to the dog; you look great Dog says, I have an amazing life. You should come live here with me. Wolf thinks about it, says okay, great.

This sounds like the premise to an ABC Family sitcom.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

But he takes a closer look at the dog. Wolf says, hey, what's this fraying here? Right under your neck? Dog says: well, that's from my collar, so my owner can track me at home. Wolf runs away, howling, "a full belly is a small price to pay for your liberty." You get it?

NICHELLE

Nothing's more important than freedom.

HECTOR

But see, that's all bullshit. Dogs used to be wolves, until they realized: they were fucking hungry all the time. Meanwhile, Aesop? Aesop wanted to be a painter, but he couldn't make any money, so the dictator of Rome, hired him to write inspirational fables that would fill the poor people with hopes and dreams, so they wouldn't start a revolution. Aesop was basically a hack writing headlines for MSNBC. Get my point?

NICHELLE

I'm just doing my job, Captain.

HECTOR

Your job is to take murders and connect them to murderers. Last I recall, you had already done that.

NICHELLE

I'm following my hunch. I've earned the right to do that.

HECTOR

And the Siegel family has earned the right to their privacy. Back off. Go bother some real criminals.

She stands there, fuming, silent, for a second.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

It's not about race, Nichelle.

NICHELLE

It never is.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Fort Lauderdale Police today were met with disturbing news when it was discovered that entrepreneur Myron Louis was murdered in his home.

INT. POLICE LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Sandy is getting changed to go home. The TV plays the news.

ON SCREEN

An helicopter shot of Myron Louis' mansion.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Louis, 63, was known for his philanthropy work, pouring millions of dollars into pediatric research. While police have not released details of the crime, they are calling this a violent homicide of an extremely "disturbing" nature.

BACK TO LOCKER ROOM

Nichelle walks in, pouting. Sandy is unsurprised by this.

SANDY

Don't worry, Travis. Old Yeller's not dead. He's just going to doggie heaven.

NICHELLE

I need you to do something for me.

SANDY

(doesn't look at her) No.

NICHELLE

You're going to go down to the Hialeah Housing Development and tell me what's inside there.

SANDY

You're buying a place and you want me to check out the plumbing. Good. You're settling down.

NICHELLE

You're going to tell me what Ron Greenspan and Angela Siegel are hiding.

SANDY

I don't run errands that go way above my pay grade.

He starts walking out of the room.

NICHELLE

You have to. Cause Alvarez already told me to back off and the Siegel case was closed.

Sandy jumps back around.

SANDY

You didn't tell him about Matthew Cobb?

NICHELLE

No. Don't worry. I won't put a questionable shot next to your name. Nothing that would ever get in the way of you making Captain.

Sandy shakes his head. A low blow.

SANDY

Yeah, I got ambitions. Most people do. Doesn't make me wrong about this. Some bows are best left untied.

NICHELLE

You always settle for good enough.

Ouch.

SANDY

Is that what this is about?

NICHELLE

No. But, God forbid you ever do something that would make you unpopular for more than six minutes.

SANDY

Alright. I'll look. But when it comes up empty, you leave it alone.

EXT. HIALEAH HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

Sandy drives through the housing project. It's shabby, low-rent.

He looks at his iPhone to check the address. 148 Albany Avenue. He sees an in-construction apartment complex in the distance.

A YOUNG HAITIAN TEEN walks in front of his car. Pulls out a pistol. Walks around to the driver's side window.

He batters the window with his gun. Sandy presses the button to roll it down.

YOUNG HAITIAN TEEN
Yo, we charge a toll fee if you
ride in this neighborhood.

In his hands, he's clearly holding his badge and his gun.

SANDY
What sort of toll would that be?

YOUNG HAITIAN TEEN
Ay Officer, I didn't mean nothing
by that.

SANDY
I'm sure you didn't. You know what
happens in that development up
there?

YOUNG HAITIAN TEEN
Nah. No one live in there. It's
empty.

Sandy's confused for a second. Then he drives on.

INT. HIALEAH HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

Sandy walks in. It's highly unfinished and almost pitch black. He's confused.

No lights to turn on. So he turns on his flashlight.

There's unmarked construction, open wiring, doors without locks. One of the units looks more lived-in than the others. He heads down there.

EXT. HIALEAH HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

The young teen we saw earlier makes a call on a PAYPHONE.

YOUNG HAITIAN TEEN
Yo. 5-0. Went into the project.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT - NIGHT

Sandy goes inside the unit. There's nothing but garbage all over the floor. Worker's trash, newspapers, tools.

He walks across the floor. It feels light to him. He taps it with his toe. Starts searching for a crack in the floorboard.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT (ISAIAH) - NIGHT

Isaiah is watching television in a dilapidated unit. He's squatting. He HEARS footsteps below him.

He turns off the TV. Hears more footsteps. Readies his shotgun. Walks out of the unit.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT - NIGHT

Sandy digs under a crack in the floorboard.

He finds bales and bales of packaged heroin. Takes a photo of it on his iPhone.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT

A THUG with a pistol walks into the unit, guns ready. They tiptoe towards the light of Sandy's iPhone.

BAM! BAM! He's shot in the back by Isaiah.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT - NIGHT

Sandy hears the gunshots. Readies his gun. Stands tall.

He holds his position for a second or two, inhaling, slowly.

He walks out towards the empty hallway, gun ready.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT

There's no one there.

He sees a pool of blood at the end of the hallway. He walks towards it.

There's nothing there but more blood. He HEARS a television.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A PHONE receives the text:

"Cop at Hialeah. Looking around."

A pair of hands starts typing back.

INT./EXT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT

A PAIR OF THUGS are sitting in a car near the housing project. They receive a text.

"Make it look gang-related."

He drives next to Sandy's car. He opens his gas tank and puts a siphon in there.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sandy marches down the hallway, looking for something.

He has his gun ready....he goes into the unit.

INT. APARTMENT UNIT - NIGHT

It's empty. There's no one in there. Except the TV is on. Sandy thinks he must be paranoid. He leaves.

INT. SANDY'S CAR - NIGHT

Sandy drives away from the complex. The dashboard indicates he's extremely low on gas.

There's a SHELL station in bright lights two blocks away.

EXT. SHELL STATION - NIGHT

Sandy fills his car up with gas, biding his time.

A THUG sees him filling the car up. He walks into the main station.

Sandy sees a handwritten note on the gas machine:

PLEASE PAY INSIDE

INT. SHELL STATION - NIGHT

The thug stands by the soft drinks, minding his own business.

He sees Sandy walk in and approach the CASHIER. He pulls out a gun and a balaklava. He starts slowly walking backwards towards Sandy, using the reflection of the glass as a mirror.

A FAT THUG in a baklava with a shotgun bursts into the gas station. He points his shotgun in the CASHIER's face.

FAT THUG
This is a holdup!

Sandy reaches for his--

The Thug pops him with a shot in the back of his head.

Sandy collapses. DOA. The cashier SHRIEKS.

FAT THUG (CONT'D)
Get the money! We're fucking
serious!

As the cashier panics, the thug calmly bends down and picks up Sandy's keys and phone. He nods at the fat thug.

FAT THUG (CONT'D)
Fuck it!

The fat thug shoots open a window. It SHATTERS

The fat thug and skinny thug run out of the gas station.

EXT. SHELL STATION - NIGHT

They run into Sandy's car and speed off into the barren night.

SIRENS ring in the background.

The cashier looks out the window after them, shellshocked.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Sandy's car rolls into a nearly empty parking lot. It stops.

The fat and skinny thug run out of it. They jump into a different car. They drive off.

INT. EXPENSIVE RESTAURANT

A text is received: ALL DONE.

We look at the person receiving the text. It's Angela.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

A Miami Police Detective was killed today after trying to prevent a robbery at a gas station.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Sandy's funeral. Packed full of Cops, Politicians, crying relatives. Very statesman-like.

Guns are fired, in formal fashion. Juliet is comforted by policeman after policeman. Tears stream out of her.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Detective Sandy Tate was 43 years old, and was a highly decorated officer, recently being awarded the State-wide medal of honor. Detective Tate leaves behind a fiance, Juliet Litman.

Nichelle hides in the back of the crowd with a lip-biting frown. As Juliet is presented with an American flag, she quietly shuffles away from the scene, not letting herself cry.

INT. NICHELLE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's sparse and cheap. A poster of the original SHAFT is what counts for art.

She sits in the dark, but for her laptop. And the TV.

CLOSE ON TV

She's watching the news report that covers the Sandy's murder. She changes the channel--

Harvey Siegel appears in a fifteen-year-old infomercial. He's younger, tan and oily, in an expensive double breasted suit.

HARVEY

And I don't just want you to be rich! I want you to be wealthy!

Gobs of cash, cars, and girls, imbue the screen behind him. It's bad late 90s "CGI" Stuff.

HARVEY (CONT'D)

What I want to teach you is not just how to make money, but where money actually comes from! And once you unlock my five secrets of cash creation--

Harvey is positively Trumpy. Sleazy, but seems earnest and charismatic. It's obvious why he's gotten a reputation.

CUT TO:

INT. MSNBC STUDIO - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

An anchor (say, CHRIS HAYES), and a PANELIST laugh over the infomercial that's just been shown.

CHRIS HAYES

It's cheesy, it's outlandish, but it works. In the month since Harvey Siegel's murder, sales of his "Money Magic" system are up five hundred percent. They're playing the infomercial day and night.

BACK TO NICHELLE'S APARTMENT

Nichelle takes a drink from a 2L jug of Diet Coke. No glass.

PANELIST (O.S.)

Oh, I know. My son won't stop singing the jingle.

Nichelle watches the show curiously. Like it's important.

BACK TO TV (MSNBC STUDIO)

CHRIS HAYES

So, what's going on here? Is a hate crime the best kind of publicity?

PANELIST

You know, Chris, I think it's nostalgia.

(MORE)

PANELIST (CONT'D)

Harvey Siegel is a product of a time when the system was open to everyone--who was a white man, of course--and the economy wasn't just for the 1%.

BACK TO NICHELLE

Nichelle looks like she's just had an epiphany.

PANELIST (CONT'D)

These images, of cash everywhere, of credit being widely available to everyone, harken back to a thriving American economy everyone could participate in.

INT. MIAMI CRIME PROPERTY ARCHIVES- DAY

Nichelle waits at the desk of a dusty crime archive with baited breath. An ARCHIVIST (50, without human contact) brings out a bunch of bags.

ARCHIVIST

This is what we got back there.

NICHELLE

Has anyone looked at them yet?

She opens the bags.

ARCHIVIST

They were tested for fingerprints.

Nichelle digs through the cash with gloves on.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

(annoyed) There weren't any.

Nichelle picks up one of the bills and studies it.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

It's fifty-six thousand, two hundred and fifty nine dollars. Not worth losing your job over.

FORENSIC SCIENTIST (PRE-LAP)

It's a standard bill. They all are.

INT. MIAMI FORENSIC LAB - DAY

Nichelle stands with a FORENSIC SCIENTIST in the high-tech Miami Crime Lab. He's examined the bill under a computerized microscope--a SCREENSHOT is visible.

FORENSIC SCIENTIST

No trace of blood or drugs; no markings from previous police possession or kidnapping. It's about as boring as money can get.

NICHELLE

You have no idea where they might have come from?

FORENSIC SCIENTIST

The bank, I'd assume. Probably one of the smaller, local ones.

NICHELLE

How do you know that?

FORENSIC SCIENTIST

Well, it's a random assortment of clean bills, but the print batch they all date back to is from 1972.

NICHELLE

So the bills have been sitting around for forty years?

FORENSIC SCIENTIST

Banks are forced to keep a certain amount of cash on hand to comply with federal liquidity regulations, but only a small, non-national bank would have kept this kind of cash on hand without any turnover.

NICHELLE

So someone might have stolen this from a small bank?

FORENSIC SCIENTIST

You ever been to a local bank? It's Golf Digests and Werther's Originals.

NICHELLE

All the more reason to do it.

INT. RODRIGO'S BAR - DAY

Nichelle walks into a non-descript sports bar. Half-full of UNEMPLOYED DRUNKS.

The BARTENDER (50), buck teethed, walks over to Nichelle. She looks out of place, sidled up between two 300-lb MEN.

BARTENDER
What can I do you for, miss?

NICHELLE
Jameson. No ice.
(then)
And two maraschino cherries.

The Bartender gives her a knowing look.

BARTENDER
Maraschino cherries all the way in
the back.

NICHELLE
I'll wait.

The bartender leans in, real close.

BARTENDER
Maybe you should go through the
back and get 'em yourself.

INT. BACK ENTRANCE OF RODRIGO'S BAR - DAY

We see Nichelle just pop in through the back door of the bar (through the parking lot).

She cuts through the kitchen, and pulls open a storage door.

Inside is the cramped room sits: JULIO (32), piercings, lithe, tattoo-ed reading THE ATLANTIC.

He's startled, readying to grab his waistband gun--

JULIO
The fuck you---

Nichelle smiles.

JULIO (CONT'D)
Girl you could

NICHELLE
How's the leg, Julio?

He pulls up his jeans. Right leg is shiny and stainless-steel. Like Oscar Pistorius.

JULIO
(singing like Alicia Keys)
Unbreakable.

NICHELLE
Some benefits to getting kicked out
the VA, huh? No more waiting in
line.

JULIO
You can say that. What brings you
out here?

NICHELLE
I need to find the Grek.

Near-laughter on Julio's face.

JULIO
Girl, you got a better chance of
finding

NICHELLE
This ain't just small fry bullshit.
I need to track down some money.
From the 1970s. When he was on the
force.

JULIO
I don't know where he is. I know
how you could find him. Maybe.

A quick flash of an excited look in Nichelle's eyes.

JULIO (CONT'D)
But it's gonna cost you. A favor
for a favor.

A smile on Julio's face. His legs slide open. Nichelle leans
in a bit closer, with a sinner's grin.

NICHELLE
If you think I'm the kind of woman
who trades favors for information,
you are severely underestimating my
abilities as a detective, and
overestimating my abilities to keep
my teeth away from my work.

JULIO
Alright.

INT. NICHELLE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ON SCREEN

Nichelle is lurking on YouTube. Watching an old episode of Jeopardy. She scrolls through the comments.

JULIO (V.O.)

Nobody knows where to find the Grek. Motherfucker went AWOL after Iran Contra. Took his guns and his gold and disappeared.

She sees an absurdly long comment, and clicks the USERNAME--

Which leads to a comment with a LINK--

JULIO (V.O.)

Now he's just hiding out there on some corner of the internet. Ranting and raving.

To an ONLINE JEOPARDY FORUM--

She finds the subheading "OLD GAME TAPES"

Nichelle starts typing:

Looking for VHS copies of old games from 8/9/92, 8/9/94...

JULIO (V.O.)

But one thing that old man loved-- Jeopardy.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Nichelle picks up a package from a near-empty Florida Post Office.

CLOSE ON PACKAGE:

JOHN CONVERSE

812 Fortieth Street

North Miami Beach

EXT. THE GREK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nichelle walks down the hallway of the vintage North Miami Beach apartment building. It's not a day past 1962 inside.

She checks the return address on her package and then KNOCKS on 5F.

THE GREK (O.S.)
Just a minute!

Nichelle, looks down, biding her time for a second. Then:

Frank "THE GREK" Grek (63), ZZ Top beard, 300 lbs of former IDF soldier, his ursine coat of body hair visible through his untied authentic Japanese kimono, appears.

He points a rifle between Nichelle's eyes.

THE GREK (CONT'D)
The fuck do you want?

Nichelle couldn't be less frazzled. Doesn't even move.

NICHELLE
I'm from the Miami homicide department. I'd like to ask you a few questions.

The Grek ponders this for a second.

THE GREK
I typically warrant a 72 hour window for all information requests.

NICHELLE
I'm looking into the murder of Harvey Siegel.

THE GREK
He was killed by a white supremacist. Check your local news for more details.

NICHELLE
I'm the cop who shot the skinhead.

THE GREK
(thinks for a second) You may enter.

An ELDERLY JEWISH WOMAN (80), opens the door across the hall. She sees the shotgun.

ELDERLY JEWISH WOMAN
Francis, put that thing away. You're going to give yourself high blood pressure. Sharon appreciated the Baklava recipe, by the way.

THE GREK
Always happy to be of service, Ms.
Teitelbaum!

INT. THE GREK'S APARTMENT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Grek walks in to see Nichelle in awe. It's a sty.

Philosophical manuscripts everywhere, wall-to-wall VHSes, a humidor full of Cuban cigars, and most conspicuously, a series of paintings that look like self-portraits.

NICHELLE
You paint yourself?

The Grek is livid.

THE GREK
That is tenor saxophone great Sonny
Rollins.

It doesn't look anything like Sonny Rollins.

THE GREK (CONT'D)
Your complete lack of recognition
of a modern jazz legend suggests
that this country's foundation of
cultural prominence is legitimately
fucking doomed.

NICHELLE
So where you been hiding all these
years?

THE GREK
I'm not hiding. I am in withdrawal
from all forms of centralized law
enforcement and surveillance.

NICHELLE
You one of those Snowden types?

THE GREK
Fuck that press-seeking traitorous
spineless amoeba!

NICHELLE
Seems to have the same concerns you
do.

THE GREK

Yeah, well when you hate 96% of the world, your enemy's enemy is still your fucking enemy.

NICHELLE

So who's the other 4%?

THE GREK

17 years in the CIA proved to me that all forces--political, economic, and cultural--attempting to imbue order and motive on American civilization are, to put it politely, completely full of shit. And hence I arrive at the only logical political disposition: I am a Marxist libertarian.

NICHELLE

Isn't that an oxymoron?

THE GREK

I believe that all human beings should be endowed with an equal quantity of material goods, and, at that point, should be left the fuck alone. People are savage animals: fun to gawk at, and completely impervious to all forms of morality. Why the government does not treat us like zoo lions beats the fuck out of me.

They sit down.

NICHELLE

So who killed Harvey Siegel?

THE GREK

The capitalist order. The endless litany of proto-moral demands that present themselves as rebellious.

NICHELLE

You got a name for that guy?

THE GREK

Harvey Siegel got what he deserved. As did Myron Louis.

NICHELLE

The billionaire in Fort Lauderdale?

THE GREK

They together received what's commonly known as karma kicking their ass. The human source of their misfortunes, however, completely escapes me.

NICHELLE

What'd they do?

The Grek leans back in his chair. This disturbs him.

THE GREK

There was a time, Detective, when this country was undergoing a crisis of confidence. Before you were born; before Ronald Reagan was named Chairman of the fucking Board in all areas moral and ethical.

EXT. HAIGHT ASHBURY - DAY - 1970 (FLASHBACK)

People enjoy the scene. THREE YOUNG MEN stand together, watching the peace and prosperity with a cautious eye.

THE GREK (V.O.)

And for a few years, it was good. People were nicer; they only utilized the sunny parts of the human soul. And then, after one too many Woody Guthrie songs, the money went home.

EXT. FLORIDA CAMPGROUND - DAY - 1972 (FLASHBACK)

A tribe of YOUNG WOMEN set up camp, play guitars, make fires.

THE GREK (V.O.)

All successful revolutions of consciousness require the upper-class to enlist and enrage the lower-class. The French. The Cuban. still see it sometimes, the crumbs. Pro Bono representation. Millionaires who drive, whatever the fuck, Volvos with Greenpeace bumper stickers. But not everyone was a rich kid with a conscience. Not everyone had an Amherst to run back to. Some people genuinely needed change.

(MORE)

THE GREK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 And when the party was over, they
 had nowhere left to go.

What appear to be CULT LEADERS--in robes and masks--lead the
 group in tribal prayer.

THE GREK (V.O.)
 The men turned to crime. Drugs
 maybe. But the women needed a
 community. Support. They wanted
 something to believe in.

The few men and many women engage in a kind of orgy.

THE GREK (V.O.)
 They called themselves the
 Unhappening, after the line from
 One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest.
 "But it's the truth, even if it
 didn't happen." Their stated goal
 was the complete obliteration of
 the capitalist order. Starting with
 the very existence of money.

INT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK - DAY - 1972

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (22), like a young Joni Mitchell walks into
 a crowded bank.

She reads aloud from a file card. Barely anyone looks up.

THE GREK (V.O.)
 One by one, they'd drive to a bank,
 and a beautiful girl, maybe 20, 21
 years old, would walk in, read a
 short political statement. Then
 she'd douse herself in gasolin and
 light herself on fire in front of
 everyone. Like a Buddhist Monk.

She pours a tub of gasoline over herself, gentle and supple.
 PEOPLE start to panic. Then, she lights herself on fire.

Crowds scurry and yelp. She's a human baked alaska, bright,
 beautiful, sweltering. Flames shimmy. She's dead in seconds.

THE GREK (V.O.)
 She was always alone. She never
 wanted anything. She just barbecued
 herself, as a form of protest.

INT. KISSIMMEE LOCAL BANK - DAY - 1973 (FLASHBACK)

A different bank. A different girl--brunette, zaftig. A statement, a gasoline shower, and then she's aflame. It's almost ritualistic at this point.

THE GREK (V.O.)

After the third or fourth time this happened, someone got the bright idea to check the bank's depository the next day. Lo and behold, a million dollars in cash was missing.

INT. TALLAHASSEE LOCAL BANK - DAY - 1973 (FLASHBACK)

EMPLOYEES burst out of the back of the bank, in sheer panic.

THREE MEN in masks, in identical plaid shirts, run into the back in the chaos.

They start stockpiling cash into a series of duffel bags. They're efficient and practiced, moving without the slightest hint of nervousness or carelessness.

THE GREK (V.O.)

It kept happening, up and down the coast of Florida. Kissimmee. Fort Lauderdale. Tallahassee. Jacksonville. 32 girls dead. 43 million dollars gone.

We see a WOMAN AFLAME running towards the back. She sees them. One of the men shuts the door, leaving her locked in.

INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT - 1973 (FLASHBACK)

An empty strip club. A WOMAN works the pole. She looks miserable. When she's done dancing, a CUSTOMER follows her backstage.

EXT. BATTERED WOMEN'S SHELTER - NIGHT - 1973 (FLASHBACK)

A crying WOMAN, littered with bruises, wanders down the street. She starts talking to a MAN, hidden in the shadows.

THE GREK (V.O.)

They knew where to find the right girls, from all across the country. Prostitutes. Addicts. Battered Wives. Native Americans trying to escap from a reserve.

(MORE)

THE GREK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Anyone vulnerable and disturbed,
 they sucked them up like a Venus
 flytrap.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY - 1974 (FLASHBACK)

A GIRL and THREE MEN are eating in an empty diner in rural Florida.

Across the restaurant, an OLDER WOMAN recognizes the girl. She runs over, excited. The girl doesn't know how to react.

After a few moments of beleaguered interaction, the older woman starts to panic and run.

INT. VAN - DAY - 1974 (FLASHBACK)

One of the Men strangles the girl in the back of a van while the other two men lookout.

INT. CENTRAL MIAMI BANK - DAY - 1976 (FLASHBACK)

A bunch of undercover cops wait in the bank, staring at the clock.

EXT. CENTRAL MIAMI BANK - DAY - 1976 (FLASHBACK)

The man dumps her in an alley. The van drives away.

THE GREK (V.O.)
 One day, a girl, she sees her
 sister in a diner. Before they're
 about to do a big heist. Central
 Miami bank. Sister gets the wrong
 vibe from the deal, says she's
 gonna call the cops. They get to
 the job--sense two and two ain't
 gonna make four. They call it off.
 Strangle her to death in the car.
 But what about the girls left at
 the commune?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT - 1975 (FLASHBACK)

A giant party. 20 GIRLS, dancing, and doing enough coke to make Tony Montana feel like a mere small-business owner.

INT. FURNACE ROOM - NIGHT - 1977 (FLASHBACK)

A man turns on a generator. We see the chord running.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT - 1977 (FLASHBACK)

One by one, the girls start passing out. They try to run for the doors, but they're locked.

THE GREK (V.O.)

They talk the girls into one last job. A mass disruption of the International Banking Conference in Miami. Bring the girls to town over the weekend. Have them stay overnight in one of the office buildings. Get em high on coke. Turn on a poisoned generator. Eighteen dead of Carbon Monoxide poisoning that night.

LATER--

A WORKER comes in. Sees the 20 girls lying there, dead.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT - 1977 (FLASHBACK)

The women are lined up next to each other, anonymously, like bodies in a morgue.

A DETECTIVE looks over the entire scene. He's so shocked he barfs in a nearby wastebasket.

The GREK--just as hairy, but 100 lbs lighter, with a thick beard, stands over the bodies, completely speechless.

BACK TO THE GREK'S APARTMENT

Nichelle is horrified. The Grek is near-catatonic, barely able to process the very story he's telling.

THE GREK

Fifty-two women died. Many of their families were never notified--no one cared enough about them to figure out who they actually were. They were just..lost to history.

NICHELLE

The case was never solved.

THE GREK

The late 1970s was a time of deep desperation in American life. The concerns about overpopulation and a lack of steroid-era growth dwarfed our concerns about making sure a bunch of women weren't treated like sacrificial fucking lambs.

NICHELLE

What about the money?

THE GREK

Florida has always been a carnival of international criminals seeking refuge, drug cartels building turf, and corrupt politicians laundering money. Any mass murderer with a million dollars in cash was welcomed to the party.

NICHELLE

And you think Harvey Siegel was one of the men?

THE GREK

Every great American fortune is built on a great crime.

EXT. HIALEAH HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Plop. Glip. Splash. Nichelle walks through the constructed housing project in ankle-deep water, which permeates the entire facility. She's with a BUILDING SUPERVISOR.

NICHELLE

It always like this?

BUILDING SUPERVISOR

What?

Splish. Nichelle stomps her foot to indicate the water.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

Oh. Yeah. Full moon brings up the tide. Nothing you can do about that.

NICHELLE

Ain't there some kind of wall you can build around that?

The building supervisor lowers himself in a squat.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 Most of Florida lies on limestone,
 you see. Build a whole state on
 what used to be swampland, and this
 is what you end up with.

Nichelle looks at the ground. It looks stable enough.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
 Thing of it is, the limestone holds
 water. From the outside, it looks
 like rock, but from the inside,
 it's all swiss cheese.

NICHELLE
 What does that matter?

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 It doesn't really. Except for when
 the water gets high--like today.
 But that's only happening once or
 twice a year.

He leads her into the apartment complex.

INT. HIALEAH HOUSING PROJECT - DAY - CONTINUOUS

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 What'd you say your name was?

NICHELLE
 Angela.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 You some kind of aid worker or
 something?

NICHELLE
 Nurse.

The building supervisor smiles.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 I got real respect for that. A
 black woman who knows how to take
 care of herself.

Even undercover, Nichelle rolls her eye a touch.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
 See unlike most developments, we
 won't put you up in some kind of
 tiny high-rise.

They go into a vast ground floor unit. It's like a bungalow in progress. Wide and spacious.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
 We'll give you an entire floor unit
 all to yourself. A whole space for
 you to make your own.

NICHELLE
 Is that allowed for someone of my
 income level? Seems kind of
 luxurious.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR
 Allowed? This is America.

He puts his hand on her shoulder, smiling.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
 What good is a home if you don't
 have the freedom to make it your
 own?

He walks her out as Nichelle looks around suspiciously.

BUILDING SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)
 Now let me show you where the rec
 room is going to be.

INT. FLORIDA REFERENCE LIBRARY - DAY

Nichelle works at a laptop computer, alongside a massive stack of filed papers.

ON SCREEN

A Newspaper headline from the mid 2000s. It reads:

SIEGELS ANNOUNCE \$200 HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN LIBERTY SQUARE

There's a picture of Angela smiling and a quote from her.

"This is an opportunity for the less fortunate to have their part of the American dream."

BACK TO NICHELLE

She opens a corresponding blueprint for Liberty Square.

She sees it's a series of flatland condominium style homes.

The buildings are flat and low to the ground.

ON SCREEN

She punches in the address into the computer, into some sort of WEATHER SIMULATION PROGRAM.

RISK OF FLOOD: 4%

BACK TO NICHELLE

She's confused. She squints--as if it can't be right.

BACK TO SCREEN

She types in the year: 2021.

And the water level: 600 L/acre

The computer spits out the RISK OF FLOOD: 64%.

BACK TO NICHELLE

She's horrified.