

EVERGLADES - DAY

Hoffman and Palmer stand over the sprawled, naked body of a young woman. Her head is missing, a gator's head sewn in its place. The head gives the two men an eerie, jagged smile. Palmer's eyes are wide. Hoffman simply stares, occasionally blinking. Our hero, Jesse, overhears several conversations as he arrives at the scene.

HOFFMAN: Christ almighty. You ever seen a body staged like this?

PALMER: Not in ten years on the force, Sheriff.

HOFFMAN: How in the hell did he get the head stitched on?

PALMER: Dunno. Maybe we should talk to a taxidermist. Or a tailor.

HOFFMAN: Let's keep it on the down low for the time being. It's been decades since we've had a case like this.

HOFFMAN: Last thing we need is to make people think there's a serial killer running around.

PALMER: Are you sure? I'm not saying we should cause a panic, but the public should know.

HOFFMAN: This is a college town, Parker. Half the people here are students. They're soft.

HOFFMAN: Ask them what's the worst crime they've ever seen in their neighborhood...

HOFFMAN: And they'll tell you about the time a meth-head wandered into their family's backyard and tore up their mama's hydrangeas.

HOFFMAN: Tell 'em there's a killer on the loose, and kids will start pulling out of classes.

PALMER: But what if we're missing out on leads?

PALMER: And shouldn't we call the FBI? This is a hell of a find.

PALMER: Or maybe Channel 12? Having a press conference, at least, could get people to-

HOFFMAN: To what? Start mailing us pig guts and claiming they're some sort of Alligator Avenger?

HOFFMAN: When I say we ain't gonna have any publicity, I mean it. And I don't kindly to having my orders questioned by anyone.

HOFFMAN: Am I being clear enough for you?

PALMER: Crystal, Sir.

HOFFMAN: Good. I ain't keen on dealing with any more jackasses than I need to.

HOFFMAN: Speaking of.

SHANNON walks over, a tablet clutched in her hands.

SHANNON: Excuse me.

Hoffman ignores her.

SHANNON: Excuse me, Sheriff? Could I ask you to take a look at my screen real quick?

SHANNON: I pulled up the sex offender registry, and some of them--

HOFFMAN: Shannon, are you really asking the sheriff of this whole goddamn county to take a look at the sex offender registry?

SHANNON: I was hoping to ask your thoughts on a few potential subjects in the area.

HOFFMAN: Big picture, Shannon. We've got a fresh body and miles of Everglades to comb through.

HOFFMAN: I don't have time for this. You want me to look at something, you type it up and leave it in a report on my desk.

SHANNON: I... yes sir.

Jesse walks up to Hoffman and Palmer.

HOFFMAN: Jesse White? I didn't expect to see you here.

JESSE: Yes, sir. I'm looking forward to being Officer White starting tomorrow.

HOFFMAN: Yeah. I had us scheduled to finalize the paperwork today when this mess happened. I should have called.

JESSE: I understand, sir.

HOFFMAN: So what are you doing here, son? I hope you're not trying to be an overachiever.

***PLAYER CHOICE:**

- A. Be humble.
- B. Be arrogant.

DIALOGUE FOR OPTION A

JESSE: It was happenstance, sir.

JESSE: I was driving home when I saw the sirens. I thought you could use an extra hand.

HOFFMAN: I appreciate it, son. But until you finish your paperwork, only uniformed officers can cross the yellow tape.

JESSE: I understand, sir.

End of Option A.

DIALOGUE FOR OPTION B

JESSE: Nothing wrong with that.

JESSE: Back in the marines, everyone had to pull their weight. So when I saw sirens, I headed straight over.

JESSE: I figured you could use some help.

HOFFMAN: I hope the military taught you something about the chain of command too.

HOFFMAN: Until tomorrow, you're still a civilian. We can't have just anyone trampling over our scene.

End of Option B.

ALL DIALOGUE CONVERGES HERE:

HOFFMAN: Tell you what. You stop by my office first thing tomorrow, and we'll put you on duty. Guaranteed.

JESSE: Thank you, sir. I'm looking forward to starting with the force.

HOFFMAN: Glad to hear it. From what your superiors told me, you were a damn fine MP back in the army.

JESSE: I did all right, sir.

HOFFMAN: Well, if that's anything to judge by, I'll have a capable man on my force.

JESSE: Thank you, sir.

HOFFMAN: So what have you been up to since I offered you the job? Been out celebrating with your girl?

JESSE: Not yet. We haven't seen each other as much as I'd like since getting back.

JESSE: But I'm hoping she'll jump right out of her seat when I tell her I got the job. It's gonna make a big difference for both of us.

Jesse steals a glance at the body.

JESSE: Clearly, there's no shortage of work.

HOFFMAN: You're right about that. It's hard work, but I bought my first house on an officer's salary-

JESSE: That's what I'm hoping will happen. Right now, I'm still living with my parents.

HOFFMAN: Little cramped for you?

JESSE: Not at the moment. It's just me and my sister, Jennifer, at home.

JESSE: Mom and Dad finally saved up enough for a month-long trip to Europe. They've been wanting to do it since before we came along.

Curtis walks up.

CURTIS: Hey! How's it going, Jesse?

JESSE: Curtis! I should have guessed they'd ask the best damn cop in the whole of Florida to take a look at this crime scene.

CURTIS: Yeah. I'm happy to help out, but seeing that poor girl in that state wasn't how I wanted to start off my morning.

HOFFMAN: No, but we need you to take a good hard look. See if you notice anything out of place.

JESSE: If there's something there, Curtis will find it.

An older woman suddenly rushes over to the scene. She is frazzled and frantic, trying to push past the caution tape and surrounding officers.

NADINE: Victoria? Victoria! Please, I have to see my daughter!

The woman catches sight of the body and gasps.

NADINE: I... I just saw her. How could this happen?

NADINE: She... she...

Curtis rushes to catch Nadine before she collapses.

HOFFMAN: Aw shit. Curtis, let's get her out of the sun.

CURTIS: Right away, sir.

As Hoffman walks away with Curtis, he stumbles over a laminated card near the body. He grimaces at the sight of it, but quickly regains face, turning his attention to Palmer.

HOFFMAN: Parker!

PALMER: Sir?

HOFFMAN: See Jesse out, will you?

As Palmer leads Jesse away, he stares outright at the body.

PALMER: You know what this is, right?

JESSE: A serial killer, if the staging of the body is anything to judge by.

PALMER: You bet your ass it is, rookie. We struck oil!

PALMER: Let me tell you, White. Cops who bring in murders like this? They can work anywhere they like in the whole goddamn country.

PALMER: Sergeant, lieutenant, chief... there's no ranks they can't climb.

PALMER: And this shit is plain beautiful.

JESSE: We might have some different definitions of that.

PALMER: If you can't stomach it, you might need another career.

Jesse and Palmer's conversation is interrupted by Shannon approaching.

SHANNON: Palmer, shut up and take a walk with me.

SHANNON: And bring that camera. I wanna see something up close.

Jesse looks at the body.

***PLAYER CHOICE:**

A. Sneak in after them.

B. Leave.

DIALOGUE FOR OPTION A

Jesse steps closer to the body.

TECHNICIAN: You're the new rookie, right? Go ahead and take a look.

JESSE: (to himself) Well, that was easy.

***PLAYER CHOICE:**

A. Examine her head.

B. Examine her arms.

C. Examine the area around her.

Dialogue for Sub-option A

JESSE: She's missing her head. That's a feat of strength. Jesus.

JESSE: Why would he do this? How much time would he have needed to take off her head and sew on a gator's?

JESSE: This can't have been the original crime scene. Just a dumping ground.

End of Option A.

Dialogue for Sub-option B

JESSE: No bite marks. Damn, that would have been useful.

JESSE: But there's ligature marks and some bruising. Looks like she fought back hard enough that he needed to tie her down.

JESSE: No visible clues about who the UNSUB is. Let's hope fingerprints show up in the analysis.

End of Option B.

Dialogue for Sub-option C

JESSE: No blood around. No tracks either. The UNSUB planned this out.

JESSE: Wait, what's that?

Jesse looks closer at a copy of a driver's license.

JESSE: Victoria.

JESSE: You'd think the sheriff would be happy to find this. This and her mother's appearance will save us hours of research.

JESSE: I'm just sorry she had to see her daughter like this.

End of Option C.

SEARCH OPTIONS CONVERGE HERE:

JESSE: Let's put this all together.

JESSE: The suspect clearly planned this. That shows cunning and organization.

Jesse looks at the gator head.

JESSE: But this kind of mutilation looks like a disorganized killer. Sloppy and unhinged.

Jesse glances around.

JESSE: If he's both organized and disorganized in his methods, my teachers back at the academy would say he's probably going through a psychological transformation.

Jesse focuses on the 'Change Me' message.

JESSE: Seems like he knows it, too.

DIALOGUE FOR OPTION B:

JESSE: I shouldn't interfere.

JESSE: I'll see the sheriff tomorrow.

End of Option B.

ALL OPTIONS CONVERGE HERE:

Jesse hears Shannon and Palmer's voices as they draw near.

JESSE: I should get out of here.

Jesse steps over the nearby caution tape and exits the crime scene.

END SCENE