

Intro:

For this Essay, I decided on two re-writes of the story "Money" by *Junot Diaz*. In one version, It will be from the point of view of the daughter of a rich CEO who has very valuable tech blueprints stolen from her mother by an enemy. The characters will be the CEO (replacing the father), her daughter (replacing Junot), her wife (in place of the mother and she has no siblings), and the two thieves. We saw how much of an impact that stolen money had on the family considering their financial situation. What about a rich person? Can a robbery impact them in the same way? In the second version of the story, all the characters remain the same and the details of the story remain the same except it's from the point of view of the thieves. If they have everything they could desire, why do they have the need to steal? How did they know that there was money to be stolen in the first place? Read along and we can discover the answers to these questions together through the use of imagination. (*Insert SpongeBob "imagination" meme here*)

The Machine

I don't know many people who have accomplished as much as my mother has in the past five years. She has created incredible technology that saves peoples lives. Yes, many others have done this too, but not as effectively as my mother. Her inspiration came from my father. He was in an accident, with his business partner's son, involving an explosion that resulted in inflammation of his spinal cord, leading to paralysis. This could have been avoided if the doctor had paid more attention but nevertheless, my mother made it her mission to make him walk again. She knew she couldn't let the mistake of that child cause a lifetime of pain and misery for her husband. Especially, after seeing what dad's business partner's wife went through as a paraplegic. Of course, she failed at first, she felt like her medical expertise meant nothing. But it was that and her out of the box thinking that got her where she is. Years of trial and error until finally, a couple of months ago, she had a major breakthrough. She had finally created an implantable chip that restores the signals in the nerves that would allow Dad to walk. All the scientific trials had been successful and it was time to try it on Dad! Of course, the chip she used in her studies was small enough to work on a mouse, but it would have to be modified for a human the size of my father. She had her blueprints locked in the safe at home, under our protection. Everyone, including the new maids, knew not to go into that room. Even if they wanted to, they couldn't go in without my mom's keycard to open the door.

Why am I telling you this you ask? Because. The moment we decided to take a family vacation together, before my dad's risky surgery, everything changed. We had planned a 10-day trip to celebrate everything we had gone through the past five years, and the future we will have if the surgery is a success. Mom left her instructions with the house sitters before we were to leave to make sure everything was protected, aka the blueprints. We flew to Bora Bora where we promised each other that we will repeat this 10-day trip after my father's surgery, the difference... he'll finally be able to feel the sand between his toes, walk the beaches with us, and swim in that crystal clear water together. It was one for the books! We savored every minute as if it was our last! We finally made it back home, its protectors gone. I distinctly remember the

anguished scream that escaped from my mother's throat when she noticed the heavily armed door...left open. I knew exactly what I had to do.

Let's go back a little in time to when we hired the new maids that I mentioned earlier. There I was, 25 years old, helping my mom with the interview process. I had a feeling that we shouldn't trust these two, but Mom thought they were perfect. I tried to convince her their resume sounded too perfect and I couldn't shake the feeling that I've seen them somewhere before. I knew I had to take steps that my mother didn't think necessary, and I invested in a stealthy security system that was aimed at the front door, my office, and most importantly my mother's forbidden office. After all, that's where my father's ability to walk was hidden. Come their first day, my mother gave them the instructions she gives everyone...her office is off-limits unless she is in there too. It was her life's work, and precious it is.

Fast-forward to the day we leave for our trip. Mom told the housesitters, the ones recommended to us by those same two very suspicious maids, what their instructions are. I knew I had to make sure of things myself, I've seen them buzzing around my mom's office, whispering...stopping as soon as they saw one of us walk by. But Mom was consumed by her work...blinded by it. Before we left, I made sure the office door was locked, and that my security cameras were working so when we came back, I knew what needed to be done.

I asked my mother where her keycard was, and sure enough, it wasn't in her bag where she put it. I ran to my office and checked the camera feed and who did I find with my mom's keycard opening the door? The housesitters. The very same ones recommended by the two maids, but that's not all! You'll never believe who they let walk right in through the front door. My dad's ex-business partner. After the accident things were never the same. His son caused the explosion leaving my father in a state similar to his wife's. Our families never got over it, causing a drift. The moment I saw him, I remembered. I had seen those maids at his house back when I was a child and I used to play over there. I used to play with them since they were my age! Then one day, I never saw them again, and anytime I asked he said they had to "go away for a while". Years later, after the accident, when they were hired, I didn't think twice about those little girls I used to play with. I just knew deep down that I knew these grown adults from somewhere. Their faces changed, but still the same. Unrecognizable yet also recognizable. I had to create a plan. I remember where the safe was kept at his house from when I used to play there, and I knew I had to find a way in.

I created a failproof plan. I would go to his house in the means of making amends and sharing this "little fact" that we finally have a cure that may help my father and his wife and that we wanted to share it. I'd gauge his reaction and then proceed. I would make two of my famous tiramisu ahead of time. Only one has a little something extra. I remembered his go-to dessert was tiramisu and I knew I needed a way to mix alcohol with enough Xanax to knock him out without him knowing. Hence, the tiramisu which uses Rum and coffee. I soaked my cake in the Rum, and then added Xanax to his batch, all the while thinking "where the hell do these ideas come from?! I definitely have watched wayyyy too many *Criminal Minds* episodes." Once ready, the plan was that I would cut three pieces of the drug-free cake for myself and take both cakes with me. The drug-free one in the car, ready for a swap before we "wake up". A piece of cake should have him out for about three hours, plenty of time for me to snoop, make a mess, and swap out the cakes for the normal one. And plenty of cake for anyone else that might be there. I

would then also “sleep” so that when he comes to he’d think I was affected by it also, and that he had been robbed.

My plan worked like a charm! He was home alone, his son and wife were at a mother-son retreat for the month which meant no interruptions. I checked his person first, looking in his pockets and of course, he kept them, folded up. I knew it was originals because my mom was smart enough to use paper that comes up blank if someone tried to take a photo, copy, or scan it. I found it quickly giving me enough time to make a mess in his son’s room (so he thinks one of his friends tried something. I knew I wouldn’t have to worry about security cameras because, ironically, he always hated technology. He woke up, found me “asleep” the cake had “fallen out of my hands”, and then he woke me up. I acted like I didn’t know what happened and joked about how alcohol and sugar always makes me sleepy. I then told him I should probably leave and can’t wait until we all meet up again and asked if I could use the restroom first. I then “screamed in horror” at the mess of his son’s room as I was on my way to the bathroom to let him know someone had broken in. Then I told him I’m going to go so that he can deal with it. The drug-free cake in the kitchen in case forensics tests it. And the drugged cake with me.

I returned the plans to my mother and told her everything starting with my suspicions (again), and ending with how I got the plans back. I showed her the footage we have of the maids and my dad’s ex-business partner and told her she can do what she wants with the info I gave her. Of course, she scolded me for drugging him, but I don’t care. I’m just happy we can make my dad walk again.

The Theft

All the Dominicans I knew in those days sent money home. Even our friend, Junot. My brother and I have known him since we were 8 years old. We were twelve years old at this point. One day we were on our way over, and as we passed the window to his parents’ room, we saw a wad of cash in his mom’s hands. It could have easily been \$500! I turned to my brother and asked him to imagine what we could buy with that money. We spent the day there, at his house, and played Dungeons and Dragons while listening to music on the portable radio. We asked Junot where his family was going on vacation this year, they always went on random trips to god knows where. Turns out they were planning to go to Jersey for a couple of days next week! On our way home, my brother told me that this was our chance to get that money. We strike when they’re not home! So we did. We looked everywhere for that money and we finally found it when we accidentally knocked over the lamp. It was hidden in an envelope shoved into the bottom of the base. We grabbed the envelope and ran! On the way out, I told my brother to wait and I went and grabbed the D&D hardcover and the portable radio. My brother looked at me as if asking why and I told him, so we can play on our own. I thought I heard a noise like someone pulling up to the house and yelled at my brother to get out of here. We ran all the way home without stopping!

Junot and his family had just gotten back and we were hanging out at the park when he started telling us about the robbery. We told him how the robbers are losers and were cursing them out until he said the front door was left open. I looked at my brother, eyes wide open, oh shit! We had forgotten to close the door!

There's nothing we can do now, and it's not like he's ever going to find out we did it. Junot asked us if he can use our bathroom real quick so we went by our house since it was closer to the park. On the way back he said he forgot something back home and would just meet us back at the park. While my brother and I were walking, we talked about what we were gonna do with the \$150 we each had in our pockets. We didn't want to spend all the money at once and split \$300 50/50. We decided we'd go to the arcade after we're done hanging with Junot, and that's exactly what we did!

We got home late and pretty exhausted from the arcade, but we had such a blast we wanted to go again the next day. When we checked under the mattress to get the rest of the money, we discovered we had been robbed. It's like those things were cursed to get stolen! And we couldn't tell our parents because they'd ask us where we got them from.

Since we didn't have any money to play at the arcade again, we went to the park where we saw Junot and a bunch of our other friends. We told them about the robbery and how our savings were stolen. Damn robbers.

Conclusion:

In writing these two versions of the story, the first one took more of my time. Even though it's technically based off *The Money*, I still had to re-create all the details of the story. I had to go back a couple of times and adjust things in the scheme of getting the stolen blueprints back. As I was writing, I would think of a new detail that made more sense until I ended up with the results written above! *The Theft* on the other hand was much easier because I had the events of the original to reference. It was like filling in invisible blanks that represented what the friends did. Like a parallel universe almost. What I learned from the story is that you can't always trust your friends and unfortunately, I have learned that first hand over and over and over again. This story just brings that fact back to light. A reminder for if you were ever to fall hard for a new friendship that can just end up hurting you.

Writing in these two styles can have a different effect for each person, that's where interpretation comes into play. Someone may have the idea that they want to write a story about a farmer who gets his herb garden robbed and destroyed, or in my case a rich CEO that ends up with stolen tech blueprints. Someone writing in the style where it's the POV of the two friends may come up with a different series of events as to how they knew of the money, or how they planned on getting it, etc. But what I do know is that everyone will interpret a story differently. For me, the original story led to the above two versions that I wrote, and for others, it'll lead to whatever versions they write. The interpretations we make play off of our interests and what speaks the loudest to us. Generally, they say actions speak louder than words, but in the case of a story, it's the written actions that speak loudly to us.