

So I just watched this movie for the first time last week. Since then I've watched it 3 times very carefully. Having no knowledge of the novel the movie was even more ambiguous for me than it probably was for most of you who have read the novel. For the potential of the film most people seem to be satisfied with 1. It was all in his head (why do people seem to prefer this?) and 2. He really killed them. This didn't quite cut it for me so I set out to create an explanation that would explore the unanswered questions without violating the reality of the film too much. This was more for my own well being but please let me know what you think or even any changes or tweaks that might make it better! This is merely a fan theory and admittedly "out there" but I think it's a fresh take on this exciting story and most importantly a fun one!

#### Presuppositions:

The movie is from Bateman's perspective. Bateman has had multiple identities throughout his life with a breakdown being the catalyst for the transition into a new persona (which coincidentally helps cover up whatever crimes his prior persona commits during their breakdown). Bateman slowly slips into one of these major psychotic episodes and breaks down throughout the movie. The movie gets loopier as he slips further into his psychotic episode. What we see can be less and less trustworthy as the movie goes on...

Other characters strictly refer to Bateman as the persona they met him as. The "Bateman is such a dork" meme is a giveaway that Bateman was so low profile early on in his career that no one really noticed him until he was VP and going as Bateman. (I understand his father is also a Bateman and at the present time in the movie Bateman Jr would have to go as Bateman Jr considering his status at the company, this is fine because he was going as his other personas as a time when he was low profile, I changed to Bateman when he did because he knew he would soon be transferring to his father's company.) His lawyer met him as Davis and Paul met him as Marcus. When people refer to him by past personas he simply reconciles it as their mistake as he pretty much disposes of his personas once he has a new one... although old personas do sneak up on him unwittingly.

When Kimbell questions Marcus it's over the phone or email and he's really speaking to Bateman.

#### The film:

Bateman hops persona to persona everytime he has a breakdown. He moves around the city with each new persona (this is why he never seems to know how close he is to different locations like restaurants) and runs into the wrong building near the end. He is initially Davis. When that persona breaks down and kills his gf Bethany he starts over as Marcus. When Marcus breaks down and ATTEMPTS to kill his girlfriend Cecilia he starts over as Bateman (more on that later). These murders are part of breakdowns that include the murders of homeless people and prostitutes as well. The movie picks up shortly after his transition to Bateman. People refer to Bateman as the name he used when he met them. (Not many people knew him until he was CEO and going as Bateman thus most people referring to him as Bateman.) The reason his lawyer refers to him as Davis is because that is the persona he used when he hired his lawyer. It's the

same for paul allen. Bateman knew and envied Allen when he was rising up the ranks and going as marcus. This persona is strongly tied to allen partly because of allens affinity for his gf celia at the time. The envy he feels when he first talks to Paul in the meeting room as well as hearing paul call him marcus triggers his hallucination of his old persona "marcus" in the room for a second who he reconciles as just a very similar man.

The death of Paul Allen:

Bateman is thrown into his old persona of marcus when hes around paul and this is greatly amplified when hes alone with Paul. The persona of marcus is seperate from his bateman persona. Things that bateman does, sees, and hears when hes temporarily stuck in his alter ego of marcus can be completely misconstrued and misremembered by bateman when he comes back to his senses again. This plays directly into the mystery of pauls disappearance and why there seems to be a discrepancy between batemans perception and reality. Marcus appears to be a much quirkiest persona. (Is it me or does he channel the cable guy before he kills paul?) (Unintended pun!). Bateman doesnt know that his persona marcus didnt actually kill paul allen. He simply imagines what he wouldve done especially having been triggered by the resurfacing envy. His slow slip into one of his extended periods of severe psychosis has already begun by this point as well. Marcus is the one who acquires the information of paul allen leaving for london. The disconnect between personas explains batemans misunderstanding and delusion. Now two things happen: Batemans continued delusion and the reality that the delusion is trying to adhere to.

Real: paul passes out on batemans floor but comes to quickly after. Feeling rather sick paul explains he needs to leave and that he has a flight in the morning. He tells bateman that hes going to London and not coming back. (hes going to live with Cecilia who fled there out of fear after bateman almost killed her). Paul decides to leave and take a taxi home. He pukes on the floor on the way out of the building.

Batemans perception: he kills paul with an axe (paul leaving/ going on a trip) and then drags the body in a bloody bag out to his limo. (Perhaps bateman wished paul would get the axe at work as well?)

The bag is really just an overnight bag as luis points out. Bateman then travels to pauls apt. He uses the key he took off paul while he was passed out. He packs the bag and leaves the message. Pauls gf meredith thinks its paul on the answering machine but isnt sure what to believe because paul never told her about the trip (it was a secret) and he didnt pack enough for a trip like that. All meredith sees missing is one suit and a toothbrush basically. She concludes that hes lying and went on a bender or perhaps he was forced to leave the message by a nefarious party and that something bad must have happened to him either way so she calls detective kimbell to investigate.

The movie follows this trend...

Early on: we get an accurate view of batemans murders. Aside from pauls which was a delusion triggered by batemans split personality. (His past persona Marcus was coming through strong causing a psychotic episode)

Midway: his insanity still hasn't reached its apex but he is very delusional. He kills Christy and Elizabeth in Paul's apt but the bodies everywhere are simply the memories of the people he killed as Marcus. His perception of the murders is overly dramatized. He kills Elizabeth in the bed. The adrenaline rush from this causes him to imagine a much more spectacular murder of Christy than in reality. He really kills her when he catches her by the leg in the bathroom.

End: Bateman knows he's close to a breakdown and decided to break up with Evelyn. He does this because he knows that every breakdown ends up with him satisfying his blood lust and a forced identity change. He knows he needs to start starting over. Evelyn denying him the right to break up with her over and over, denying him control while at the edge of full fledged meltdown sets him over that edge and what we see next is a mix of wildly over dramatized kills.

The ending:

At the height of his psychotic breakdown, triggered by Evelyn denying him control in the restaurant and beginning with "feed me a cat" Bateman kills an old lady and 2 police officers. Again the adrenaline rush alongside his breakdown causes him to hallucinate like when he killed Christy. When he runs into the wrong building it's actually empty. His mind at this point is already going to the next step of his psychosis which is creating a new persona, just like all his other breakdowns. That's why he hears the unfamiliar name Mr. Smith. He runs around the building imagining two more murders and leaves to go home and finally confesses.

Some might say "how can people not realize he's changing personas and that people are calling him different names. To that I say, the same way they that other interpretations claim that everybody is mistaking him for someone else. It's because everybody is so self absorbed that while they may see him, they never notice him (a common theme in the movie is "I was here, you just didn't notice me," meaning that all he is, is a walking husk of a shell. Any detail further than that is of no importance to them. Only Evelyn notices when Paul calls Bateman "Marcus" and in that scene we see how easily Bateman shrugs off the situation.

Anyway, Meredith assumes the worst after Kimbell comes up empty and goes back to Paul's apt. She finds the bodies of Christy and Elizabeth. Desperate to protect Paul who she thinks may be responsible and holding out hope he will still come back, she hides the bodies and puts the house up for sale. When Bateman arrives back at the house a realtor is already showing people. The realtor's suspicions of Bateman are clear. She doesn't think he's a killer however. The house just went up for sale and she's showing friends of hers off the record first before putting an ad up. When a mysterious man shows up snooping around the house of a man who disappeared before she's even put an ad up she gets very suspicious. First she lies and tells him he's got the wrong place and then decides to test him by asking if he saw the nonexistent ad. He fails the test and she realizes the potential implications that he may somehow be linked with the disappearance or might at least be a shady character. She tells him to leave and never come back.

In the last scene, Batemans lawyer assumes the confession call is a joke referring to bateman the corporation partner (batemans dad) as a killer which is ludicrous because everyone knows hes a boring square (hes inconsequential enough to get no screen time). Remember, The lawyer only knows Bateman by his former persona Davis. The lawyer still hasnt met or worked with bateman as his current persona and knows batemans fathers reputation as a square which solidifies his misunderstanding. Also the lawyer had met with Paul Allen in London to discuss the issue of detective kimbell and the investigation. Surely after batemans confession/joke the lawyer looks at him as some kind of sick freak... but not a killer.

There it is! Now, I obviously dont think this is the intended interpretation but still interesting. Let me know what you think!