

Mitch flew into Washington on the firm's private jet. De Vasher didn't want him to go. Chicago had given orders that McDeere was not to leave Memphis on firm business except with at least two partners. But the firm had arranged months ago for Mitch to go to this conference on taxes in Washington. DeVasher couldn't argue against it, because as far as he knew Tarrance had only met Mitch that one time, and Mitch had immediately reported it. So Mitch seemed to be a loyal member of the firm. His first morning at the conference, surrounded by strangers, a man whispered, Harbison, FBI;' and passed him a note. The note read: Dear Mr McDeere I would like to speak to you for a few minutes during lunch. Please follow Grant Harbison's instructions. Thank you for your co-operation. F Denton Voyles Voyles was the almost legendary boss of the FBI. Harbison arranged a meeting in the men's room. He went first and Mitch followed after twenty minutes. What does Voyles want? he asked. Something important. It's not my job to tell you, said Harbison. 'When the conference breaks for lunch you'll find a taxi, number 8667, outside the hotel. It will take you to the meeting. Be careful: two of the boys from Memphis followed you here. They're in the bedroom next to you in the hotel. Mitch followed his instructions. The driver of the taxi spoke to others constantly on his radio. When he was certain that no one was following them he stopped acting like a tour guide and took Mitch directly to his meeting with Voyles in another hotel. Tarrance was waiting in the hotel room. After a few minutes Voyles walked in with another agent. Thank you for coming, Voyles said. 'This is very important Mitch breathed deeply. 'Sir, do you have any idea how Voyles offered his hand and Mitch stood up to shake it. to us. confused and frightened I am? I really need an explanation. What's happening? Mitch, what I'm about to tell you will certainly shock you. You won't want to believe it. But it's all true, and with your help we can save your life.' Mitch waited. No lawyer has ever left your firm alive, Voyles went on. Three have tried, and they were killed. Two others were about to leave, and they died last summer. When a lawyer joins Bendini, Lambert & Locke, he never leaves, unless he retires and keeps his mouth shut. And by the time they retire they are part of it all and cannot talk. The firm has a major surveillance operation on the fifth floor. Your house, car and phones are bugged. Your desk and office are bugged. Almost every word you speak is heard and recorded on the fifth floor. They follow you, and sometimes your wife. You see, Mitch, the firm is not what it seems. It is not owned by the partners. It is part of a very large and very illegal business. The firm of Bendini, Lambert & Locke is owned by the Morolto crime family in Chicago. The Mafia. I don't believe it' Mitch said, frozen with fear. His voice was weak. Voyles smiled. 'Yes, you do, Mitch. You've suspected so thing for some time. That's why you talked to Abanks in th Caymans. That's why yo killed by those boys on the fifth floor. You know the rotten, Mitch. u hired that investigator and got him Is Mitch rested his head in his hands and stared at the floor. As far as we can see, Voyles said,'about a quarter of the firms clients and businesses are legal. There are some very good lawyers in the firm, doing tax work for rich clients. It's a very good cover. Most of the files you've worked on so far are OK That's how they operate. They bring in a new man, throw money at him, buy the car and house, take him to the Caymans and put him to work on their legal clients. Then after five or six years, when the money is really good, when you and your family have become completely used to this rich way of living, they tell the truth. By then you can't get out even if you want to. They'll kill your wife, or one of your children; they don't care. So you stay. You can't leave. If you stay, you make a million dollars and retire young with

your family safe. If you try to leave, your picture will hang in the first-floor library. You mean that every partner.. 'Mitch couldn't finish. Yes, they all know and they all do what they're told. We suspect that most of the associates know as well. We don't think the wives do. We really want these people. We could destroy the Morolto family. We could arrest hundreds of them. How do they help the Moroltos?' Mitch asked. To be honest, Voyles said, 'we don't know everything. We've only been watching them for about seven years, and very little information gets out. But here's an example. A partner takes several million dollars in "dirty" money to the Caymans on the firm's private jet. Mitch thought of all the journeys the partners kept making to the Caymans. Voyles continued his story. Then the same partner, or one of the others, forms a legal entity back in the States, to buy some land perhaps. The company money is wired through from the Caymans to... what's the name of that bank in St Louis with whom the firm does a lot of business? Commercial Guaranty?" That's the one. The Mafia own it. So the money arrives back in the States and is used legally. Suddenly, "dirty" money is 'clean". That's why Bendini was sent down there in 1944. Locke grew up working for the Moroltos. He's a criminal first and a lawyer second. Lambert is the perfect cover for the firm. He looks and sounds like everyone's idea of a lawyer. But the next time you see him in the office, Mitch, remember that he's a killer. What about the secretaries and support staff?" Good question. We think some of them are part of it too. But some of them don't know anything. That's how they operate as two firms at once: a lot of the people there really are doing legal business. But Hodge told Tarrance that there's a group of support staff who work only for the main partners of the firm. They probably do all their legal work, so that the partners are free to do the Moroltos' dirty business. If you know so much, why don't you just go in there and arrest them all?' asked Mitch. We need evidence.' Voyles said. "That's where you come in. We want you to photocopy files, bank records, all those documents which we can't reach from the outside but you can. We need the names of all the staff, we need to know who works on which files; we need all the information you can give us, about every part of Bendini, Lambert & Locke. And then eventually we'll want you to appear in court and be a witness – our most important witness. You must decide whether or not you'll co-operate, Mitch. Tell us soon. If you decide not to help us, we'll find someone else who will, sooner or later, and we'll have you in prison along with the rest of them. If you choose to believe us, we can negotiate a price. And then we'll look after you and your wife anywhere in the world you want to go. But the Mafia never forgets; Mitch said. I've heard stories of witnesses hidden by the FBI whose car suddenly explodes. You people are capable of mistakes; one day, in ten years' time, one of you will talk to the wrong person. If I help you I'll always live in fear. I'll never be able to practise law again: Abby and I will have to change our faces and become Mr and Mrs Ordinary Nowheretown in Indiana. It's true, Mitch, Voyles said. They never forget. But I promise you, we will look after you and your wife. We have about two thousand witnesses living all over the country under new names with new homes and new jobs. Now you had better get back to your hotel. Tarrance will make contact with you soon. Chapter 13 Abby met him at the airport and in the bar he told her everything that had happened. She was frightened and close to tears, but neither of them could see any way out. They couldn't just run away and they couldn't do nothing. Even while they were talking Mitch saw a tall, fair-haired man with a moustache at the bar whom he remembered from the hotel in Washington. They were following him all the time. Tarrance didn't wait long. A week after Mitch returned to Memphis, about

the same time that 'Doris' got in contact, Tarrance met him as he was walking back from a meeting and suggested they turn into a shoe shop together, to get off the street. He started to say that it was time for Mitch to decide what to do, but he suddenly stopped. What is it?" Mitch demanded I just saw someone walk by the shop and look in at us carefully, Mitch. We'll walk out together, and as soon as we outside, you push me away and shout at me. Then run in the direction of the office.' Mitch did exactly as Tarrance suggested. As soon as he got back to the Bendini Building he went to Avery Tollesons office and reported that the same FBI agent had contacted him again. By the time they got to Locke's office, Lambert and McKnight were there as well. He pretended to be frightened and upset, and demanded to know why the FBI had now contacted him twice. Lambert told him the same story as before. Mitch hardly heard him; he watched his lips moving and thought of Kozinski and Hodge and their families. Then Locke asked him what had happened today Tarrance pushed me into the shoe shop. I tried to run away, but Tarrance followed me and grabbed me. I pushed him away and ran back here. That's all that happened. What shall I do?" Nothing, Mitch,; said Lambert. Just stay away from this Tarrance. If he even looks at you, report it to us immediately. That's what he did, said Avery. Mitch tried to look as pitiful as possible. You can go, Mitch, Lambert said. He's lying. I'm sure he's lying, De Vasher said. They were all in DeVasher's office. What did your man see?'asked Locke. Something slightly different, but at the same time different, you know? He says McDeere and Tarrance walked together into the shoe shop. He didn't see Tarrance grab McDeere. They're in the shop for a couple of minutes. Our man walks by and looks inside. Next minute they're fighting on the street. Something isn't right, I tell you The partners thought for a while. Finally, Oliver Lambert said, McDeere is telling the truth Look, De Vasher, its possible that d that your man got the wrong signals. You don't know of any an contact since last August. No, but we can't watch anybody absolutely all the time. We t know about those other two until it was almost too late.' But because you don't know of any recent contact, you shouldn't doubt what McDeere's saying I'm not sure,' said DeVasher. 'I think McDeere and I should have a little talk.' About what?"Lambert asked nervously. Just leave it to me. If you fools were in charge of security we'd all be in prison by now. Lazarov is getting really worried, but he thinks he can get someone in the FBI to talk. Then we'll know whether McDeere is lying. Mitch was alone in his office late that night when a short, fat man walked in. My name's De Vasher, he said. 'What can I do for you?' Mitch asked. You can listen for a while. I'm in charge of security for the firm. .. Why does the firm need security?"Mitch asked. Bendini was crazy about security. Anyway, we believe the FBI are trying to get a man inside the firm to help in their investigations of some of our clients. It's important that you tell us whenever they attempt to make contact with you. Yes, I already know that. Suddenly DeVasher was smiling evilly,'I brought something with me to show you,' he said. "Something that will keep you honest: He reached inside his jacket and pulled out envelope Mitch opened it nervously. Inside were four photograph black and white, very clear On the beach. The girl. Oh, my God! Who took these? Mitch shouted at him What difference does that make? Mitch tore the photographs up and let the pieces fall on to his desk We've got plenty more upstairs. De Vasher said calmly. 'We don't want to use them, but if we catch you talking to Mr Tarrance or some other FBI agent, we'll send them to your wife. How would you like that, Mitch? The next time you Tarrance decide to shop for shoes, think about us, Mitch Because we'll be watching. Chapter 14 'So you want to rent a small

office?' the agent said as they rode up in the lift. He was admiring the tight jeans on the blonde. She smiled and nodded. The lift stopped and they got out. He showed her the small two-room office. She liked it. They negotiated a price – a good price for even a small office on the ninth floor of the famous Cotton Shipping Building. She signed the forms 'Doris Greenwood. y noon the next day the furniture was in place. There was a knock at the door, 'Who is it?' she asked. 'It's your photocopier,' a voice answered. She unlocked the door and opened it. Two men wheeled in a big machine and she pointed them towards the spare second room. 'It's a big copier for such a small office,' one of them remarked. 'This is the most modern machine we've got. It does ninety copies a minute.' She smiled and said it would do fine and signed the documents. After they had gone she locked the door behind them and walked to the window. She looked north, along Front Street. A quarter of a mile away, on the opposite side, the Bendini Building was visible. a Tuesday morning Mitch's secretary checked that he had On everything for his meeting with Frank Mulholland in fifteen minutes. Mitch, sitting at his desk, pointed at a large black briefcase. He finished signing the letters on the desk in front of him, picked up the briefcase and a thin document case and left the building. He checked that the briefcase was in his right hand and the document case in his left. That was the signal. On the ninth floor of the Cotton Shipping Building, Tammy moved away from the window, put on her coat and left the office. Mitch entered the building and went straight to the lifts. Mulholland's office was on the seventh floor. Mitch pushed the button. He was not alone in the lift, but he didn't think they had followed him here. He put the briefcase down on the floor by his foot. Tammy got into the lift on the fourth floor. She had brought with her exactly the same kind of briefcase that Mitch had. She didn't look at Mitch but stood next to him and put her briefcase down on the floor next to his. On the seventh floor Mitch picked up her briefcase and left the lift; on the ninth floor Tammy picked up his briefcase and went to her office. The briefcase was full of files from Bendini, Lambert & Locke. Tammy locked the door behind her. There were seven thick files. She laid them on the table next to the copier. She took the papers out of the first file and put them into the copier. She pushed the 'Print' button and watched the machine make two perfect copies of every page Mitch's meeting with Mulholland went well. They shook hands at the end and arranged another meeting next week. The lift stopped on the fifth floor and Tammy walked in. It was empty except for Mitch. When the door closed he said "Any problems?" No. Two copies are locked away How long did it take? Thirty minutes. The lift stopped on the fourth floor and she picked up the empty briefcase. 'Midday tomorrow?' she asked. Yes, he replied. The door opened and she disappeared on to the fourth floor. He rode alone down to the ground floor and walked, with a briefcase in each hand, looking just as a lawyer should, back to his office.