



## **The Client**

### **John Grisham**

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# Plot Summary

Mark, a streetwise eleven-year-old, and his younger brother, Ricky, witness the suicide of New Orleans mafia lawyer, Jerome Clifford. Mark and Ricky flee the scene, but the trauma of the experience sends Ricky into severe shock. Just before Clifford shoots himself, he spills a big mob secret to Mark. Clifford tells Mark the location of Senator Boyette's body, a piece of information the FBI has been desperately trying to uncover, because Senator Boyette was murdered by the notorious mafia man, Barry Muldanno. The FBI and mafia soon learn that Mark knows the location of the senator's body. Mark realizes that if he tells the FBI what he knows, the mafia will be after him and will not stop until they kill him. Mark has seen enough movies to know that the mafia never forgets.

Realizing that he is in over his head, Mark hires a lawyer, Reggie Love, a tough woman but with a soft spot for overlooked and abused children. Reggie fights for Mark's right to keep silent, although she cannot keep him from being jailed for contempt. When the mafia threats begin to feel too real for Reggie's liking, she changes her strategy and begins to urge Mark to cooperate with the FBI.

Mark comes up with a crazy plan that begins with his escape from jail. Reggie reluctantly goes along for the dangerous adventure that takes the pair into Clifford's garage, where they come face to face with the dead senator's body. As the situation becomes more deadly, Mark finally gives in and decides to make a deal with the FBI. Reggie drafts the deal, which includes the witness protection program for Mark and his family in addition to many perks. Reggie and Mark say a tearful goodbye. Mark and his family fly away in a plane on the way to their new home, and with their new identities. Only then, does Reggie finally tell the FBI the location of Senator Boyette's corpse.

# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

Mark, an eleven-year-old, and Ricky, his younger brother, are walking down a path into the woods behind their trailer park. Mark promised Ricky to let him try smoking, since Ricky caught Mark stealing their mother's cigarettes and threatened to tell. Mark reminds Ricky of the two rules they agreed on. First, only one cigarette is allowed per day. Second, Ricky can't tell anyone. Mark also warns Ricky not to inhale. Mark is very mature for his age. He hit his Dad with a baseball bat to make him stop beating his Mom, when he was seven. He was his Mom's confidant and testified in court for her during the divorce trials.

As the boys fiddle with their cigarette, a black Lincoln pulls into the clearing, thirty feet from where they stand. Mark and Ricky stop smoking and watch. A chubby man gets out of the car, opens the trunk, pulls out a hose, and sticks one end of it into the exhaust pipe. He puts the other end into the crack in the left rear window and gets back into the car. Mark explains to Ricky that the chubby man is trying to kill himself. Ricky is scared and begs Mark to leave, but Mark insists they have to stay and do something to help the man. Mark crawls over to the car and pulls the hose out of the exhaust pipe. Five minutes later, the chubby man gets out of the car. He grips a bottle of whiskey, cries and mumbles, as he pushes the hose back into the pipe.

Ricky begs Mark to leave. Mark says they can't leave him to die, as they would get in trouble. Ricky breaks down into sobs. Mark attempts to save the chubby man's life again, by pulling out the hose. The chubby man steps out again, looks around and then sticks the pipe back in. The chubby man, a lawyer, has a loaded pistol beside him. The lawyer wonders how long it will take to die, and whether it will hurt. He hoped the gas would have worked sooner. The lawyer is scared to use the pistol, but will if he has to. He comforts himself with the fact that no one will miss him. The only person who ever loved him, his mother, is already dead. The lawyer imagines his funeral, small

with no frills. He looks into the rearview mirror and sees the weeds behind his car move.

Ricky sees the car door open before Mark hears it. The lawyer catches Mark. Mark slips, as he tries to get away. The lawyer grabs him and throws him into the passenger seat. Mark reaches for the lock. The lawyer slaps Mark hard. Mark is momentarily blinded. Mark begs to be let out. The fat lawyer tells him that since he had to be all cute and try to save his life, he is going to have to die with him. He gives Mark a choice between a shot in the head or the poison inhalation. Mark asks the lawyer why he's doing this. The lawyer tells Mark that he's crazy. Mark gets his hand on the gun. He points it at the lawyer. The lawyer shouts at Mark to pull the trigger. Mark is about to pull the trigger when the lawyer grabs the gun from Mark's hand and accidentally shoots the rear window. The window cracks, but does not shatter. Ricky hears the shot and pees on himself again. He thinks Mark is dead.

Mark remembers once watching a television show about a cop who talked a suicidal man down from jumping off a building. Mark asks the man why he is killing himself. The lawyer says he wants to die. Mark asks for the lawyer's name. The lawyer says his name is Jerome, but Mark can call him Romey. Mark persists in his questioning, until Romey begins to give up some information. Romey tells Mark that he knows a secret that his scum of a client told him, and that he can't tell anyone. Mark keeps asking questions. Romey tells Mark that the client, Barry the Blade of the New Orleans mafia, killed a senator, named Senator Boyette. He hid the body under Romey's garage, and now Barry the Blade wants Romey dead, because Romey knows too much.

Meanwhile, Ricky had pulled the hose out of the exhaust pipe. Romey was getting drowsy and soon passed out. Mark took the opportunity to escape. Mark runs back into the bushes with Ricky. Ricky begs Mark to let them leave, but Mark insists they wait a bit. He feels safe in the bushes. Romey emerges from the car. He finds the hose out of the pipe again and hollers obscenities. He sticks the pistol into his mouth and pulls the trigger.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

Mark and Ricky have a father and son relationship. Mark knows how to sound authoritative and make Ricky listen to him. Watching cop shows on television probably saves Mark's life, because it leads him to question Romey and to distract Romey from wanting to kill him right away. At the same time, it also leads him to trouble, because now he knows the information that the mafia want Romey dead for. This creates suspense, as we wonder what Mark will do with this information, and what the mafia will do to Mark when they find out that he has this information.

Romey is a mafia lawyer, who knows too much. He is terrified of a death by mafia hands, and would rather kill himself. Romey gets a sense of relief, as he discloses the secret information to another soul before he dies.

The reader learns a lot about Mark's character from this chapter. Mark is brave, loving, curious, smart and quite mature for his age. He tells Romey that he wants to live, because he has to take care of his mother and brother. The reader also begins to understand how Mark became this way. Mark had a tough childhood with an alcoholic and abusive father. He also had to deal with his parent's divorce and even testified in court for his mother during the trial.

# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Barry Muldanno, otherwise known as Barry the Blade or simply "The Blade," stops in front of pay phone in a restaurant in his flashy suit, gold jewelry and gelled back black hair. He dials his lawyer's office and asks where his lawyer was. He has been waiting for him for forty minutes. The secretary says that Mr. Clifford left the office at nine in the morning and hadn't been heard from since. Barry the Blade slams the phone and walks away. He just wants to talk to his lawyer about the mess he is in and does not understand why he cannot.

Barry's lawyer, Jerome Clifford, has been defending prominent New Orleans thugs for fifteen years, doing whatever necessary to win his cases including bribes, threats and all sorts of other corrupt business. Jerome is known to be loyal to the end. Jerome has been representing Barry since he was twenty-five and always proved to be competent, yet lately, Barry has been sensing something wrong with Jerome. He wants to replace Jerome.

Barry is not worried about the trial much. He knows Reverend Roy and the FBI have only a circumstantial case against him. They could never get a conviction without a body, and Barry has the body where no one can find it. The trouble with Jerome starts, when Jerome began to push for a quick trial. Jerome told Barry it was in his best interest to give the prosecution less time to find the body. Barry did not want a quick trial. He assured Jerome the body would not be found. Jerome pushed to know where Barry hid the body. He pushed until Barry told him it was under Jerome's boat in Jerome's garage.

Barry is very angry that Jerome did not show up to their meeting. He rushes out of the restaurant and storms off to Jerome's office to look for him. He thinks about a friend of his who was able to stall his case for a long time by killing his lawyer and forcing

the judge to grant a continuance.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

The author portrays Barry the Blade as a typical slick, yet scary mobster. Barry is thinking about replacing Jerome, and Jerome sensed that. Jerome knows that if he were to be replaced, he would have to be killed. It seems the tipping point for Jerome was when he found out that Barry had buried the dead body of a senator in his house. The end of the chapter, where Barry contemplates killing Jerome in order to delay his trial, tells the reader that Jerome was probably not wrong in his guess that Barry would kill him.

This chapter also gives the reader a sense of the ruthlessness of mobsters, like Barry. The reader begins to understand why Jerome is scared to death, and why he was driven to suicide. As Barry storms off to look for Jerome, the reader knows that Barry will not find Jerome, because Jerome is dead. So far, Jerome's death will probably be a good thing for Barry. Barry will be thrilled that Jerome killed himself, and he will no longer have to worry about disposing of Jerome.

# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Ricky runs away from the suicide scene. Mark takes one last look at Romey and then runs after Ricky. They get to their trailer, and Ricky collapses in a state of shock. He sucks his thumb and cries without tears. Mark desperately tries to talk to Ricky, so they could get their lies straight, but Ricky does not respond. Mark wonders if he should call the police. The thought of the body not being discovered for days sends Mark to the phone.

Mark finally calls the police and tells them he saw a body in the woods. Mark drags Rick to bed, leaves a note for his Mom, and goes back to the scene. He watches cops and paramedics do their work. A cop spots Mark. He asks him a few questions and then introduces him to the other cops, as the kid who made the call. Mark knows that he has been found out. The cops ask him lots of questions to get more information out of him. Mark tells him he found the man dead and never heard the gunshot.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

Mark's curiosity gets him into more trouble again. First, it got him into trouble when he insisted on watching Romey and stopping him from killing himself. Now, it got him in trouble for going back to the suicide scene and being found out by the cops. The cops are tricky and ask Mark lots of questions. They corner him into admitting that he made the call. It seems likely that they will soon get more information out of him. So far, he tells them that he found the man dead in his car and never heard any gunshot.

# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Diane Sway, Mark and Ricky's mother, comes home and finds Ricky shaking and unable to talk. She calls the doctor. Mark arrives at the door with a policeman behind him. Mark tells his mother that he and Ricky found a dead man in the woods. The police officer and Diane check Ricky. The officer tells Diane that Ricky is in shock and calls an ambulance to take Ricky to the hospital.

In the ambulance, the officer asks Mark if he is lying, because his claims sound fishy. The officer wonders why Mark would not tell the police his name on the phone, and then why he would go back to the scene of the suicide, hide and watch. The officer tells Mark that he suspects that Mark and Ricky saw the whole thing. Mark asserts that he found Romey dead. The officer asks Mark, if he knows who Romey is. Mark tries to save himself from the terrible slip of the tongue and tells the officer that he thought the officer said the person's name was Romey.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

The officer obviously has suspicions about Mark's story. He suspects that Mark witnessed the suicide. When Mark slips and mentions the lawyer's nickname, the reader knows that it is only a matter of time before the cops figure out that Mark knows more than he is telling. As smart and mature as Mark is, he is too inexperienced to pull off a huge lie, such as the one that he is attempting. The slips he makes in this chapter foreshadow the coming out of the truth.

# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

This chapter opens with The Honorable J. Roy Foltrigg, the United States attorney for the southern district of Louisiana. He's driving up to Memphis in his fully equipped van instead of taking a plane, because he has a secret fear of flying. With him are his assistant attorney, Thomas Fink, special agent Truman, who was on the phone with Memphis FBI, and special agent Skipper Scherff. The chauffeur is Wally Boxx, and Foltrigg's right hand man. He hangs on Foltrigg's every word and move, hoping to one day tag along to the top with Foltrigg, whom he is sure is headed for big things.

Memphis FBI agents tell them about Jerome's suicide letter, and they discuss other details of the case. The men complain about how this will delay the case at least six months. Fink talks about how he and Romey went to law school together, and how Romey called him a few days ago, drunk and crazy as ever, muttering about how he had to quit to the case and even hinting that he knew where the body was. The next day, Romey hounded Fink, trying to find out if he let any information slip. Fink strings Romey along and drives him crazier. Fink threatens Jerome with a charge of obstruction of justice, which would make him unable to work on Barry's defense anymore. Jerome gets very upset, and no one hears from him again. They discuss how they need to track Jerome's trip from New Orleans to Memphis.

## Chapter 5 Analysis

In this chapter the reader is introduced to the district prosecutor, Roy Foltrigg. Foltrigg is an overconfident prosecutor, certain of his eminent ascent to Capitol Hill. He enjoys having the FBI work under him, and he loves the limelight resulting from leading this very high profile case. He does the glamorous work and leaves the behind the scenes, boring work for his assistants. They obey his every order, because they see him as their ticket to the top.

The reader learns that Jerome knew one of the prosecution attorneys and slipped information to him. So, the prosecution knows that Jerome knew where the body is hidden. Fink's description of Jerome's phone calls shows the reader what kind of state of mind Jerome was in before he killed himself. Jerome seemed to be crazy, depressed, yet also in a state of drunken hysteria. Due to Fink's threats, he not only had to worry about Barry the Blade, but also about the FBI charging him with obstruction of justice.

# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

At the hospital, a psychiatrist whisks Diane away, and Officer Hardy takes Mark to the cafeteria for a cheeseburger. Mark worries about Ricky. Hardy assures Mark that Ricky will be okay, as long as the doctors know the whole truth of what the boys witnessed. If they don't, there is no knowing how long Ricky could stay in shock or end up locked up in a mental institution. Hardy patronizes Mark with the gory details of a mental institute, and Mark gets sick of being spoken to like a five-year-old. Mark worries about getting to Ricky before the doctors or the cops. Hardy starts to ask Mark questions about the Marks on his face, and Mark sticks to a fight at school story. However, the cop keeps asking questions, until Mark has to make up more and more lies to cover up his original lie.

Mark and his Mom meet with Ricky's doctor, Dr. Greenway. Mark is worried about his brother and tells the doctor some of the truth. He tells the doctor that he tried to prevent the man's suicide, but then he and Ricky saw the man shoot himself.

Hardy walks up and down in the halls, as Mark speaks to the doctor. His lieutenant shows up and tells him that they found small fingerprints in Clifford's car, and that they suspect Mark was in there. Hardy gives the Lieutenant Mark's can of Sprite to see if the prints will match.

Dr. Greenway tells Diane that Ricky has a severe case of acute post-traumatic stress disorder. He also tells Diane that Ricky will need her and Mark to stay with him as much as possible for the next couple of weeks. Ricky needs to feel safe. Diane tells the doctor that she has a job, and that they don't care about her son being where she works. The doctor tells her that he will do his best to help her explain to them. Dr. Greenway also promises to speak to Mark's principal and teachers and explain to them why he can't be at school for the next few days.

Mark and Diane lay on the foam mattress in Ricky's room. Mark tells his Mom that he needs to talk to her. She tells him that she is tired, so they will talk first thing in the morning. Diane drifts to sleep. Mark waits twenty minutes and then sneaks out for a walk, as he often does when he cannot fall asleep. It's a habit he started when he used to want to get away from his mother and father's fights.

Mark strolls to the cafeteria, buys an orange juice and watches a lawyer try to pick up a client, a man hit by a truck and able to sue for permanent disability. The lawyer works the injured man hard, but the man tells the lawyer that a dozen other lawyers already approached him, and he has not made any decisions yet. The lawyer hands the injured man his card and leaves. Mark goes up to the waiting room and watches television. He sees an ad for the same lawyer, Gill Teal, on television. He wonders if he should call him, himself.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

When Mark decides to tell the truth, he only tells part of the truth. He continues to keep the crucial part of being in the car with Clifford a secret. At the same time, the reader knows that Mark will not be able to keep this secret for much longer, since the police have discovered his prints in the car and will have the evidence to prove it soon enough. The suspense builds, as the reader waits for Mark's secret to come out and see what the fallout will hold. At the end of the chapter, Mark thinks about getting a lawyer. This foreshadows that Mark just may end up actually needing a lawyer to deal with the fallout of his secrets.

# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Foltrigg and his entourage enter the federal building in Memphis and walk to the FBI office of Jason McThune. McThune briefs Foltrigg about what the Memphis police found so far in the investigation. He tells Foltrigg about Mark, that his fingerprints were found everywhere in the car, on the gun, the liquor, everywhere. He tells him about Ricky's posttraumatic stress disorder, and finally he tells him that Mark knows a lot more than he is telling. McThune tells Foltrigg that Mark let it slip that he knows Clifford's nickname, Romey. McThune passes Foltrigg the suicide note Clifford left behind. Below the funeral arrangements and directions to his secretary, Clifford wrote in a different pen, "Mark, Mark where are." Then, it seems that he ran out of ink. Foltrigg's men ask a bunch of dumb questions, and McThune impatiently answers them with looks of disgust at their stupidity. Foltrigg tells McThune that they must find out what Mark knows. McThune says he will meet with Mark, his Mom and the doctor, today.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

The evidence that proves Mark is lying keeps piling higher and higher. Now, the police know for certain that Mark was in the car and that he spoke to Clifford. Clifford wrote Mark's name on his suicide note, and Mark let it slip that he knows Clifford's nick name, Romey. Also apparent in this chapter is the tension and competition felt between the FBI, and the district attorney and his men. The two sides dislike each other, and each think the other side is incompetent. This means that they will likely not be able to cooperate well on this case.

# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

In the morning, Dr. Greenway again meets with Diane, Mark and Ricky. The doctor emphasizes to Diane and Mark how important it will be for Ricky to see his family the Moment he comes back to awareness. They must stay in the room. Dr. Greenway also tells them that the FBI wants to speak to them, but he is trying to delay them. He hands Diane a paper with the story of Clifford's suicide on the front page. Mark sees Jerome's picture and almost vomits. Dr. Greenway tells them that apparently Mr. Clifford worked for the mob. Mark thinks to himself that he knows all about the mob, because he has watched *The Godfather* on cable.

Diane naps, and Mark decides to go for a walk. He walks out of the hospital towards Gill Teal's office, as he had seen on a map. He wonders if he should make another anonymous call to the cops about the location of the dead senator's body. Mark finds Gill Teal's office. The office is filled with clients on crutches and in casts. The receptionist tells Mark that he is in the wrong place. Mark wanders around the building, passing by many other lawyers' offices, until he decides to try another lawyer, Reggie Love. The receptionist in Love's office is nice. When Mark finds out that Reggie is a woman, he is surprised at first. Then, he decides it might be a good thing. He saw a woman lawyer on "L.A. Law" once, and she had ripped up the cops pretty good.

Reggie meets with Mark. Mark takes out the newspaper clipping about the suicide story. He tells her that he's the kid who witnessed the suicide. Reggie assures him of strict confidentiality and tells him to give her a retainer, even if just one dollar. After, Mark slowly spills the entire story, withholding only the location of the dead body. Reggie tells Mark that she will speak to the FBI with him, and that he does not need to tell them anything for now. Mark calls his Mom, and Diane tells him that Ricky is coming out of the comma. Reggie walks with Mark back to the hospital.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

Mark's taking charge and speaking to a lawyer on his own shows his independence and maturity. He is scared to death, but trusts Reggie with his whole story. Lucky for Mark, Gill Teal did not want him as a client. Reggie seems like much more of a trustworthy and reliable lawyer. Reggie knows that Mark does not have to tell the FBI anything, and her expertise gives Mark options he did not know he had.

In this chapter, the reader begins to see just how much of Mark's consciousness about the real world comes from television. Mark is terrified of the mob because of what he has seen in the movie *The Godfather*. Also, he decides that having a female lawyer might be a good thing because of what he saw in the television show, "L.A. Law."

# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Barry Muldanno hires a new lawyer, Willis Upchurch. Willis Upchurch is an angry faced, bushy haired, loud lawyer, who loves to be seen and heard. He is practically owned by the mafia, and so, when Barry's uncle, Johnny Sulari, called on him, he came running and was full of excitement.

Diane lay in bed with Ricky, as he slowly came out of his coma. Mark arrives at the hospital with Reggie. Reggie stays at the nurse's station, as Mark walks into Ricky's room. Mark asks the doctor if Ricky has spoken yet. The doctor says that he's only uttered a few mumbles here and there. The doctor asks Mark if his Mom has some family who can help her for the next while. Mark tells the doctor that they don't have any family who can help. They have one Aunt, who is on bad terms with his Mom, and one Grandma, who is always sick. Dr. Greenway tells Mark that the FBI are expecting them, but that his Mom must not leave Ricky's side. Mark tells Dr. Greeway that he has hired a lawyer and that he will meet the officers with his new lawyer, so that his Mom and the doctor can stay with Ricky.

Before Mark meets the officers, Reggie tapes a recorder under his shirt and reminds him to say only what she explained to him he should say. Mark is terrified. He worries the officers will realize that he is wired and shoot him. Reggie assures him that cops do not shoot kids. Mark tells her that he once saw cops shoot kids on television.

Mark finally collects the courage to walk into the room and face the officers. They introduce themselves as Jason McThune of Memphis FBI, and Larry Trumann of the New Orleans FBI. Mark explains to them that his mother can't leave his brother. He asks them if the questions can wait until his mother can be with him. The officers decline. They tell him they really need to ask him a few questions. They press him for information about the incident. They ask him if Jerome was really dead, when he first

came upon him. Mark tells them he is taking the Fifth Amendment. He asks them if he should get a lawyer. The officers tell him that lawyers are a pain in the ass and that he definitely does not need one. Mark asks to go to the washroom.

Twenty minutes later, Reggie walks into the room, introduces herself as Mark's lawyer, and asks the officers if they have wronged Mark in any way. After they plead innocence, she reveals to them that Mark recorded their entire conversation. The officers are shocked and worried about the possible repercussions. Reggie threatens them, and they know she is right when she says she can have their jobs. She promises to keep the tape to herself. All that she asks of them is to be straight with her and tell her what she needs to know. Reggie tells them to meet her at her office at 3 pm. They agree.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Reggie immediately proves her skills as a competent lawyer. She does what is best for her client and is tricky. Reggie is not unwilling to stretch the lines of ethics, in order to achieve her goals. She tells Mark exactly what to say, and Mark does exactly as she tells him. The result is that now Reggie has the FBI on record, breaking the rules. She can use it against them anytime she needs to. She gains an upper hand on two FBI agents, and this is bound to help her in the inevitable battle to come. Mark and Reggie seem to make a great team. So far, Diane is too busy with Ricky and his recovery to be involved in Mark's new scandals. She does not even know that Mark has hired a lawyer.

Although Mark was scared to death of confronting the officers while wired, he faces his fear and does as Reggie directs. This shows what a strong young man he is. At the same time, the reader once again sees just how big a role television plays in shaping Mark's opinions and thoughts. Mark tells Reggie that he is afraid the cops might shoot him, because he has seen cops shoot kids on television. Reggie assures Mark that cops do not shoot kids, but Mark is still scared.

# Chapter 10

## Chapter 10 Summary

In this chapter, the reader is introduced to a new character, Slick Moeller, a veteran police reporter. Slick's life is reporting on crime, and he is the best at what he does. He has the connections necessary to get around town in places no ordinary person dares to tread, to get tips and secrets from everyone from cops to criminals. Everybody knows his word is worth something. Slick found out that Foltrigg and the New Orleans FBI are in town, and he begins to dig for the story. He starts at the hospital, where Ricky is recovering. Slick tries to pry information out of an orderly. The orderly resists at first, but due to Slick's skill, ends up telling Slick that Ricky is not doing well, and the cops have been all over the place. Also, the family seems to have hired a lawyer, named Reggie.

By noon, Foltrigg and his sidekicks, Boxx and Fink, are camped out at the Tennessee District Attorney's office. District Attorney, George Ord, is not pleased to host them. Foltrigg is convinced that Mark knows where the dead body of the senator is, and he does his best to convince everyone else of that. McThune and Truman break the news about the new lawyer, Reggie. Foltrigg asks Ord about Reggie Love. Ord finds one of his men, David Sharpinski, who says he went to law school with Reggie. Foltrigg asks him for everything he knows about the woman. Sharpinski tells the group of men that Reggie has a long and sad story. He tells them that Reggie was married to a doctor, who put her through hell. He dumped her for a younger model, took her kids away from her, did his best to send her in and out of mental institutions and left her penniless. Reggie struggled through law school. She eventually made it out, with a vengeance, and now deals with abuse cases.

The attorneys and officers then discuss, Barry The Blade's new lawyer, Willis Upchurch. The men find out that Upchurch just gave a press conference to let the media know that he is Muldanno's new lawyer, that the trial has been postponed, and

that his client will not be found guilty. Ord warns Foltrigg that his case just became a nightmare.

## Chapter 10 Analysis

In this chapter, the reader meets this new character, Slick, the news reporter. Slick seems to be very good at his job, but his role in the grander scheme of the story is unclear. He finds out a few things about the case from the hospital orderly, but the reader does not know what Slick's real objective is yet. Ord's warning to Foltrigg at the end of the chapter foreshadows a messy and difficult case to come. Muldanno's new lawyer, Upchurch, sounds even worse than Clifford. He is likely the type of lawyer willing to play dirty and do whatever necessary to win his case.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter 11 Summary

Diane sleeps by Ricky, who drifts back into his coma after making all of them think he was getting better. Mark can't sleep. He wonders about Reggie, whether he could really trust her. He thinks about all the television shows about lawyers and decides half of lawyers are trustworthy, and the other half are snakes. He considers telling Dr. Greenway everything for Ricky's sake, but then remembers how, in a movie he watched, the message is clear. You never mess with the mafia, and if you do, the mafia never forgets.

Mark leaves Ricky's room. In the elevator, he comes across Slick from the *Memphis Press*. Slick tries to squeeze him for information, but Mark tells him that he is not answering questions. He loses the reporter in a crowd of hospital workers. Mark sits in an empty stairwell and cries. Now, the media is hounding him too.

Meanwhile, Foltrigg, McThune and Trumann arrive at Reggie's office. Foltrigg squirms with anger, as Reggie makes them wait forty-five minutes, just to emphasize who has the upper hand. Trumann warns Foltrigg that she may tape their conversation. Reggie indeed does ask to record the conversation.

Foltrigg wants to know when they will be able to talk to Mark. Reggie answers that he is assuming that they will get to talk to him at all. Foltrigg tells her that they must talk to him, because they know he was in the car. They also know that he conversed with Clifford and probably knows something about the case. Reggie asks them to tell her everything they know about Mark, and they lay out the evidence they have to show that Mark spoke to Clifford, including the fingerprints and suicide note. Reggie asks them where they got Mark's fingerprints. They tell her about the Sprite can. Reggie asks them if they got permission to do that. Of course, they did not. Foltrigg then tells Reggie they also found traces of Mark's blood on Clifford's hand. Again, she asks

them how they know Mark's blood type, and she catches them breaking the rules again. Reggie makes it clear to them that if they violate her client's rights again, she will not hesitate to sue them.

Reggie tells the men that they will meet again tomorrow. They again tell her how important it is to their case that they speak to Mark as soon as possible. She does not promise them the chance to do so.

## Chapter 11 Analysis

Reggie is clearly skilled in her field. She makes it clear to the men that she is boss, from the moment they step into her office. She catches them breaking the rules several times and threatens to sue them. Now, they know that she has power over them. The entire conversation is recorded, so she will have no problem proving they broke the law, since she has their own words admitting to it on tape. Reggie uses the effective technique of steering the conversation away from the real issue of what Mark knows by challenging her opponents' methods and the technicalities of their investigation. It is clear the authorities will no longer be able to take advantage of Mark, with Reggie on his side.

# Chapter 12

## Chapter 12 Summary

Wally Box called the office in New Orleans at least four times an hour to update them on the case and to convey communications back and forth from Foltrigg to his forty-seven assistants regarding all other cases. Soon enough, the entire office knew about Mark Sway and his story. Reporters from New Orleans called for comments from Foltrigg, but got nothing.

Mark finally has a chance to speak to his mother. He tells her about Reggie. Diane asks Mark, why they need a lawyer. Mark feels guilty and decides to tell her the whole story, except for the secret that Jerome told him. Dr. Greenway is also present, and both are skeptical that Mark is telling the truth, when he tells them that he just remembered these new details. Mark says that he must have gone into a mild sort of shock, just like Ricky. That is why he could not remember everything before.

Reggie arrives at the hospital and meets Diane. Reggie explains what has been happening with the FBI in such a way as to make the FBI seem utterly untrustworthy to Diane. Diane feels glad to have another woman willing to listen to her and support her family during this tough time.

Jack Nance is an ex-con, who runs a private investigating service. He does people's dirty work for them for big amounts of cash and never leaves a trail. His clients all come by referral. Paul Gronke walks into Nance's office, passes him a two thousand dollar retainer and tells him that he needs Mark Sway's every move trailed. When Paul Gronke calls Barry Muldanno after meeting with Nance, Muldanno's girl, a stripper, answers the phone. After speaking to Gronke, Muldanno goes to Randy's, a restaurant owned by his Uncle Sulari. He knows he can find his uncle there. Muldanno tells his Uncle that they have to do something about Mark Sway and his brother. Sulari calls his nephew an imbecile. He tells him to send two of their men to Memphis, but not to

make any moves until he approves.

## Chapter 12 Analysis

Thanks to Wally Box's big mouth and the inability of the people in Foltrigg's New Orleans office to keep a secret, the media finds out about Mark, which inevitable leads to the mob finding out about Mark. Muldanno does find out soon enough, and he runs to his Uncle for help. He suggests taking Mark out, but his Uncle belittles him and repeatedly calls him a dumbass. He tells him not to make a move until he approves. However, the two men do agree to send some mafia men to Memphis, until they decide what to do. This means mafia men will now be hovering around Mark, and he is now in the danger that he was so afraid he would fall in.

Reggie finally meets Diane. Reggie offers Diane some comfort and support. Diane feels good to have someone on her side, helping her out during this hard time. Reggie tells Diane everything she needs to know and carefully makes it clear to Diane that the FBI are not to be trusted. Reggie is after Mark's best interest, and she knows Diane might not know what that is. Diane, like any other good citizen, probably thinks that cooperating with authorities is always the best thing to do. Once again, Reggie is there to look out for Mark's interests.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter 13 Summary

By Tuesday evening, Foltrigg and his crew have nothing to do, as they wait for the meeting with Reggie. They sink to doing something they all hate to do, legal research. The issue at hand is how they can force Mark Sway to tell them what he knows or harder still, how they can force Reggie to betray her attorney/client privilege. Meanwhile, Foltrigg also works on a backup plan. He gets approval to put Mark and his family in the Federal Witness Protection Program. They put together a deal that they think Diane cannot refuse. The deal includes a good job for Diane, a house, possibly a car and some kind of cash incentive. Foltrigg feels confident.

Mark is sick of sitting with his Mom in Ricky's room. He takes off to the hospital waiting room. He finds a man flipping through magazines. The man makes small talk. He tells Mark that his son is in the Intensive Care Unit, and he needed a break from the horror of it all. The man, of course, is Nance. He tries to get as much information out of Mark as he can, but Mark is in no mood for friendly conversation. Nance leaves, without much. Mark falls asleep in the waiting room.

## Chapter 13 Analysis

The FBI and Foltrigg now realize that it will not be as easy as they thought to get Mark to talk, especially with Mark's feisty new lawyer in the way. Foltrigg puts together a deal for Diane that sounds like a dream come true. Diane will have the opportunity to work for more pay, to trade in her trailer for a real house with a foundation, and possibly even to get some cash to get started with. The offer sounds very generous of the FBI. Of course, they are essentially asking for Diane to place her son on the mafia's hit list.

The mafia has already begun their watch on Mark. Nance tries to befriend Mark in the waiting room. He works on getting Mark's sympathies, by telling him that his son was hit by a drunk driver. Mark is not stupid enough to spill anything to a stranger. Mark has grown very wary of stranger in the last couple of days. Mark is in obvious danger now, and his own mother still has no clue about it.

# Chapter 14

## Chapter 14 Summary

One of the nurses shows Mark a news story in the Memphis Press with photos of Mark and Ricky, and details about new findings in the FBI case. The story includes how Mark's fingerprints were found inside the car, on the gun and on the whiskey bottle. Mark feels indignant at the violation of privacy, and at the story that makes him look like a criminal. Mark feels sorry for himself, because he is going through this turmoil without supportive and protective parents behind him. His father is non-existent to him, and his mother is busy with Ricky. Jack Nance is still hanging around the hospital to watch Mark.

Mark gets into an empty elevator. It stops on the eighth floor. A man in a white lab coat steps in. The door closes. The man grabs him around the throat, flicks open a switchblade and holds it in front of Mark's face. He tells Mark that he doesn't know what Jerome told him, but he better not tell anyone anything he does know. If he does, he will kill him, his mother and his brother. The man shows Mark a picture of him that could only have come from his home and tells Mark that he knows where he lives and goes to school. He will have no problem getting to Mark, if he needs to.

Mark eventually finds his way to Reggie's office. He is shaken and pale. Reggie asks him what is wrong. Mark asks her if he has to tell what he knows, and what will happen if he simply keeps his story a secret forever. Reggie assures him that there is no need to volunteer any information right now, but that the prosecution will eventually try to force him to come out with it. Mark tells Reggie that he does not want to meet with the FBI, and Reggie immediately tells her secretary to cancel the meeting with Foltrigg.

Reggie figures out that the mob must have gotten to Mark. She shows Mark a picture of Barry Muldanno and asks him if he was the man he saw today. Mark says no. They

figure Barry has many men working for him. Mark tells Reggie that he does not want to tell anyone about what happened, not even his Mom, because she has enough to deal with already, with Ricky still not feeling well. Reggie approves.

#### Chapter 14 Analysis

The mob finally gets to Mark. They send a man to threaten Mark and scare him to the point where he no longer considers telling anyone anything. He no longer wants to speak to the FBI, and Reggie agrees to help him hold on to his right to silence. Mark is also mature and strong enough not to want to trouble his mother with this new incident. This shows great courage for an eleven-year-old.

# Chapter 15

## Chapter 15 Summary

Foltrigg is very upset, when he finds out that Mark no longer wants to talk to him. He storms out of Reggie's office with his men and returns to Ord's office. Ord calls Reggie, urging her to get Mark to talk. Reggie is firm with her refusal. Ord threatens Reggie, and Reggie threatens back. Ord gives up and tells Foltrigg that Reggie will not budge.

Foltrigg asks Ord's men to follow Mark all day, and to protect him from Muldanno and his men. The authorities already know that Gronke is in town, and they know that more of Muldanno's men will be all over Mark soon enough. Ord's men grudgingly accept the extra work. Foltrigg tells Ord that he will return to New Orleans, but probably will come back in a couple of days.

Meanwhile, Mark is still in Reggie's office. He chats with Clint, as Reggie takes care of her other clients. Mark asks Clint all about his job and his past with Reggie. Clint tells him about his troubles with law school, and how he met Reggie there. He explains to him the duties of his job. Then, Clint asks Mark about his family. Mark tells Clint about his father, the abuse, the cops, the trial and how he testified for three hours about his father's abuse. Mark's father was close to getting custody of one of the boys, until Mark told the judge about the day Mark's father came home drunk, beat Diane, stripped her naked, and threw her out of the house. He then did the same to Mark, when Mark tried to save his mother.

Mark also tells Clint about his mother's lawyer during the divorce, Hack. Hack was an incompetent and mean lawyer. When Diane could not pay all her bills, he threatened to sue her and that forced her into declaring bankruptcy. Clint asks Mark what he thinks of Reggie, and Mark tells him that Reggie is great, nothing like lawyers he has met.

## Chapter 15 Analysis

Foltrigg spends all day waiting for the meeting with Reggie and Mark. When he arrives and finds out that Mark has decided not to speak, he is furious. He realizes now that he will have to find a way to force Mark to talk, and the reader awaits to find out what strategy Foltrigg will create.

In this chapter, the reader finds out a lot about Reggie from Clint. We find out that she lives with her mother and that she often takes her clients home where her Mom likes to cook for them. The reader also finds out more about Mark's father, the abuse and divorce trials. Mark's father ruthlessly abused his wife and sons. It is a wonder that Mark is not severely traumatized. Knowing this also makes the reader feel very sorry for Diane, who seems to have no breaks in life.

# Chapter 16

## Chapter 16 Summary

Reggie and Mark go to the hospital. Jack Nance is watching them, as they leave. When they are gone, he slips into Reggie's office. Nance tells Clint that he is a reporter and asks to speak to Reggie. Clint tells Nance that Reggie is not there, and Nance leaves without much accomplished.

Reggie and Mark rush past reporters and into Ricky's room. They find Diane looking upset, like she was crying. Mark asks what's wrong. Dr. Greenway tells them that Diane's employer just couriered a letter informing her that she has lost her job. Reggie is furious and asks to keep the letter. Diane allows her to do so. Mark and Diane comfort each other about the job loss.

Reggie leaves the room and calls Clint. She tells him to prepare a summons, because she is filing a lawsuit against Diane's employer, Ark-Lon Fixtures and the president of the company, Chester Tanfill. Later, Reggie picks up the papers and drives over to Ark-Lon Fixtures to hand deliver them. Mr. Tanfill's secretary gives Reggie trouble, until Reggie explains that she is a lawyer and that she is going to sue Mr. Tanfill and his company for millions of dollars.

Mr. Tanfill does not take Reggie seriously at first, but soon enough, Reggie scares him into cooperation. She explains to him exactly how she will sue him and on what basis. When Mr. Tanfill suggests that he may be willing to bargain, Reggie is ready with her demands. Reggie asks him to give Diane her job back, to continue sending Diane her paychecks while she stays in the hospital with her son for a few more weeks, to give her a raise, and to send Diane flowers to the hospital every week and maybe even a card. Mr. Tanfill nods away bewildered and taken aback, as Reggie lists her demands. When Reggie is satisfied that she has made her point clear, she leaves.

Dr. Greenway feels Ricky is ready for a first therapy session. He asks Diane to speak to the boys alone. Dr. Greenway asks Ricky if he remembers going for a smoke in the woods. Ricky gets scared, but says yes. Dr. Green asks Ricky if he remembers the black car drive up. By this second question, Ricky feels to scared to continue the therapy and goes back into silent mode. Mark is frustrated, but the doctor is not, for he did not expect to accomplish much in the first session.

## Chapter 16 Analysis

It is a sad Moment when the reader discovers that Diane loses her job. She already has so much to deal with, and now she has to worry about money. As soon as Reggie asks her to keep the letter from her employer informing her of her job loss, the reader knows there might be a bright ending to this subplot.

Reggie proves once again her superb skills as an attorney in Mr. Tanfill's office. In a short time, she prepares a lawsuit so thorough that Mr. Tanfill is ready to make a deal. Reggie's passion for her work drives her to go beyond the call of duty for her clients. The reader gains a great sense of justice and joy in this scene, when the reader finds out that Diane will not lose her job. In fact, she will get a raise.

# Chapter 17

## Chapter 17 Summary

Foltrigg and his men arrive at their office in New Orleans and jump right into a meeting. Foltrigg asks one of his researchers, Bobby, what he has found regarding ways to get the needed information from Mark Sway. Bobby explains that there are two possible courses of action. The first consists of creating a petition accusing the child of misconduct, and therefore, a hearing will be held. Foltrigg, Bobby and the others discuss what accusation they can come up with to hold against Mark, like obstruction of justice. Once the kid is on the stand, the judge may be able to force him to speak, if they convince the judge that he knows something important.

Foltrigg likes this plan, particularly because hearing for these kinds of cases can remain confidential and outside of the realm of the media. Foltrigg worries that media coverage could be harmful, as it may portray the prosecution as desperate. If they lose, it will be even worse. Foltrigg's men find it funny that for once he does not want media coverage.

The second possible course of action would be to try and force Reggie to speak up about what she knows. However, Bobby warns that this is harder, because attorney/client privilege is nearly impossible to infringe upon. Foltrigg likes the first plan and tells his men to move on it first thing in the morning. Bobby warns them that they also have to protect Mark from the mob, because he could be a target if they find out he knows something. Foltrigg assures Bobby that they have that under control already.

Meanwhile, Muldanno's men are watching Mark. Nance plans to plant a bug in Ricky's hospital room. He already wired the phones in the doctor and lawyer's offices. Nance has another Muldanno thug helping him watch Mark. His name is Cal Sisson. Sisson calls Nance and reports that Mark is in the hospital with his mother and lawyer.

Gronke asks Nance if he thinks Mark told anyone about his encounter with the mob. Nance says that obviously Mark told someone, because there are suddenly more guards at the hospital. However, he probably did not tell the FBI, because there are no FBI agents hanging around the room.

### Chapter 17 Analysis

Bobby's warning foreshadows Mark getting into more trouble with the mob. We see so many more mobsters showing up to keep an eye on Mark. We find out everything is being tapped and wired, and soon they will discover that Mark knows and he will be in more trouble.

# Chapter 18

## Chapter 18 Summary

Reggie and Mark leave the hospital and head to Reggie's home. When Reggie told Diane that she gets to keep her job and that she is even getting a raise, Diane smiled and then cried. Mark was happy to be leaving the hospital and getting a break from all the sadness. Reggie spoke to George Ord and convinced him to have the FBI watch the hospital room, because the Sway family needs protection. Ord was more than happy to have an official reason for his men to hang around in the hospital.

Mark and Reggie chat on the way home. Mark asks Reggie why she takes her clients home. Reggie says her clients are usually sad cases, and she feels sorry for them. She tells Mark that he is lucky to have a mother who loves him. They arrive at Reggie's house, and Reggie introduces Mark to her mother, Momma Love. Momma Love warmly greets Mark. He enjoys the feast that Momma Love has prepared. Reggie leaves for a while, and Momma Love asks Mark about what he and Ricky saw out there. Mark dodges the questions and then quickly starts to ask some of his own questions to distract Momma Love from what she wants to know.

Mark and Momma Love spend a long time getting to know each other. Momma Love tells Mark about Reggie's kids, her grandkids. She tells Mark about how Reggie lost her kids, and how her ex-husband made her life a living hell. Momma Love is very sad that her grandkids got messed up with drugs and other bad things, and she has no relationship with them. Momma Love also tells Mark about Reggie's years in and out of institutions and her struggle to make it through law school. When Reggie finally turned her life around and became a lawyer, she decided to change her name.

Mark tells Momma Love that he feels bad that he did not pay Reggie much money. Momma Love tells him not to worry, because Reggie takes two pro-bono cases every month. Mark knows what pro-bono is from television. As the evening unfolds,

Momma Love attempts again to ask Mark about his case, but Mark tells her that his doctor told him it would be bad for his health to discuss what he saw.

## Chapter 18 Analysis

Momma Love is a wonderful character. She's warm, loving and a natural nurturer. She loves to cook for and care for the kids Reggie brings home. It is clear where Reggie gets her big heart. Momma Love is very curious, though, about Mark's case and keeps poking for information about what Mark has been through. Mark cleverly dodges her questions, coming up with one excuse after the other not to answer.

Momma Love tells Mark about Reggie and the sad story of her divorce. The reader has heard this story twice before already, once when the FBI and prosecutors discussed it, and the second time when Clint, Reggie's assistant, explained it to Mark. Through Momma Love, the reader gets a little more insight into Reggie's experience in losing her children, and how they've sunk into a life of drugs. This may be one of the reasons why Reggie is so motivated to help other children. Evidently, she's powerless to help her own.

When Momma Love tells Mark that Reggie takes two pro bono cases every month, Mark knows what pro bono means, because he has heard it on television before. Television taught Mark that half of lawyers work on pro bono cases out of kindness, and the other half were sleeping with beautiful women and eating in fancy restaurants. Once again, the reader sees just how much influence television has had on Mark, and how much of his understanding about the world comes from television.

# Chapter 19

## Chapter 19 Summary

Trumann gets a brilliant idea for the case. He figures out a way to put so much pressure on Mark that he will surely crack and speak up. Trumann heads to Foltrigg's office to announce the brilliant plan. Foltrigg and his assistants are working hard. Foltrigg is not afraid of hard work. He almost enjoys putting in 18-hour days. As he married a woman he did not love, because she had the right profile for his career, he did not care to be home early. He only cared to maintain a pretty family portrait that suited his career, and his wife was more than happy to exchange her services for the kind of salary Foltrigg brought home.

Foltrigg and his assistants figured out their game plan. It was simple. Every citizen has the duty to give testimony to aid the enforcement of the law, with no exceptions. If the Juvenile Court approach in Memphis fell through, Foltrigg planned to issue a subpoena for Mark Sway to appear before a grand jury in New Orleans. He figured this would scare Mark into loosening his tongue.

Trumann walks into Foltrigg's office. Trumann tells Foltrigg that he spoke to K. O. Lewis today. Lewis was second in command in the FBI. Lewis told Trumann that he would be happy to help with the case, if they needed him. So, Trumann figures they should call Lewis and ask him to have a chat with the judge at the Juvenile Court in Memphis to help make things go their way. Furthermore, they could get Lewis to explain to the judge that Muldanno's men are in Memphis and are all over Mark. It would be in the kid's best interest for the state to take him into its custody. That would surely make the kid crack.

Foltrigg instantly falls in love with the plan and tells Trumann to call Lewis right away. Trumann calls Lewis. Lewis agrees to speak to the judge. Foltrigg and his assistants are thrilled and they are all optimistic that their plan will work.

Meanwhile, Reggie is thinking along the same lines as Foltrigg and his assistants. She reads through her law books and affirms her worry that Mark has a duty to testify. The court will not care that his and his family's lives are in danger. Reggie imagines the scene in the courtroom, when the judge will order Mark to answer Foltrigg's questions. Mark will squirm, not answer and look at her with pleading eyes. Reggie thinks about the many young clients that she has scattered throughout various training schools in Tennessee for being in disfavor with the system. Reggie knows the easy and ethical thing to do is to tell Mark to come out with the information, but she can't bear to make him put his life on the line.

Mark sleeps in Reggie's house that night. When he wakes up in the middle of the night, he notices a man walking back and forth in front of the house. Mark knows the man is more than just a nosy neighbor, and he is scared. Meanwhile, a white Ford pulls up in front of Mark's trailer home. A man gets out, places a box in front of the door and leaves. A few minutes later, the box explodes, and Mark's home burns down. The neighbors rush to put out the blaze with garden hoses, but it is no use.

## Chapter 19 Analysis

The reader gets to see how the prosecution and FBI can play political games to make things unfair. The prosecution is using their connections with the FBI to influence a judge's decision. Mark seems to be powerless against these big shots. All he has is a poor lawyer fighting for him, and he can't even pay her. Trumann's idea is very clever. As soon as Foltrigg hears and loves it, everyone knows that he will pretend like it was his own. However, Trumann thinks to himself that he knows how to handle Foltrigg.

Reggie knows what is coming to her and Mark, but she is confused as how to react. It is difficult to have a child client, because children look to her for decisions and not just advice. She does not want to make decisions for Mark, but she knows she will have to do a lot more than just give lawyerly advice in this case. Mark notices a man outside of Reggie's home, walking back and forth. The man was probably sent by Muldanno. Muldanno's men seem to be surrounding Mark, wherever he goes.

Muldanno's men burn down Mark's home, a clear sign to Mark that they mean business and that their threats are not idle. Diane, Mark and Ricky have been through so much. Now, they also lose their home and all of their belongings. This adds more pressure on Mark not to talk, but the reader knows that Foltrigg will force Mark to come out with the information.

# Chapter 20

## Chapter 20 Summary

Reggie and Mark have breakfast in the morning and then head back to the hospital. Reggie tells Mark that he is on the front page of the paper again and that the story says that Mark must be hiding information from the FBI regarding Clifford, because he hired a lawyer. Reggie jokes about how accurate the story is. Mark vents about how sick he is of all this, and how he wishes he could go back to school and be a normal kid again. Reggie is sympathetic.

Mark tells Reggie that her house was being watched last night and that he is scared. Reggie tells Mark to trust her. Reggie, Clint and Mark slip into the hospital through unusual passage ways and arrive at Ricky's room to find Diane crying with a cop by her side. The cop tells Mark that their trailer has been burned down, and all their belongings are gone. Mark and Diane hug and comfort each other and agree not to tell Ricky about the fire yet.

The Honorable Harry Roosevelt has been presiding over the Shelby County Juvenile Court for twenty-two years. He has been offered many superior positions over the years, but has chosen to stay at his job. He feels that his job is important and has a desire to be there and do what is right for the children that come to his court. He has a reputation for being very tough on adults, who do wrong by children.

Harry's assistant tells him that a small group of men are waiting outside his office to meet him. The men include George Ord, the district Attorney, K. O. Lewis, Deputy Director of the FBI, and several other important figures. The men are let into Harry's office. They explain to Harry the case they have against Mark, and how desperate they are for what he may know. They also emphasize how much danger Mark is in, and why it would be in Mark's best interest if they took him into custody. Harry is very reluctant to allow them to charge Mark with obstruction of justice and take him into

custody, but he's eventually convinced. Harry warns them to treat Mark well while he is in custody, and then they leave.

## Chapter 20 Analysis

Judge Harry has many parallels with Reggie. They both have a passion for their work and for children's rights. They both care little for money and position, and work long hours for relatively little pay. This judge sounds like good news for Mark. He is not likely to allow the FBI or district attorney's to take advantage of Mark, although the reader sees that the FBI and district attorneys are pretty good at convincing the judge of their point of view. Harry agreed to allow them to implement their plan to get Mark to talk. This means that, soon, Mark will face the courts and be intimidated and nearly forced into giving up the information he holds.

# Chapter 21

## Chapter 21 Summary

Mark, Diane and Ricky lay in Ricky's room. Mark thinks about the fire and slowly comes to the realization that the fire was no accident. He wonders how much insurance will cover, and whether or not his mother has been paying the premiums. He remembers how his father was always the one to handle the family finances, and how his mother often messed up bill payments after the divorce.

A couple of cops and some nurses show up at the hospital room. Mark feels something is wrong. The cops explain that they have to take Mark into their custody and take him to a summons at court. Diane goes crazy with anger and fear. She yells and curses at the cops and tells him there is no way they will take Mark from her. Diane slaps one of the cops. Security guards hold Diane down, as the cops haul Mark away. Diane yells and screams, and suddenly Ricky gets out of bed to come and see what is happening. Ricky groans, and Diane sweeps him up into her arms and rocks him in bed.

Mark gives the cops hell, as they leave the hospital. He shouts out to the media and hospital staff that the cops beat down his mother and are taking him, a little kid, to jail. Mark calls the cops names and curses at them. They try to shut him up, as he is embarrassing them in front of everyone. They realize their attempts are futile. Mark threatens the cops and tells them that he has the best lawyer in town. He says that, by morning, they will probably no longer have their jobs. His lawyer is going to sue them for what they are doing to him, and what they did to his mother.

Mark insists on riding in the backseat, as the cops drive him to the detention center. He continues to shout at the cops and make fun of them. The cops hand Mark over to the staff at the detention center and are thrilled to have him off their hands. Mark is taken to a room, where he sits and thinks about the many problems he now has. He has

a burnt down home, a sick brother and depressed mother. Plus, the mob and FBI are both after him.

## Chapter 21 Analysis

Ricky was just starting to recover, when he sees another traumatic scene with his mother being held down by guards and his brother being hauled away by cops. Ricky regresses back with a mournful moan and a blank look, like the one he had during the scene with Clifford. The reader wonders just how badly this new trauma will worsen Ricky's condition.

When the cops drag Mark away, he swears at them with bad language. This may be because he just heard his mother using that kind of language. This shows how susceptible kids are. They speak and act the way they see others speak and act. Mark also asks the cops to read him his rights and reads them to himself, because he says he knows them well from television. Again, much of what Mark knows comes from television.

Mark threatens the cops with his smart lawyer, who will sue them and have their jobs in the morning. This shows what a feisty, confident kid he is. He has lots of faith in Reggie and an unrealistic view of her abilities, probably obtained from his idea of the stereotypical lawyer he watches on television. Mark insists on riding in the back seat and shouts out to the media that the cops are taking him to jail. This shows that he is at least partially enjoying all this attention and this being treated like a criminal.

# Chapter 22

## Chapter 22 Summary

A small service takes place for Clifford, attended by Muldanno, Foltrigg, a bunch of lawyers and judges, and the media. Foltrigg leaked to the media that Muldanno would be at the service, so that he could get some media coverage. Clifford had no family, therefore, the service was small, and there were no tears.

As he is leaving, Foltrigg is approached by the media, who want to ask him questions. He lies and says he has to be in court in fifteen minutes, his standard answer, but that he will give them a minute or two. He answers their questions, and then says that he has to rush off and leaves in a hurry.

By noon, Mark is ready to escape from his jail, but he finds no way out. He thinks about the great jail escape movies he has watched and thinks he can figure out a way. Someone walks into his room and hands him a phone and a phone book. He calls his Mom, Reggie, and Dr. Greenway, but finds no one. He then decides to call the Memphis police department and finds out that Detective Klickman will not be in until noon. Mark calls several fast food places and orders about forty deep-dish, supreme deluxe large pizzas, and a dozen Chinese lunches for all of Detective Klickman's office, at a cost of about five hundred dollars.

Gronke and Nance discuss what to do about the new situation with Mark. They wonder what to tell Muldanno, and how to answer him when he asks them how they can get to Mark now. Nance is tired of working on this case. He suggests to Gronke that they tell Muldanno that they can't do much now. Nance warns Gronke to leave the kid alone, as he's no ordinary kid. Mark has FBI all over him, and they can't expect to get rid of him without being noticed.

## Chapter 22 Analysis

Clifford's funeral is depressing. He has no family, and no tears are shed in his funeral. His only daughter is estranged from him and did not even show up at the service. Foltrigg purposely leaks information about the service to the press so that they will be present, and he can be in the spot light. He answers the press' questions in a way as to present himself as a hero, or America's crime fighter. For example, when the press asks about the new trial date, he tells them, "The United States will be ready for trial whenever he sets it" (p. 216). He uses metonymy to inflate his position and himself. He says the United States will be ready, instead of saying that he will be ready. Foltrigg is an expert at manipulating language to get the image that he wants across to the media. This is representative of how many people view politicians.

Mark shows his mischievous side with the prank he plays on Detective Klickman. Detective Klickman did not treat Mark kindly when he came to take him into custody, so the reader will not feel too sorry for him for getting some pay back. Gronge and Nance's argument about what to do about Mark's new situation shows that Mark being taken into custody could possibly be better in terms of his safety. Now, the mob is having a harder time keeping an eye on him and will not be able to get to him easily.

# Chapter 23

## Chapter 23 Summary

Reggie is meeting with the psychiatrist, Dr. Elliot Levin, while Mark, Diane and Judge Harry are all trying to get a hold of her. Clint shows up at the doctor's office and fills her in on the latest news the minute she steps out of Dr. Levin's office. Reggie is outraged. They rush to court, because there is less than hour left until hearing time. At the court, they run into McThune. Reggie threatens McThune with the tape and forces him to fill her in on everything. He warns him not to say anything self-serving and against her client, if he is called to testify.

Reggie steps into Harry's office, like it is her own. She and Harry are good friends. Harry and his wife, Irene, have been invited to several of Momma Love's feasts. Reggie confronts Harry about allowing the authorities to take Mark into custody. Harry justifies his action by telling Reggie that he is worried about Mark's safety. Harry tells Reggie to warn her client that the hearing could get rough.

Reggie goes to see Mark, who has now arrived at court. Mark asks if they can sue the detention center, because they have not fed him. Reggie says maybe, but quickly changes the subject. She explains what will happen to Mark. Mark asks once again what will happen, if he chooses not to talk. Reggie tells him that no one can make him talk, but the judge can order him to be taken back to the detention center. Then, Mark asks the question Reggie has been dreading. He asks if he can simply lie and say that he knows nothing. Reggie itches to say that is exactly what he should do, but knows she can't. Mark gets upset, when she tells him that he can't lie in court. Mark bursts into sobs, and soon, Reggie joins in. She can't stand children suffering.

## Chapter 23 Analysis

Reggie is apparently a well-connected woman. She is good friends with the judge that presides at the court, where most her cases are heard. Reggie is not afraid to confront the judge about his allowing Mark to be taken into custody. Reggie has no inhibitions when it comes to her work. She also threatens McThune and warns him not to say anything uncalled for against her client, if he should end up on the stand.

Mark finally asks Reggie the question that she has spent hours worrying about. She wishes she could allow Mark to lie on the stand, but she has ethics. Mark is upset with her. He knows that lying would be an easy way out, but he can't bear to fire Reggie. When Mark cries, Reggie also cries. This shows just what a soft spot she has for kids. She can't bear to see them suffer, although in her line of work, she encounters child suffering on a daily basis.

# Chapter 24

## Chapter 24 Summary

Two officers escort Mark into the courtroom. Slick Moeller is lurking around the court to get the story. Mark is surprised about how small and simple the courtroom is. The hearing begins. Reggie begins with several objections. She objects that she was not given enough time to prepare. She objects to Mark's mother being absent. Judge Harry tells her that he will grant her a continuance, but Mark must remain in custody. Reggie declines the continuance. Fink attempts to comment on the objections, but Judge Harry quickly puts him in his place and lists several rules for Fink to follow. One ruling is that Fink is not to speak, unless spoken to.

Judge Harry warns Fink that they need to present a decent case that justifies holding the hearing. Fink assures the judge that they do. Although Reggie asks the judge to dismiss the hearing, the judge agrees to hear the petitioners proof. The judge warns Fink that the hearing is closed, and the only person he can talk to about what goes on in this courtroom is Foltrigg. The judge orders McThune and Mr. Lewis out of the courtroom. He finds their presence unnecessary.

The hearing begins. Fink calls up his first witness, Officer Hardy. Hardy testifies about the phone call Mark made, how he found Mark at the crime scene, and how Mark lied to the police about what he saw and heard. Next, Fink calls on McThune, who provides the evidence to prove that Mark is lying. Evidence includes the fingerprints inside the car and the suicide note. Finally, Fink tells the judge that he would like to testify, himself. The judge is hesitant, but allows Fink to testify. Fink states that he knew Clifford from law school, and that they were in touch during the trial. Fink tells the judge about the phone calls Clifford made to him right before he committed suicide, trying to prove that Clifford knew where the body was hidden.

Fink tells the judge that they would like Mark to testify. The judge orders a break and speaks to Reggie, alone. The two of them discuss what is best for Mark. They agree that Mark should testify, but not tell the pertinent information. Judge Harry will have to accuse him of contempt of court and send him back to the detention center, but at least he will be safe there. The FBI will also have time to put together a witness protection program for the family. Reggie worries that if Mark refuses to talk, Foltrigg will present him with a grand jury subpoena, and then they will have to go to New Orleans, which is not her territory. Harry assures her that he will not allow that to happen.

### Chapter 24 Analysis

Now, Mark has Reggie and Judge Harry on his side, plotting for his good. The two of them agree that it is best for Mark to testify, but not to tell the court exactly what he knows. Judge Harry is strict and embarrasses Fink many times, although Fink does his best to remain solid. Fink lays out a decent case to prove that Mark is a liar, and that he likely knows something about the Boyette case.

# Chapter 25

## Chapter 25 Summary

Reggie allows Mark to testify, but warns Fink that she will not tolerate abusive questioning. Mark takes the stand, and the judge begins to ask Mark questions. Mark is confused, because he has never seen a movie in which the judge is the one to ask all the questions. Mark answers the judge's questions and tells the whole story. The judge eventually gets to the important question, and Mark begins to stall. He asks the judge to explain what he means and does everything he can to dodge the questions. Eventually, he can no longer do that. He thinks about lying, but then remembers how, in the fourth grade, the cops came to his school and showed them how a polygraph test can detect liars. He worries that he will be found out, if the cops order a polygraph test.

The judge continues to ask Mark if Clifford told him anything about the Boyette case. Mark tells the judge that he wants to take the Fifth Amendment. The judge explains that it does not apply in his case, because he is not implicated in any crime. Mark continues to state that he is taking the Fifth Amendment over and over, until the judge tires of questioning him and orders him sent back to the Juvenile Detention Center. Fink is devastated. He was waiting excitedly for Mark to come out with all the information.

The judge tells Fink that they will meet again in court tomorrow. He will call Mark back to court every other day, and he expects Fink and Foltrigg to show up to court, every time. Fink explains that Foltrigg has a hearing tomorrow and will not be able to show up in this court. Judge Harry says that Foltrigg had better send the papers to prove that he has another court hearing. The hearing ends, and Mark gets ready to go back to the detention center. He tells Reggie to tell his mother that he is fine, and that he will try to call her soon.

Reggie and Fink speak to Judge Harry after Mark leaves. The judge tells them that Reggie will try to convince Mark to speak, but the FBI had better work on guaranteeing his safety. Mr. Lewis promises to have a witness protection program ready for them in days. Reggie agrees to talk to Diane about the possibility of going under a witness protection program.

In the men's washroom, the court bailiff meets with Slick Moeller and tells him everything that happened in the courtroom. Slick hands the bailiff a hundred dollar bill and assures him that no one will ever know his source. Slick's photographers catch pictures of Mark, as he leaves the court. Slick knew exactly where to position the photographers. Mark gets into the back of the police car. His stomach aches, and he feels scared and alone.

## Chapter 25 Analysis

Mark's decision to take the Fifth Amendment, when it does not even apply to him in this case, is probably something he got the idea to do from a movie that he has seen. His lack of understanding for how the law really works reminds the reader of just how young Mark really is. Fink is crushed when Mark does not come out with the information and that Judge Harry has now made his life even harder by ordering him to be in court every day, until Mark decides to come out with the information.

The little meeting Judge Harry has with Fink and Reggie after the hearing provides hope for a solution of mutual benefit. The option of going under a witness protection program sounds like a good deal for Diane and her family. The reader will have to wait to see how Diane will react to this offer.

Slick Moeller represents the media in this book. He is sly and tricky and knows his way around the court better than the lawyers. He gets his story by paying sources that ethically should not speak. Slick seems to care little for ethics. His only worry is getting the juicy details of the story that no one else can get. Slick provides a negative portrayal of the media.

# Chapter 26

## Chapter 26 Summary

Foltrigg waits in great anticipation for Fink to call him after the hearing. Finally, Fink calls, and Foltrigg excitedly picks up the phone. Fink explains the events of the hearing. Foltrigg is crushed. Fink tells Foltrigg that it's obvious that the kid knows where the body is. Foltrigg regains his excitement. He blurts out to everyone that he knew it; he just knew it. Foltrigg decides that they must act right away to subpoena Mark and his lawyer and take them in front of a grand jury in New Orleans. Foltrigg thinks that will surely scare Mark into talking. Fink tells Foltrigg that they need to move fast on a witness protection program, because that must be in order before the kid will talk. They agree to work on that, right away.

An officer drops Mark off at the detention center, and Mark is taken back to his room. He chats with the attendant and makes her feel sorry for him. He tells her that his brother will probably die, and that he will probably end up sick like his brother. The attendant feels sorry for Mark and asks him if she can do anything for him. Mark asks her for some pizza.

## Chapter 26 Analysis

Foltrigg wants to go to a grand jury in New Orleans, just as Reggie predicted. However, Judge Harry promised her that he would not allow that to happen. In the detention center, Mark obviously knows what he is doing, when he chats with the attendant. He knows how to make her feel sorry for him and to get what he wants. In this case, it's some sympathy and good food.

# Chapter 27

## Chapter 27 Summary

Reggie arrives at the hospital to talk to Diane. She explains to her the option of going under the witness protection program and all the benefits such a program could bring to her family. Diane is impressed at first, but then begins to think about a life of always being on the run, always looking over her shoulder and wondering if they have been found out. Most importantly, she'll always worry about her sons' safety.

Mark calls and speaks to his mother. He tells her that he likes the detention center and not to worry about him. He tries to sound so brave and apologizes many times for bringing them all into this mess. Diane feels horrible. She feels like she is failing Mark. There is nothing she can do to help him. After hanging up with Mark, Diane opens the television, only to see Mark on the news. The media is making him look like a criminal, and Diane becomes even more upset. Diane wonders how much longer she can bear all her troubles.

Barry the Blade meets with Gronke in a restaurant. Barry asks Gronke to fill him in, and Gronke tells him that Mark is in custody. They agree that most likely Mark knows something, otherwise he wouldn't hire a lawyer and refuse to talk to the authorities. Two FBI agents walk into the restaurant and ask a waiter to place new salt and pepper shakers on Barry the Blade's table. The waiter does so. Now, the FBI can hear the rest of the conversation between Barry and Gronke.

Barry knows that the FBI will soon ask Diane to go into the witness protection program, and he is scared that she will take the offer. Barry wants Mark dead. Gronke explains that that would be a bad idea, because Mark is a child. Plus, the FBI is all over him. Barry then considers killing Mark's brother or mother, but finally settles on the idea of killing his lawyer. That would scare Mark sufficiently, and no other lawyer would want to take on his case. Barry likes the idea the more he thinks about it. He

asks Gronke to do it. Gronke says he does not feel like killing anyone. Barry says that he will ask Pirini to do it.

Cal Sisson is sitting in a car, waiting for Nance to wire Reggie's office. Eight cops surround his car and tell him to get out. They know exactly who he is, and what he is doing. They offer him his freedom in exchange for information. Sisson answers all their questions. He tells them that Gronke is coming from New Orleans and possibly planning a hit. He tells him exactly where Gronke and others will be staying. The cops ask him who burned the trailer, and he says Bono and Pirini. They ask about future plans to burn, wire or kill anyone or anything. Sisson says there are no definite plans that he knows of.

## Chapter 27 Analysis

Mark is going through a horribly tough time, and he does not have his mother available to him physically, nor emotionally. Mark does not blame his mother. He blames himself for bringing the family this mess and tries to protect his mother from knowing just how scared and worried he feels. He often tells Reggie not to tell his mother about new problems, because he thinks he's mature enough to deal with them on his own. He does not want to bog his mother down with more troubles than she already has.

To Barry the Blade, killing is easy. He discusses the murder of several people as if killing is as simple as having a chat with someone. Gronke does not want to kill anyone and unsuccessfully tries to set Barry straight. At least, he does get himself out of having to do the dirty work. The FBI is overhearing all this, so although Barry just decided to have Reggie murdered, the reader knows that the FBI will protect her. The FBI are proving some competence, as they tap Barry's conversations and force Cal Sisson into confessing. Sisson tells the cops where Muldanno's men are staying in Memphis. Now, the reader will have to wait and see what move the FBI will take to stop them.

# Chapter 28

## Chapter 28 Summary

The cops call Reggie and tell her that there is an emergency at her office. She rushes over with Clint, and the cops explain to her that her office was wired by one of Muldanno's men, Nance, but that they have now arrested him. Reggie is terrified that she is now in the picture. The cops tell her that there are two more mafia men, Bono and Pirini, still hanging around town. She agrees to allow the FBI to position some men around her house.

Judge Harry calls Reggie and tells her that the supposedly secret hearing is all over the news. They discuss who may have leaked the information. Harry tells Reggie that he will subpoena Moeller and force him to reveal his source and then throw the source in jail. Reggie tells Harry about how the mafia tried to bug her office. Harry and Reggie now both agree that Mark should stay in custody, and that the witness protection program is the best option for his family.

Reggie arrives at the detention center to visit Mark. Reggie explains to him that the best thing to do is to accept the FBI's offer of witness protection. Mark disagrees. He tells Reggie that the mafia never forgets, and he relays all the movies he has seen where the mob always finds who they are looking for and get their revenge, witness protection program or not. Reggie tells him they have no other options. Mark tells her that he can lie.

The motion for continuance filed by Willis Upchurch on behalf of Barry Muldanno is attended by tons of media and voyeuristic lawyers. The presiding judge is surprised at how much attention a little motion for continuance is getting. However, with the presence of Barry Muldanno, himself, and the notorious Willis Upchurch and Roy Foltrigg, it should not be much of a surprise.

Muldanno is in good spirits. He did not yet know of Nance's arrest or that Sisson has spilled his guts. Foltrigg did know, and he heard the bugged conversation at the restaurant between Muldanno and Gronke. He knew that he could get Barry put away for at least five years, but he wanted the glory of putting Barry away for the murder of the Senator.

The hearing begins. Upchurch asks for a six-month continuance. Foltrigg claims that six months is too long, even though he needs the time as badly as the defense. The judge agrees to issue a continuance and belittles Foltrigg for his objections to giving the defense the time it needs. After the hearing, Upchurch and Foltrigg are happy to give impromptu press conferences in the hallway of the court.

## Chapter 28 Analysis

Now that Reggie knows that she is being watched by the mafia, she is scared and feels that there is more at stake. She is more open to cooperating with the FBI, and she does her best to convince the Sways to take the offer of witness protection. Reggie finally realizes just what kind of danger the mafia brings. Mark still refuses to put his life in everlasting danger by betraying the mafia. He is too scared. Reggie tries to convince him that it is his only option, but he knows there is always the option of lying in court. As the situation gets more dangerous, Mark starts to take a liking to the detention center. At least, he feels safe in there. Reggie, too, is no longer furious that her client has been incarcerated.

This chapter shows the media's fascination with crime and particularly the mafia. A little motion for continuance gets huge coverage from the media simply, because Barry Muldanno is the defendant, and they all know that he will be present.

# Chapter 29

## Chapter 29 Summary

Slick goes to the court for the summons, looking like a weather-beaten reporter, but Judge Harry feels no sympathy for him. The judge tells Slick that he is there, because he has violated the confidentiality of Judge Harry's court proceeding. In the process, he's affected the safety and well-being of a young child. The judge also makes it clear that there are no criminal penalties for such actions, only contempt.

Judge Harry reads parts of Slick's article to him and asks him how he obtained the confidential information. Slick says that he had a source. The judge asks who the source was. Slick's lawyers quickly try to intercede, but Judge Harry quickly shuts them up and continues to question Slick about his source. The lawyers try to find legal fault with the judge's line of questioning, but Judge Harry refuses to give into them. He again asks Slick who his source was. When Slick refuses to answer, Judge Harry tells him that he is in contempt and orders his imprisonment, until he agrees to answer the judge's questions.

Meanwhile, Grinder, Slick's source, who happens to be in the courtroom, because he is a guard in the court, feels sick and is about to vomit from the anxiety. Grinder is terrified that Slick will give in and name him, but Slick gets dragged off to jail and remains faithful to his source. Judge Harry tells Slick that he will call him back to court on Monday for another try. Meanwhile, he had better not do any writing. Slick's lawyers are helpless, and can only promise him an appeal.

Diane and Mark discuss the idea of moving to Portland under the witness protection program. They discuss their worries of always being on the move and always watching their backs, worried about mafia retaliation. Diane tells Mark that the mafia is scary. Mark says, I know I've met them and proceeds to tell her about his meeting with the mob man, who threatened him with a switch blade in the elevator. Diane is

shocked and asks him why he did not tell her before, but does not have the energy to be mad for long.

Mark, Diane and all the lawyers arrive in Judge Harry's courtroom. The judge puts Mark on the stand and questions him about what he knows. Mark says he does not want to answer any questions, just because he is scared. Judge Harry asks to speak to the FBI before they leave. K.O. Lewis and McThune explain to the judge that they have been keeping an eye and ear on Muldanno and they know that he is up to no good. They play the recorded conversation between Muldanno and Gronke for the judge. Diane and Reggie listen carefully to Muldanno, as he says he wants Mark dead and possibly Reggie, too. Reggie is terrified to hear that she has become a mob target. The danger hits home for Diane, as well. Diane trembles.

Judge Harry uses the opportunity to again bring up the idea of the witness protection program. Diane says that she is scared. Judge Harry tells her that she will be under the protection of the FBI. Diane asks why they can't just arrest those guys. The FBI explains that they've made one arrest and are attempting to arrest the others. Diane then suddenly realizes that this is the mafia they are talking about, and that the mafia is an invisible army with a large number of soldiers, who can never all be put away at the same time. Diane tells them that she will take the witness protection plan, only when they can show her a plan that completely guarantees her family's safety.

## Chapter 29 Analysis

Listening to the tape recording of Muldanno's conversation with Gronke makes the danger tangibly real to Diane and Reggie. Reggie is shocked that she has become a target. This shows that she probably never had a client that was mixed up with the mafia before and is naive about how dangerous the mafia is. This may be one of the reasons why she was opposed to Mark being in custody. However, after hearing this tape, Diane and Reggie both want Mark in the detention center, because it is the safest place for him. Judge Harry and the FBI both thought hearing the tape would make Diane more likely to accept the witness protection program, but it seems hearing how

real the danger is only scared Diane further away from being able to accept the FBI's deal.

# Chapter 30

## Chapter 30 Summary

Gronke takes a flight back to New Orleans. Gronke is tired of doing dirty work for Muldanno, even though they are close friends and business partners. One time, Muldanno bragged to Gronke about the Senator's murder. Senator Boyette had become a big problem for Muldanno, because he was standing in his way of the Sulari family business, which was a landfill. Finding an opportunity to kill the Senator was easy, because Muldanno found out that he frequented a certain strip club and slipped in through the back. When Boyette disappeared, there were rumors that he staged his own disappearance to escape his mounting debt and problems with his ex-wife.

Reggie appears in Judge Harry's courtroom, but this time, it is for a different client. She needs a favor from Judge Harry. Judge Harry is happy to help Reggie out. Judge Harry asks Reggie to push her client towards accepting the witness protection program. Reggie says that she will try and that, hopefully, they can wrap this case up soon.

## Chapter 30 Analysis

This chapter sheds light on the relationship between Gronke and Muldanno. They are business partners. It seems that Muldanno has a habit of asking for big favors from his friends and business partners, but Gronke has no intention of continuing to do dirty work, like killing kids, for Muldanno. The reader does not know how Muldanno will react to this. Will he get angry, or will he accept Gronke's rejection?

Reggie knows how to get her way with Judge Harry. They both think in similar ways about justice and have a soft spot for children. It is no wonder why it is so easy to get a signature from Judge Harry for Reggie.

# Chapter 31

## Chapter 31 Summary

Foltrigg asks Fink about the grand jury subpoenas. Fink tells Foltrigg that he had delivered them to the US marshal in Memphis and gave him instructions not to serve them, until he heard from Foltrigg. Foltrigg says that he does not think the local Memphis authorities will interfere with the US Marshal office, so they do not anticipate any problems. Fink asks Foltrigg why he would subpoena the lawyer, when he knows any information that she may hold is privileged. Foltrigg admits that it is pure harassment. Foltrigg jokes that Judge Harry will be lonely on Monday, as Mark and his lawyer will be in New Orleans. No one will show up at the hearing. Wally laughs, but Fink does not.

Doreen, the guard at the detention center, goes to check on Mark. He instantly turns into a zombie, when he hears her come in. A while later, the door opens again, and Mark goes into a zombie-like state again, until he realizes that it is not Doreen at the door, but two US Marshals. They inform Mark about the subpoena and tell him that they will pick him up tomorrow afternoon and escort him to the grand jury trial in New Orleans. Mark asks if his lawyer knows about this. They tell him that they are not required to inform lawyers, but that his mother will be informed. Mark asks to speak to his lawyer. The officers tell Doreen to bring him the phone in thirty minutes.

Other US Marshals are busy delivering the same papers to Diane and Reggie, all coordinated to be delivered at the same time. When the officers arrive at Reggie's house, Momma Love answers the door. The officers explain their business. Momma Love tells them that Reggie does not live here. They point out that her car is in front of the house. Momma Love insists that Reggie is not here, and the officers leave angry and disappointed. They promise to be back. As soon as Momma Love is sure they are gone, she goes up to Reggie's apartment over the garage.

Diane accepts the papers without comment and reads them by herself. The subpoena gives no details, only orders for Mark to be present in front of a grand jury on Monday. Diane calls Reggie, but does not find her. When Reggie finds out the bad news, she goes over to Clint's house, taking one hour to get to Clint's house, even though he lives fifteen minutes away, to make sure no one is following her. Reggie calls Diane and tries to reassure her. Diane tells Reggie she could not get through to Mark at the detention center.

Reggie and Clint discuss the situation. They realize that Foltrigg purposely issued the subpoenas on Friday, so that they will not have time to oppose the subpoena, as the trial is on Monday. Reggie says that she will continue to dodge the subpoena. If she is not served, she will not have to show up. Reggie says that the prosecution can't ask her to answer any questions, because they know her information is privileged. Clint asks Reggie if she knows where the Senator's body is buried. Reggie declines. Clint asks if Mark knows. Reggie affirms this. Clint says that they must find Harry right away and tell him what is going on. Harry is on a fishing trip, but Clint says that he will track him down.

### Chapter 31 Analysis

Foltrigg is confident that his plan to subpoena Mark and Reggie will not be hampered, but the reader knows that Judge Harry promised Reggie that he will not allow that to happen. Foltrigg seems to think that no local authority would dare interfere with the US Marshall, but the reader knows that Judge Harry is exactly the kind of man who would do such a thing.

Mark's zombie act shows that Mark can be manipulative and knows how to provoke sympathy. When the US Marshals deliver the subpoena to Mark, his first reaction is to ask if his lawyer knows about this. Mark has an unrealistic expectation of his lawyer, as if she can supernaturally protect him from any harm and wrong doings.

When Diane finds out about the subpoena, she is helpless to do anything. She is even unable to get through to Mark. Reggie comes up with a good plan to dodge the subpoena, and Momma Love was smart enough to allow for that to happen. Reggie and Clint realize that Harry is the only one with the power to help them now, but he is away on a fishing trip. Clint says he will do whatever necessary to track him down, but the reader will have to wait and see if Clint and Reggie will find Harry in time to get his help.

# Chapter 32

## Chapter 32 Summary

In the Juvenile Detention Center, Telda, the guard, comes in to check on Mark. He's curled by the toilet, sweating profusely and sucking his thumb. Telda is terrified. She remembers that Doreen warned her to keep a close eye on Mark, because he is very fragile. Mark begins to moan, just like Ricky did. Telda blames herself for allowing the US Marshals into Mark's room. Obviously, they scared him to death, she thinks. Telda finds a note from Doreen that says to take Mark to St. Peter's and call Dr. Greenway in case of an emergency. Telda calls an ambulance, and they take Mark to the hospital. Mark's heartbeat is soaring, and the paramedics think that he is in shock. Telda says that he must be going through the same thing as his brother. Everyone, including the paramedics, knows who Mark is, and that the mob is after him. The paramedics note that Mark is burning up, but that usually people in shock are cold and clammy.

They arrive at the hospital, but the emergency room is full, and the wait is long. The paramedics try to get some medical attention for Mark, but one nurse rudely points out that they have too many bloody bodies around there, and that a psychiatric emergency is not priority. As the paramedics and nurse argue, Mark takes the opportunity to hop off his stretcher and wander around the hospital.

Mark calls Reggie from the morgue. He tells her that he tricked everyone into thinking he has gone into shock. He tells her that he jogged around his room for half an hour and made himself sweaty and hot, and made his heart race. Reggie is baffled and worried for his safety. Mark tells her that he knows his way around the hospital and can hide for a while, but he needs her help to escape. Reggie asks him if his mother knows. He says yes and that she freaked out, but quickly calmed down and is on pills, so she will be okay. They agree to meet in the parking lot, and Reggie takes Clint's car to the hospital.

Clint warns Reggie that she is becoming an accomplice and is risking her license. Reggie does not care. Clint continues to try to talk Reggie out of helping Mark to escape, but she does not listen to him. She asks him for his credit cards and whatever cash he has on him. She also tells him to stay by the phone and to take care of Momma Love. Reggie packs her toothbrush in her bag and leaves.

### Chapter 32 Analysis

At first, Mark seems to really be in a state of shock. His condition seems real, otherwise how could he really produce a fever and sweat and a wild heartbeat? However, other signs point to this being an act. Mark begins to moan like he remembers Ricky moaned. Also, the paramedic notes that Mark has a fever, when usually shock makes people cold and clammy. At the hospital, when Mark casually gets bored of the stretcher and sneaks off to wander around the hospital, it becomes clear that he is not in a state of shock. Still, the reader wonders how Mark pulled off a fever and fast heartbeat.

Later, the reader discovers how Mark pulled off his act. This goes to show just how smart and manipulative he can be. When Mark calls Reggie, he knows exactly what to say to convince her to help him. He is clever and irresistible to Reggie. He reminds her how she is also in trouble and convinces her that there is no other way out but for her to help him, and for them to make a run for it together. Reggie's final words to Clint sound like she might be gone for a long time. She actually tells Clint to take care of her mother. This foreshadows that Reggie is probably thinking to hide out with Mark for quite a while.

# Chapter 33

## Chapter 33 Summary

Reggie thinks about how she will deal with the charge of accomplice, as Mark gets into her car. She figures she won't get into too much trouble. She can make a good argument that Mark was being chased by the mafia, and she had no choice but to help him. Reggie asks Mark where they should go now. They juggle around some ideas, sometimes jokingly and randomly deciding on Arkansas. For a while, they think a cop is following them, but then the cop drives past them. Mark jokingly likens him and Reggie to Bonnie and Clyde. Reggie is amused.

Mark and Reggie chitchat. Mark takes pleasure in again telling Reggie about his escape act. Then, Reggie tries to entice Mark with the witness protection plan again. She tells him that the FBI can offer him and his family whatever life they choose, but Mark does not want to spend the rest of his life fearing the mafia. Mark tells Reggie that jail time has allowed him to think, and he came to a realization. What if Romey told him lies and not the truth? What if he tells the FBI where Romey said the body is buried, but then it turns out Romey was lying? It would be all over.

Mark comes up with the idea that they should drive to New Orleans and check if the body is where Romey said it would be, in Romey's house. Reggie is shocked, when she finds out where the body is buried. However, after a moment of stunned silence, she tells Mark that there is no way they will do that. It is too dangerous. Mark tries to convince her that they will not find the body, and then it will all be over. Reggie asks him what they would do if they found the body. Mark says that then they'll know for sure that the body is there, and the FBI will be willing to do anything Mark asks. Reggie asks him what he wants. He says a nice house in Australia, a car and some plastic surgery. Reggie laughs his plan off, but agrees that going to New Orleans is a good idea, because that is the last place anyone will expect them to go.

In Arkansas, Reggie stops for gas and snacks. Mark hides in the car. Later, Mark asks Reggie if they're being chased yet. Reggie senses excitement in his voice. Reggie asks him, if he is willing to go for the witness protection plan; why not do it now? He says that he does not completely trust the FBI. He'd rather know if the body is there for sure, before he tells them. He would rather have the upper hand by forcing them to protect him, before he tells them anything. Reggie tells Mark that he is not making much sense, and Mark changes the subject.

### Chapter 33 Analysis

Reggie has proven just how big of a soft spot she has for Mark by risking her own name to help him escape. Mark also proves that he is clever, because he knows exactly what to say to convince her. He makes it sound like they are in the same boat, because he is escaping from the grand jury, and she is dodging subpoenas. He even refers to them as Bonnie and Clyde. Reggie knows that Mark is exaggerating, but she still finds him irresistible. It becomes obvious that Mark is really enjoying being on the run. When he asks if Reggie thinks they are being chased yet, Reggie senses the excitement in his voice. Mark continuously makes references to movies, and it is obvious that he feels like he is living an action movie. It excites him.

Mark's plan to check if the body is really where Romey said it was is crazy, and Reggie knows it. It seems that, with Reggie by his side, Mark is less fearful and more excited. Mark comes up with the idea to tell the FBI the wrong location for the body. This sounds like a promising idea, because it will get him off the hook with both the FBI and the mafia, but Reggie does not take his idea seriously or encourage it.

# Chapter 34

## Chapter 34 Summary

McThune has to leave a quiet Saturday morning with his family, when he finds out about Mark going missing. He calls K.O. Lewis, Trumann and Ord to inform them. Then McThune, Ord and some other men meet to discuss the case. An officer tells them what they know so far about Mark's disappearance, which is little. There are several problems. First, why was Mark taken to the hospital without police supervision? Second, why did it take eight hours to notice that he had gone missing? And third, why would Foltrigg do a stupid thing like subpoena Mark and call him to face the grand jury in New Orleans? McThune did not know about the subpoena, and he is shocked that Foltrigg would piss off Judge Harry, because everyone knows that Mark is under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. The officers agree to keep an eye on Diane, hoping that Mark will contact her to get in touch with Reggie and Foltrigg to inform them of the situation.

McThune goes to the hospital to talk to Diane. He informs her that Mark is missing, but that he does not think the mafia has him. Diane lies and says that she has not heard from Mark. McThune asks her if she knows where Reggie is, because they can't find her. Diane says no, but she is relieved, because she realizes Mark must be with Reggie. McThune tells Diane that he will leave two men in front of her door, in case she needs them, and to please call him if she hears from either Mark or Reggie.

Soon, Foltrigg has his boys assembled, and they discuss the case. Foltrigg does not think the mafia has Mark. He thinks Mark ran away with Reggie, and that they are somewhere in Memphis. Meanwhile, the FBI finds Reggie's car abandoned. Then, they go to Clint's house and knock on the door. Clint stays in his bed, pretending to be asleep.

Clint's phone rings, and it is Reggie. Reggie tells him that she and Mark are staying at a hotel near New Orleans. Clint assures her that he told Diane that Mark is safe with her. Then, Clint tells Reggie that she has gone mad. Reggie says that it is not the first time, she loses her sanity. Clint continues to ignore the knocking.

### Chapter 34 Analysis

At this point, the authorities are in a panic. They have no information as to whether Mark's disappearance is a case of a runaway, or if the mob got their hands on him. The Memphis authorities think Foltrigg's subpoenas were a dumb move, and now they have caused all this trouble. At the hospital, Diane covers for Mark. Apparently, she has more faith in her son than she does in the FBI. Nonetheless, when she realizes he might be with Reggie, she is very relieved. Diane obviously has no intention of cooperating with the FBI and is even more relieved when she finds out from Clint that Mark is indeed with Reggie. The FBI are knocking on Clint's door, and Reggie just finishes telling him where she is hiding. If the FBI gets to Clint; will he lie for Reggie?

# Chapter 35

## Chapter 35 Summary

Barry the Blade goes to visit his uncle Johnny Sulari. Barry is terribly nervous. He looks at the floor and tells his uncle that the kid has disappeared. Johnny calls Barry stupid, over and over again. Barry begs for help. Johnny asks him where the body is but tells Barry only to give him general answers, not to tell him the exact location. Soon, one question leads to another, and Johnny finds out where the body is. Barry begs his uncle to order some men to move the body. He is afraid the kid might talk, and moving the body is the only option. Johnny explains to Barry why that will be very difficult, since the body is in a residential neighborhood. Johnny continues to belittle Barry, but eventually agrees to send him three men to move the body.

The search for Mark in the hospital is over. The hospital agrees to allow the FBI to tap the phone in Ricky's room. The police continue to search for Mark outside the hospital's territory. The FBI contact Harry. He is livid and takes the first chance he gets to return from his trip. Clint continues to evade the FBI, and Momma Love refuses to answer any questions. The FBI put out an APB for Mark Sway and Reggie Love.

McThune gets a call from his men in the hospital, who tell him that Clint has called Diane's room and told her that Reggie and Mark are safe in New Orleans. Clint was calling from his girlfriend's house in East Memphis, but they did not have enough time to trace the call. McThune immediately calls Trumann in New Orleans.

## Chapter 35 Analysis

When the reader sees how Barry's uncle treats him, the reader can understand why Barry is so cold and mean. Barry transforms from a strong, fear evoking mafia leader to a little scared boy, when he enters his uncle's office. Barry's uncle agrees to Barry's

request to send men to dig up the body and dispose of it, properly. If Mark goes through with his plan to check up on the body, this may lead to a collision between Mark and the mafia, one that is likely to quickly turn deadly for Mark.

Clint was not smart to give Diane important information over the phone. Reggie should not have given too much information to Clint over the phone, because now the McThune knows that Reggie and Mark are together and in New Orleans. McThune immediately informs the New Orleans FBI, and soon they will be on Reggie and Mark's trail.

# Chapter 36

## Chapter 36 Summary

Reggie and Mark drive by Clifford's house and take a look. It is a big, yet plain house. Mark says he expected to see yellow tape everywhere. Reggie reminds him that no crime was committed here. Mark asks Reggie who will get the house now, and Reggie tells him that Clifford's heirs will. Mark tells Reggie that he thinks it is time for him to get a will. Reggie asks him what he owns. Mark reminds her that he is nearly a celebrity now. Producers will be knocking on his door, even though he does not have a door at the moment, and begging to make a movie about his life. Mark wants his mother and brother to get the movie rights to his life story.

Reggie has a map of the neighborhood, and the two of them use it to make their way close to Clifford's through the woods at the back of his house. They discuss back and forth whether they are seriously going to dig up the dead body. Neither of them wants to admit that they probably will not have the guts to do it. Reggie finally asks Mark for the exact location of the dead body, and he tells her it is in the garage under the boat.

Meanwhile, K.O. Lewis lands in New Orleans and meets with McThune. They realize that they have no chance of catching Reggie and Mark, until they make a mistake. The director of the FBI gave them strict instructions to find Mark and make him talk. They were given the green light to offer him anything necessary.

## Chapter 36 Analysis

Mark shows that he has a humorous side to him. He makes Reggie laugh in the middle of the mess they are in. Of course, a part of Mark is probably not kidding. He probably does not think it is so far fetched for Hollywood to come running to him, because they want to make a movie about his life. Reggie and Mark get close to Clifford's house, but it seems that neither of them really has the intention of digging for dead bodies,

although they refuse to admit it. Meanwhile, the FBI are getting desperate, but can do nothing but wait for a clue as to where to find Reggie and Mark.

# Chapter 37

## Chapter 37 Summary

Three men sent by the Sulari family make their way into Clifford's garage. Leo and Ionucci are regular leg breakers for the mafia and actually related to Barry the Blade, although they rarely admit it. The last man is simply known as the Bull, due to his size and muscle power. Barry had diagrammed the area for them and told them exactly how to carry out the procedure. He assured them many times that this is an easy job, and they will not get caught.

As the three men try to enter the house, they realize they need to break some glass. They do the job as quietly as possible and gain access into the horribly messy garage. Barry explained to them exactly where to start digging, and they get to work, immediately chipping away at the gravel first and then the concrete.

Reggie and Mark had left for some rest and food and returned after dark. Reggie asks Mark if he is sure he wants to do this, and Mark takes her hand and leads the way through the woods back to Clifford's backyard. They walked close enough to see the outline of Clifford's garage. Mark tells Reggie to stay where she is, and that he will be back. Reggie yells at him to stay, but Mark crawls closer to the house, until he notices that glass has been broken, and the door is ajar. Then, he also hears a sound. Mark crawls closer, until he trips and makes a loud noise. Leo comes to check it out and finds nothing. He decides that it must have been a cat. The men go back to their digging, and Mark returns to Reggie.

Mark explains to Reggie what happened. He tells her there are men in the garage digging up the dead body, and they have to stop them. Reggie tells him that it is a good thing, that way the mafia will have nothing against him, and his life can go back to normal. Mark refuses to accept that. Reggie begs Mark to leave with her, but Mark refuses to leave. He keeps on saying, just a minute, just a minute, and Reggie can't

bear to leave without him. Although she does not know what exactly Mark wants to do, Reggie tells Mark that he is crazy. At that moment, she actually believes it.

Mark crawls away once again, gathers three rocks and throws them at Mr. Ballantine's window, until the window breaks. Mr. Ballantine jumps out of bed and grabs his shotgun. Mrs. Ballantine calls the cops, and soon they can hear sirens. Mark hurries back to Reggie, and they tremble in each other's arms. Leo and the other mob men do not know what his going on, but when they hear the cops, they hurry out as quietly as they can, passing by Reggie and Mark on their way. Reggie is terrified. Reggie and Mark wait for the mob men to leave, and then wait for the cops to leave. They wait some more, before Reggie feels that it is safe for them to go to the car.

### Chapter 37 Analysis

The fact that Muldanno's men are moving the body could be a golden opportunity for Mark. He can be off the hook and free to go back to his normal life, as Reggie points out to him, but something makes Mark refuse to take this easy way out. Maybe Mark has grown a sick liking to being wanted by the mafia, or maybe he does not want the big screen movie action to end. He feels like a celebrity and a star, and if the mafia are not after him anymore, and if he no longer holds information needed by the FBI, then he will go back to being a nobody. This beats any feelings of fear Mark may have.

Mark comes up with a brilliant plan to upset the mob's plans to move the body. He creates a diversion that requires the cops to show up. The mob men have no choice but to flee the scene, their work undone. At this point, Reggie truly believes that Mark is mentally ill, and maybe there is something to that. Mark is not completely insane but there are definitely psychological factors. He thrives on a need for attention and excitement, which is a driving force for Mark's crazy actions.

# Chapter 38

## Chapter 38 Summary

Once again, Reggie tries to talk Mark into leaving the scene, but Mark refuses. She realizes that she can't win the argument. Mark tries to calm Reggie down and comfort her. Reggie tells Mark she has had enough and is leaving, but Reggie does not move. Mark tells Reggie that it is not safe to step out of their hiding spot yet. He tells Reggie to stay where she is, while he takes a look at the body. Reggie says that there's no way she is going to let him go alone.

Reggie follows Mark into the garage. Mark grabs one of the chisels and rips the black garbage bag wrapped around the body, until he stands face to face with the decaying face of the late Senator Boyd Boyette. Reggie is revolted and trips on a bag filled with cans. The clatter wakes up the neighbors, and a light comes on next door. Reggie and Mark crawl away as quickly as they can. Mark asks Reggie if she saw the face. Reggie says mostly what she saw were the worms that covered the body. Mark says that he wants to see the body again. Reggie is about to slap Mark, when he explains to her that he is kidding. Reggie is not amused.

On the way back to the hotel, Reggie and Mark talk about the witness protection program. Reggie tells Mark that the FBI is desperate and willing to give him whatever he demands. Mark daydreams about the kind of place where he would like to live. Mark asks Reggie if she thinks the mob will ever find him. Reggie knows that she has no choice but to say no. She tells Mark that the FBI is his only option now.

In the hotel, Mark showers, and Reggie calls Clint. She tells him to get her Trumann's number. Mark gets out of the shower, slips into the new clothes Reggie bought him from Walmart and lays beside Reggie. Reggie asks him if he is okay, and Mark tells her he does not know what to do next anymore. Mark begins to cry, and soon the tears turn into a slush of sobs. Reggie holds Mark and comforts him.

Reggie gets a hold of Trumann and tells him they must talk as soon as possible. She gets Trumann's attention by telling him that now she has personally seen the body, and that the mafia is trying to move it to a different location. She warns Trumann that they must move fast if they want to get to the body before the mafia tries to move it again. They agree to meet at a restaurant. Trumann asks if he can bring K.O. Lewis. Reggie agrees, but warns Trumann to keep Foltrigg out of this.

### Chapter 38 Analysis

Once again, Mark gets his way with Reggie. Reggie is desperate to leave and go back to the hotel, but insists on seeing the body. Reggie has no choice but to follow him. She cannot bear to leave him or let him go alone, and she is unable to enforce her authority over him. Back at the hotel, Mark breaks down and transforms from the fearless brave young man, who off-set the mafia's plan to move the body, to a scared little boy, who does not know what to do.

When Reggie gets a hold of Trumann, she tells him just enough to get his complete attention and to have him rush the meeting as is necessary. Reggie seems to have a plan, when she tries to contact the FBI, but the reader does not know yet what she plans to do with her new information. She likely wants to make a deal to give the FBI the information they want in return for a very generous witness protection plan for the Sways. Mark and Diane are still hesitant to enter the witness protection plan, although at this point, it certainly seems like the best option, if not the only option.

# Chapter 39

## Chapter 39 Summary

Reggie meets Trumann and K. O. Lewis in the restaurant and clearly explains that the terms she will lay out are not negotiable, and that the FBI better hurry up and get the papers signed before Muldanno's men try to move the body again. Reggie hands Trumann and K. O. Lewis a list of three hospitals that specialize in child psychiatry and tells them to forget about Portland. Reggie lays out the rest of her requests. She wants K.O. Lewis to send his private jet back to Memphis and to pick up Diane, Ricky, Clint and McThune, if he wants to come. Reggie tells the FBI that the entire Sway family will be put under the witness protection program, and once they are on the plane off to their new home, she will tell the FBI the location of the body. Reggie explains that the witness protection program must include new identities for the family, a house, a car, a four thousand dollar allowance a month for Diane, with twenty-five thousand up front, and when Diane is ready, an easy, well paying job in the government sector. K. O. Lewis is more than happy to oblige.

Reggie explains that there are also a few minor issues, which will be covered in the agreement that she is having prepared as they speak, and that will be signed by all of them including Judge Harry. She also asks for the FBI's assurance that they will ensure that Foltrigg will be in Judge Harry's courtroom on Monday, because the judge has some issues to clear up with him, even if it takes a subpoena. The FBI agrees.

Reggie calls Diane and explains as much as she can over the phone. As Reggie and the FBI wait for Diane and the other to arrive from Memphis, they ask Reggie many questions about what happened with her in the last couple of days. Reggie tells them she will explain the whole story some other time. Trumann asks for some clues as to where the body is, so they can be prepared to move as soon as she tells them the information. Reggie tells Trumann that the body is only fifteen minutes away, and Trumann is giddy with anticipation. Reggie even tells him at which intersection to

station his men, and that they will need some hammers and chisels.

## Chapter 39 Analysis

Reggie has succeeded in gaining the upper hand and holding all the cards. The FBI has no choice but to do exactly as she says now, and she has no qualms with asking for a lot.

Reggie is firm with her requests for the Sway family, and the FBI seems more than happy to oblige with all her demands. They can feel how close they are to getting their hands on the Senator's body, and they do not want to do anything to upset Reggie. They all act like the best of friends now, and there are no longer bad feelings between Reggie and the FBI, at least no apparent ones.

The demands Reggie makes for Mark's family will ensure an amazing opportunity for Diane and the boys to start over. Diane will be able to have all of the things she dreams of, a house, a car, and the opportunity to stay home and take care of her boys and not have to work, until she is ready to take on an easy job with the government. A different lawyer may have only asked the FBI for protection and a home, but Reggie knows to ask for more than that. She knows what Diane really needs and that is a home and care for her children for a few years, until they are older.

# Chapter 40

## Chapter 40 Summary

Clint goes to Diane and encourages her to accept the witness protection program. Diane is still hesitant, but Clint helps her realize that it is her best option, if not her only option, right now. Meanwhile, Reggie, Mark and the FBI are transported to the airport, where they will wait for Diane, Ricky and Clint. Mark feels important sitting in the back of the black car being rushed to a private jet and surrounded by a ton of FBI agents, all looking out for his safety. He is also excited about getting on the plane, because he has never flown before.

## Chapter 40 Analysis

Diane is still scared to go into the witness protection program, but she probably does not have the strength to oppose what everyone else is telling her is best for her and her boys. Mark, meanwhile, is back to enjoying the star status he loves so much, as the FBI transports him to the airport.

# Chapter 41

## Chapter 41 Summary

When Leo and company arrive at Barry's without the body, they get hell from Barry. Leo assures Barry that they will try again in twenty-four hours. Meanwhile, they are keeping a close eye on the house, making sure no one goes near it. Barry's uncle tells them all to stay cool. They remain optimistic that the rest of the job can be finished quickly and soon enough.

Foltrigg attempts to contact Trumann but can't find him. Foltrigg is certain that Reggie has run off with the kid, and that likely she has gone crazy again. He smiles to himself at the thought and can't wait for the opportunity to nail Reggie.

Reggie, Mark and the FBI await the plane from Memphis. Mark thinks about how just a few weeks ago, he fought with a kid who made fun of him, because he'd never flown. He thinks of how great it would be for this kid to see him now. Not only is he going to fly, but he has been rushed to the airport by a private FBI car and is waiting for his private jet to take him anywhere he likes. Mark imagines how great his new life will be. He looks around at the FBI agents all eyeing him and thinks he might sign some autographs later.

The FBI informs Reggie that Ricky has been accepted into the hospital in Phoenix, and they alert the pilot of the flight destination. K. O. Lewis asks Reggie if she wants FBI protection for her own safety. Reggie says she is not worried about herself. However, if they want her watched, she does not mind, as long as the FBI keeps out of her way.

Finally, the plane from Memphis appears in the sky and lands. Mark runs into his mother's arms, crying and telling his mother how sorry he is. Diane is just glad to hold him in her arms, once again. Diane expresses some reservation about the whole plan,

and Reggie assures her that everything will be okay. Reggie tells Diane that after Ricky recovers, they can move to any location they like. Mark says he wants Australia, because he saw in a movie once that they have real cowboys there. Diane tells Mark that there will be no more movies for him, because if it were not for movies, they probably would not be in this mess to begin with.

McThune hands Trumann an envelope that he is to give to Foltrigg. It is a subpoena issued by Judge Harry, demanding that Foltrigg appear in his court on Sunday morning. Diane and Mark say good-bye to the FBI agents they have now become friends with. As Mark boards the plane, he realizes that Reggie is not following him. For the first time, it occurs to him that he will have to leave Reggie behind.

Mark walks back towards Reggie and asks her if she can come with him. Reggie explains that she can't. Neither of them ever discussed this issue before. Mark apologizes for everything, and Reggie tells him that it has been a pleasure working for him. Mark asks Reggie if he will ever see her again, and Reggie says no. Tears run down both their faces, and they hug and say good-bye. Reggie has the urge to grab him and take him home to Momma Love, but she leans on Clint for support.

## Chapter 41 Analysis

Barry is enraged, but his men tell him that in twenty-four hours, they will have the body. His uncle tells them all to calm down. They have no idea what Reggie and Mark have been up to and that, before twenty-four hours are up, the FBI will have the body in their hands. Foltrigg, too, has no idea what is happening. He gleefully daydreams about nailing Reggie, but soon Foltrigg will have what is coming to him. He will have to answer to the subpoena and face Judge Harry's wrath.

Mark continues to enjoy the glamour of the moment and even thinks about handing out some autographs. This shows that he is still a child inside, as mature and responsible as he tries to appear. Diane tries to think optimistically about the witness protection plan and, although she is not a hundred percent certain about it, she will go

through with it.

Finally, when it comes time for Mark and his family to board the plane, Mark realizes he will have to say good-bye to Reggie. Neither of them allowed themselves to think about this sad moment before. It is a tearful and heart wrenching goodbye. Reggie has grown to love Mark and wishes she could take him home. However, she is a realistic, practical woman and leans on her friend Clint for support.

# Chapter 42

## Chapter 42 Summary

The plane takes off. As Reggie waves good-bye to Mark, she tells Clint that she wants to switch to being a real estate lawyer, because she can't handle this anymore.

Trumann appears in front of Reggie. She looks at him, takes out the tape she recorded him on and hands it to him. Reggie tells Trumann that the body is in Clifford's garage and gives him the address. Trumann immediately speaks into his radio, and the FBI agents bolt into their cars. Trumann thanks Reggie. Reggie tells him not to thank her, but to thank Mark.

## Chapter 42 Analysis

As much as Reggie loves her job, Mark's case has worn her out like no other. She is ready to switch to a new niche within the legal system. When Reggie hands Trumann back the tape on which she recorded him breaking the law, she shows that there are no bad feelings left between she and the FBI. She tells Trumann the information the FBI has been dying to hear, and the FBI races away to obtain the body. The reader knows that the FBI will make it in time, because Muldanno's men do not plan to make their second attempt until night.

# Characters

## Mark Sway

Mark is a street smart and mature eleven-year-old boy, who likes to smoke, but is determined to stay away from beer and pot, because he has seen how they can bring people down. Mark's Dad was an alcoholic, who tormented his family with physical and emotional abuse for years before Diane, Mark's mother, found the courage to divorce him. Mark is a father figure to his younger brother, Ricky, who looks up to Mark and goes to Mark for information about the real world. Mark teaches Ricky to ride a bike, protects him from bullies, and informs him about all he needs to know about sex and drugs. To his mother, Mark is a friend and caretaker. Diane relies on Mark to protect her from her abusive husband and constantly relies on Mark's maturity and responsibility.

Mark is pulled between his terror of the mafia and his enjoyment of being in the spot light. Mark craves the attention and center stage he gets from being wanted by both the FBI and mafia. This craving of excitement leads Mark to cross the line between courage carelessness risk taking. Mark drags Reggie along into many dangerous and deadly adventures and Reggie follows along against her better judgment because Mark is irresistible and persuasive. For Mark, his family's safety is always number one on his list. He never thinks only about himself, but always thinks about his mother and brother and their well-being. Mark is very smart and brave. He finds a way to outsmart the mafia and off-set their plans to move the dead body, until he decides that he is ready to tell the FBI about the location of the body.

## Reggie Love

Reggie Love, who likes to be called only by her first name and calls others only by theirs, is a passionate lawyer, who strives to help children abused or disregarded by

the system. She has short grey hair and is of medium height and weight. She has a horrible past filled with abuse and heartbreak, including losing her two children to her own abusive husband. Reggie gives her all to her work and does not care about the money. She takes on Mark's case with a \$1 retainer and no promise of more money to come. Reggie is well aware of her responsibilities as a lawyer, but sometimes feels like the system stinks enough to justify a few broken rules. Reggie does not hesitate to blackmail the FBI, to help Mark escape from FBI custody, or to push to have Foltrigg subpoenaed to simply teach him a lesson.

Reggie does not have conventional lawyer/client relationships. Reggie forms emotional ties with her poor, abused clients and often brings them home. There, her mother, Momma Love, cooks and cares for them. Reggie goes out of her way to protect the children she represents. For Mark, that included risking her life. In the end, Reggie, in her partnership with Mark, finds a way to outsmart the mafia and pressure the FBI into a deal that satisfies her strict requirements.

## **Roy Foltrigg**

The Honorable Roy Foltrigg is the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Louisiana at New Orleans. Foltrigg loves authority and giving orders, but not as much as he loves the limelight. Foltrigg only does the glamour work for his cases, work that involved media coverage, and leaves the boring paper work to his loyal subjects. Foltrigg enjoys ordering around FBI agents most of all and, therefore, they all hate him and would love to see him go down. Cocky and over confident are understatement, when it comes to Foltrigg. He preached to juries, quoting scripture. He treats the media, as if he does not have any time for them. Foltrigg does not inspire loyalty, except from one or two people, who aspire to climb the career ladder by putting up with his oppression. Foltrigg gets his way through threats and political games, dodging ethics whenever he can get away with it.

## **Barry Muldanno**

Barry Muldanno is the notorious nephew of Jonny Sulari, one of the heads of the New Orleans mafia. He is also known as Barry the Blade. Barry wears shark shoes and flashy suits, has a well-built body and dresses to exude the image of power and success. He wants people to fear him and enjoys being eyed. Barry has a full head of black hair, colored to hide the gray, slicked down with gel, and tied into a ponytail. Barry adorns himself with a diamond earring on his left lobe, a gold bracelet, a diamond Rolex and a gold chain. He has brown eyes set close together, surrounded by puffy brown skin. Barry loves his eyes and thinks they are legendary. Barry acts like a tough guy, but when he gets into a rut, he runs to his coldhearted uncle and begs for help, like a child.

## **Jason McThune**

Jason McThune is the head of the Memphis FBI office. He gets involved in Foltrigg's case, when Clifford decides to commit suicide in Memphis, and Mark becomes a witness.

## **Judge Harry Roosevelt**

Harry Roosevelt is the judge at the Juvenile Court in Memphis. He loves his job, does not care for promotions or money, and cares deeply for the children who enter his court.

## **Jerome Clifford**

Clifford is a chubby, balding mafia lawyer, who was working on Barry's Muldanno's murder trial, until the pressure of working for the mafia gets too much. He decides to kill himself. Before he commits suicide, Clifford tells Mark a deadly mafia secret that

gets Mark into deep trouble.

## **Ricky Sway**

Ricky Sway is Mark's eight-year-old brother. He looks up to his brother and wants to copy Mark in everything, even when it comes to smoking. When Ricky witnesses Jerome Clifford's murder and his brother's near death, he goes into a deep post traumatic shock and ends up being hospitalized for a several weeks.

## **Diane Sway**

Diane Sway is the thirty-year-old, single mother of Mark and Ricky Sway. She ended an abusive relationship with the boys' father, but now has to work at a factory for minimum wage and has a hard time making ends meet. She cares deeply for her boys, but the stress of all that happens to the Sway family wears her out. Often, she does not know how to be a good mother for Mark.

## **Thomas Fink**

Thomas Fink is the Assistant US Attorney, working for Roy Foltrigg. He does the non-glamour grunt work that Foltrigg hates to do. Fink works very hard and knows the Boyette case inside out, almost better Foltrigg himself.

## **Wally Boxx**

Wally Boxx actually has a license to practice law, though he prefers to work as Foltrigg's right hand man. Officially, he is an Assistant Attorney, but in reality, he drives Foltrigg around town, runs errands for him and looks after Foltrigg's public image. He is loyal to Foltrigg and always stands up for him, hoping that one day his loyalty will pay off.

## **Larry Trumann**

Larry Trumann is a New Orleans special agent FBI, who resents having to cooperate with the pompous Foltrigg.

## **Willis Upchurch**

After Jerome Clifford commits suicide, Barry Muldanno hires Willis Upchurch to take on his case. Upchurch is thrilled at the opportunity to take such a huge case filled with glamour and media coverage.

## **Slick Moeller**

Slick Moeller is the unscrupulous crime reporter, who is always in pursuit of a good story, regardless of the cost. He resorts to bribes and law breaking and has a long list of paid informants.

## **Momma Love**

Momma Love is Reggie Love's adoring mother. Momma Love opens her house and her heart to all of Reggie's child clients. Reggie brings her child clients home to Momma Love, who cooks and cares for them.

## **Jack Nance**

Paul Gronke hires Jack Nance to keep an eye on Mark and his lawyer. Nance is asked to wire Reggie's office and copy important files. Nance doesn't care about what he is asked to do. He just cares about getting paid large sums of cash.

## Paul Gronke

Paul Gronke is a friend and former business partner of Barry Muldanno's. Muldanno asks Gronke to watch Mark for him and eventually discusses the murder of Mark and his lawyer as possible options to deal with their problems. Gronke does not want to murder anyone for Muldanno and carefully tries to get out of working for Muldanno.

# **Objects/Places**

## **Jerome Clifford's Garage**

This is where Barry the Blade hides the dead body of Senator Boyette.

## **The Clearing**

The clearing behind the Sway's trailer home is where Mark and Ricky go to sneak a smoke and where Jerome Clifford decides to kill himself.

## **The Sway's Trailer**

Mark and his family live in a trailer home that is eventually burned down, along with all of their belongings inside.

## **Ricky's Hospital Room**

Ricky stays in the hospital room for most of the novel. Diane, his mother, is forced to remain in that room, as well, waiting for Ricky to wake up. Ricky's hospital room is bugged by the FBI, when Mark escapes from the detention center.

## **Foltrigg's Van**

Foltrigg's white van is what he uses to travel, because he is secretly afraid of airplanes. The van is fully equipped with anything the District Attorney may need on one of his trips. Foltrigg travels in his van from New Orleans to Memphis, when he finds out that Jerome Clifford has committed suicide.

## **Judge Harry's Courtroom**

Judge Harry is a juvenile court judge, and his courtroom is small and simple. This is where Mark's hearings take place.

## **Momma Love's House**

Reggie takes many of her child clients to Momma Love's house, where Momma Love cooks and cares for them. Reggie also lives in a garage apartment in Momma Love's house.

## **Reggie Love's Office**

Mark randomly decides to walk into Reggie's office, while he searches for a lawyer. The mafia wires Reggie's office.

## **The Juvenile Detention Center**

Mark is jailed in the Juvenile Detention Center, when he refuses to answer questions in court. The judge is forced to hold him in contempt. Mark eventually escapes from the detention center.

## **The Cassette Tape**

Reggie secretly records a conversation Mark has with some FBI agents on a cassette tape and uses that tape to blackmail the FBI agents into doing whatever she asks of them. In the end of the novel, Reggie hands the tape over to the FBI agents, because she no longer has a need for it.

# Social Concerns

The chief venue in *The Client* is the Memphis juvenile justice system, and the chief problem for the system is how to get eleven-year-old Mark Sway to reveal what he may know about a criminal case. Through the frequent use of Mark's point of view, Grisham presents how the system seems callous, frightening, and unwilling to recognize Mark's good nature. While readers may know that the logical, legal, and even moral option is for Mark to tell what he knows, readers can also grasp how the system and its players make Mark resistant and fearful.

While sneaking cigarettes in the woods behind their trailer, Mark and his eight-year-old brother Ricky watch a man place a hose in his car's tailpipe in a suicide attempt. Without much thought, Mark intervenes, removing the hose, but then gets snatched up and taken into the car by the wired man, lawyer Jerome Clifford. Before Mark can escape the car, Clifford reveals in a rambling, hopeless, menacing speech the location of the body of Senator Boyd Boyette, a victim of Clifford's Mafia-connected client, Barry "The Blade" Muldanno. Mark escapes, and Clifford finally shoots himself.

Mark faces the dilemma of whether to reveal what he was told and in the process admit his involvement in the ghastly suicide. His proximity to the scene and other clues convince the police that he has much to tell them, but he keeps from them key details. He finds a lawyer to represent him -- finds her by roaming around an office building -- and explains to her: "I've lied to the police about this, and think they know I'm lying. My little brother's in a coma because of me [in shock from witnessing the suicide]. It's all my fault. I lied to his doctor . . . I don't want anybody to know what I know, because Romey [Clifford] told me his client had killed many people and was planning on killing Romey too . . . And the cops have threatened me if I don't tell the truth, and they think I'm lying anyway, and I just don't know what to do." While telling the truth seems to be the best policy, he would tell it to people who have threatened him and then he could become a target of reprisal from the Mafia. But only

his lawyer understands Mark's confused position; the police and government become increasingly impatient and mount a campaign of legal efforts to force him to testify. Grisham largely presents the authorities as heartless: Although they fight to bring a killer to justice, they are willing to abuse an innocent boy to achieve their otherwise noble goal.

Mark's experiences with the justice system have not encouraged him to have faith in lawyers. In his parents' bitter divorce proceeding, Mark asked to testify and told the judge in graphic terms about beatings administered on him and his mother by his drunken father. Mark believes that only his bold declarations saved him from going to his father's custody. And the officers he meets after Clifford's suicide do not inspire trust. The first policeman accuses him of lying and threatens to take him to the station for questioning, and the FBI people at the hospital mention the possible charge of obstruction of justice against him and his mother.

A softer approach might have won his confidence, but these people do not look at the events from his perspective nor realize how threatened they make him feel. When he refuses to talk, the authorities file a petition in juvenile court to have him declared a delinquent for his noncooperation. Although the court is ruled by the humane Judge Harry Roosevelt, the petition has legal standing, so Mark is hauled into a juvenile detention center. He complains to his lawyer, "If I didn't do anything wrong, why was I picked up by the cops and taken to jail? Why am I sitting here waiting for a hearing?" These are sobering questions that concern the limited rights of witnesses, the lack of power individuals have to protect themselves from the authorities, and the sometimes arbitrary influence of the juvenile court.

The Mafia threatens by naked aggression, whereas the government threatens by using a barrage of legal means that strip the individual of power over himself. But the police efforts and the juvenile court proceeding cannot bully Mark into talking about Clifford. When Judge Roosevelt seems willing to wait for a time and hold Mark in custody, the prosecutors become impatient and procure a federal subpoena to bring Mark to New Orleans, to their jurisdiction, where they can squeeze him. They hold the

subpoena until the weekend so that it can be served without interference from Judge Roosevelt.

The chief government villain is U.S.

Attorney for New Orleans J. Roy Foltrigg, who seeks a career-enhancing conviction of Muldanno and who is sure he can get it if he locates the body of Senator Boyette. He is another of Grisham's driven lawyers, utterly careless of how his efforts affect others as long as he achieves his goal. And his goal, while it may be to put a bad guy in prison, has become highly personalized, so that Foltrigg serves not justice but his own ambition. No one stops him; the prosecutors and FBI men in Memphis bristle at his commands that they serve his interests, yet then do almost all that he wants. And even Roosevelt must admit that Foltrigg's efforts have legal merit. Foltrigg can get the system to work for his own ends. Foltrigg's ruthlessness infects his staff; one of Foltrigg's assistants tormented Clifford, an old law school classmate, by hinting that the drunken Clifford had mentioned the whereabouts of Boyette's corpse. As Clifford endures a rapid descent into suicidal paranoia, the prosecutors see him only as a possible source of information they need. Toward Clifford and toward Mark, Foltrigg and his team are a heartless bunch.

In opposition to Foltrigg, Grisham places Reggie Love, the lawyer Mark serendipitously finds among a maze of law offices. A fifty-two year old with gray hair, Reggie has survived a cruel divorce proceeding, alcohol and drug addictions, and an emotional breakdown. After enduring therapy, Reggie attended law school and now specializes in painful cases few others can tolerate: custody, support payment disputes, and delinquency. Reggie is an example of the politically correct 1990s feminism: Abused in her earlier role as wife and mother, she has overcome personal tribulation to become an independent woman and an advocate of the downtrodden. She even has a male secretary, further reversing the traditional gender roles. Grisham pairs her with Mark, who likewise suffers abuse and trauma in his family situation.

Unlike the prosecutors, she understands his fear of the system. That both survive their pasts and retain their sense of mission for others -- Reggie for her clients and Mark for his family (even for Clifford in trying to stop the suicide) -- proves the strength at the core of their characters. In placing Reggie and Foltrigg in confrontation, Grisham appeals to revised, contemporary overviews of how the sexes approach problems differently. Thus Foltrigg and his cohorts display a masculine aggressiveness that seeks to dominate others, while Reggie partakes of the feminine inclination to hear others out, to understand the nuances of an issue (specifically, Mark's fears), and to reach a compromise.

Grisham provides *The Client* with a network of social issues. As in the previous novel, *The Pelican Brief* (1992), Grisham places an environmental dispute as the precipitating factor: Boyette was killed over his effective opposition to a mob-controlled proposed toxic waste dump. Dianne Sway, Mark's mother, works in a sweatshop packing cheap plastic lamps; she is fired when she has to stay by Ricky's hospital bedside. Grisham dramatizes the problems of borderline poor women such as Dianne who must rely on such heartless employers. Grisham does send Reggie to extort concessions from the employer by threatening an ugly law suit, which few poor women would think of filing. The press sensationalizes Clifford's suicide, hints at Mark's involvement, and pries into the closed juvenile proceeding. Grisham allows Roosevelt to punish the reporter for his snooping. In presenting these problems, even as tangents, Grisham returns to the wide social scope he used in *A Time to Kill* (1989, please see separate entry).

# Techniques

The chief problem Grisham sets for himself in *The Client* is to present Mark's reluctance to testify as believable. Readers may object that telling the truth would probably solve Mark's problems. Grisham tries to refute this easy answer to the dilemma in three ways. First, the narration goes inside Mark's head to convey his suspicion of authorities, confusion over legal procedures, and fear over what happened with Clifford. Second, the authorities come off almost as malevolent as the mob because they are so focussed only on getting the conviction; they are object lessons in how driven, ambitious lawyers can lose touch with humanity.

All the officials who contact Mark make the same mistake of demanding that a tough kid cooperate, or else.

They are oblivious to their impact on him and blind to other approaches: Grisham gives a sobering comment on how adult figures often treat children.

Third, Reggie and Harry Roosevelt both grasp the enormity of the threat against Mark from the mob and both understand his thinking.

Yet even very generous readers who feel that Grisham deftly overcomes the problem of Mark's reluctance must admit that Grisham allows some lapses of logic to enter the plot. Why is Barry Muldanno out on bail for a charge of murdering a Senator? If Muldanno could not move the body earlier because he was being followed, why does he feel safe to move the body at the book's climax -- is he no longer being tailed? If not, why not? After Reggie and Mark validate what Clifford told Mark by finding the body, but also after they realize that the mobsters are trying to retrieve the body, why does Reggie feel confident that she and Mark can wait for hours before telling the authorities? Would not the mobsters return to finish the digging? And why do they not return to finish?

The techniques that may keep such questions at bay are Grisham's trademark suspenseful plotting and his dense atmosphere. In this novel he returns to the style of *A Time to Kill* and lingers over characterization, background, settings (especially the cavernous hospital), and issues. The previous two thrillers, *The Firm* (1991) and *The Pelican Brief* (1992), are streamlined to keep the plots rolling. Even the heroes in the latter seem to lack depth (the real energy in *The Pelican Brief* appears in the political satire). While *The Client* has characters who are clearly white knights and villains, Grisham spends time making them rounded characters, as exemplified by the wealth of specifics he supplies for Reggie, Foltrigg, and Roosevelt. Whereas in *The Firm*, the partners tend to be hard to differentiate, in *The Client* Grisham strives to individualize the supporting players.

For example, he distinguishes the two camps of prosecutors, from Memphis and from New Orleans (led by Foltrigg), and develops the rivalry and impatience that exist between them.

# Themes

As the discussions of the earlier novels show, ethical dilemmas seldom disturb Grisham's characters; their goals, rather than morality, direct their behavior. However, the characters in *The Client*, at least Mark and Reggie, and also Harry Roosevelt, do feel the pull of ethics. More so than in the other books, here Grisham broaches the problem of how to decide to do the right thing. Whatever readers might debate about the standards of Jake Brigance or Mitch McDeere, both Mark and Reggie definitely do have internalized moral compasses. The task Grisham sets for himself in this novel is to dramatize how challenging it really is for good people to do good things.

Reggie knows that a lie will save Mark (if the prosecutors believe him):

He can say that he had been silent earlier because he was scared of the authorities and that Clifford told him nothing about Senator Boyette. But Reggie cannot counsel her client to lie in court. And although Mark brags that he wants to lie and charges that she is endangering him by not letting him lie, her advice meshes with his own instincts. He cannot make himself lie to the authorities, so he declines to say anything.

Mark's ultimate respect for the truth's sanctity is one of many indications of his strong morals. In the opening section, he lectures Ricky that the little boy can only smoke one cigarette a day and cannot, under threat of being beaten-up by Mark, take drugs or alcohol. When he sees Clifford prepare for suicide, Mark's impulse is to intervene and try to remove the hose; Mark cannot simply leave, as Ricky pleads for them to do. He later explains to Reggie, "I don't know. It was like I just had to do something once I realized what was going on. I couldn't run away. He was about to die, and I just couldn't ignore it. Something kept pulling me to his car. Ricky was crying and begging me to stop, but I just couldn't." Nor, after Clifford shoots himself, can he let the body lie in the woods, perhaps undiscovered for days, so he calls 911 to report the death. All the wretched events that follow spring from this effort to save someone's life; Mark deserves better. Although Mark may be a wiseacre and may mislead the police

early on, fundamentally, he is a good person who learns the sad truth that doing good is very hard.

Dianne Sway presents another standard of behavior, security. She adamantly refuses to urge Mark to cooperate and to enter a witness protection program unless the authorities can guarantee her and her sons' safety.

When challenged that her recalcitrance keeps Mark in custody, she retorts, "Sir, I'd rather have him in a detention center than in a grave." To the prosecutors, Mark is a witness who can give them what they need; to Dianne (and Reggie), Mark is a real person who needs assurance and protection. The prosecutors do not account for the human factor.

# Significant Topics

## Television's Effects on Children

One of the themes in *The Client*, is the idea that the media shapes the reality of children, and sometimes even adults, and affects how they view certain types of people. It may even affect important life decisions. In *The Client*, the main character, Mark Sway, constantly refers to things he has watched on television or in the movies. His belief in what he has seen shapes his understanding of the people around him and affects the decisions he makes. When Mark first meets Reggie, he is surprised that she is a female lawyer, but then figures it might be a good thing, because once he saw a female lawyer on television rip her opponents apart. Mark uses his knowledge from television to make wide sweeping generalizations about people.

Later in the story, Mark threatens many people using his lawyer as leverage. He tells certain officers that his lawyer will have their jobs by morning, because she is the best lawyer in town and can do that. Mark obviously misunderstands how lawyers work and experience limitations. Once again, he has gained his biases and stereotypes from television programs and movies.

In the Juvenile Courtroom, Judge Harry Roosevelt does all the questioning. Mark is confused because, in the movies, the judges never do the questioning. Furthermore, Mark seems to immediately have a feeling of mistrust for the FBI, likely as a result of stereotypes that appear in most movies. Mark's decision not to talk to the FBI stems from his mistrust of the FBI and his fear of the mafia. Both of these ideas were learned from television. Therefore, the ideas Mark picks up from television affect the life changing decision Mark makes not to tell the FBI the mafia secret that only he knows. Mark's terror of the mafia is ignited by phrases such as "the mafia never forgets," a phrase that he remembers from a movie and that keeps on repeating in his mind, until he trembles with fear.

There are times when Mark learns useful things from his television viewing. When Mark is trapped in the car with Clifford, who threatens to kill Mark, Mark remembers a stalling tactic from a movie and tries to use it to distract Clifford from his murderous intents. Mark asks Clifford lots of questions to slow down Clifford. In the end, this technique may have worked for Mark, because he does manage to escape from Clifford. It also leads him to more trouble, because Clifford answers Mark's questions and ends up giving him too much information, including the deadly piece of information regarding the location of the dead body buried by the mafia.

## **Abuse of Power**

In *The Client*, those in authority often have personal agendas and use their power to further those agendas. In some cases, the character's motivations are good, but in other cases, the characters are only after their own glory and success. Grisham shows that the legal profession, in particular, is filled with difficult ethical choices. Plus, the higher-ups in the system often put ethics and morality aside, in order to further their own causes.

The prime example of this type of corruption is Roy Foltrigg, the federal prosecutor in New Orleans, heading the case against Barry Muldanno in the murder of Senator Boyette. Foltrigg is a self-centered, unethical and manipulative prosecutor after only his own success and the limelight. Foltrigg works only aspects of the case that get media coverage and makes his subordinates do the boring grunt work. He never fails to take credit for all that goes right and distances himself from all that goes wrong. In the Boyette case, Foltrigg is desperate to get the information from Mark and does not ever stop to think about the price Mark has to pay for talking. Foltrigg plays every trick he can think of to force Mark to speak. He even subpoenas Mark's lawyer, even though he knows that lawyer/client privilege is sacred and can't be broken. Foltrigg gleefully admits that he subpoenaed Reggie just to scare and torment her.

Reggie Love, Mark's lawyer, also breaks ethical codes, in order to achieve her

purposes. Reggie wires Mark and tapes a conversation between Mark and two FBI agents, McThune and Trumann. In the conversation, McThune and Trumann are unethical and once Reggie catches them on tape, she uses the tape to blackmail the agents. Although, Reggie's motivations are more humane than Foltrigg's, her actions are still immoral and wrong. Reggie also helps Mark escape from the custody of the FBI, breaking the law in the process. Again, her intentions are good but, nonetheless, she breaks the law.

## The Mafia's Ruthlessness

John Grisham paints a grim picture of mafia culture, one that does not deviate much from the stereotypes of the mafia that people see in movies and on television. First of all, the terrorizing of the mafia and the knowledge of how they deal with those they have issues with is what leads Jerome Clifford to suicide. In *The Client*, the members of the mafia treat each other in abusive ways and speak of other people's lives as if they are worthless. Barry Muldanno's uncle, Johnny Sulari, treats Muldanno like a stupid little kid, who only knows how to mess up. When Muldanno goes to his uncle for help, his uncle puts him down over and over again, before he reluctantly agrees to help him.

In return, Muldanno treats his subordinates with the same wrath and oppression. Muldanno and Gronke were business partners, and Muldanno often took advantage of Gronke. He raked in much more than his share of profits, but due to fear, Gronke was never able to fight for his rights. Furthermore, Muldanno casually discusses plans to murder Mark or his lawyer, as if murder is no bigger sin than swatting a fly. Muldanno even laughs at the thought of how the murder of Reggie Love would teach all lawyers a lesson not to mess with the mafia. Therefore, in *The Client*, the mafia is portrayed as ruthless and evil. All involved are submerged in a culture that creates an ever-flowing circle of bad treatment and oppression.

# Style

## Point of View

*The Client* is written in the style of third person narration. The narrator of the story has very little presence, mostly going unnoticed by the reader. The reader can trust the narration and accept that it is objective. The author takes the reader into the thoughts and minds of many of the characters. Therefore, the reader can relate to, sympathize with and understand the motivations of more than just the main character.

## Setting

The novel begins in Memphis Tennessee, where Mark Sway and his family live in a poor part of town, consisting of a complex of trailer homes. There is a clearing behind the trailer homes, where Mark and Ricky go to play and smoke. Coincidentally, Jerome Clifford picks this very same clearing as the location for his planned suicide. The novel then takes the reader to New Orleans, where the mafia yields power, and where Roy Foltrigg reigns as federal prosecutor. The novel is fast paced and moves from place to place quickly, yet it only spans over the course of a few days. Grisham packs a truckload of adventure into the few days between when Mark witnesses the suicide, and when Mark decides to take the witness protection plan. Also important to the setting are the hospital where Ricky and Diane spend almost all their time during the course of the novel, and the juvenile courtroom, where Mark's hearings take place.

## Language and Meaning

In *The Client*, John Grisham creates credibility for his story by skillfully portraying the lingo of lawyers, children, judges, FBI agents and the mafia. Grisham's characters are authentic and believable to a reader because of his clever juxtaposition of different modes of speaking. Grisham keeps the novel focused on the action by using

straightforward language and simple sentences. There is very little use of literary devices, such as metaphor and colorful imagery. This keeps the reader focused on the action and suspense that Grisham so skillfully lays out. Grisham creates a fast pace by using a lot of dialogue interspersed with short bits of expository.

## Structure

*The Client* consists of forty-two short and fast-paced chapters. The story begins in Memphis, Tennessee. Then, it quickly moves back and forth between New Orleans, where Foltrigg's office is, and Memphis, where Mark and his family reside, and Reggie Love practices law. There is a tension between the authorities in the two locations, because the Boyette case begins in New Orleans, but takes a turn into Memphis, when Jerome Clifford decides to commit suicide there. This leads the New Orleans authorities to require the cooperation of the Memphis authorities, creating some tension. The novel ends in New Orleans, where Mark and his family meet and fly away to Phoenix, the location of their new home within the witness protection plan.

# Quotes

"He was a coward, but a very determined one." pg. 8

"You had to be a cute ass and stick your dirty little nose in my business, didn't you? So I think we should die together. Okay? Just you and me, pal. Off to La La Land. Off to see the wizard. Sweet dreams, kid." pg. 10

"I planned a nice little suicide, you know just me and my hose and maybe a few pills and some whisky." pg. 11

"He screamed obscenities at the sky." pg. 19

"He asked God for a family in which everyone could sleep without fear of abuse." pg. 58

"He held his hands up patiently as if he would love to answer questions but, being a man of great importance, he just didn't have the time." pg. 63

"As the secret and confidential information unfolded, it became obvious to Reggie that Mark knew where the body was allegedly buried, and she skillfully and fearfully danced around this information." pg. 81

"When I grow up, we'll catch him somewhere, me and Ricky, and we'll beat the living hell out of him. Bruise for bruise. Stitch for stitch. We talk about it all the time." pg. 147

"He threw her outside, completely naked, and dragged her into the street where, of course, the neighbors were watching. Then he laughed at her, and left her lying there." pg. 148

"But Trumann has quietly massaged and manipulated the egos of prima donnas before, and he could certainly handle this idiot." pg. 181

"Though she'd seen it many times, the sight of a child scared and suffering was unbearable. She couldn't keep from crying too." pg. 232

"'You can't lie in court, Mark.' She said this with all the sincerity she could muster. Hours of sleep had been lost trying to formulate the answer to this inevitable question. She wanted so badly to say 'Yes! That's it! Lie, Mark, lie!'" pg. 232

"This was not what he expected. He'd never seen a movie in which the judge asked the questions." pg. 252

"'Your Honor,' Mark said. 'I respect you and what you're trying to do. But I cannot answer these questions because I'm afraid of what might happen to me or my family.'" pg. 256

"The mafia never forgets" pg. 284

"Harry despised him, his firm, and their ilk. He did not trust the corporate types who came down from the tall buildings to mingle with the lower class only when necessary." pg. 294

"The mafia is an invisible army with plenty of soldiers." pg. 301

"You want a will so Diane and Ricky will get the movie rights to your life story?" pg 352

"At times he thinks like a terrorist, then he cries like a little child." pg 394

"He suddenly felt important, sitting in the rear of his own black car, being rushed to the airport to board a private jet, cops all around just to protect him. He crossed his

legs and sat a bit straighter." pg. 391

"The tough little boy who threw rocks through windows and outsmarted killers and cops and raced fearlessly through dark woods began to cry." Pg. 378

"She had seen sunlight and smelled real air." pg. 398

"As dark and treacherous as the future seemed, it could not be as horrible as the past six days." pg. 398

# Adaptations

Grisham sold film rights to the then still-unpublished *The Client* in October 1992 for \$2.5 million to Arnon Milchan of New Regency Productions, which made the film in association with Warner Bros. With a screenplay by Akiva Goldsman and Robert Getchell and direction by Joel Schumacher, the movie version opened in summer 1994 to box office success. Filmed on location in Memphis, the movie closely follows the action of the novel (contrasted to the film of *The Firm* [1993], which veers away from Grisham's resolution). The chief change is that the script expands Foltrigg's role to place him at most of the confrontations between Mark and the authorities. As played by Tommy Lee Jones, Foltrigg on film is less villainous than on the page; Jones plays him as a driven and ambitious prosecutor frustrated by delays he cannot control. Susan Sarandon, although younger and better-looking than the part demands, plays Reggie. Jones and Sarandon invest their characters with presence, intelligence, and quiriness. (The leads in the film of *The Pelican Brief*, Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington, seem to do much less with their roles, and thus the film seems listless, especially contrasted to Schumacher's work with Jones and Sarandon.) Sarandon earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Actress for her work in the movie. Unknown Brad Renfro plays Mark, and veteran Ossie Davis has the (sadly) abbreviated role as Judge Roosevelt.

Grisham seems to have liked the film well-enough that he sold the film rights to *A Time to Kill*, which he had held back from sale for years, to Milchan and New Regency with the proviso that the team from *The Client*, notably director Schumacher, work on the movie.

From its first episode in September 1995, the weekly television version, entitled *John Grisham's The Client*, anchored the CBS Tuesday night lineup. The focus is on Reggie Love and her barely solvent legal practice. As in the novel, Reggie crusades on behalf of children (and sometimes adults) caught in the juvenile justice system or ensnared in family disputes. The show sketches morally ambiguous disputes and allows thriller

elements to dominate, rather than depend on court scenes for drama.

In addition to whatever threats the court system may pose, Reggie's clients endure chases, explosions, and murder attempts. In the pilot episode, Reggie befriends a teen-aged boy who has somehow gotten a bag of stolen loot, and Reggie and the boy must elude the goons who come after the money. Another episode features a fifteen-year old pregnant girl who wants Reggie's help to keep her baby. In spite of some overly-dramatic adventures, Reggie retains her faith in the inherent virtues of her young clients and finds strong values among the struggling, one-parent families she usually meets.

Set in Atlanta instead of Memphis, the show retains many of the key characters from the book: Reggie's mother (played by Polly Holliday), Judge Roosevelt (again played by Ossie Davis), and a greatly expanded role for Reggie's young legal assistant Clint (ably played by David Barry Gray). Mark Sway is never mentioned. As portrayed by JoBeth Williams, Reggie is open about her status as a recovering addict and a failed mother. A sub-plot running through the episodes concerns her effort to regain her parental rights over her teen-aged children (who are much younger here than in the novel), with her ex-husband as a recurring villain.

The show's most surprising yet original departure from the source is the use of Roy Foltrigg as the folksy and bluntly ambitious Atlanta District Attorney.

John Heard grins as he plays Foltrigg; the character is relentless witty, never flustered, and almost always willing to cooperate with Reggie. As a cordial adversary, he clearly likes and respects her, and may even harbor romantic interests.

Blair Brown reads the abridged Bantam audio version, while John MacDonald reads the complete text for Books on Tape.

# Key Questions

Beyond the obvious context of literary portrayals of the law, an expansive context in which to discuss *The Client* is American portrayals of adolescents.

Twain's Huck Finn, Salinger's Holden Caulfield (from *Catcher in the Rye* [1951]), and other characters provide comparisons that may provide insights into Grisham's characterizations. A focus on adolescents often points to a critique of adult society (as in Mark Twain and Salinger), and readers could discuss how Mark's experiences serve as social criticism. This sort of discussion alerts readers how Grisham does more than write a thrilling story. Certainly the justice of the legal proceedings that Grisham describes and the ways the authorities treat innocent individuals merit consideration in any discussion of the novel. As a frequent topic in reviews of Grisham's work is his portrayal of women, readers could linger in discussing Reggie Love. She fits 1990s guidelines for political correctness, yet Grisham gives her a very particularized personal history. Does she emerge from the book as a real character, even as she is a savior and a role model?

1. How would you describe Mark's morality? What do his early advice to his brother, his decision not to leave the hose in Clifford's tailpipe, then his refusal to tell what he knows reveal about his internalized standards?
2. How do Mark's background and family situation explain his personality and his morality?
3. How is Mark like or unlike other American literary adolescents? Consider Huckleberry Finn in particular.
4. How fairly does the system treat Mark? Mark complains to Reggie about the illogic and unfairness of the system. Are his complaints justified, naive, self-serving? What does Grisham suggest about how police treat young witnesses? about how the juvenile

justice system treats its charges?

5. How do you evaluate Harry Roosevelt? He is a striking mix of self-righteousness, imperiousness, and commitment to do good.

6. Why does Reggie take on such a frustrating and painful law practice?

What drives her to continue? Why can she and Mark bond so quickly?

7. Can you justify the actions of Foltrigg and the other prosecutors?

Why are they willing to be so brutal toward Mark and Reggie?

8. In portraying the uneasy relations of the prosecutors from New Orleans and Memphis, and in showing Roosevelt's tyranny in his courtroom, what comments is Grisham making about business relationships, lines of authority, and the legal profession?

# Topics for Discussion

How does the fact the Mark has watched a lot of television in his eleven years of life affect his reaction to the situation that he finds himself in, along with his decision?

According to *The Client*, what role does the media play in the legal system? What effect might media coverage have on legal proceedings?

Although both Reggie Love and Roy Foltrigg are attorneys, they are opposites in many ways. They have different career goals and very different motivations and ethics. Describe the ways in which the two are opposites. Explain what role their clash of personalities plays in the story.

Describe the inner workings of the mafia men, and how they treat each other. How does Jonny Sulari treat his nephew Barry Muldanno? Might that, in turn, affect the way Barry Muldanno treats those who work under him?

What image of the FBI does the novel portray? What stereotypes about the FBI does Grisham play into or possibly break? Reflect upon Reggie's relationship with the FBI, and how it changes in the course of the novel.

Diane has had a tough life. She dealt with abuse and now tries to raise two children, as a single mother. Many of Diane's failures as a mother are understandable. However, are there times when Diane is unjustifiably negligent in her mothering of Mark and Ricky? How much is Diane to blame for the trouble the Sways find themselves in?

What does *The Client*, say about the abuse of power? How do those in power, such as district attorneys, lawyers, FBI agents and judges use their power to push their own agendas?

# Literary Precedents

Mark Sway fits the literary tradition of the moral adolescent, a type best represented by Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn from the 1884 novel. Huck and Mark live beyond the margins of respectable society, and they spring from family situations fraught with abuse. Strongly independent, they resist rules and parental authority. Yet these boys, whom society would classify as delinquent, appear in both novels as moral forces. Both instinctively know to do the right things, even at great cost to themselves. In novels about moral choices, both Grisham and Mark Twain locate the strongest morality in the least socially respectable (and respectful) characters. Among literary adolescents, at eleven Mark is nearly the youngest; Huck is about thirteen.

Two other characters who are older teens and products of upper class environments yet who are presented as moral forces are J. D. Salinger's Holden Caulfield from *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) and William Faulkner's Charles Mallison in *Intruder in the Dust* (1948).

In these four books, the authors use the adolescent characters as figures yet unspoiled by the corrupting forces of society. Other fruitful comparisons with Mark are the characters in S. E. Hinton's novels of Oklahoma youths, especially her debut *The Outsiders* (1967) and *Tex* (1979). The characters are older than Mark, yet are from roughly the same social class. Hinton places them in violent situations which test their moral standards, just as Grisham places Mark.

# Related Titles

The Client is Grisham's second attempt to portray a female protagonist.

The first, law student Darby Shaw in *The Pelican Brief*, is brilliant and resourceful as she unravels a mystery and flees from threats against her life.

Yet she remains largely a flat character who does what the thriller genre demands -- stay alive throughout daring adventures. Grisham expends more effort with Reggie, giving her a very specific personal history, a number of eccentric traits, and a challenging intellectual and moral dilemma on what advice to give Mark. Darby fits the formula, whereas Reggie is a character who could appear in a mainstream novel.

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