

Prologue

“I can’t continue with this deal any further! And I am not changing my *freaking* answer...” John didn’t want to be part of this deal anymore. Therefore, he stayed rock stern in his answer.

Some of John was agitated, reflecting on the horrors that would happen to him for being against “them,” against the “contract.” He only wanted the job because of his daughter, whom he ever so desperately wanted in his arms again.

Vivid thoughts overflowed his mind, encouraging his angst and making him question his answer. Every single gulp of saliva seemed to be harder to swallow due to his state of terror. He knows what these men are capable of doing, yet he is refusing to work with them any further.

John’s stomach clenched to these disturbing thoughts. He could not bear to continue working with these viperous people because he knew the stakes were increasing. An intoxicating feeling overwhelmed him with the thought of losing his life and never seeing his daughter again. But it was either his life or the life of his precious daughter that was at stake. These broods of vipers demanded more and more from

John until he felt *suffocated*, enclosed in fear for the life of his daughter or his.

John was shackled securely to a chair with blood from his head and nose dripping down, staining his previously white shirt. John had been mangled almost to the point of death by three men dressed identically in black-on-black wool suits. Two of the men wore a gray newsboy Belfry Giancarlo hat and sunglasses. The three wore gray shoes—the other man, who seemed more intimidating than the rest, wore a fedora hat. The victim was held captive in an empty, depressing, soundproof, gray room. The room looked abandoned and smelled like an old basement. Dry, decayed blood was on the cement of the walls and floor. It seems like a torture chamber. The windowless room was illuminated solely by a small pool of harsh light in the center.

There were handcuffs attached to the ceiling at the end of the room, and there was also the dental chair, where John was sitting in the middle of the room. The dental chair had straps for both the arms and feet; there was a table right next to the chair for the torture weapons to be placed. Cameras were placed around the room to monitor hostages at different angles.

“Please, John, you don’t want to make that decision; think of your *daughter*,” a strange man dressed in black from the group said from the cold and bleak corner of the room, hiding his face in the overwhelming darkness.

He crawled from the pitch-black corner into the rays of the fluorescent light to the bloody figure in the middle.

The man looks down at John in disappointment.

He was about to speak until a Hispanic man approached him and said, “It’s no use convincing him, sir. No matter if we beat, threaten, or torture him, he will stick to his answer and

we cannot risk our team being revealed. We have to do what must be done,”

“You’re telling me to sneak drugs across the border!” John interrupted brusquely, “You know if I even step one foot out there, they’ll find out. I’ll go to jail, or worse... they could shoot me right in the spot! I’m done, for me and for my daughter’s sake.” He spits out in pure fear.

John wept and regretted ever doing business with these suspicious men. He tried his best to keep his answer strong without a single speck of terror; his legs, however, tell a whole other story despite that. His legs quaked in perturbation. John didn’t want to be involved in any weird shit with the group, and even if he did, all he would do was sink deeper and deeper into the mire until he became a part of what these men do, and there is *no* way out.

What John doesn’t know is that it is already too late; he has already sunk deep into the ocean. His life was already in their grasp when he signed that contract.

Earlier in hand, John had threatened to expose confidential information if the group of dangerous people did not let him out of the contract. Information that could put everyone in that room in jail, possibly executed by lethal injection. To avoid being exposed, they kidnap John and hold him captive to make him change his mind. However, they made zero progress in doing so.

The man with the fedora hat stood near the dark corner of the room, looking down at the victim and then at his assistant, now with the slightest patience toward John.

Seth takes a step closer to his assistant.

“Get rid of him. If he exposes us and word gets out, special agencies will hunt down everyone who was involved in this mafia. I don’t care how you do it; get *rid* of him,” he

whispered coldly to his assistant.

Before the boss left the room, he glanced back at his assistant and added, "Make him *suffer*."

The assistant obeyed the orders of his boss. "As you wish, sir."

The boss left the room, leaving John with the last two assistants in suits. As he was leaving the room, he could hear John behind him breathing heavily while losing his mind to the horrors of what was yet to come.

In the last few seconds, as the door creaked closed, John said, "You won't get away with this whole system; someone will one day bust you and your damn business!" He yelled out to Seth his last breaths until the door shut closed, for John would never be seen again.

However, those words were like sticks to the rock. The boss shook those words off. He was doubtful that he and his mafia's business would ever be discovered. He has friends from very high places. They control everything; everything is in his hands. Not a single doubt lay on his mind.

The boss walked out of the hallway and into the next room across from where he opened the door. A young woman was in the room, which was big compared to where John had been held captive. There is a huge black table in the middle with fancy Acme traditional chairs and a big mafia sign at the end of the room. The young woman sat at the end of the table while the boss sat at the front.

Behind them, on the back wall, is a spray-painted sign of a huge Reaper holding its staff with the words 'Goliath Reaper.' The name on the wall imprints that death is an ever-present force that cannot be escaped. The name serves as a permanent reminder to their group that there will always be

death everywhere they go.

“I need you to blame a death on someone, make the crime scene seem like it was from this guy. I have a file on whom and how. Follow the papers very closely. Do *not* fail me.” The boss orders as he takes a photo printed copy of the man he wants to blame the murder on, then he takes out a whole file for the woman to take. She looked at the photo and examined it and the file. “Alright, sir. Everything should be set up in less than a day for forensics to find.”

The boss was sure that she could get the job done.

Everything must go as planned; any evidence must be burned and thrown, and no one must make a single mistake. It's almost impossible for someone to walk away with his mafia's meaningful information or for someone even to demolish them; almost everyone and everything is part of the system.

~~We all live lies because we don't know who we are.~~

Why stop here? This is only the beginning. Follow Alisa through her journey in uncovering the truth of the criminal justice system. After all...the more she digs deeper, the higher the stakes rise.