

## Chapter 1

John shook his head gingerly and checked his nose. Blood was freely flowing from it, or was that from his forehead? He really wasn't sure at this point; all he knew was that he was a bloody mess. John felt someone grab him by the leg and drag him behind a stack of boxes. As John turned to see who had saved him, he saw two of Bruce Cosby. Great, he thought, I'm seeing double. It was then that John's stomach rolled. He was nauseous, though he wasn't sure if it was from the blow he took to his head or seeing two of Bruce.

"You ok?" Bruce asked. John couldn't quite make out what Bruce was saying. Either he had asked him if he liked hay, or if he wore a toupee. A shot rang out and hit the box over John's head. That he heard clearly! John tried to remember how they got in this mess. It was all starting to slowly come back to him. Senator Jeremiah Cosby had been kidnapped. John and Bruce had tracked down the chief suspect, Luke McDonald, to this warehouse and were attempting to apprehend him. John and Bruce had found Jeremiah a few days earlier, and thought they had Luke cornered in this building. The only thing John knew for sure at that moment was Luke had pitched a grenade at John's previous location. The concussive force and the shrapnel from the explosion had about finished John off. If the boxes in front of him hadn't taken the fragment damage, John wasn't sure he would be here right now.

"Stay back," yelled Luke. "I've got a bomb and I'll take you out!"

Bruce sneaked a quick peek at the device.

"John," Bruce began. "I think if I were to shoot the bomb, it would go off and take Luke out without hurting us."

John stared at Bruce with amazement, put his finger in his ear and wiggled it around like he was trying to unclog it.

"I'm sorry, my hearing must be extremely jacked-up. I thought you just said you wanted to shoot a bomb!!" John exclaimed. Bruce sighed.

"John, you're hurt and I can't take a chance of that maniac getting away and killing my father," replied Bruce.

"Bruce!!! He's got a freaking bomb!!! You have no idea what the payload is!!!"

"John, stay down," said Bruce. Bruce stood and took aim at the bomb.

"Don't Bruce!! I won't tell!!" Luke yelled.

"You're right. You won't," said Bruce quietly where John couldn't hear him. Bruce fired and John thought to himself, "Sam, I'm coming to see you a lot sooner than I planned."

The bomb exploded.

**6 Days Earlier**  
**New York FBI Office**

## Chapter 2

John walked into the New York FBI building. He was glad Trip hadn't taken away his FBI visitor credentials. John had to make a decision soon about what he was going to do. He currently was not a member of the FBI. He had been offered his old job back after assisting his former two partners Chet and Jessica. Trip, the Director of the New York office, had offered the position and the file on John's wife murder after the last case was over. John snickered. After the last case was over . . . that was yesterday.

He headed down the elevator to the foxhole. The name had always amused John. He had given the basement the name since most of the agents that had been stationed in the basement had dug in like they were in a foxhole; fighting for their careers. Not 24 hours ago, Chet and Jessica had been doing just that. Now, John had requested to have the three of them stationed there permanently. There were a couple of reasons for that. The first was to try and stop the pressure that built up on the agents that were stationed in the basement when their careers were on the line. The other, well, it was simply to annoy Bruce. John knew by not only going into the foxhole and solving an unsolvable crime, but by also embracing the foxhole would just drive Bruce insane. If there was anything John went out of his way to do, it was to drive Bruce insane. John thought about the situation that he was about to step into. He smiled as he appreciated the irony. The elevator door opened and John stepped out.

As he headed down the hall he thought about his team. Well, they weren't his team anymore since he wasn't in the FBI. Chet was the computer guru. He could get information that John had no way of obtaining online. Truth be told, John could barely turn on a computer. There was also Jessica Hammerstein, "The Hammer." Jessica could get a confession out of anyone in interrogation. Then there was John. John had a way of finding a lead, or making a connection out of information that no one else seemed to be able to. Together the three of them were an almost unstoppable force; that was until John left the FBI over three years ago and became a private investigator.

John had been undercover for over a year within the Mafia. During that time he had succumbed to the lifestyle of the men he associated with and became an alcoholic. The night of a huge bust of alleged Mafia members by the FBI, John was heading home to tell his wife, Sam, that he was joining AA and would leave the FBI as she wanted him to. John had been thinking about how he was going to tell Sam his decision during his walk. He was yanked out of his thoughts as he got within three blocks of his apartment. The apartment exploded with Sam inside and John looking up at it after being knocked back by the explosion.

John had been a wreck since then. He barely remembered the funeral, or his interrogation ran by Jessica at the insistence of the FBI. What little he remembered about any of it was being drunk, and yelling at people. He yelled at his family and Sam's. He had only within the last week apologized to his family. He suspected Sam's family was still mad at him; he had just been served legal papers by them less than an hour ago. Sam's parents, Arthur and Madeline Moore, had filed suit against John in civil court for Sam's death. They were suing him for the trust Sam's grandparents had left to Sam which had been left to John after her death. John had no clue how much was in there. He just knew he had nothing to worry about moneywise for the rest of his life.

John came to the door of the foxhole and looked inside. There was Jessica. John smiled when he saw her and his heart jumped into his throat. It was strange; three years ago after John was interrogated by Jessica, he left the FBI letting her know that he hated her. For the next three years Jessica and Chet did all they could to solve the case of Sam's death. Jessica also kept

John's parents and Sam's mother in the loop as to what was happening. Jessica ran interference for John after he blessed out a reporter when the reporter asked John about his late wife's death. In the past week John and Jessica had started to admit the romantic feelings they had for each other.

Jessica turned, saw John and smiled at him. She motioned him in and John walked into the room. Inside the room were Chet, Trip, and Bruce Cosby. John and Bruce had a special hate-hate relationship. Bruce's father, Senator Jeremiah Cosby, had actually met John at Sam's house when John and Sam had first started dating. Jeremiah thought of Sam and John as the children he didn't have that he always wanted. Apparently Jeremiah, and Sam's mother, Madeline, had dated for a time before Madeline married her husband, Arthur. Bruce and John's confrontations in the FBI had been legendary; with John coming out on top every single time. Bruce had actually asked for John on this case. This showed John exactly how serious the case actually was, and how serious Bruce was taking it. Jeremiah had been reported kidnapped a little over an hour ago. John walked up to Bruce and the room went quiet as Bruce turned to face him.