

CHAPTER 1

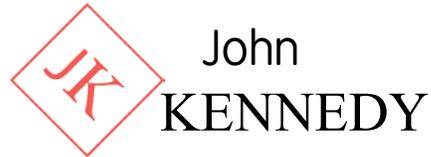
Reflexively, Quinn tugged at the knot of his purple and white striped woollen scarf, the colours of Durham University, as a rush of wind funnelled down the staircase into St Paul's tube station.

A man in front of him, dressed only in a suit, paused. He eyed Quinn's discomfort with the cold and shrugged as if he was explaining his own mode of dress. He gave a quick nod of the head, buried into his shoulders, leant forward, and charged out of the exit.

Quinn stepped into the street as a gust of wind caught him mid stride. Wind laced with icy spears of rain stung at his uncovered head. He crossed the road, judging that the office blocks on the North side of Newgate Street would offer some protection to the Southerly prevailing wind.

Orange plastic barriers surrounded a trench, some five feet deep and six-foot-long, that left a black scar on an area of grey paving. Paving slabs, stacked upon a mound of dirt, bore the tell-tale chewing gum stain marks that marked its passage of time. Blue plastic protruded from the trench, providing the only colour on a monotone grey canvas that washed between sky and city.

A pigeon, unperturbed by the weather, pecked at discarded crumbs outside a café.



A bus disgorged passengers, who raced, heads down, toward their destinations. No one was in tourist mode. No one stopped to marvel at the dome of St Paul's Cathedral that peek-a-boomed between gaps in office blocks. The bus pulled away, leaving a belch of black sooty smoke as it did so. The roar of its engines cannonaded off office walls, amplifying the sound.

Quinn followed the snaking line of office blocks. Spidery trestles of cranes visible above the roofline. It seemed London was forever in makeover mode.

On the corner of Old Bailey Street, City of London Police officers, distinguishable by the red and white checker band surrounding their caps, circled a black traffic bollard.

Quinn caught snippets of conversation. The consensus surrounded various sentences constructed from the noun 'up', in its various hyphenated connotations: fuck, ballsed, and cock.

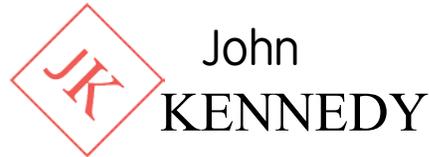
Quinn stood off the pavement, to circumnavigate them, just as a white van with the orange and red globe logo of the BBC news rushed past. He felt the draft of air caused by an all too close wing mirror.

Idiot.

The rain stopped, and for a brief instance a warm glow bathed Quinn's face. He stared toward the sky. A beam of sunlight backlit the green patinaed copper dome of the central criminal court, more widely known as the Old Bailey, and cascaded through balcony balustrades. Atop the dome, sunlight haloed the gold statue of Lady Justice before once again it was swallowed by grey cloud.

A crowd gathered.

A group of men held up signs: Buchanan is innocent, Justice for Cody. They smoked, they laughed, they swore. Television crews and journalists roamed in packs, looking to fill column space and air time.



A journalist removed her red jacket with a CNN logo sewn onto it. She wore a white V-neck dress with a plunging neckline. The crew handed her a microphone. She went through a microphone check. She pressed her finger to her ear, nodded as the offsite producer talked into her ear piece.

Lights.

Action.

She switched on the insta-smile. An intense beam of light shone from under the rain cover shrouded camera, highlighting Colgate pristine teeth.

She reached out to a man who wore a baseball cap and, what Quinn surmised to be, an oversized neoprene sweater. The words Wang sewn across.

Quinn shook his head. This was not going to end well.

Neoprene man stared down her top as she asked him the first question. He looked back at his compatriots and nodded toward her cleavage. Men poured forward to catch a glance, jostling her in the process. A football terrace chant of ‘show us your tits’ drowned out her question. Neoprene man saw an opportunity, he grabbed her breast and gave it a squeeze.

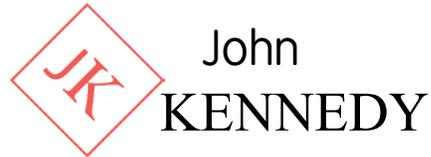
The journalist slapped at his hand. Her cameraman stepped in. Someone threw a punch. The herd gathered. The mood threatening.

TV crews flocked to the scene. Camera lights pinpointed the action. Camera flashes captured stills.

The police officers barged into the crowd and made a grab for neoprene man.

The herd, divided by the initial police intervention, closed in. They surrounded the policemen as they fought Neoprene man to the ground. They swore, they spat, they struck out.

Quinn moved to the other side of the street, catching a final glimpse of the neoprene man, via his neon orange sneakers, as he was flung into the back of a waiting police van.



‘Detective Stewart, detective, detective...’

Quinn recognised the voice of Kayden Carter, from behind him. He kept on walking. He took to an alley that ran down the side of the courtroom. The tippity-tap of heels echoed as she pursued him.

Quinn made his way to the rear entrance of the courthouse, just as an out of breath Kayden Carter tapped him on the shoulder.

‘Detective,’ she said, sucking air, ‘if you could spare a few minutes.’

Quinn looked her up and down.

Sprigs of blonde hair sprouted at obtuse angles from under a thick blue cable knit beanie. A similar coloured scarf draped loosely around the collar of a grey zipped sheepskin jacket. She toyed with the frayed ends of the scarf with orange fingerless gloves.

‘I thought you were ignoring me,’ she said, raising a gloved hand to push away a tuft of hair caught in a long eyelash.

Quinn paused, there was something different about her. He tugged at the collar button on his duffel coat. Nope, he could not quite place it. He undid the next button, and with his left hand reached inside his coat whilst simultaneously pushing the door open with his right hand.

Inside he was greeted by a security guard. Quinn held up his warrant card. The guard nodded and stepped to one side.

As Kayden Carter followed the guard placed himself in her way.

‘Sorry Miss, this is not a public entrance,’ he said.

She protested. ‘What, I, I... Quinn.’

Quinn glanced behind him as he passed through the security check point. He shrugged his shoulders and headed for court number one.