

*After they ended the call Alex picked up the message sitting on his desk. It was from Louise's attorney, Jack Collins, who called while he was out. He dialed the number and was immediately connected.*

*"Thanks for returning my call," said Collins. "I've received the letter you faxed me this morning and I've already spoken to my client about it."*

*"So what does she have to say? Is she willing to work with us to find out who really sent the photos to Gentry Magazine?"*

*"No, I'm afraid not. In fact, we've decided to follow through and file our claim against Ms. Daniels."*

*"May I remind you sir, that Mrs. Dickinson will be receiving a generous fee from the magazine as compensation for the unauthorized use of her photos. So may I ask the reason why she intends to pursue my client?"*

*"Certainly. It's our understanding that when Ms. Daniels called Mr. Wyman's office she told his secretary quote, 'I can't find my release form. Would you mind emailing a copy to me?' We're told that during that call she sounded very calm and collected. She never once came across as angry or upset. She even thanked Mr. Wyman's secretary, when she congratulated her on winning the contest."*

*"Yes," said Alex, "she admits making that call. She was trying to get a copy of the release form without raising suspicion. She needed to see the signature because she knew she hadn't signed it. She also tells me that the email address they had on file wasn't hers, and that she had to give them her correct address so she would receive their file."*

*"We understand that's her story. However, we're of the opinion that your client, possibly with the help of at least one other individual, has conspired to make it appear as if the photos were submitted without her knowledge. We believe that her partner either signed the release form, or that Ms. Daniels attempted to distort her own handwriting when she signed it. Either way, she did so that in the event she got caught, she could then turn around and claim her signature was forged. Ms. Daniels is in dire financial straits. She needed the five-thousand dollars to help pay her mother's medical expenses. She didn't count on Mr. Dickinson being a subscriber to Gentry Magazine."*

*"This is a joke, right?"*

*"It's not a joke, Mr. Montoya. We're serious."*

*"In that case, I have to ask you if you've completely lost your mind. If that's the kind of fantasy world you and your client want to live in, go ahead. I have the five thousand dollar check my client received from Gentry Magazine. She freely turned it over to me. Are you also not aware that this is a criminal, as well as civil matter? Ms. Daniels has already filed a police report. She never had any intention of cashing that check, and we've also informed Gentry Magazine that she had no intention of ever cashing it. If you want to file your frivolous lawsuit, go ahead. We'll be defending her and we believe that once the court hears our side of the story, we'll prevail."*

*Alex ended the call and hung up the phone in disgust. Louise was going after Carrie out of pure spite. He wadded up the message and threw it at the little miniature basketball hoop attached to his wastepaper basket. He smiled as he made his shot. His mind flashed back to high school. He had made the varsity basketball team his junior year, and even though Carrie was hardly a basketball fan, she nonetheless attended as many games as she could so she could cheer him on.*

*"And now, Alex, the ball is in your court. Whatever you do, don't let her down."*

*It was time to go back to work. He needed to enlist the services of an old and trusted friend. He turned to his computer to look up the number and he quickly dialed, drumming his pencil on his desk while he waited for someone to pick up.*