

Dr. Ryker walked into a classroom across from the church office. The classroom had been transformed into what looked like a bookmaker's office with eight telephones in use at the same time. Taped on the walls were lists of media phone numbers, state and local official's numbers, and various other lists. These lists were on posters so that they could be read from any of the phones in the room. Clip boards on each desk kept account of each call made, the person it was made to, and the result of the call. Favorable lists of media members, senators, legislators, and pastors were being made in order to more rapidly get in touch with those who showed any sentiment towards the church's position. Ryker walked up to the coordinator's table in the middle of the room. Dan Gunther sat there reading the latest reports from the phone calls.

"Dan?" Gunther looked up from his paperwork.

"Dr. Ryker, how did the arraignment go?"

"As well as could be expected.... How is the phone system working out?"

"Okay. I did it the way you explained it to me. The phone nearest the door is for incoming calls switched over by Mrs. Sanders of people who inquire about the situation. The next two phones are being used to call churches and pastors to notify them of the situation here. All those calls are written on the ledger sheets to be divided into favorable or unfavorable calls. Then we divide them into respective states. Those who promise to send an offering are put on this ledger to be followed up on."

"How are we doing thus far?"

"The phones were installed about an hour ago. Since then twenty-eight pastors have been contacted, mostly here in Indiana. Fifteen have been favorable."

"How about our public servants...?"

"Those three phones in that corner are used to call the state and local people. So far, the few senators who have been reached have stated that they wish to be kept apprised of the situation from our perspective."

"Very good.... Are those calls logged also?"

"Yes. The person who calls, the state or county official called, and the result of the call. I will rotate each pastor and church volunteer each hour, so that no one is using any type of phone for more than one hour each."

"How are the prompt cards working?"

"Very well.... I've tried them myself. They really help out when you are talking to someone about the situation. You don't have to think up everything to say; just go down the checklist."

"No time is wasted in idle conversation either."

"Those three phones are used for calling the media. So far, the national media people have said that if their affiliates feel it is national news, they will let them know."

"I was afraid the locals would try to blackout this story. We'll just have to keep hounding them until someone nationally takes an interest. Now, I don't want the same people making all the calls, Dan. Spread it around."

"Don't worry. Every person in this building has their times to call. They know if they don't call, they can go home."

Good."

“Also, some of the members and staff of the church have volunteered for calling times.”

“Just keep those phones in use. It’s the only way we have of putting any pressure on the public officials to do something about the situation. Remember to monitor the callers, also. We don’t want someone undermining us while using our own phone system. Believe it or not, some men will be sent here to try and discourage others from coming. Some will purposely distort our position to the public officials.”

“I’ll stay on it.”

“Thanks Dan.”

A head poked into the room and said, “Dr. Ryker, Sheriff’s car coming down the road.”

“Round everyone up George, except for the man on the back lot....” The head disappeared. Turning to the men in the room he stated, “Let’s go men.”

The Sheriff’s car pulled up to the front gate. The pastor in charge of letting cars in and out of the church parking lot closed the iron bar before the car arrived. This pastor had been on duty for the past hour and had his note card on confronting the Sheriff memorized. He looked down into the car and spoke to the Sheriff.

“Do you have a warrant, or probable cause to enter this private property?”

The Sheriff rolled down his window and looked up at the man through his sun glasses.

“I’m Sheriff Tresh. Let me through, please.”

“Could I see some identification, please?”

The Sheriff looked perturbed at someone asking for his identification. Reaching into his hip pocket, he produced a card with his picture on it. He held it up for the man at the gate to see.

“Now let me through, please.”

“Could I see another picture ID card to verify this identification?”

“Look, I’m Sheriff Tresh. I’ve been as nice as I’m going to be. You have seen my card, now let me through.”

“I’m very sorry, Sheriff, but unless you have a search warrant, you may not enter these premises unless invited by the owner, or someone authorized by the owner to let you in.”

“All right, who’s the owner?”

“God....”

The Sheriff stared blankly at the man, constructing in his mind exactly what the man said.

“What does God have to do with whether I can come onto the property?”

“Well, since some of you deputies already violated the property when they came and arrested a man of God, we are being very careful as to whom we allow to enter.”

“Since I can’t very well ask God, who can I ask if I can come on the property?”

“That would be Dr. Ryker. That’s him coming over there.”

Ryker and about fifteen other pastors approached the Sheriff’s car. The entire left side of the car had men standing around it as Ryker positioned himself next to the driver’s window.

“Are you Dr. Ryker?”

“Yes.”

“Dr. Ryker, I need to look around the buildings.”

“May I inquire as to the reason, Sheriff?”

“I have a warrant for the arrest of Lee Jackson, and I wanted to look for him here.”

“I’m sorry, Sheriff, but just having an arrest warrant is not cause enough for you to be able to come onto the premises. You would need to have a search warrant to be able to do that.”

“Hey, now look. I’m the Sheriff. This is my county, and I can look for anybody I please, anywhere in my county. Got that!?”

At that moment the angry Sheriff noticed a camcorder peeking at him through the crowd.

“Sheriff Tresh,” said Ryker kindly, “I’m just letting you know that you should at least go by proper police procedures. What do you think?”

Tresh looked visibly shaken at the fact that everything he said was being filmed. Lowering his voice, he said, “Dr. Ryker, let me notify you of the fact that the judge is signing an injunction to close this facility. I’ll be back personally to serve it on you. I’ll make sure at that time that I carry you off the property personally.”

“Sheriff Tresh, do you usually come down harder on citizens who ask you to go by the law? Or do you just normally refuse to go by proper law enforcement procedures?”

The Sheriff mumbled something to himself as he rolled up his window. He backed the squad car around and squealed the tires as he drove off down the street.

“I hope he didn’t go away mad,” said one of the pastors in the back of the crowd.

Ryker turned and faced the men of God.

“Men, let that be a lesson to you. Learn that bureaucrats expect you to go by the law one-hundred percent, but they get angry if you make them abide by the law one-hundred percent.”

“Dr. Ryker, don’t look now, but there’s a television camera in the field across the street.”

“That’s all right. I expected them by now. Dan, why not go ahead and call a press conference for tomorrow afternoon. By then we’ll know which press is for us and which press is against us.”

“Randy, what are you doing home so early?” asked Nancy Jones as she turned around from preparing the evening meal of roast and potatoes.

“Oh, hi Mom,” Randy said as he went to the refrigerator and opened the freezer door. “Well, it’s a long story. Mom, do you remember that ice pack that Brad used when he sprained his ankle last summer?”

“Look way in the back.” She moved closer to her son. “Why, what happened?”

Randy unbuttoned his shirt and peeled it back, revealing a black and blue arm, shoulder, and neck.

“I kind of ran into a door.”

Nancy’s face started turning white. “Oh, Randy...!”

“It’s nothing, Mom. There’s the ice pack.”

“Randy, you need a doctor,” his mother said insistently.

“Oh, Mom, you always blow everything up. Besides, Laura and Lee are in the living room, so this is no time for me to be a wimp, or for my mother to coddle me.”

“Wimp or no wimp, I’m calling Dr. Jacobs for an appointment. You can’t be sure if it’s broken or not.”

Nancy went to the phone as Randy went back into the living room with the ice pack on his shoulder. He sat down on the couch next to Laura and across the recliner Lee was sitting in. Laura noticed the shoulder first.

“Oh, Randy, it’s horrible!”

“I’m really sorry I caused that to happen,” said Lee apologetically.

“Don’t worry about it. It’ll heal. What makes me so mad is that they found you so easily.”

“Randy, you don’t suppose that your dad...”

“No, Laura, it couldn’t have been my father. He may have advised Lee to turn himself in, but that was only to protect him should anyone find out Lee was in his office. Then he can say that he advised him to do that.”

“Then how,” asked Lee. “I didn’t talk to anyone.”

“Laura, did you say anything to your pastor?”

“Randy, Dr. Turner didn’t express that he would help, but I am sure he wouldn’t want to harm another pastor.”

“I hope not.” Randy reached for the remote control. “Let’s see if we made the news tonight.”

The trio waited through several commercials as they talked about how or when they would get back to the library to finish their research. Nancy entered and placed a tray of cheese and crackers on the table for the three others to have. Noticing the news coming on, she sat in the rocker next to the couch.

“Hello, I’m Ted Boswald-“

“-and I’m Karen Palmer.”

“Welcome to Six-at-Five. The top news story today deals with the vote for Judge Randall Jones’ confirmation to the Supreme Court. Karen?”

“Ted, the Senate confirmed long-time Marion County Judge Randall P. Jones as the next Indiana Supreme Court Justice today in a seventy-three to twenty-five vote, as the conservatives claimed a victory at the State Capitol. In a rousing speech just before the vote, Senator Steven Vorbach, a close friend of the judge, called the choice a brilliant move by the Governor to strengthen the justice system here in Indiana. Even the Minority Leader, Charles Powell, said that Jones was the best qualified for the position. In opposition to Jones was the faction led by Senator Gary Allen, who tried vainly in an attempt to sway enough votes against the judge. Tom?”

“Isn’t that wonderful?” said Nancy.

“Shh, Mom, this is it!”

“The Welfare Department in Montgomery County is trying to find out if allegations about child abuse at the Emmaus Bible Church are true. The problem is, they’re having a difficult time getting anyone at the church Day Care to cooperate in the investigation. Our own Marty Brown is at the site of the church with our Live-at-Five camera crew. Marty...? Are you there?”

“Hello, Ted and Karen.... Behind me is the Emmaus Bible Church that houses the Day Care in question. You can see behind me on the parking lot, some pastors, we believe, who have come here to make sure the Day Care remains open. Moments ago, the Sheriff of Montgomery County, Sheriff Tresh, was confronted at the gate you see behind me and denied entrance, we believe, to the property. The pastor of the church, Reverend Robert Hancock, is being held in the county jail and was arraigned for trial today. A Welfare spokesperson told us earlier that caseworkers who entered the building with the police found a lengthy list of items which did not come up to code. An investigator from the prosecutor’s office is looking into allegations of harmful abuses, including sexual abuse against the children in the Day Care. The church officials have yet to comment. Still at large is the Day Care supervisor, a Lee Jackson, who has been sighted in the Indianapolis area.”

“Marty, have any parents removed their children from the Day Care because of these allegations?”

“No, Karen, not to our knowledge.”

“Marty, will the pastor be getting out on bail?”

“Tom, the Sheriff has stated that Rev. Hancock is refusing to be processed or cooperate with the authorities in any way.”

“Isn't it true that this is not a state licensed Day Care? How did the Welfare people know to check out this Day Care?”

“Karen, the Welfare spokesperson stated that they have a responsibility to protect Indiana's children, and that's what they were doing.”

“Thank you, Marty Brown live in Crawfordsville. Now we take you to Jenny McCain at a church on the east side of Indianapolis. Are you there, Jenny?”

“Tom, I am in the office of Dr. Haskill Turner, the pastor of the Inglewood Baptist Church. Dr. Turner, what do you make of what is going on at the church in Crawfordsville?”

Laura's face turned ashen and then red.

“Jenny, one thing I will not do is speak against another church or pastor. However, the Bible definitely speaks to us about obeying and cooperating with the authorities when it comes to allegations like these.”

“Would your church have a problem with the Welfare Department viewing your Day Care facilities?”

“Of course not.... You see, there's where the problem lies. We are not trying to hide anything.”

“What about the separation of church and state? There are those who would say that the Welfare should not be allowed to enter a church.”

“I'm all for the separation of church and state, Jenny. The church should stay in it's spiritual realm and the state should handle the secular realm. But when a church decides to run a business, as in a Day Care, then it needs to comply with state regulations simply because the public needs to have confidence in what goes on in a church-run Day Care.”

“Then you are not against the legislature passing a law to regulate church Day Cares?”

“Jenny, I think I speak for most pastors and churches in Indiana when I say that we would welcome those laws with open arms. After all, we want to show the public that we more than comply with regulations.”

“Doctor, is your Day Care registered?”

“Yes... The Day Care, the elementary school, and the high school, is incorporated individually with the state and regulated by the various state agencies. We have had literally no problem with any of the authorities.”

“Thank you, Dr. Turner. I'm Jenny McCain, for channel Six. Back to you Ted and Karen....”

“On a much lighter side-“

-Click-

“I don't get it,” said Randy spitefully. “I thought you Christians were supposed to get together on things. Lee, that guy just stabbed you in the back.”

“Sad to say, but Christians are the only army who shoots their wounded, Randy.”

Laura just sat there silently, staring at the dark picture tube.

“I'm not a Christian, and the guy wounded me,” said Randy, pointing at his left shoulder.

“Who got wounded?” called Judge Jones as he entered the living room. “Evening folks.... Hi, Laura....” His eyes lit as he looked at Lee. “Lee, you shouldn't be here.”

“It's my fault, Dad. We just stopped by to check out my shoulder and watch the news.”

“Ordinarily I wouldn’t mind, Randy. But I could really look bad if it were found out that I housed a fugitive. Oh, that’s a nasty shoulder. What happened?”

Rising to kiss her husband, Nancy said “Fugitive or not, he’s not leaving this house until he has had a good meal first. Come on, everyone. The places are already set. And Randy has an appointment with Dr. Jacobs in one hour.”

They moved toward the dining room as Lee noticed Laura still seated on the couch, staring at the television.

“We’ll be right there,” he called to the others.

Lee sat next to his friend.

“Laura, are you okay?”

She just sat there deeply in thought. Tears welled up in her eyes.

“Laura, maybe he didn’t call the police. Maybe somebody else overheard you, or maybe someone recognized me at the library.”

“No,” she said softly. “He did it.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“Notoriety, Lee. That clip will go well in a file somewhere. Plus, it’s amazing what lengths a man will go to in order to preserve his ministry.”

He placed his arm around his friend. Her tears ran onto his shoulder.

“It will all turn out all right.”

“*All* will never be *right* ever again.”



Four more men slipped into the back of the auditorium shortly after the rally began. New pastors and guests were introducing themselves to the crowd. Nearly two-hundred people filled the church auditorium as over seventy pastors joined the regular members of the church. More than sixty posters lined the left side of the auditorium wall with the names of the churches represented here by the pastors. Dr. Ryker stood at the podium as moderator of the rally.

“Some others have come in during the announcements. If you men in the back will give you names and the churches you are from, we would like to welcome you here this evening.”

One man rose up to identify the four.

“I’m Pastor Dalton, and these three with me are men from our church. This is Jack, Eddie, and Don.”

“What church do you represent?” called Ryker.

“God’s Covenant Reformed Church in Freedom, Ohio, halfway between Akron and Youngstown,” Pastor Dalton replied.

“We welcome you to the battle, men.”