

The Racketeer Study Guide

The Racketeer by John Grisham

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Plot Summary

"The Racketeer" by John Grisham is a tale of revenge and greed. Malcolm Bannister finds a way to gain a fortune at the expense of the federal government.

Malcolm Bannister is a forty-three year old lawyer serving a ten year sentence for money laundering. Malcolm continually proclaims his innocence in the crime for which he was convicted and blames the FBI for his wrongful incarceration. When Judge Raymond Fawcett is murdered along with his secretary, Malcolm sees his opportunity to gain his freedom.

Using Rule 35, which declares that if a prisoner helps solve a federal crime then he can have his sentence reduced, Bannister bargains with the FBI. He claims to know the identity of the Judge's killer and is willing to divulge the information in exchange for his freedom, reward money and witness protection. The federal government agrees to his demands and he tells them that Quinn Rucker had motive to kill and rob the judge. Fawcett had taken a bribe from Rucker in the form of half a million dollars in exchange for letting Quinn's nephew off on a drug charge. The judge took the money, but sentenced the boy to prison time. Rucker vowed to get revenge.

The FBI coerce a confession out of Rucker and when he is indicted for the murder of Judge Fawcett and his secretary, Naomi Clary, the FBI release Malcolm from prison. He is given plastic surgery, a new name, Max Reed Baldwin, a place to live in Jacksonville, Florida and the reward money of \$150,000. Once he obtains his freedom and the money, Malcolm begins to deviate from the plans the federal government has for him and begins to follow his own agenda. He refuses the job they have for him. He travels to the Caribbean, Jamaica and Antigua.

As Max Reed Baldwin, he creates a fake film company and he tracks down a man named Nathan Cooley. With the help of a woman named Vanessa Young, the sister of an ex-fellow inmate, with whom he reunited once he was out of prison, they convince Cooley they are filming a documentary on the Drug Enforcement Agency and the people they have wrongfully killed in the line of duty. Nathan's brother, Gene, was shot and killed by DEA agents during a drug bust.

After filming is complete, they convince Nathan to come to Miami to meet the investors. Once he is on the plane, however, Max gets him drunk, drugs him and plants cocaine and a handgun on him. He takes him to Jamaica instead of Miami. When they land Nathan is arrested and put into a Jamaican prison. Desperate to get out he tells Max the location of a cache of gold bars he has. He promises him half if he uses some of it to get him out of prison.

Vanessa finds the gold and together she and Max stash it away in various bank safety deposit boxes. Max then tells the FBI that he cannot testify against Quinn Rucker after all. He can tell them the name of the real killer, but he demands immunity. In the



meantime, Vanessa has provided Quinn's lawyer with evidence that he was in a rehab center in Akron, OH at the time of the murders. It turns out that she is Quinn's sister.

The FBI agrees to Max's demands. He meets with them and tells that Nathan Cooley is responsible for murdering the judge and Naomi Clary. Nathan helped Judge Fawcett carry the safe into his cabin and he learned about the gold the judge kept in it. It took him years, but Nathan was finally able to steal the gold, killing the judge and Naomi Clary in the process.

Max tells the FBI that he does not know the whereabouts of the gold. Victor Westlake, the lead FBI agent in charge of the judge's murder suspects that Max engineered the entire scheme in order to to be released from prison and to get the gold from Nathan Cooley. He cannot prove it, however, and they have agreed to give Max immunity.

Quinn is released from prison. Vanessa and Max retrieve the gold from the safety deposit boxes and then meet up with Quinn and his brother, Dee Ray. After a portion of the gold is given to Dee Ray for his contributions in helping to set up the plan the rest will be divided amongst the other three, who had the largest roles in the plot, which has been several years in the planning. When Nathan told Malcolm Bannister about the gold he knew the judge was keeping in his safe and he was going to get it someday Malcolm saw the opportunity to gain his own freedom and untold wealth. Through his plan he was also able to make the FBI look foolish and take millions of dollars of gold from under their noses without them being able to do anything. He even had them give him plastic surgery at their expense in order to trick Nathan Cooley.

The four conspirators were able to smuggle the gold bars out of the United States and into Antigua on a yacht without any trouble. Vanessa, Quinn and Malcolm planned to enjoy their wealth living the rest of their lives outside of the United States and no longer within the jurisdiction of the FBI and the rest of the federal government.



Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4

Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 Summary

"The Racketeer" by John Grisham is a tale of revenge and clever cunning. Malcolm Bannister is a man spending ten years in prison for a crime he did not commit. He hatches a plan that will give him not only his freedom, but untold wealth as well as give him the opportunity to make the FBI look foolish. The Racketeer is a legal thriller that keeps the reader unsure of the character's true motive and what he will do next.

In chapter one, the reader is introduced to the narrator, Malcolm Bannister. He is a forty-three-year old lawyer, who has served five years of a ten year sentence. His current location is the Frostburg Federal Prison Camp, which is a low-security facility that is not even surrounded by a fence. A prisoner can easily step over the boundary line and simply walk away. At the thought of spending more years in prison, Malcolm finds it harder to not cross the boundary and keep walking.

As a result of his conviction Malcolm loses his law license and his wife divorces him. She remarries two years after and cuts off all communication with his son, Bo. Malcolm spends his time helping his fellow inmates with legal advice. It allows him to keep his skills sharp although he will never be able to practice law again after he leaves prison. At this point his future seems very bleak.

In chapter two, Malcolm gives insight into his background. He was a partner in a small law firm in Winchester, Virginia named Copeland, Reed & Bannister. His two partners were almost indicted along with him, but were able to avoid it. Malcolm feels guilty for being responsible for the tarnishing of Copeland & Reed's reputation.

Malcolm's only regular visitor in Frostburg is his father, Henry, who was one of the first black state troopers. Just as Malcolm, he is a former marine. He visits Malcolm once a month. Although his son tells him he is innocent Henry does not believe him. He has a blind faith in the law so if the federal government believes Malcolm is guilty, then he must be.

His sister and brother visit him once or twice a year. He does not see his childhood friends even though Frostburg is close to his hometown. Malcolm does not have any desire to return to Winchester when his prison term is up. Instead he plans to leave the country. His bitterness against the federal government and their unfair imprisonment of him leaves him with the fervent desire to leave their jurisdiction as soon as he is able, in case they should hound him the rest of his life.

In chapter three, the body of Judge Raymond Fawcett, a federal judge, is found in his cabin in Virginia. Fawcett was found in the basement next to his empty safe with two bullets in the back of his head. The body of his secretary, Naomi Clary, was found on the sofa near the judge's body. She was bound at her ankles and wrists and completely



naked. Naomi had been tortured with small burns on her body. This was believed to have been the way the thief and murderer forced the judge to open the safe. Naomi was also shot in the head twice.

The contents of the safe were unknown and it was uncertain why he needed such a large and secure safe. He was not known to have any expensive collections that would require such security. The FBI were unable to gather any significant evidence, thus denoting a very careful killer and there were not any witnesses in such a remote area. As the trail grew colder, the FBI offered a reward of \$100,000, but with little results.

In chapter four Malcolm reads about the death of Judge Fawcett in the newspaper. Malcolm is already familiar with Fawcett, although he never met him. The inmates who had been sentenced by Fawcett loathed him, since he seemed to take pleasure in sending them to prison for long periods of time. During his first few years on the bench he had been more lenient and compassionate, but at some point he began to change and become harder against the little people and sided more with the wealthy and powerful.

The biggest case of Fawcett's career involved Armanna Mines. A large vein of uranium ore runs through central and southern Virginia, but mining it is against the law since its effects to the environment is too devastating. Armanna Mines filed a lawsuit in the Southern District of Virginia. They claimed that the ban on uranium mining is unconstitutional. The main defendant was the Commonwealth of Virginia along with many cities, towns and counties as well as a few landowners. The judge ruled in favor of Armanna Mines. Although the FBI looked closely at the Armanna Mines trial they could not find a lead. The FBI is still flummoxed, but Malcolm sees this continued floundering as the chance for which he has been working on for years, which is his way out of prison.

Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 Analysis

The reader meets the main character of the novel, Malcolm Bannister. He is serving time in prison for a crime he says he did not commit. He has served five out of ten years and is finding it difficult to take the idea of spending five more years in a place he does not belong. His wife divorced and his son now has a new father. Malcolm's own father does not believe he is innocent, but instead has more faith in the law than in his own flesh and blood. It seems that Malcolm is alone in the world, he will never have the life he had before once he leaves prison. His desire for changing his future is strongly felt.

Malcolm has a great deal of bitterness toward the federal government since they are the ones who have placed him in prison unfairly. Once he is free of prison he plans to make a new life somewhere far out of their reach since he does not trust them enough to think they will ever leave him alone. These feelings are the underlying motive for Malcolm's plan and a great deal of his later actions.



The reader is first acquainted with the murders of Judge Raymond Fawcett and his secretary, Naomi Clary. Little is known about the judge at this point, except that he was a federal judge and whatever was kept in his safe led to his murder as well as the torture and murder of his secretary. The judge was not well liked so the list of people wanting revenge is long and a high profile case involving uranium ore seems like good starting place for the FBI. It is mentioned that the judge ruled in favor of Armanna Mines and this helps to give an insight into the type of person he was. He had little care for those who were not wealthy and powerful, but seemed to get pleasure in defeating the little people. The FBI is unable to gain any leads into the murders, but Malcolm seems to have all of the answers. He enjoys the Feds being at their wits end, especially when he can use it to his advantage. Malcolm has been developing this scheme for years and it is his only real chance of gaining his freedom.



Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8

Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8 Summary

In chapter five, Malcolm requests a meeting with the warden. He claims that his grandmother is dying, hoping that this will get him an audience. Both of his grandmothers died many years before. Several days pass before he is granted his request. The warden, Robert Earl Wade, has made a career in the field of corrections. Malcolm helped him with legal advice regarding his divorce.

Malcolm tells the warden that he knows who killed Judge Raymond Fawcett. He claims to have met the killer, but will not divulge where. Malcolm wants the warden to contact the FBI on his behalf.

Malcolm recalls his arrest during a Downtown Civic Club meeting. He was taken into custody by a large number of federal agents and members of a SWAT team. At the same time as Malcolm was being arrested another team of agents were confiscating files, computers and printers from the offices of Copeland, Reed & Bannister. Malcolm was completely surprised by the FBI's actions. He had been cooperating with them fully for over a year and had given them everything they asked. He was told that the government was not interested in him any longer. The government had obviously lied to him and did not only have a warrant for his arrest, but indictment papers as well.

In chapter six, Malcolm meets with two FBI agents, Chris Hanski and Alan Erardi. He tells them he knows who killed Judge Fawcett and why. They are skeptical and believe Malcolm only wants a way out of prison. Malcolm tells them that, of course, he wants out of prison, but he also wants protection from the alleged murderer. He wants his freedom as soon as they arrest the person, not wanting to wait until he is convicted in court. The agents begin to take him a bit more seriously and agree to talk to their boss.

In chapter seven, the FBI have set up headquarters at a warehouse in an industrial park near the Roanoke Regional Airport. It is nicknamed "the Freezer" due to its previous use as a freezer for imported shrimp. This is the headquarters for the investigation of Judge Fawcett's murder. They have not gotten very far going through the judge's case files. The investigation is not going well when Malcolm Bannister comes to their attention.

Victor Westlake is the leader of the task force. He has a reputation for getting the criminal he is after. Hanski and Erardi report to him regarding Malcolm Bannister. The warden has told them that Malcolm is believable and that they should take his story seriously. They decide to investigate Malcolm's prison background in order to see who he may have crossed paths with who also may have come across Judge Fawcett.

Malcolm recalls his downfall that led him to prison. Barry the Backhander was a client whose identity he did not know until he was indicted. A real estate case was referred to Malcolm from a friend. A client wanted to buy a hunting lodge in Shenandoah County, in



the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains. Malcolm negotiated a large fee for his firm to handle the deal.

Unfortunately, the closing date was delayed several times and the company's name changed multiple times as well, causing Malcolm extra work. The contracts were finally signed for rental rather than buying outright and the client was an offshore company operating in St. Kitts. They were to wire money to Malcolm to pay his fee and the rent for the lodge. When the wire came through the amount was \$4.5 million. Malcolm tried to contact someone, but without luck. More money was placed into the account a month later. He tried to wire it elsewhere, but without success. Malcolm could only let the money stay in the account and accrue interest.

Barry the Backhander fixed up the lodge and flew in powerful friends from Washington DC. He supplied young women for his guest's pleasure, but unfortunately one young girl from the Ukraine died of an overdose while with a congressman. The girl turned out to be only sixteen years old. Outrage caused an investigation into Barry and his activities, resulting in his trial. Malcolm was implicated due to the money he had from Barry sitting in the firm's account.

In chapter eight, Malcolm writes a letter to Victor Westlake. He reiterates that he knows the identity of the judge's killer as well as his motive. He tells him that he wants released from prison, a new identity and protection. He also wants the \$150,000 reward that is being offered.

Malcolm gives some insight into his prison life. His cellmate is a young nineteen year old black man named Gerard. He is in prison for selling crack. He and Malcolm get along well together. The chow hall is segregated by choice. Everyone sticks with their own groups and intermingling is frowned upon.

Malcolm works in the library. He likes to read the newspapers before his shift in the library begins. The newspapers have little progress to report in the Fawcett murder case.

Malcolm spends part of his time as a jailhouse lawyer. It was one of his early clients who told him about Judge Fawcett and his safe. The client was desperate to get out of prison and wanted to get his hands on what was in the judge's safe while it was still there.

Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8 Analysis

Malcolm is a model prisoner who does what he is told and does not cause any problems. He has a quiet routine at the prison and seems to be able to get along well with everyone. He puts his skills as a lawyer to use by helping his fellow inmates even though he knows that once he leaves prison he will never be able to practice law again. It is by this skill set that he learned about Judge Fawcett and his safe in the first place. The reader learns that Malcolm was at one point acquainted with someone who was



eager to get whatever was in the judge's safe and Malcolm has to be certain that they lived up to that desire and killed the judge in the process.

Malcolm is willing to deal with the FBI as a means to an end although he holds a grudge against them for how they treated him during the investigation into Barry the Backhander. He cooperated fully and was willing to help in any way he could, but was lied to and given a false hope that all of his troubles were over. They arrested him in a manner that was completely unwarranted for the crime for which he was being arrested. They could have arrested him quietly at his office instead of swarming a civic club meeting and causing him extreme public embarrassment. His arrest certainly did not fit the crime. The reader can certainly feel a sympathy toward Malcolm and understand his feelings regarding the federal government.

The two FBI agents who come to question Malcolm only see him as an inmate. Like Malcolm's father they seem to think that if someone is in prison they must be guilty of the crime for which they were sentenced. They are only at the prison so that they can say they have followed up all leads possible in the Fawcett case. It does not surprise them that Malcolm wants out of prison in exchange for his information. It is only once he mentions a fear for his safety that they pay attention. A person who is only concerned with getting out of prison and does not actually have information on a crime would not be so concerned with his own safety from an alleged murderer. The fact that he was a Marine seems to go a long way with Victor Westlake, the leader of the task force and the fact that the warden vouches for Malcolm. Otherwise they would have not been inclined to take him seriously. As it is they still feel the need to go around him and try to discover the murderer through anyone he had contact with in prison, thus giving them the option of not giving him a deal.



Chapter 9, 10, 11, 12

Chapter 9, 10, 11, 12 Summary

In chapter nine, Malcolm is called back to the warden's office. The FBI agents, Hanski and Erardi are back to talk to him along with a Mr. Dunleavy, an assistant U.S. Attorney from the Southern District of Virginia, Roanoke office. Malcolm outlines for them the deal he wants. It has to be secret and he wants a written agreement approved by the U.S. Attorney's offices in the Northern and Southern Districts. He will then give them the name of the killer. When the murderer is indicted, Malcolm will be freed from prison and taken into witness protection. He wants his prison sentence commuted, his record expunged and plastic surgery, as well as the reward money and a new life. Dunleavy seems reluctant to make a deal so Malcolm tells him he wants to talk to Victor Westlake and one of Dunleavy's superiors. Otherwise the deal is off.

The Director of the FBI, George McTavey, visits the Freezer in Roanoke to see how the investigation into Judge Fawcett's murder is going. He wants to know more about Malcolm Bannister. They believe Fawcett's killer is someone Malcolm met in prison. They have two theories, the first of which is that the judge was killed by someone holding a grudge from a court case. Their second theory is that it was simply murder and robbery.

Hanski vouches for Malcolm and tells the Director that he does not seem deceptive. The agents realize they are not getting very far and that Malcolm may be their best option. McTavey gives the order to make the deal with Malcolm.

In chapter ten, Malcolm waits patiently to hear from the FBI. A month has passed since the murders took place and still no one has been arrested. He continues to see clients in his library cubicle. He remembers his own conviction. Barry the Backhander received twelve years and Malcolm's lawyer was sure he would get half of that since he was such a small player. He was given ten years, however.

Malcolm was taken into custody. He was transported by the U.S. Marshals on a bus. For days he was shuttled around to various county jails and distribution centers. He eventually ends up in Louisville, Kentucky at a prison. He had spent forty-four days being shuffled around.

In chapter eleven, the federal agents return to Frostburg. Victor Westlake is present this time. There are two assistant U.S. Attorneys, one from the Southern District and one from the Northern. Malcolm reiterates his terms and mentions he wants the agreement signed by the Attorney General. He does not trust any of them or anyone working for the federal government. They present him with a document entitled 'Rule 35 Motion'.

Two days later he is taken by U.S. Marshals to Washington DC. He is taken to the chambers of Judge Slater, the judge who convicted him five years earlier. The



agreement gives Malcolm everything he has asked for and has been signed by the Attorney General. The judge signs the order. Malcolm is then taken to a room where Victor Westlake and others are waiting with a video camera for Malcolm to give his information.

In chapter twelve, Malcolm gives the name of the killer as Quinn Rucker, a black male, age thirty-eight, from Washington DC. Malcolm met him in Frostburg. Quinn walked out of prison three months earlier. He comes from a family of drug dealers.

Malcolm tells the agents that Quinn was not doing well in prison. He was smoking and selling pot. It was rumored that he was about to be busted for this drug activity, which would get him placed in a higher security prison, so he walked away from the prison camp.

Quinn's grudge against Judge Fawcett had to do with his nephew. The Rucker family transported cocaine from Miami to the East Coast. Quinn's nephew was transporting cocaine when he was caught outside of Roanoke. His case was assigned to Judge Fawcett. Quinn learned that the judge may be open to a bribe. The lawyer made the deal and the judge was given half a million dollars. The judge, however, ruled against the nephew and ordered a trial. He was found guilty. The nephew is serving an eighteen year sentence in Alabama.

Quinn told Malcolm he was going to kill Judge Fawcett for revenge and to get back his money. He knew where the judge lived and worked. He knew about the cabin and suspected that was where he kept the money. Quinn wanted Malcolm to find a loophole to get him out of prison. He promised to give him half of what he got off of the judge. Malcolm could not help him, though.

Chapter 9, 10, 11, 12 Analysis

Malcolm knows that he has the upper-hand in his negotiations with the FBI and U.S. Attorneys Office, but he is still nervous that they will not make a deal. His entire plan rests upon him being able to get out of prison. If the Feds are unwilling to give him that deal he does not have anything to gain by helping them. The fact that they do not have any solid leads or evidence plays in his favor, Malcolm realizes this and is able to stand firm with what he wants. He does not allow the Feds to bully him as they try.

Although Malcolm cooperates fully with the FBI and was a small town lawyer, who had a small part to play in Barry the Backhanders business dealings he was given only two years less than Barry. He should have received half of that sentence at the most, especially due to the fact that he was aboveboard about everything and cooperated fully with the FBI investigation. Instead of being allowed to self surrender to a prison Malcolm was driven and flown through several states for over a month until he ended up in Louisville, in a medium security prison. There was no distinguishing from the hardened criminals and those who had committed lesser crimes. His treatment at the hands of the federal government was unfair and his introduction to prison life was harsh.



The reader is introduced to Quinn Rucker. He is from a family of drug dealers. The story Malcolm tells the FBI regarding Quinn's motive is a believable one. It seems plausible that Quinn would wish to get his money back and get revenge for the judge betraying his nephew.



Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16

Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 Summary

In chapter thirteen, Quinn Rucker is located at the Velvet Club in Norfolk working as a bartender. He is taken into custody. They find that he has been living under the assumed name of Jackie Todd. The agents discover a handgun in his mobile home and a stash of cash in a storage unit.

Quinn is interrogated by two FBI agents. He waives his rights. They go over his whereabouts for the past three months. The agents then begin to question him about an arrest under the name of Jackie Todd in Roanoke. They ask about the money and the gun. The agents mention a preliminary ballistics report they have. Quinn mentions that he may need a lawyer.

In chapter fourteen, the two agents do not have a ballistics report, but are tricking Quinn with a memo. They divert his attention away from his mention of a lawyer. Dee Ray Rucker, Quinn's younger brother, who is studying finance at Georgetown, is brought in, photographed in handcuffs and then returned home without explanation.

Quinn is further questioned about his time in Roanoke. He gives very little in reply. They mention his nephew, Jakeel Staley, who is serving time in Alabama. They say that Dee Ray told them he gave Quinn cash to give to Jakeel's lawyer. They show him the photo of a handcuffed Dee Ray.

The agents mention Judge Fawcett. They tell Quinn that according to the ballistics report there is a ninety percent chance that his gun killed the judge. One of them says they have a witness who can place him in a town near the judge's cabin at the time of the murder. They also say they can match a print from one of Quinn's boots to a print found at the judge's cabin. They threaten him with the death penalty.

In chapter fifteen, the two agents tell Quinn that not only will he be tried for murder, but most of his family will join him on death row. Quinn asks to see the evidence, but is denied. He does not trust the agents because he has been lied to before by the FBI. They tell him if he does a deal he will not get the death penalty. Quinn mentions the name Bannister. He knows Malcolm is the one who told the FBI about him. Quinn asks for his lawyer, but then agrees to a deal to save his brothers.

In chapter sixteen, Malcolm reads in the Washington Post that Quinn Rucker has been arrested for the murder of Judge Fawcett and confessed. Malcolm remembers when he first met Quinn two years before. They became good friends. Quinn was tired of the family business and wanted a straight life.

Henry Bannister pays his monthly visit. Malcolm realizes that if his deal with the federal government works out this could be the last time he sees his father, but he cannot say anything. On Sunday, Malcolm is told that he is wanted in the administration building.



Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 Analysis

As someone who comes from a family of drug dealers, Quinn waiving his rights when he is interrogated by the FBI is not very plausible. The reader may question why he would do something so naive, especially when he has been to prison before. He also does not ask for a lawyer, but willingly talks to the FBI agents. He seems inclined to talk in order to see what the FBI knows. Whether this points to his guilt in the murders of the judge and Naomi Clary remains to be seen, but it makes the reader think.

The interrogation techniques of the two agents do not put the FBI in a good light. The reader has a good idea why Malcolm is so bitter about his experience with them and does not trust them. The men lie about evidence to coerce a confession out of Quinn. They deprive him of sleep to make him edgy and easily rattled. He is kept in the interrogation room for numerous hours. It is not surprising when he finally breaks. He seems to confess to keep his brothers out of trouble and the FBI away from them.

When Quinn mentions Malcolm's name the reader is meant to fear for Malcolm's safety. Quinn immediately knows who is responsible for his current predicament. It seems as if Malcolm will soon need the protection he asked for in his deal.

Malcolm's thoughts of Quinn are those of a friend and someone he liked. There is foreshadowing in the mention that Quinn wanted out of the family business and to lead a straight life. Malcolm is giving a clue as to Quinn's character. It does not seem in character for Malcolm to give up someone he considers a friend in order to gain his own freedom.



Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20

Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20 Summary

In chapter seventeen, Malcolm meets with Pat Surhoff, a U.S. Marshal and Agent Hanski. They show Malcolm the indictment against Quinn. They have come to take him out of prison. The urgency is due to Quinn's having mentioned Malcolm's name during his interrogation.

Malcolm enjoys his first taste of freedom in five years as he drives away with Surhoff and Hanski. He already knows where he wants to begin his new life. They decide on a new name for Malcolm. He chooses Max Reed Baldwin.

In chapter eighteen, they stop at a Best Western near Morgantown, West Virginia. Max is given his own room and some new clothes. Max is still unable to fully trust anyone working for the federal government. He still remembers the lie he was told about not being prosecuted.

Max tells them he wants the plastic surgery now to protect him against the Ruckers. He also decides that he wants to live in Florida. He wants to be in northern Florida, in Jacksonville or Pensacola.

In chapter nineteen, Stanley Mumphrey, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District is giving a press conference. The murders of Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary is Stanley's chance to boost his career. The case was such a high profile one that Stanley is taking the opportunity to boost his own reputation by publicly announcing the indictment of Quinn Rucker for the murders. They plan to seek the death penalty.

Max leaves West Virginia and the FBI behind. He is now in the sole care of the U.S. Marshals. They get on a plane headed to Denver.

Victor Westlake interrogates Jakeel Staley's lawyer, Jimmy Lee Arnold, about the bribe Judge Fawcett supposedly took from Quinn Rucker. Arnold denies all knowledge of a bribe and says he did not pay one to the judge. Furthermore he claims that he would be surprised if Judge Fawcett ever took a bribe from anyone. He complains that the judge always took the side of the prosecution and cops no matter what, though.

Dee Ray Rucker hires Dusty Shiver as Quinn's lawyer. Dusty tells Dee Ray that Quinn confessed to the crime, but that he says he was tricked. The lawyer mentions the name Malcolm Bannister and tells Dee Ray that his brother is very bitter about Malcolm.

In chapter twenty, Max is taken to a clinic at Fort Carson. They specialized in radical appearance modification and are used by several government agencies. He will have to convalesce at Fort Carson for two months after his surgery. He meets with two doctors and a nurse to discuss his new appearance. They will make a few changes to his



features, he will wear a pair of designer glasses and shave his head to complete his new look.

Dee Ray Rucker gets a chance to talk to Quinn, but the conversation is recorded by the FBI. Quinn wants Dee Ray to do something about Bannister. He knows Malcolm probably used Rule 35 to get out of prison. Dee Ray agrees to take care of it.

Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20 Analysis

Malcolm finally gains his freedom after five years in prison. Although they are supposed to be working together Malcolm cannot get past his mistrust of anyone working for the federal government. He may like some of them, but he will not let his guard down.

Malcolm insists upon plastic surgery right away. He seems to be in a hurry to change his appearance. His insistence appears to be due to his fear of the Ruckers, although resorting to plastic surgery seems to be a bit extreme. It is only later that the reader will discover the importance of this part of Malcolm's plan. Malcolm is now known as Max as his new life and new personality begin to come together. He is trying to become a completely new person.

Stanley Mumphrey seems to be the same kind of U.S. Attorney that was eager to put Malcolm in prison for money laundering. The Judge Fawcett case is good for his rather mundane career. Such an opportunity will unlikely come again for him so he has to take advantage of it while he can. Unfortunately, he does not seem to be very good at his job.

The Ruckers continue to mention Malcolm's name with sinister intentions. As part of a criminal family the reader feels sure that they will do all they can to take care of Malcolm so he cannot testify. This also works to Malcolm's benefit, since Quinn's animosity toward him lends credence to his story. One is made to feel the unease that Malcolm supposedly feels regarding the Ruckers.



Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24

Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24 Summary

In chapter twenty-one, Max writes a letter to Vanessa Young, a woman with whom he is in love. He met her in Frostburg when she came to visit her brother. He has never touched her, but they have written letters. He begs her to see him.

U.S. Marshal Pat Surhoff takes Max away from Fort Carson. He gives Max all of his new identity papers in the name of Max Reed Baldwin. He will live in Neptune Beach, a few miles east of Jacksonville in a one bedroom condo. Max will receive his reward money once his bank account is up and running. He is given a background summary on the life of Max Reed Baldwin to learn.

Once in Florida, Max sets up a checking account. He buys new clothes and leases a car. He is ready for his new life as Max Reed Baldwin and the freedom it entails.

In chapter twenty-two, Dusty Shiver files a motion to suppress Quinn Rucker's confession. He also includes an affidavit in which Quinn recants his confession. Stanley Mumphrey meets with Victor Westlake and two of his agents to discuss it and plan. Mumphrey is unaware of the tactics used by the two FBI interrogators and the FBI will never share this information with him.

The motion accuses the interrogators of lying to Quinn on various points such as the death penalty, prosecution of his family, a ballistics report and a boot print. Westlake denies that his interrogators tricked or abused Quinn in any way. The confession is the only piece of evidence they have and if they lose it they do not have a case. Westlake reminds Mumphrey that they have Malcolm Bannister. The prosecution needs the confession along with Malcolm's testimony to convict Quinn of the crime, however.

In chapter twenty-three, Max meets his U.S. Marshal handler, Diana Tyler. He throws off their plans for him by saying he would prefer not to have a job right then. He has plenty of money in the bank and would like to travel and just enjoy his freedom for a little while. Max says farewell to Pat Surhoff. Although he likes him he does not trust him or anyone with the Marshals office or the FBI. Max has a plan to deceive them, but without their knowing that he is doing it.

Max sets up two new bank accounts. He is always on the alert for people watching or following him. He hires a lawyer to set up a company for him by the name of Skelter Films. The address of the company will be the lawyer's office.

The Feds want to meet with Max supposedly to discuss his testimony, but he believes they merely want to see his new appearance. Stanley Mumphrey and Agent Hanski are two of the people he meets with in Charleston, South Carolina. They tell him the trial will take place on October 10, which is four months away. Max is surprised it is so soon.



They discuss the plan for the trial. Max asks about Quinn and is told that he is not holding up well in prison and says he is innocent. The Feds believe that they and Max are great friends working together to put Quinn away, but do not realize that he would sabotage their case if he could to pay them back for what they did to him. Max doubts that he will have to testify even though the Feds believe it is a certainty.

In chapter twenty-four, Max meets with Diana. She gives him his new driver's license and passport. He gives her an itinerary for a trip he is taking, but it has gaps in it that she does not know about. He is flying to Miami then on to Jamaica and Antigua.

Max flies to Miami and checks into the Blue Moon Hotel. That evening he meets a woman named Eva. The next day Max goes to the office of Corporate Registry Services. A corporation can hire them to be an address, phone-answering service, or a drop off. Max wants to use their services for Skelter Films.

After two more nights in Miami, Max flies to Montego Bay where he stays for three days. He then flies to Antigua. It is known as the world's friendliest tax haven.

Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24 Analysis

Max finally leaves Fort Carson and is ready to begin his new life of freedom. He contacts Vanessa Young and the reader finds out how important she is to him. He is willing to risk everything to let her know what he is doing and that he has a new appearance and identity.

Max begins to pull away from the federal government once he makes it to Florida and has obtained everything he needs from them. He prefers not to take one of the jobs they have on offer for him. Instead he wants to enjoy some time and the reward money gives him the option. Max gives a glimpse into his inner thoughts and the reader discovers that he has a plan to deceive the federal government, but he wants to do it in a way they not realize what is happening. A job would limit his movements and keep him too much under the thumb and eyes of the the Feds. He needs more freedom to put his plan into effect.

Max begins exhibiting unusual and somewhat suspicious behavior and the reader may be uncertain as to what his actions say about his character. He opens two more bank accounts with his reward money. He creates a company under the name of Skelter Films, but he does so in a rather dubious manner so that it seems that the company is not legitimate.

Max takes a trip to the Caribbean. It begins with a trip to Miami where he hires someone to be a front for his Skelter Films business. Part of his trip seems to be for pleasure, but at the end he visits Antigua. He mentions the island is the world's friendliest tax haven, giving the impression that he may find that useful at a later date.



Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28

Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28 Summary

In chapter twenty-five, the FBI has been monitoring phone conversations between all of the Ruckers. Victor Westlake is called in to listen to a conversation between Dee Ray Rucker and someone named Sully. Sully tells Dee Ray that he has found Malcolm Bannister. He knows he is in Florida, his new name is Max Baldwin and that he changed his appearance.

Max is picked up by two FBI agents and taken to a safe house. They tell him there has been a breach in security and the Ruckers know where he is. Victor Westlake arrives at the safe house. Max tells him that he wants to leave witness protection. They ask him to allow them to keep protecting him since they need him safe for the trial. Max is adamant and wants to make his own plans.

In chapter twenty-six, Max packs up and leaves the condo. In Orlando he takes his car to a detail shop. He and the guy working on it find a tracking device. Max places the device on another car. For days Max drives around through various states making sure no one is following him. He eventually ends up in Roanoke, Virginia.

In chapter twenty-seven, the FBI has lost track of Max Baldwin. Money has disappeared from his bank accounts and they are not able to trace it. Westlake admires Max's ability to disappear and hopes that it keeps him safe.

Max goes to the office of Frank Beebe, a private detective. He wants to find a man named Nathan Cooley. He has a letter he wishes to give Nathan once he is found. Max represents himself as a documentary filmmaker from Miami. He is filming a documentary on murders committed by agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration. He wants Nathan to be part of the film because his brother, Gene, was killed by DEA agents.

Frank Beebe locates Nathan Cooley in Radford, Virginia where he owns a bar called Bombays. Max asks Beebe if he knows anyone who can do a false passport and he refers him to a guy in Baltimore. He mails his letter to Nathan now that he knows his address.

In chapter twenty-eight, Quinn Rucker is brought to a meeting with Victor Westlake and Stanley Mumphrey. Quinn is not doing well after four months in prison. He is kept in solitary confinement and suffers mood swings and sleeps most of the day.

The purpose of the meeting is to warn Quinn that they know he and other members of his family want to get rid of Malcolm Bannister. The Feds will go after his family and add additional charges to Quinn if their witness is harmed. The intimidation does not work, instead it makes the federal government nervous about their witness' prospects.



Max really wants to see Vanessa Young. He remembers the first time he saw her in the Frostburg visiting area. They had exchanged a few letters while he was in prison, but timing was not good for them and it did not work out. He arranges a meeting with her through e-mail, warning her that his appearance has changed. They meet at a restaurant in Richmond. She approves of his new look. The evening goes well and they go to a hotel together.

Chapters 25, 26, 27, 28 Analysis

The Ruckers find out not only Max's location and new name, but also what his new appearance is. The FBI is amazed that they have been able to ascertain this information at all let alone so quickly. Such an occurrence has never happened in the witness protection program.

Max is contacted by his handler and the FBI. They want to put him somewhere safe. He seizes his opportunity to get away from them and their watchful eye and withdraws himself from the witness protection program. He now has the freedom he needs to go where he wants and do what he wants without having to explain it to anyone or without being followed by agents.

Max is able to keep the FBI from following him and keeping tabs on his whereabouts. He ends up where he is least expected to be found, which is Roanoke, Virginia. The reader is left to wonder what he is planning to do next. He finds a private detective and asks him to find someone named Nathan Cooley. There is not any explanation as to who Nathan is or why he wants to find him using his film company as a cover.

Vanessa meets up with Max in Richmond. They are able to rekindle the spark that they felt while Max was in prison, but could not act upon. Vanessa takes his new life and appearance in stride and does not seem concerned in the least.



Chapters 29, 30, 31, 32

Chapters 29, 30, 31, 32 Summary

In chapter twenty-nine, Max gets a call from Nathan Cooley. They agree to meet for lunch the next day at Spanky's in Radford. Max is worried that Nathan will recognize him as Malcolm Bannister. The reason he changed his appearance is to conceal his real identity from just one person, Nathan Cooley.

The next day Max meets with Nathan. He has changed little since Max last saw him four years ago. Nathan does not recognize him or is not suspicious in any way of his identity. Max explains to him what a documentary is and how his company's films specialize in the abuse of power by the federal government.

Max tells Nathan a little bit about Skelter Films. He explains why he wants to put him in his documentary about the DEA. The film will feature three or four stories similar to that of Nathan's and his brother, Gene. Nathan agrees to do the film and talk about Gene's death. The next day they sign a contract and Nathan receives a check for eight thousand dollars. Max arranges to start filming the next morning at Nathan's house.

In chapter thirty, Nathan lives in a small brick house a few miles away from Radford. He does not have any close neighbors. Max's filming crew consists of Vanessa, who is pretending to be his assistant named Gwen, Slade, the videographer and Slade's assistant, Cody. The two young men have been ordered to do what Max asks and to say very little.

They set up for filming and Gwen takes the opportunity to flirt with Nathan as she applies his makeup. He enjoys the attention. She gets several still shots of Nathan before filming begins.

They begin filming and start to discuss Nathan's life. His family makes and sells meth and he went to jail for the first time at sixteen. He has numerous cousins who died from meth explosions or are in prison. During a break in filming, Vanessa takes the opportunity to get a look inside Nathan's house. She makes note of the door locks, lack of alarm and the number of guns Nathan owns.

In chapter thirty-one, Max and the crew go with Nathan to Bluefield, West Virginia to the place where Gene was killed by DEA agents. Max prods Nathan about getting his mother involved in the film. He says she refuses. She blames Nathan for Gene's death although he is younger and was only going along to help Gene with the drug deal. The two walked into a trap. The two surrendered and Nathan was being led away when he heard gunshots. Gene was shot by the agents. They say he was trying to escape. Nathan wants to get far away from his family. He wants to go to somewhere like Boone, North Carolina.



Max is taken by surprise when Nathan tells him he reminds him of a guy he knew in prison named Malcolm Bannister. He realizes he has let his natural mannerisms come out when he should have been more on his guard. Luckily, Nathan does not seem to think about it further.

They arrive in Bluefield. Gene had made a regular drop there for ten years. Nathan had not been too interested in the family business preferring to work at other jobs. Nathan walks around the scene and recounts the night of the drug bust and his brother's death. He says that the last that he saw of Gene alive was lying on the ground with his hands behind his back. Nathan then heard shots and his brother's scream.

Vanessa and Max tell Nathan about an idea one of their people has about bringing all of the families together from the documentary and filming them as they meet one another and talk about their stories. Nathan seems interested. They would like to do it in Miami. Max is concerned about Nathan's comparing him to Malcolm. Vanessa placates him and assures him Nathan is all for coming to Miami.

In chapter thirty-two, Nathan and the film crew go to his hometown of Willow Gap. They film at a house where Nathan once lived. They mention Miami once again and tell him if he comes they will show him the DEA file on his brother. Nathan agrees to go. They plan to leave the next afternoon from Roanoke.

Vanessa leaves to go to Reston, Virginia where she has a fake passport and driver's license made. She gives the forger the pictures she took of Nathan Cooley. She asks for the new documents in the name of Nathaniel Coley. She also picks up two first aid kits, a pistol and some pills.

Chapters 29, 30, 31, 32 Analysis

Nathan Cooley is introduced and through Max's comment on his voice sounding vaguely familiar the reader can deduce that this is someone from his past. It seems that Max does not want Nathan to recognize him as Malcolm Bannister for some reason. That is why he had plastic surgery to change his appearance. He wants to fool Nathan. That makes the reader wonder who Nathan is and what Max wants with him so badly.

Max knew Nathan four years ago obviously from prison since that is where Max was at that time. Skelter Films finally begins to play a role in Max's plan. He convinces Nathan he is planning to film a documentary and wants to include his brother's death by the DEA in the film. Nathan is easily taken in and seems to like the idea of a starring role in a film.

Nathan likes his solitude and being in the country. His house is simple and far away from any neighbors. Vanessa has obviously been taken into Max's confidence and she does not seem to have any qualms about helping him deceive Nathan.

Vanessa flirts with Nathan and he enjoys getting attention from an attractive woman. She uses this to keep him in a good mood and to take the opportunity to see inside of



his house. She and Max are interested in Nathan's security measures, which means they would like to see what Nathan has in his house or to search his house for something.

Through the filming the reader learns that Nathan comes from a family that makes, deals and uses meth. Nathan has been in trouble with the law from an early age. He was pressured by his family to be part of the business, but he dreams of a better life. His brother, Gene, died a horrible death at the hands of DEA agents. Nathan does not want to share that fate.

Max is shocked when Nathan mentions the name of Malcolm Bannister. He genuinely feels fear that Nathan could have recognized him. The reader wonders what Nathan would do if he did discover Max's true identity. His fear seems to be unfounded, though because Nathan does not mention it again.

Max and Vanessa seem invested in Nathan coming to Miami. They work hard to make it so enticing that he cannot refuse. In the end, he agrees and they are thrilled. Vanessa then does something the reader may find confusing, which is she has a fake passport and Virginia driver's license with Nathan's picture, but under the name Nathaniel Coley. One has to wonder what their plan for Nathan is.



Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36

Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36 Summary

In chapter thirty-three, Max and Nathan are set to fly out of Roanoke on a private jet. Max waits as long as he can to submit Nathan's passport to the charter service since it is a fake. Max plans to fly Nathan out of the country rather than to Miami as he said. Max is worried that when Customs receives a copy of his passport it will trigger an alert with the FBI. He does not trust them so he does not know what trouble it could bring.

Nathan has already been drinking when he arrives at the airport. Max gives the pilot Nathan's passport without him seeing. The two men begin drinking once on the private jet. Max keeps Nathan drinking and he is already becoming drunk. Max eventually places two chloral hydrate tablets in Nathan's beer. He passes out half an hour later.

The plane's destination is Jamaica rather than Miami. As they prepare to descend Max goes into action. He takes Nathan's keys from his pocket. He substitutes the fake driver's license for the real one and places the fake passport in his pocket. He takes two nylon first aid pouches from his bag and places them in Nathan's. Max then tells the pilot that they will need medical attention because Nathan is drunk and barely has a pulse.

The medics board the plane as well as Immigration officers and police. Max takes the opportunity to slip away. Vanessa is waiting for him outside of the airport.

In chapter thirty-four, Victor Westlake is informed that Max Baldwin flew by private jet from Roanoke to Jamaica. They know he was traveling with a Nathaniel Coley, whose passport is fake. Westlake wants to know what Baldwin is up to.

Nathan wakes up in a hospital. Jamaican police officers come to take him to the city jail. He learns he is in Montego Bay. Nathan denies any knowledge of a fake passport. He tries to tell them about Max, but they do not know who he is talking about. The police tell him he is under arrest for entering Jamaica with four kilos of cocaine and a handgun. They place him under arrest.

Max goes to the law office of Rashford Watley. He tells the lawyer about Nathan being arrested. He wants Rashford to find out about Nathan and tell him that Max is working on his release. Rashford makes some calls and finds out Nathan is facing at least twenty years in a Jamaican prison for his crimes. Max wants to see Nathan. Rashford promises to do what he can.

In chapter thirty-five, Max goes with Rashford to see Nathan in jail. Rashford goes in alone to speak with him. Nathan is not doing well at the jail. His face is swollen and bruised. The conditions are worse than he ever experienced in federal prison.



Max enters the room to speak with Nathan. He tells Nathan that they diverted to Jamaica because Miami International was closed due to bad weather. He blames the the police for planting the drugs and gun on Nathan. Nathan begs Max to get him out of there. Max tells him it is a way for the Jamaican police to squeeze money from them. If they give them money they will let Nathan go free.

In chapter thirty-six, Vanessa is back in Roanoke. She takes Nathan's truck from the airport parking lot. She heads toward Nathan's house in Radford. She uses Nathan's keys to let herself in and begins to methodically search his house. After hours of searching she does not find anything.

Max is back at the jail the next day and speaks with Nathan alone. He has sustained further injuries. Max tells him that the police are demanding one million dollars from the owner of the jet, who is willing to pay. They want half a million dollars for Nathan. Nathan says that he has some money and that he and Max can be partners. He will tell him where the money is. He confesses that he stole it. Max agrees to be his partner and then Nathan tells him that he has mini-bars of gold hidden under the floor of his storage shed. He admits to having between five and six hundred bars of gold valued at between seven and a half and eight million dollars.

Max calls Vanessa and tells her about the storage shed. She finds them exactly where Nathan said. She loads them up and leaves the house.

Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36 Analysis

Max hires a private jet to supposedly take them to Miami. He has other plans for Nathan, however. He plans to take him out of the country that is why he needed a fake passport. This does not explain why it is under a different name, however. Max is happy that Nathan has already been drinking when he arrives at the airport. He seems as if he purposely put the time of departure back to allow Nathan more time to consume some alcohol.

Once they are on the plane, Max begins to get Nathan drunk and gives him drink after drink. He finally drugs him so that he passes out. He does not want Nathan to know where he is being taken. When they are ready to land, it is only then that the reader is told that they are in Jamaica. Max makes sure the authorities come aboard and Nathan is found with cocaine and a gun in his possession, which Max planted there.

Nathan is taken to jail in Jamaica. He does not do well there. Max has obviously placed him in such an adverse environment because he wants something from him. He had to have learned from his previous trip to Jamaica their laws regarding guns and drugs or through research. He knew what was in store for Nathan when he was caught by the authorities. He makes sure to keep in Nathan's good graces by letting him know he is working hard for his release.

Vanessa goes to Nathan's house and begins searching. The reader does not know what she is looking for, but it has to be something very valuable for the elaborate scheme



they put together to get Nathan out of the way and locked up in a Jamaican jail. Finally Max gets Nathan to tell him where his stash is hidden and that it is almost six hundred gold bars worth almost eight million dollars. This is what Max has been after all along, this treasure is what all of his plans have been about.



Chapters 37, 38, 39, 40

Chapters 37, 38, 39, 40 Summary

In chapter thirty-seven, Vanessa buys ten kids' backpacks to store the gold in. She drives around for hours up and down Interstate 81 waiting for darkness. Max makes his way back to the United States under the name of Malcolm Bannister. He arrives in Atlanta where he rents a car.

Vanessa leaves Nathan's car in the Roanoke airport parking lot. She transfers the gold to her own car. She meets up with Max at a motel in Asheville, North Carolina. They carefully count the gold bars in each cigar box. There are 579 bars, which is worth around \$8.5 million.

In chapter thirty-eight, the FBI have lost track of Max Baldwin in Jamaica. They do not know who Nathaniel Coley is and why Max was with him. They want to find out what he is up to.

Max and Vanessa divide up the gold. He heads back to Neptune Beach. He puts one cigar box in a briefcase and goes to the First Coast Trust where he has a safety deposit box. He then goes to Jacksonville Savings Bank where he places another box of gold bars. Then on to a third bank with another box.

Vanessa does the same thing at three banks around Richmond. She returns to her apartment where she waits for darkness to carry the rest of the gold upstairs. The next day she repeats the procedure with three more boxes. Max does the same in Florida. Max is then on his way to Miami.

In chapter thirty-nine, Max calls Rashford Watley and asks him to visit Nathan and let him know that he is working hard to secure his release. Rashford tells him that it appears that Nathan will get twenty years for his crimes, but he does not believe he will last long in the Jamaican prison system. He will be lucky if he survives the week.

Vanessa goes to the office of Quinn Rucker's lawyer, Dusty Shiver. She tells the lawyer that Quinn is her brother and that she can prove he is innocent. She says that when Quinn left Frostburg he almost overdosed on cocaine in DC. She and Dee Ray drove him to a rehab facility near Akron, Ohio. Quinn was in the facility when the murders of Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary took place. She has paperwork to back up her claim. He was admitted under an assumed name, James Williams, and they paid the facility a deposit of \$20,000 in cash. Quinn was given a physical exam and complete blood work. Dusty says that once he has investigated the matter he will file a motion to dismiss the charges.

Nathan's truck is found by the police on Tuesday morning, after his employees began to worry when he did not show up on Monday. Very little is done since his family is not



worried about him. It is discovered that he is an ex-con and this elicits very little sympathy from the police.

Max still has forty-one gold bars with him worth about \$600,000. He makes an appointment to meet a gold dealer. Max meets Hassan at an ice cream shop. He shows the man one gold bar. Max is willing to sell him five bars. Since the gold is obviously black market variety the price will be less. The two men agree on a price.

Max buys various items such as backgammon sets, cheap laptops, toolboxes and hardback books. He hides gold bars anywhere he can within the items. Wrapping them for shipping he plans to send them to himself in Antigua. He manages to place a total of thirty-two bars within the items.

Max drafts an e-mail to Stanley Mumphrey and Victor Westlake. In it he says that Quinn Rucker did not kill Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary. He says he knows the identity of the real killer and that Dusty Shiver has evidence to prove Quinn's innocence. He wishes to talk to the two men as soon as possible since he has a plan to get the real killer. He wishes immunity for himself and others.

In chapter forty, Max meets with Hassan again and they exchange five gold bars for \$122,000. He mails his packages at FedEx, UPS and DHL offices. Max then boards a private jet for Antigua. He sends the e-mail he drafted to Mumphrey and Westlake before take off.

Max has chosen Antigua because it is not overly populated and it has flexible banks. He has leased a two-bedroom condo near the beach. He sees it as a good starting point for his new life.

Stanley Mumphrey and Victor Westlake discuss the e-mail they received from Max. They are not sure they can trust him since they feel he obviously lied to them. They know that he just flew to Antigua on a private jet.

Mumphrey believes everything Max did was a conspiracy to get out of prison. He is sure Quinn is in on it. He wants to throw Max back in jail and get the information from him that way. He and Westlake realize they need Max if his information is valid since they do not have anything without him. Mumphrey does not like feeling like he has been duped, but Westlake is able to dissuade him from calling a grand jury.

Chapters 37, 38, 39, 40 Analysis

Vanessa and Max take possession of the gold. They divide it up between themselves and place it in safety deposit boxes in Richmond and Jacksonville. They are stashing the gold away until they can figure out what to do with it.

Vanessa goes to Dusty Shiver's office to say she is Quinn's sister and can prove his innocence. The reader now realizes why she was so eager to help Max. The scheme seems to be a family affair. The close relationship between Max and Quinn is more



apparent now and the extent of Max's plan is beginning to be revealed. It is now apparent that Max and Quinn set up the scheme for Quinn to be arrested for the judge's murder so that Max could be released from prison. Max then finds Nathan Cooley and gets the millions in gold he has hidden away. Then Max and Vanessa will make sure that Quinn will not be charged with the judge's murder.

Max continues to help Quinn get out of prison by emailing the FBI to let them know he will not testify against Quinn. He also tells them he knows the identity of the real killer. It is apparent that he has known it all along, but has strung the FBI along in order to get what he wanted from them. Max wants immunity for himself and those who have helped him in his scheme. He wants Quinn out of prison and then they can all enjoy the gold they have taken from Nathan and start a new life.

Max has done his homework and he has chosen Antigua to begin his new life. He has leased a condo and mailed some of the gold bars there to himself. That way he is able to smuggle some of them out of the country with relative ease. Since the banks are so flexible this will help him with smuggling in the rest of the gold and converting it to cash.

The FBI and U.S. Attorney's office realize that they have been duped by Max. He has used them to gain his freedom and now he has them right where he wants them where Quinn Rucker is concerned. They cannot catch the judge's killer without Max because they have not a clue who it is.



Chapters 41, 42, 43, 44

Chapters 41, 42, 43, 44 Summary

In chapter forty-one, Max is enjoying his time in Antigua. He visits the Royal Bank of the East Caribbean where he has rented two large lockboxes. He leaves some cash and papers, but the boxes will soon be the home to the gold bars.

The packages begin to arrive at his villa. The gold has made it safely. He puts the nine gold bars that have arrived so far in the bank.

Max sends another e-mail to Stanley Mumphrey and Victor Westlake. He knows their initial reaction was to want to indict him and Quinn Rucker. He warns them he will disappear again because he is not going back to prison. He sends them three photos of cigar boxes. He mentions that these are the brand Judge Fawcett liked to smoke. He says the box in the photo was taken from Judge Fawcett's safe and is now in his possession. It has the killer's fingerprints on it. The fourth photo is of three of the gold bars. Max tells them that these were what was in the boxes in the judge's safe. That is the reason the judge was murdered. He wants to cut a deal.

The FBI do some investigating and find that a man named Ray Fawcett sold a few gold bars from time to time in New York City. Over the past four years he sold at least \$600,000 worth of gold. By showing the picture of the gold bar Max sent them to the gold dealer they find out it is identical to the ones sold by Fawcett.

Westlake theorizes that Malcolm and Quinn worked together to get Malcolm out of prison. This allowed him to find the killer and the gold. They believe he will want Quinn released from prison under Rule 35 as well. McTavey admires Malcolm's planning and intelligence as well as the fact that he made the federal government look foolish. McTavey suggests that Westlake take Mumphrey and meet with Malcolm. He wants the case to be finished.

In chapter forty-two, Vanessa joins Malcolm in Antigua. They realize that they are now wealthy, but it is the freedom and security the money gives them that they enjoy the most.

Max's meeting with Mumphrey and Westlake takes place at the Blue Water Hotel on the northwestern tip of Antigua. He is greeted by Mumphrey and Westlake. Max still has a small doubt that the meeting could be a set up. Vanessa is waiting with a plan just in case.

They talk to Dusty Shiver on speakerphone since he represents not only Quinn, but Max and Vanessa as well. They go over the immunity agreement. It says that the government will not prosecute Max, Quinn, Vanessa or Dee Ray for any wrongdoing concerning the murder investigation of Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary. It is e-mailed to a federal magistrate in Roanoke who signs it and sends it back.



Quinn is cleared of all charges relating to the murders. This is also signed by the magistrate. Then there is the Rule 35 motion to commute his sentence and set Quinn free. Max refuses to complete his part of the deal until Quinn is free.

During a break in the proceedings, Westlake takes the opportunity to talk to Max. He wants to know what Max will do if they need him to testify at the trial. Max refuses. He does not plan to return to the United States. Even with immunity he does not trust the Feds who put him in prison for a crime he did not commit. He does not want to be in their jurisdiction again.

Westlake wants to know where the gold is. Max tells him he does not know. Westlake suspects that Max has the gold. Max continues to deny it, but he does say that if the gold even exists it does not belong to anyone because it was obtained by corruption and the original owners would deny all knowledge of it.

The judge who sentenced Quinn originally finally signs the Rule 35 order of commutation. Quinn is released and taken to the office of Dusty Shiver where Dee Ray is waiting for him. After all of the papers are signed Max tells them who the real killer is.

Six months after Malcolm Bannister arrived at the Louisville Federal Correctional Institution he was able to get an inmate released by filing a motion. A guy named Nattie heard about it and was sure Malcolm could do the same for him. He could not, but Nattie offered him money and told him about a quantity of gold bars he knew about. Max did not believe him, so he told him the entire story.

Nattie came from a family of meth makers and dealers. He wanted something better and got a job at a country store. One day a stranger offered him money to help him move a five hundred pound safe. Together they got it into the basement of his cabin. Nattie told his brother, Gene, and the two investigated to find out what was in the safe. They were eventually able to discover the stranger was Judge Raymond Fawcett, who was residing over a trial involving uranium mining in Virginia.

After much frustration, they figured out that the judge kept the safe hidden behind a trapdoor. Nattie saw the judge place a cigar box full of small gold bars into the safe. The two planned to force the judge to open the safe for them so they could steal the contents. Before they could put their plan into action, however, Gene was killed in a drug bust and Nattie was sent to prison. It was five years before Nattie killed the judge and Naomi Clary and stole the gold.

Max identifies Nattie as Nathan Cooley, who could be found in a city jail in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The Feds realize this must be Nathaniel Coley, who Max had been traveling with. Max tells them that Nathan is looking at twenty years in a Jamaican prison and he would most likely take a deal if he was offered one by the FBI and they would not have to bother with a trial.

In chapter forty-three, Max confides in Victor Westlake that he believes the gold came from Armana Mines. It was a pay off to rule in their favor regarding uranium mining in Virginia. He suggests that the FBI should investigate the bribe so that Armana Mines



does not profit. Max tells Victor that if the FBI does not begin an investigation in thirty days he will go to an investigative reporter with his information. Westlake realizes that Max is getting his revenge on the federal government.

Max and Vanessa fly back to Miami. Vanessa leaves him and goes on to Richmond. They both collect the gold bars they have previously left in different banks in Richmond and Jacksonville. Vanessa heads on to DC and Max follows as soon as he finishes his business.

Max is reunited with Quinn and Vanessa at Dee Ray's apartment in DC. They celebrate their success and figure out how to divide the gold. They give Dee Ray a generous portion for his contributions and the rest will be divided amongst Max, Vanessa and Quinn.

In chapter forty-four, Dee Ray has figured out how they can smuggle the gold out of the country and into Antigua. They have hired a yacht and will pretend to be avid scuba divers. The bars will be hidden away in the diving equipment. Gold bars are also stashed in luggage wherever it can be safely hidden. The four board the yacht called Rumrunner. They sail to Antigua without any problems. They carry the scuba equipment and luggage ashore without raising suspicions. They soon arrive at the villa Max has leased and one ready to begin their new lives.

Chapters 41, 42, 43, 44 Analysis

Max contacts the FBI and U.S. Attorney once again. He threatens that if they try to arrest him he will disappear and they will never be able to find him. They realize how good he is at disappearing so they take the threat seriously. Their case against Quinn will not stand up without Max so they do not have a choice but to meet with him.

The pictures of the cigar boxes and gold bars intrigues the FBI enough that they investigate. They find that the gold came from Judge Fawcett since he sold similar ones over the years.

Westlake knows exactly what Max has done. He knows that Max will want Quinn released from prison under Rule 35 just as he was. It was their plan all along. The FBI know he made fools out of them and that he did it on purpose as payback for what they did to him and what they cost him. They cannot help, but admire what he has done, though. They are willing to do a deal with him because they really just want to be finished with the Fawcett case. It has cost them too much time and embarrassment already.

Max is able to get what he wants by holding all of the cards. He refuses to give the Feds anything until they release Quinn from prison. His friend has risked a great deal for him and spent months in prison pretending to be crazy and Max does not want to leave him in there any longer than he has to.



Westlake knows Max has the gold, but cannot get him to admit it. It is uncertain what he would do if Max actually confessed to having it.

Max gets what he wants and Quinn is released from prison. Max then tells them that Nathan is the one who killed the judge and Naomi Clary in order to steal the gold from the safe. Nathan wanted a life away from his family and the gold would allow him to do that. The same could be said for Quinn who wants a life away from the drug business in which his family is involved. The FBI realize that Max put Nathan in the Jamaican prison. He tells them that Nathan will be more than willing to deal with them in order to get out of that prison. An American prison is much better than a Jamaican one.

Max and his compatriots get the immunity that they requested and are allowed to leave the country. They take the gold with them seeing it as rightfully theirs since the judge got it through bribery and Armanna Mines will not claim it since it was given away illegally. Max, Vanessa and Quinn smuggle the gold to Antigua and get a new life.



Characters

Malcolm Bannister, Max Reed Baldwin

Malcolm Bannister is a forty-three year old black lawyer who is serving a ten year prison sentence for money laundering. Malcolm proclaims his innocence and holds a grudge against the federal government, who he feels treated him unfairly and did not care that he had been an unwitting accomplice to criminal activities rather than a knowing participant.

Malcolm sees his chance to gain his freedom and wealth at the death of Judge Raymond Fawcett. He tells the Federal Bureau of Investigations that he can name the killer, but for a price. The FBI gets an indictment against Quinn Rucker with Malcolm's help and he in turn gets his freedom, a new identity and the reward money.

Malcolm becomes Max Reed Baldwin and begins to use his money to hatch a plan. He tracks down the real killer of Judge Fawcett, Nathan Cooley and befriends him enough to get him to take a plane ride with him. Once on the plane Max drugs Nathan and takes him to Jamaica, plants cocaine and a handgun on him, thus landing him in prison. Due to Nathan's desperation Max elicits from him the whereabouts of the gold he stole from Judge Fawcett's safe after he murdered him. Max eventually gets Quinn free of any charges and gives the FBI Nathan in exchange. The federal agents realize that Max had a plan all along and end up looking very foolish. Max, Quinn and Quinn's sister and brother, Vanessa and Dee Ray split the gold amongst themselves and sail away to Antigua to begin a new life.

Vanessa Young

Vanessa Young is a woman Malcolm Bannister met while in prison. She came to visit her brother, Quinn Rucker, who was a good friend of Malcolm's. She was married at the time and Malcolm had seven years left in his sentence so the relationship did not flourish.

Once Malcolm gains his freedom from prison and changes his identity to Max Baldwin he contacts Vanessa. The two meet up and the attraction is instant. Vanessa plays a key role in Max's plan to get Judge Fawcett's gold from Nathan Cooley and embarrass the FBI at the same time. Vanessa plays Max's assistant as he tricks Nathan into believing they are filming a documentary involving his dead brother, Gene. She uses her sex appeal to gain Nathan's trust and to keep him interested in the project. She helps convince him how great Miami is and it is a trip he should definitely take. Vanessa also deals with obtaining Nathan a fake passport so that they can take him unwittingly out of the country to Jamaica rather than to Miami. It is Vanessa who spends fruitless hours searching Nathan's house for any sign of the hidden gold. Only after Max calls her with the location of the gold does she finally find it and carry it away. She helps Max stash



the bars in various banks in Virginia for a short time until they are ready to leave the country and retrieve them. The reader only learns Vanessa's true identity when she goes to see Quinn Rucker's lawyer, Dusty Shiver, and identifies herself as his sister proclaiming that he has an alibi and she and her brother, Dee Ray took him to a rehab center in Akron, OH around the time of the murders. Vanessa gets an equal share of the gold along with Quinn and Malcolm. She and Malcolm, along with Quinn and Dee Ray sail away to Antigua where they plan to live in comfort and enjoy a new life.

Nathan Cooley

Nathan Cooley comes from a small town in Virginia called Willow Gap. He and his brother, Gene, are involved in meth distribution. Nathan is hired by Judge Fawcett to move a safe into his cabin. Nathan tells his brother about the safe and they are curious about what valuables the judge could be hiding in it. He and Gene let themselves into the cabin multiple times, first to locate the safe and second to try to figure out how to open it. The two brothers find out that the cabin is owned by a federal judge who is involved in a high profile case involving uranium mining. They eventually figure out that the safe is hidden behind a secret door, but they are unsuccessful in finding a way to open it. They watch the judge carefully hoping to see how to open the safe and discover that he has a large store of gold bars stashed in cigar boxes stored within the safe. Before they have a chance to do anything further they are busted by the DEA during a drug deal. Gene is shot and killed by DEA agents and Nathan is sent to prison. While in the Louisville Federal Correctional Institute he meets Malcolm Bannister, who he asks to help him with legal advice. Nathan was convinced that Malcolm could find a loophole to get him out of prison. To gain Malcolm's help he told him the story about the judge's safe and how it contained gold bars. He promised Malcolm half of the fortune if he succeeded in getting him out of prison. Malcolm was unable to do so, therefore it was five years before Nathan was able to get his hands on the judge's gold. He tortured Naomi Clary to get the judge to open his safe. Once Fawcett did Nathan shot them both. He stashed the cigar boxes of full of gold ingots under the floor of his shed, kept with a small metal casket. He bought a bar in Radford and began to live a normal life. Once Malcolm, now Max Reed Baldwin, got out of prison he tracks Nathan down using his brother's death and the excuse of making a documentary as a way to get close to the man. He believes Max and takes a trip with him to Miami, but he is actually taken to Jamaica. Max drugs him and plants cocaine and a handgun on him. Nathan is thrown in prison by the Jamaican police where he is continually beaten and harassed by his fellow prisoners. In desperation, he confides to Max the location of the gold bars hoping that he can use some to bribe the authorities to let him out of prison. Max finds the gold and then gives Nathan up to the FBI, so that they can extradite him back to the United States.

Judge Raymond Fawcett

Judge Raymond Fawcett is a federal judge, who is found murdered along with his young secretary in his cabin. He is found with two bullet wounds to the back of his head



laying next to his open and empty safe. His secretary, Naomi Clary, is found with her hands and feet taped. She had been tortured to make Judge Fawcett open the safe. As the investigation unravels it is learned that the Judge was open to taking bribes for giving favorable rulings in cases. He supposedly took a bribe of half a million dollars to let Quinn Rucker's nephew off on a drug smuggling charge. The judge was said to have taken the money, but sent the boy to prison anyway. This was the story that Malcolm and Quinn fabricated to give Quinn a motive for killing Judge Fawcett. The Judge, however, was open to bribery because he took payment in the form of small gold bars from Amanna Mines so that he would rule in their favor during their trial. Judge Fawcett acquired more than eight million dollars in gold. Nathan Cooley lived in the area near the judge's cabin and helped him move his new safe into the basement of the cabin. Nathan and his brother, Gene, knew the judge must be keeping something very valuable in such a large and impregnable safe. They were unsuccessful in their several attempts to see inside of the safe and it was only after Gene died and Nathan was released from prison after a drug bust that the surviving brother was able to achieve his goal by torturing Naomi so that the judge opened the safe. The judge and Naomi were then executed with bullets to their heads.

Quinn Rucker

Quinn Rucker is from a family of drug dealers. He makes friends with Malcolm when they are both serving time at the Frostburg Federal Prison Camp. As part of Malcolm's plan to free himself from prison and to make them both very wealthy Quinn is implicated in the murder of Judge Raymond Fawcett. Under Rule 35 Malcolm is able to gain his freedom when he tells the FBI that Quinn had a motive for killing and robbing the Judge. Supposedly Quinn's nephew was caught smuggling drugs and was to go up before Judge Fawcett. It was known that Fawcett would go easy on defendants if he was given a bribe. Quinn arranged a bribe through his lawyer and it was accepted. When the time came for the Judge to pass sentence, instead of letting Quinn's nephew off as he was supposed he sent him to prison. Quinn vowed vengeance against the Judge and wanted to get his money back. With Malcolm's testimony and evidence gathered from Quinn, himself, the federal agents are able to get an indictment against him. Malcolm later retracts his statement and refuses to testify. Quinn is also provided with an alibi by his sister, Vanessa and brother, Dee Ray, thus making it impossible for him to have killed Judge Fawcett. He is eventually released and reunites with his sister, brother and Malcolm. Quinn had the most difficult role in Malcolm's plan since he had to spend months in prison, most of it in solitary confinement. He had to have had a great deal of faith in his friend, Malcolm to let himself be willingly put in that position. In the end, his was rewarded with a large share of the gold they obtained from Nathan Cooley. He was then free to live his life away from the family drug dealing business as he wished.

Dee Ray Rucker

Dee Ray Rucker is Quinn Rucker's younger brother. He is well educated and good at dealing with the money side of the family's drug dealing business. He is in on Malcolm's



plan to dupe the FBI and take from Nathan Cooley whatever he gets from Judge Fawcett's safe. He is the one who picks up Quinn Rucker when he walks away from Frostburg Federal Prison Camp, he monitored Nathan's release from prison so that they knew when to begin their plot. He also provided the money for Quinn's alibi at the drug rehab center in Akron, OH, as well as providing Malcolm with a gun and cocaine to plant on Nathan Cooley in Jamaica. He is awarded a generous share of the gold as a result of his efforts.

Victor Westlake

Victor Westlake is the FBI agent in charge of the investigation into the murder of Judge Raymond Fawcett and his secretary, Naomi Clary.

Stanley Mumphrey

Stanley Mumphrey is the US Attorney for the Southern District. He has had a mundane career up to the point when Judge Fawcett is murdered. The case is his opportunity to make a name for himself and grab some glory.

Pat Surhoff

Pat Surhoff is a US Marshal with the Witness Protection Program. He helps Malcolm get his new identity and gets him settled in his new life in Florida.

Henry Bannister

Henry Bannister is Malcolm Bannister's father. He was one of the first black state troopers hired by the Commonwealth of Virginia. He is disappointed in his son for being in prison, but nevertheless visits him every week. He is the only visitor that Malcolm has. He is a hard man, but his sense of duty demands that he stick by his son no matter what.



Objects/Places

Frostburg Federal Prison Camp

Frostburg Federal Prison Camp is a low-security facility that houses nonviolent prisoners and those sentenced to ten years or less. This is where Malcolm Bannister is serving his last five years of prison.

Safety Deposit Boxes

Malcolm and Vanessa deposit the gold bars in safety deposit boxes at several banks. They do this to ensure that the government or anyone else will not discover they have the bars.

Gold bars

The gold bars, which are mini-bars, each weighing ten ounces, were paid to Judge Fawcett by Armana Mines as a bribe in a legal case. They were stolen by Nathan Cooley who then lost them to Malcolm Bannister.

Lake Higgins

Judge Fawcett had a cabin at Lake Higgins, which is located in southwest Virginia. It is there that Nathan Cooley kills the Judge and his secretary, Naomi Clary, and steals the gold bars.

Safe

The Judge's safe is where he kept the gold bars.

Prison Library

The prison library is where Malcolm works at Frostburg. He also meets with prisoners who ask him for legal advice in his office there.

The Freezer

The Freezer is the FBI's temporary headquarters while solving the murder of Judge Fawcett. It is a warehouse located in an industrial park near Roanoke Regional Airport.



Louisville, Kentucky

Louisville, Kentucky is where the medium-security prison is located at which Malcolm Bannister served the first twenty-two years of his prison sentence.

Rule 35

Rule 35 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure says that if an inmate can solve another crime, in which the federal government has an interest, the inmate can have their sentence reduced. Malcolm uses this rule to be released from his remaining five years of prison.

Velvet Club

The Velvet Club is a strip club where FBI agents pick up Quinn Rucker. He is working there as a bartender after his escape from Frostburg Federal Prison Camp.

Witness Security Program

The Witness Security Program is also known as witness protection. The US Marshals provide protection and an new life to people who need to change their identities due to testifying in a federal case. Malcolm Bannister enters witness protection.

Morgantown, West Virginia

Morgantown, West Virginia is the first stop for Malcolm and the federal agents when he leaves Frostburg. He gets a new name and clothes.

U.S. Army Hospital at Fort Carson

The U.S. Army Hospital at Fort Carson is where Malcolm Bannister get his plastic surgery to change his appearance and becomes Max Reed Baldwin. He stays there two months to recuperate.

Roanoke, Virginia

Roanoke, Virginia is where the investigation into Judge Fawcett's murder takes place. It is also where Quinn Rucker is kept in jail.



Neptune Beach

Neptune Beach is a few miles east of Jacksonville, Florida. This is where the US Marshal's provide Max Baldwin with a one bedroom condo and a new life.

Miami, Florida

In Miami, Florida, Max Baldwin goes to Coporate Registry Services where he sets up a fake documentary film business called Skelter Films.

Antigua

Antigua is in the eastern Caribbean.

Radford, Virginia

Radford, Virginia is the town where Nathan Cooley owns a bar called Bombay's Bar and Grill.

Bluefield, Virginia

Bluefield, Virginia is where Nathan Cooley and his brother, Gene are caught by the DEA during a drug deal. Gene is shot and killed by DEA agents.

Passport

Vanessa and Max have a fake passport made for Nathan Cooley, but in the name of Nathaniel Coley. This allows them to take him out of the country and leave him in Jamaica under a different name.

Montego Bay, Jamaica

Jamaica is where Max flies Nathan Cooley after he gets him drunk and drugs him. The authorities find his passport is fake and he had in his possession four kilos of cocaine as well as a handgun.

Storage shed

A storage shed is where Nathan Cooley hides the gold bars he steals from Judge Fawcett. It is hidden under a wooden floor within a bronze casket and divided amongst eighteen cigar boxes.



Akron, Ohio

Akron, Ohio is where the rehab facility is located that Vanessa Young and Dee Ray Rucker profess that they placed their brother, Quinn. Vanessa shows the necessary paperwork to Dusty Shiver, thus proving Quinn is innocent of the murder of Judge Fawcett.

Rumrunner

The Rumrunner is the yacht that Max, Dee Ray Rucker, Vanessa Young and Quinn Rucker charter to take them to Antigua. This is how they safely smuggle the gold bars out of the country.

Sugar Cove

Sugar Cove Villa is in Antigua and this is where Max and the Rucker siblings make their new home.

Themes

Revenge

Revenge is a typical theme in novels and is the case in "The Racketeer". A character has been treated badly by someone so they seek revenge against those who have done them wrong. In this novel Malcolm Bannister spends years putting together a plan that will not only gain him freedom from prison, but also make the federal government look foolish.

Malcolm was sent to prison for ten years for money laundering. As a lawyer he accepted the business of a client, who was less than law abiding in his business activities. Unbeknownst to Malcolm the client was using him and his firm to launder criminal funds. Once he realized what was happening it was too late. He cooperated fully with the Federal Bureau of Investigations and he was assured that he would not have any trouble. He was completely taken by surprise when he was arrested later on and tried along with his former client and twelve others. Malcolm was found guilty and sentenced to ten years in prison. His faith in the federal government and the judicial system vanishes and is replaced by bitterness and mistrust as well as a desire to get payback against those who destroyed his life. Thus he spends years planning an elaborate scheme. The first step in his plan is the death of Judge Raymond Fawcett. The judge's death allows Malcolm to make a deal with the FBI to gain his freedom in exchange for giving them the identity of the killer. Once this is agreed upon Malcolm gives them the name of Quinn Rucker, a friend of his who is in on the plan. Quinn keeps the FBI busy by confessing and allowing himself to be indicted. They use less than legal tactics to get a confession out of Quinn, which will reflect badly upon them later.

In the meantime, Malcolm is busy using the reward money he got for turning over Quinn to find the real killer. Malcolm concocts an elaborate storyline to placate Nathan Cooley and gain his trust. He is then able to have Cooley placed in a Jamaican prison where he will do anything to get out, which includes telling Malcolm the whereabouts of the gold he stole from Judge Fawcett when he killed him. Malcolm then hands over Nathan to the FBI, who then realize that he had played them along to gain his freedom. Malcolm tells them about the gold, but does not share its whereabouts. Victor Westlake, the agent in charge of the Judge Fawcett murder investigation, knows that Malcolm is not sharing everything he knows, but grudgingly admires his ingenuity. He cannot prosecute him for anything since he requested immunity in exchange for divulging that Nathan Cooley was the actual murderer of the judge and Naomi Clary. Malcolm takes his gold and moves out of the country where he can live in peace and comfort away from the federal government so that they cannot touch him again.



Greed

Greed is a recurring theme and shows characters who covet possessions that are not theirs or do not wish to share those they have. In this novel, the reader sees the way that greed affects several characters and the consequences of that greed. Judge Raymond Fawcett is paid to uphold the law, but due to greed he fails in his duty. Judge Fawcett accepts bribes of gold from the Armanna Mines in exchange for giving them a favorable ruling during their trial.

Drug dealer Nathan Cooley and his brother Gene discover that the Judge has valuables hidden away in his cabin and thus decide to steal it for themselves. As a consequence the Judge and his secretary, Naomi, an innocent bystander, are tortured and killed in order for Nathan Cooley to learn the safe combination to steal the over five hundred bars of gold the judge has stored in there. Nathan's greed lands him in the hands of Malcolm Bannister, who wishes to begin a new life outside of the United States so he drugs Nathan and gets him put in a Jamaican prison where, in his eagerness to get out, he confides to Malcolm where the gold is hidden. Malcolm seems remorseless as to fate he has set in motion for Nathan, but only concerns himself with the gold. He later gives evidence against Nathan to the FBI so that he can be returned to the United States to pay for the murders of Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary.

If Malcolm Bannister had only been interested in obtaining his freedom he could have warned authorities of Nathan Cooley's intentions of robbing Judge Fawcett and may have been able to prevent the murder of not only the judge, but of Naomi Clary as well. Even if they had not listened to him and the murders had taken place he still could have brokered a deal to testify against Cooley in exchange for his freedom. Instead he waited for the Judge to be murdered and robbed and only then came forward with every intention of taking the gold for himself.

Quinn, Vanessa and Dee Ray Rucker all put themselves at risk for the sake of becoming wealthy. Quinn leaves prison early and lives as an escaped convict before taking the blame for the murders of the judge and his secretary. He suffers days of solitary confinement and the danger of being convicted for the murder of a federal judge. A crime which he did not commit. Dee Ray provided drugs and a handgun to help set Nathan Cooley up in Jamaica and he was also an accessory to his brother's escape from prison. Vanessa could have very easily been caught with the stolen gold, which she helped transport to different places.

Injustice

There are some examples of injustice that occur within this novel. The main one is that Malcolm Bannister proclaims throughout the novel that he is innocent of the crime for which he was tried and found guilty. He claims that he was a mere pawn in the money laundering enterprise Barry the Backhand. He merely saw it as a golden opportunity to make a significant amount of money for the firm. Neither Reed, nor Copeland, his business partners had any qualms about the business, but let Malcolm continue with the



work unhindered. Once the nature of the business was discovered Malcolm cooperated fully with the FBI, who assured him that they did not need anything further with him. A U.S. Attorney, who was more interested in putting away as many criminals as possible as opposed to dealing fairly with those who had been caught up in the scheme inadvertently decided to prosecute Malcolm anyway. He was taken into custody with a show of force that was completely unwarranted for the situation or the crime for which he was being charged. Malcolm was not shown any leniency, but instead given a sentence almost as long as the man who was responsible for the entire scheme. His reputation and life were shattered and no one would believe that he was innocent.

The other example is the FBI's interrogation of Quinn Rucker. The reader finds out later in the book that Quinn is completely innocent of the murder of Judge Fawcett and Naomi Clary, however he was very close to being tried and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. The FBI did not have any physical evidence that tied Quinn to the murders, rather all they had was Malcolm Bannister's testimony. They needed to illicit a confession out of Quinn so they used whatever tactics they deemed necessary to do so even if they were not entirely legal. The two federal agents who interrogated Quinn made up evidence that showed his guilt knowing full well they would not be able to introduce such evidence at the trial. Quinn was told that a witness could place him in the vicinity, a ballistics report showed that his gun was used as the murder weapon and that a boot print found at the scene matched one of his own. They kept him sitting in a small room for hours, without any sleep, discouraging his desire to be taken to the local correctional facility so he could rest and ignoring his mention of a lawyer since he did not outright ask for one to be called. If Quinn's confession had not been part of Malcolm's overall scheme, he most likely would not have succumbed to the agents tactics, but a less savvy individual could have easily given in and been convicted of a crime they did not commit.

Style

Point of View

The point of view is for the most part first person. The narrator is Malcolm Bannister, a forty-three year old man serving time in the Frostburg Federal Prison Camp for money laundering. The point of view is not entirely reliable since the reader finds out later in the book that Malcolm has kept some very important information to himself and not shared it through his narration. The reader is only given the information that Malcolm wishes to share and therefore the entire truth is not revealed until the end. The author does this for the affect of the story, but it does not give the reader a trust in Malcolm and his information.

Due to the first person narrative being so narrow in scope, there are parts of the story that are also told in third person. These are scenes that Malcolm cannot witness directly, but they are important to the story and the information they provide to the reader. The third person narrative allows the reader to find out what else is going on in the story since Malcolm's viewpoint of events is limited to his own storyline. These supporting scenes mainly involve the FBI agents and their investigation of the murder of Judge Fawcett. This way the reader is allowed to see how the investigation is progressing and witness some of the techniques the federal agents use to get what they want. The reader is also given glimpses into Vanessa Young's role in the story when she is not with Malcolm, but is nonetheless engaged in performing tasks to help complete his plan.

Setting

"The Racketeer" is set in several different locations. Part of the novel takes place in Frostburg, Maryland where the narrator is serving a prison sentence at the Frostburg Federal Prison Camp. The prison is a minimum security one and the prisoners have an easier life than they would at a medium or maximum security prison. There is not even a fence around the perimeter, thus allowing the possibility of easy escape.

On his release from prison, the novel follows Malcolm as he travels to different places in his new life as Max Reed Baldwin. He begins at the U.S. Army Hospital at Fort Carson in Colorado where he gets plastic surgery to change his appearance and gets his new identity. The story then follows Max Reed Baldwin as he supposedly begins a new life in Florida. He soon deviates from the plans the federal government has for his new life preferring to make his own life decisions.

Max goes on a trip, which begins in Miami and on the to Caribbean, Jamaica and Antigua. The reader knows that Max has his reasons, rather than pleasure, for making this trip, but is not privy to Max's innermost thoughts. Upon his return Max begins his plot to track down Nathan Cooley. This takes him to various locations in Virginia and West Virginia where he weaves an innovative tale to gain Nathan's trust and lower his



defenses. Through this interaction he is able to get Nathan on a plane to Jamaica where he incriminates him by planting cocaine and a handgun on his person, thus landing him in a Jamaican prison where Max leaves him.

Upon his return once again to the United States Max and Vanessa spend their time securing the gold they have taken from Nathan's house in various banks in Virginia and Florida. The two eventually recover all of the gold to meet up with their accomplices Dee Ray and Quinn Rucker in Washington, DC where the four make plans for the future and are soon sailing their way to Antigua where Max has rented a villa on a previous trip. The four are able to smuggle the gold out of US and into Antigua on a yacht without raising suspicions. They plan to live their lives in comfort well away from the grasp of the federal government.

Language and Meaning

The language of this novel is easily understandable to a modern audience. The language is that of every day and although the main character is a lawyer he explains legal matters in a way that the average reader can easily understand. The novel is easy to read and the storyline engrossing. The twists the author lends to the plot keep the reader engaged and completely taken by surprise as to what will happen next.

The language of the novel fits well with the characters being portrayed. The backgrounds of the characters have a variety of range, each of which is portrayed accurately, but without diminishing the readability of the story itself. The narrator uses exposition to add to the reader's knowledge of various characters, thus the reader does not entirely have to rely upon the dialogue between characters to garner information about a person's personality and background. This lends a richness not only to the characters, but also to the storyline itself.

Structure

The novel is made up of forty-four chapters, the length of which ranges from four to thirteen pages. The chapters are short, but a lot takes place within those brief amount of pages. The author does not waste time on superfluous descriptive detail, but keeps the story moving quickly. The story is told through both exposition and dialogue. The narrator flashes back several times to past events allowing the reader to get a fuller picture of how he came to be in prison for money laundering.

"The Racketeer" contains one main plot and two subplots. The main plot follows Malcolm Bannister as he transforms into Max Reed Baldwin and then as he sets in motion his plan to make the federal government look foolish while at the same time obtaining untold wealth. One of the subplots follows the Federal Bureau of Investigations and the U.S. Attorneys Office as they investigate the murders of Judge Raymond Fawcett and his secretary, Naomi Clary and their subsequent indictment of Quinn Rucker for the crime. The other subplot follows Vanessa Young, Malcolm Bannister's love interest as well as his cohort in his plan to find and steal the gold ex-

con Nathan Cooley stole from Judge Fawcett's safe. All of these plots work together to develop a satisfying story that wraps up well at the end.



Quotes

"I am a lawyer, and I am in prison."
Chap. 1, pp. 3

"Malcolm Bannister, black, aged forty-three, convicted of a crime I had no knowledge of committing."
Chap. 1, pp. 6

"I am sitting here doing ten years for a noncrime because a hotshot US Attorney needed to jack up his kill quota."
Chap. 2, pp. 17

"Judge Fawcett was found near the safe, shot twice in the back of the head, definitely an execution, and there was a large pool of dried blood on the floor around him."
Chap. 3, pp. 18

"The other body was that of Naomi Clary, a thirty-four-year-old divorced mother of two who had recently been hired by Judge Fawcett as a secretary."
Chap. 3, pp. 19

"Judges often change as they mature, but few turn as abruptly as Raymond Fawcett."
Chap. 4, pp. 26

"Soon, though, I met the man who would eventually kill Judge Fawcett. I know the identity of the murderer, and I know his motive."
Chap. 4, pp. 28

"I have a plan, one I have been plotting for years now. It is my only way out."
Chap. 4, pp. 28

"The point being - for an inmate, I have credibility."
Chap. 5, pp. 33

"The government lied, and not for the first or last time."
Chap. 5, pp. 38

"I was one of the fourteen, and my alleged crime had been what is commonly known as money laundering."
Chap. 7, pp. 54

"For the rest of my life I will be regarded as a criminal, and I refuse to accept this. I will have a life, freed from my past and far away from the tentacles of the federal government."
Chap. 10, pp. 78



"I don't trust Judge Slater or any other federal judge, prosecutor, assistant prosecutor, FBI agent, or anybody else working for the federal government. The paperwork must be perfect; the deal unbreakable."

Chap. 11, pp. 81

"Somewhere in the process, Quinn learned that Judge Fawcett might look more favorably upon the nephew's case if some cash could change hands."

Chap. 12, pp. 88

"A nip here, a tuck there, a bit of tightening and straightening, and, voila, a new version that's every bit as handsome and much safer."

Chap. 20, pp. 148

"Freedom is exhilarating, and indescribable."

Chap. 21, pp. 158

"They think we're pals now, one big happy team walking lockstep toward another just verdict. If I could, I would knife them in the back and poison their case."

Chap. 23, pp. 173

"They-the federal government-took away five years of my life, along with my son, my wife, and my career."

Chap. 23, pp. 173

"So it's just me, Max Reed Baldwin, free but on the run, scheming some way to exact revenge while riding off into the sunset."

Chap. 26, pp. 195

"And this entire charade has been carefully put together not to mislead the people who want to follow me or kill me but to conceal my real identity from you, Mr. Nathan Cooley."

Chap. 29, pp. 210

"With gold fluctuating around \$1500 an ounce, our jackpot is worth somewhere in the neighborhood of \$8.5 million."

Chap. 37, pp. 284

"Maybe Rucker is part of the scheme and he played along so Bannister could get himself out of prison."

Chap. 40, pp. 308

"Naturally, the brothers were stunned at what they had learned, and they began making plans to rob the safe. It would require an altercation with the judge, and probably violence, but they were determined to follow through."

Chap. 42, pp. 328



"He waited five years before he strong-armed Judge Fawcett, tortured Naomi Clary, robbed the safe, and executed both of them."
Chap. 42, pp. 328



Topics for Discussion

What is a racketeer? Does anyone in the book meet that description? Explain.

Malcolm Bannister proclaims his innocence in the crime he is serving time for. Do you believe him? By the end of the book did your opinion of him change? Explain.

What is Malcolm's motive for the elaborate scheme he implements around the death of Judge Fawcett? Do you believe his motive justifies the methods he uses? Why or why not?

What crime did Nathan Cooley commit? What happens to him? Do you believe the crimes he has committed justify his treatment at the hands of Malcolm and his accomplices? Explain.

Discuss the tactics the FBI used to extract information from Quinn Rucker. Do you believe they were justified in doing so? Did their methods work? In light of Quinn Rucker's innocence of the crime, discuss the ramifications of these methods on those innocent of any crime.

If you were Malcolm Bannister and saw the opportunity to leave prison and acquire great wealth, would you seize the opportunity? Do you believe it would be worth the risk? Would you use the same methods or find another way? Explain.

Do you believe that Malcolm and the Ruckers deserve to be able to keep the gold they took from Nathan Cooley? Why or why not? If not, what should happen to it?