

Chapter 13

Danny Tcheda and Pam Stevens, officers managing the chaotic scene near Ed's Eats, struggle to control a growing crowd of morbid onlookers eager to witness the alleged crime scene. Despite their efforts, the crowd grows increasingly hostile, with many accusing the police of covering up the truth or even protecting the Fisherman, a suspected criminal. The officers face absurd demands, including requests for "keepsakes" from the tragedy, highlighting the ghoulish fascination of the public. Danny's frustration peaks as he confronts a man resembling George Rathbun, threatening to arrest him if he doesn't leave, showcasing the tension between authority and the entitled crowd.

The situation escalates with the arrival of the Thunder Five, a biker gang whose presence initially terrifies Danny and Pam. The officers brace for confrontation, but the bikers unexpectedly pass by, only to return moments later, leaving Danny torn between relief and dread. The crowd's attention briefly shifts to the bikers, but the chaos resumes as more people demand access, including a self-proclaimed honorary officer who tries to leverage his connections. The officers' exhaustion is palpable as they continue to fend off the relentless, entitled mob, their patience wearing thin.

Amid the turmoil, Danny realizes Wendell Green, a reporter he despises, has slipped away, likely sneaking into the restricted area. The discovery adds to Danny's frustration, but the crowd's demands soon drown out his thoughts. Horns blare, voices shout, and a few men even step out of their cars to confront the officers directly. The chapter captures the overwhelming pressure on Danny and Pam as they try to maintain order while grappling with their own anger and disbelief at the public's behavior.

As the crowd finally dissipates, the officers are left drained but momentarily relieved. The highway returns to its usual quiet, and Danny and Pam consider whether to

investigate further. The chapter ends on an uncertain note, emphasizing the emotional and physical toll of their duty. The scene underscores themes of public sensationalism, the challenges of law enforcement, and the dark curiosity that drives people to exploit tragedy for their own gratification.

