

Chapter 12

The chapter opens with Wendell Green, a journalist, arriving at the dilapidated Ed's Eats, where the Thunder Five bikers and local police are gathered. Wendell, hoping to capture a sensational story, discreetly observes the scene, noting the chaos as officers struggle to control curious onlookers near the highway. He focuses on documenting the events, particularly the interactions between the bikers and law enforcement, while avoiding detection. The atmosphere is tense, with the stench of decay hinting at a grim discovery inside the building. Wendell's anticipation grows as he positions himself to witness and record the unfolding drama.

Wendell's attention shifts to Jack Sawyer, who emerges from the building carrying a plastic bag and a baseball cap. Jack's furtive behavior—attempting to hide the items in his truck—piques Wendell's curiosity. Sensing a scandal, Wendell photographs Jack, convinced he has uncovered evidence of misconduct. The discovery excites him, as it could expose Jack's involvement in a cover-up, potentially tarnishing his reputation. Wendell's glee is palpable as he imagines the fallout from his exposé, though he remains cautious, aware that the situation is still developing.

The scene grows more chaotic as additional police arrive, including two inexperienced officers who are visibly unnerved by the stench and the unexpected camaraderie between Chief Gilbertson and Beezer St. Pierre. Wendell notes the officers' admiration for Jack, contrasting it with his own suspicions. He also observes a mysterious figure in a straw hat, who exudes authority and seems to command respect from both Jack and the chief. Wendell speculates about this man's role, sensing he may be central to whatever is being concealed. The tension builds as Wendell waits for the right moment to act on his plans.

Wendell's determination to secure a gruesome photo of the crime scene for tabloid profit underscores his opportunistic nature. Despite his excitement over potentially

exposing Jack, he remains focused on his goal, biding his time amid the disorder. The chapter ends with Wendell poised to exploit the situation further, highlighting his ruthless ambition and the broader themes of media sensationalism and moral ambiguity. The decaying setting and the characters' conflicting motives create a dark, suspenseful tone, setting the stage for further revelations.

