



Brian Finke





PowerHouse Books



## Forward

By Edith Zimmerman

DEPUTY US MARSHAL CAMERON WELCH AND PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN FINKE WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL TOGETHER IN HOUSTON, AND A MUTUAL FRIEND—ALSO FROM HIGH SCHOOL, NOW WELCH'S BROTHER-IN-LAW—PUT THEM BACK IN TOUCH FOR THIS PROJECT. WELCH AND I SPOKE ON THE PHONE ONE AFTERNOON AS THE BOOK WAS COMING TOGETHER.

**EZ:** I know you and Brian met in high school, but I'm curious how you knew each other back then.

**CW:** Ohhh, Brian was in that New Wave real artsy fartsy crowd in our high school class. [Laughs.]

That doesn't surprise me!

He turned the camera around in the hallways, I remember, all the time. Just like *that guy*, you know, the dude that was going to be this huge photographer one day, I guess that's what we all thought. That or like a type of musician, because of the people he hung out with. And I was into sports, but I was into music, too, and I think that's how we crossed paths.

I went on one ride-along in New York, but I otherwise don't know a lot about the Marshal Service, so this might be a little broad, but: who are the Marshals, exactly?

Well, basically the Marshal Service is the oldest law enforcement agency in the country. It was founded in 1789, when George Washington was in office, and although obviously a lot's changed since 1789, the core mission is still what it was back then: the protection of our federal judiciary family and anything that falls under the federal court system, including federal protection of the judges through to the US attorneys. We also extradite and move prisoners around the country, run an asset-forfeiture division, and oversee the witness protection program. But probably the most recognized division of the Marshal Service would be our fugitive investigation division. That's what I work on.

Which is also what a lot of photos in this book cover. Do you remember the first time Brian rode along with you?

Oh yeah. [Laughs.] If he had hair, he probably would have lost it that day!

He buckled his seatbelt in, he had his assistant Eric with him, there were hugs and high-fives, and I'm asking him about his family, how's New York. It's been 20 years, so we're just catching up on all that stuff. Some of the people I've tracked in the town we grew up in were people we'd grown up with, so I could be like, "Remember this guy?" And he'd be like, "What's he up to?" "I don't know but I put him in jail!" Then Brian said, "But I just really wanna know: what do we have first?" There had been an escape from a Texas prison, and the Texas Rangers had called us to assist them in tracking this guy down. So I told him, "Hey, we're gonna get geared up, we think we know where he's at. I hope you're in for a fun week, because this is all we're doing." He was excited, and I was excited to have him with me. To share my job with

somebody who knew me when I was a punk kid—it's such a cool experience. Just as it's cool for me to see his talent working behind the lens.

I hear you sometimes like to drive fast and listen to [horror punk band] The Misfits?

The Misfits! [Laughs.]

Do you have specific playlists? I'm sorry—I asked Brian for some anecdotes!

Did he tell you about my Jay-Z?

Haha, he did actually!

It's like fighters getting ready to go into The Octagon. They have their songs, and, you know, then they do their fights, go home, and train for the next ones. But we go into a fight every day, not knowing if we're going to come back home. So I like to get my mind right, and I start by listening to some music. And depending what case it is—[laughing]—that's the genre I might pick. I don't know! So yeah, I think he was with me getting pumped up because this was a real bad dude. We might've been listening to The Misfits.

And then with the Jay-Z, there was a new song that had just come out—"On to the Next One." So we're in a big, run-down part of Houston, and we'd just caught a guy, and I'd had that music playing earlier that day in my vehicle. And I just remember we got him in handcuffs, a patrol car came, we put him in the back, the patrol car left, and the scene was secure and safe. And my car started playing that song, the windows were open, and people were

It can get scary sometimes. I've gone into the [door] before on murders, and they don't even want to duke it out, they've actually committed suicide right in front of us. And you immediately think, "Is it worth it? Is this a profession I really want to do?" But then a few minutes later you're already looking at the next case, on tracking down the next guy. That's how addicting it is. And yeah, it's dangerous, but it's so rewarding to know that I'm making differences in other people's lives, by getting this person off the street who really affected them.

Like I told my boss before, I'd work for free.

The other thing with this job, is like I didn't know what a US Marshal was when I was a kid. I mean some kids might have, but my parents got divorced when I was pretty young, and I lived with my mom, so I didn't have a lot of chances to do "boy" stuff. I didn't watch Westerns—I didn't know about them. And I think I shared this with Brian, but I joined the military because I knew I wanted to be a police officer. I'm a history buff—I read a lot of history, now more so than when I was in school—but I kind of defaulted into my first job, in the Army. Because it just sounded cool when I signed up. But it was the US Cavalry. I was part of this old regiment of US military history, and I loved it. The history behind it, the brotherhood. And when I got out, I loved being a police officer—"I love

looking at me, like, "Whaaat!" and I looked at them like, "Yeah, we're on to the next one," and they were like, "Ahhh!"

So Brian goes back to New York, and like a month later, he mails me a photo of Jay-Z that he'd taken during a photo shoot with him. He'd told him that there's a Marshal down in Houston who's playing his music, and it's kind of his theme song for the next case—

This is amazing.

—and so I get this photograph in the mail, signed, and on the back it says "On to the Next One,—Jay-Z." To me. So I thought that was probably the neatest gift I've received in my law enforcement career.

Are there any close calls you can talk about?

Yeah. In 2007, I received a case on a threat investigation [on a man] who'd been bothering one of our federal judges. My partner and I went to talk to him, and the guy came barreling out of his apartment pointing a pistol right at me. Right then, And I've been in the military, I've been in combat, but it's not until you look down the barrel of a gun pointed at you that you really put everything in perspective. And it happens all within about a fraction of a second. You think of all the things you haven't done, all the things you want to do. All the people you love, the people in your heart. You think, "I want to go home, and I don't want to die today." Then, "I am going to go home, I'm going to win this battle." And I won that day. But it could have been different.

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this, it's so great"—but people kept telling me, "You need to go federal, we need you on a federal level." FBI, DEA. And I was trying with all the agencies, but—nothing. And it wasn't that I didn't have the requirements, but then I got on in 2003 with the Marshal Service, and I just truly think it's a calling. It was like I was steered into this agency that's the oldest agency in our country, and I think does the best job in the law enforcement realm: literally going and tracking down the bad guys. Some of the cops that we've worked are with are like, "Man, I want to work for the Marshal service." And I'm like—you can apply!

What drew you to law enforcement?

Believe it or not, it was for a girl. She and I were dating in high school, and her brother and father both were policemen. I heard stories from them about their daily activities, and it sounded so interesting, because you're not bogged down behind a desk, knowing that every day you have the same monotonous crap—ha! And I love being outside, I love meeting new people, I love public service. My grandfather was five-time mayor of Houston, and hearing about the people he got to meet and things he got to do while he was in office, and all the laws that he changed—I thought, gosh, that's probably the most rewarding thing that another person can do, helping another person out. So I was like, "law enforcement, that's it, I'm hooked."

It's also a huge adrenaline rush tracking these guys. Ernest Hemingway said, there's no other thrill greater than tracking a man. Once you've done it you're never going to want to do anything else. And it's the truth.

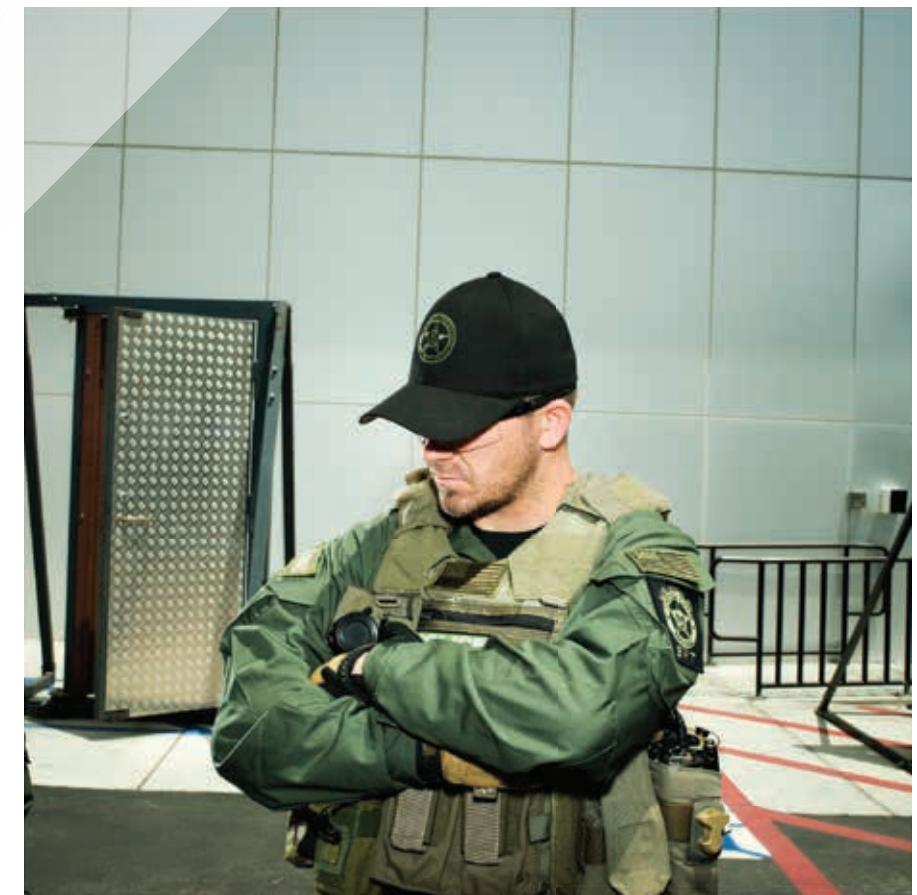
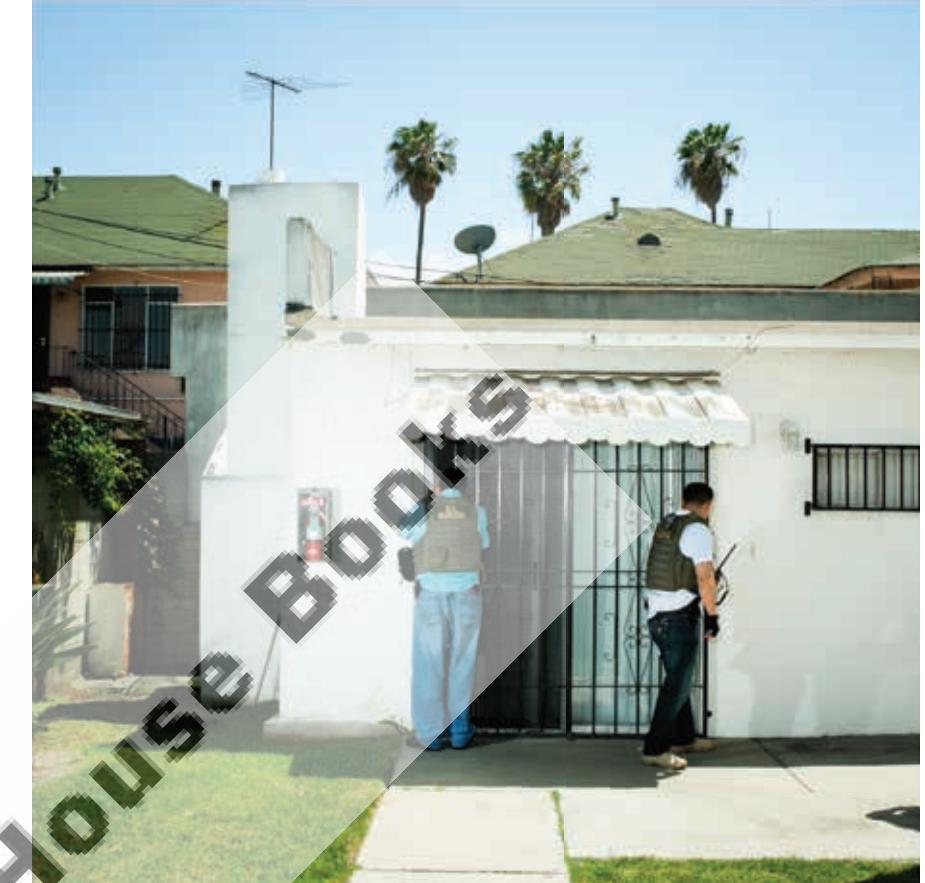
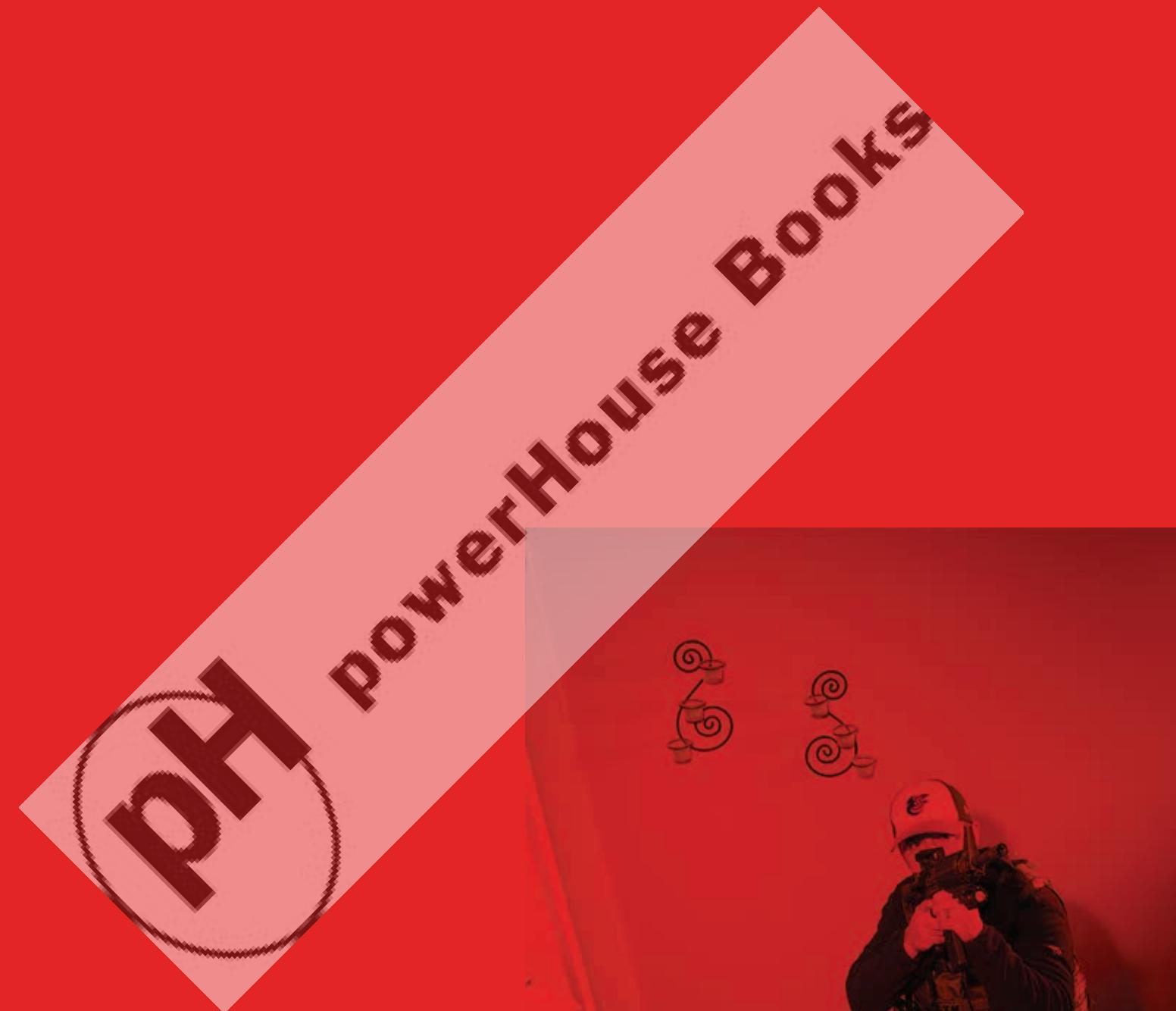
*"There is no hunting like the hunting of man, and those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never care for anything else thereafter."*

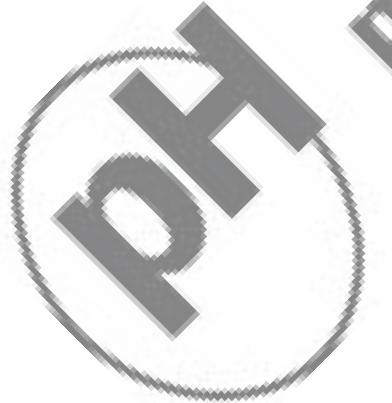




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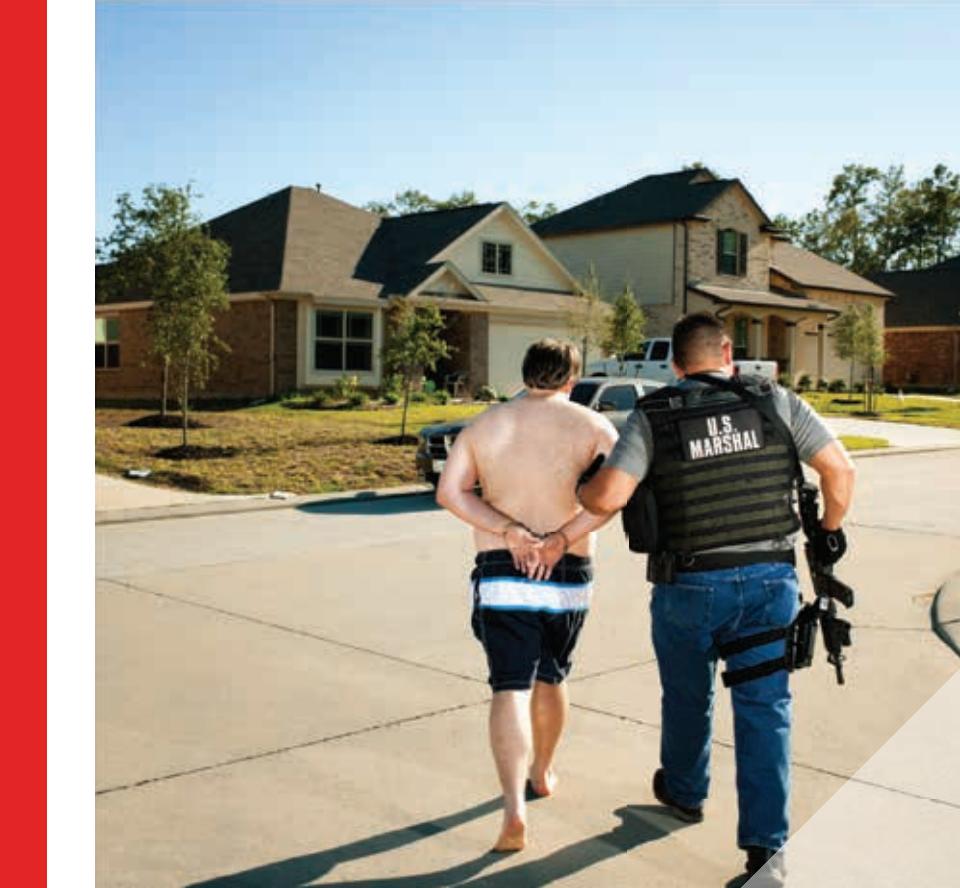


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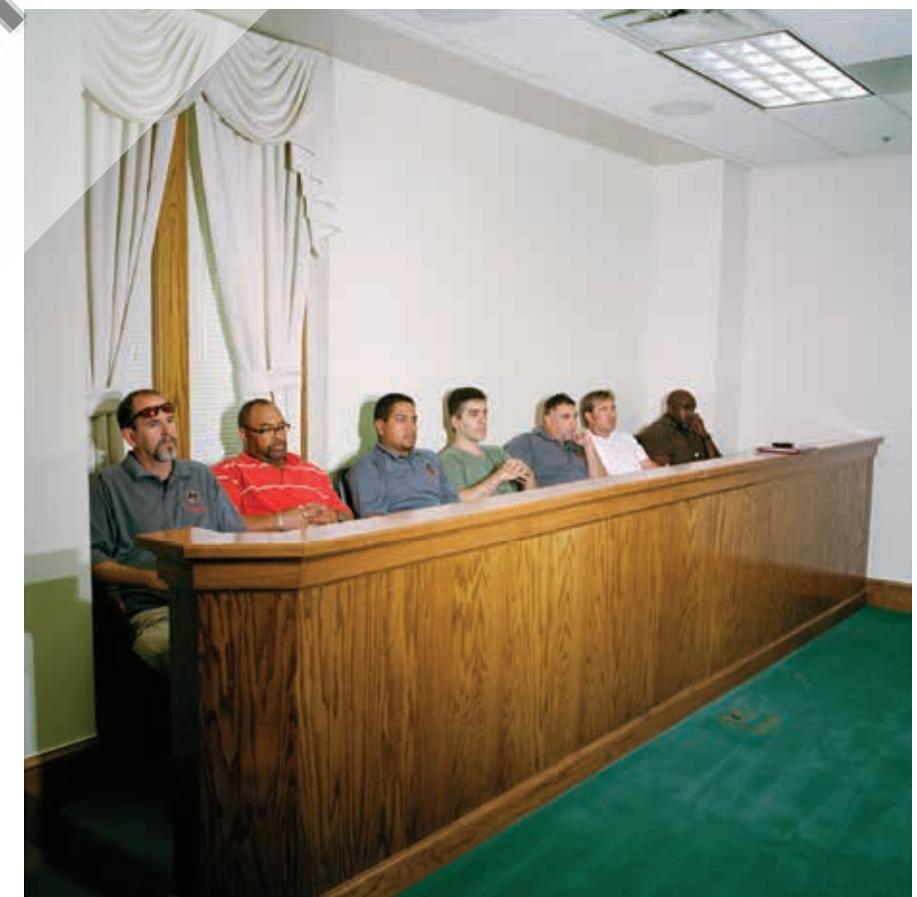
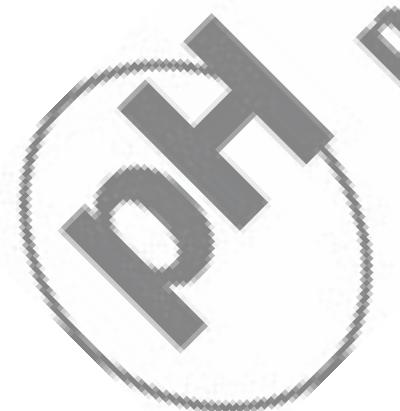
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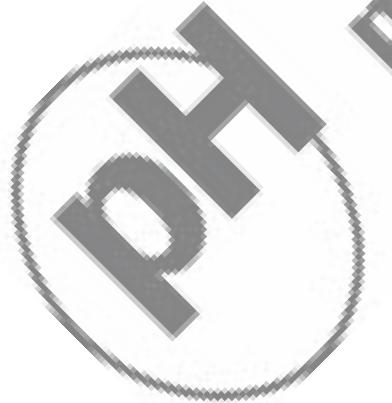




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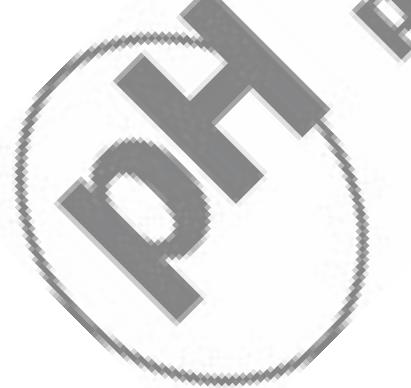






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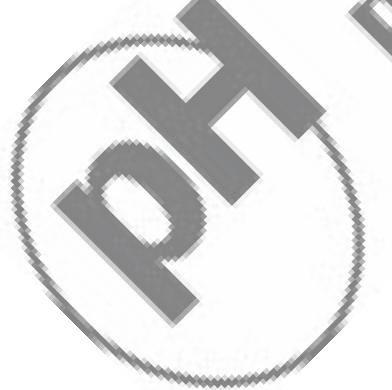




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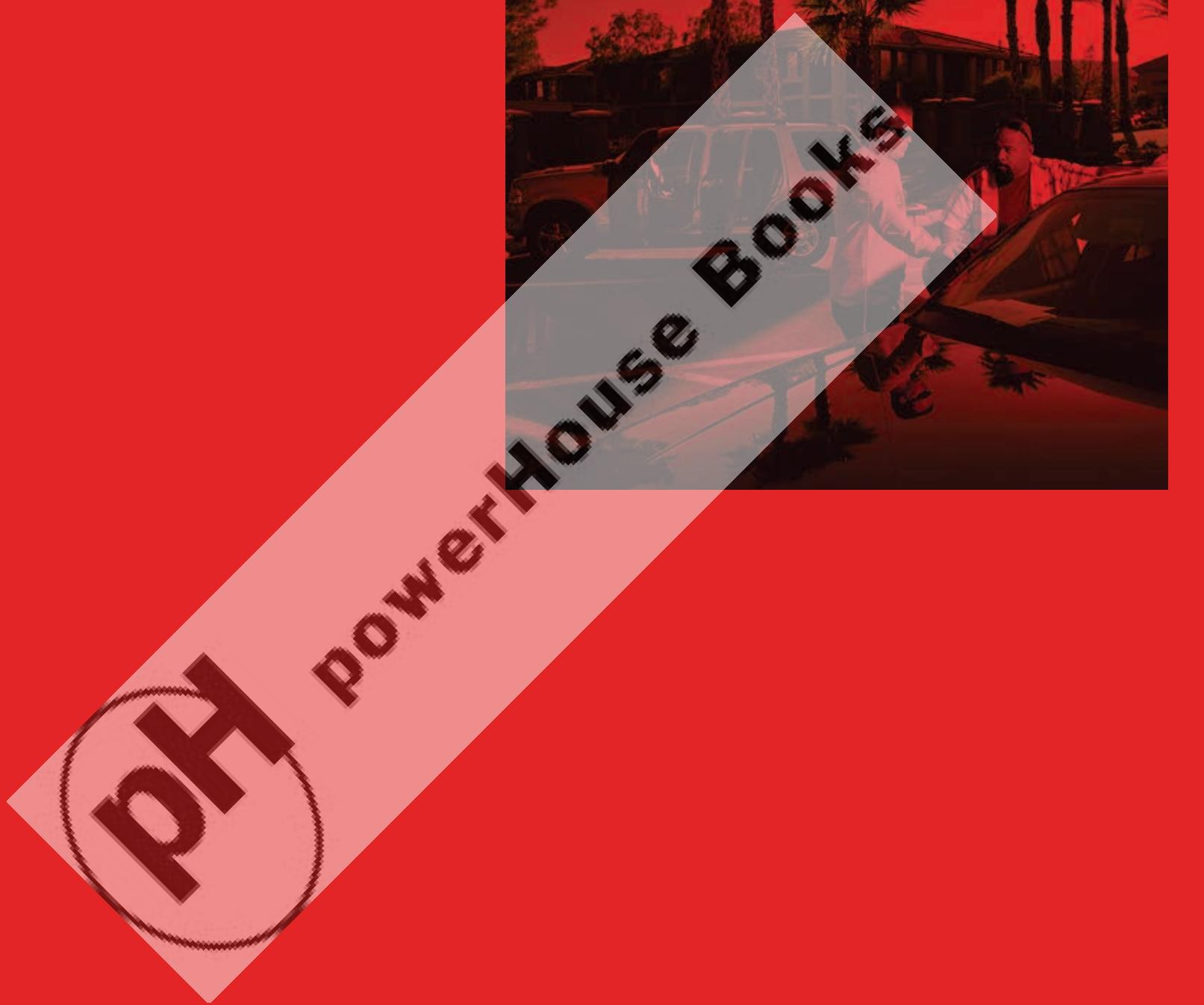


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