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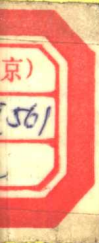
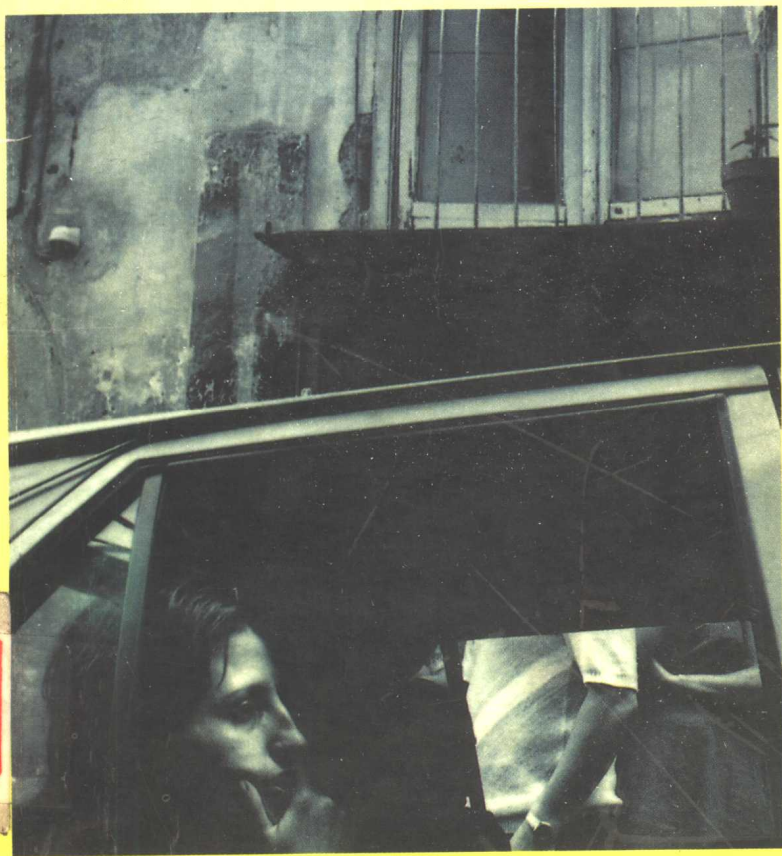
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危险

The Danger

迪克·弗朗西斯 著

DICK FRANCIS



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危 险

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GLOSSARIES

carabinieri officers	(意)警察
officers	法警, 警察, 警官
ransom	赎金
victim	被害者
jockey	赛马的骑手, 骑师
shrine	圣祠
Madonna	圣母(耶稣基督的母亲)玛利亚的像
drugged	(被)施予麻醉剂, 被麻醉了(drug 的过去分词)
racing	赛马
racecourse	赛马场
race	比赛
mask	面具
racehorse trainer	驯马师
locker	有锁的小柜橱
rent	租
burglar alarm	防盗报警器
listening devices	窃听装置
rope	绳子
root	树根

* 注: 以上所列单词为书中黑体字

危 险

The Danger

著名的骑手艾莉西娅·森西在意大利遭人绑架了,安德鲁受命去营救她。随后,接二连三又发生了新的绑架案:一个名叫多米尼克的小男孩在英国被绑架;摩根·福利曼特在美国遭绑架。所有绑架案均发生在赛马场内。这些扑朔迷离的绑架案是否为人所策划?安德鲁苦苦地追查着绑架者,但这项命案调查也使他置身于危险中。

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DICK FRANCIS

Retold by John Escott

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The Danger

PART ONE: ITALY

Chapter One

It all went wrong in Bologna. I stood as still as possible in the back of the ambulance, my whole body cold with anger, and watched. **Carabinieri*** officers burst from the dark corners of the street and into the silence of the summer night – voices shouting, hands waving guns. There was so much confusion they didn't see the two men with the suitcase full of money – £650,000. They were more interested in the young man falling out of the other car. He had brought the **ransom** money. Now he was shot, and I saw the dark red blood on his shirt.

The two men ran to a hidden car and drove away.

Alessia Cenci was twenty-three. She had been with the kidnappers for five weeks, three days and ten hours – and she had never been closer to death than now, I thought.

It was not a real ambulance I was inside, it was a van. Inside its darkly painted windows were a lot of small machines. One of them was telling us where the suitcase and the money were going. It was receiving sounds from something we had put inside the suitcase. We followed it to some flats and stopped. In front of the building was a black car, its engine cooling. Police cars stopped and parked, their doors open and lights shining brilliantly across the street.



At midnight, Enrico Pucinelli arrived.

'I am controlling things now,' he said. 'The kidnappers are in the front apartment on the third floor and they say they have kidnapped the people who live there and will kill them if we don't let them go. They say Alessia Cenci will die, too.' He looked at

* *Carabinieri*. The name for the Italian police.

me. 'My men say you wanted to let the kidnappers get away, taking the money with them.'

'Yes,' I said.

'They shot the boy who drove the car,' he said. 'We can't let them escape now.'

'The boy knew it was dangerous. The girl must still be saved.'

I was still angry. The boy was shot because the local police tried to catch the men when they came for the suitcase of money. He was supposed to leave the money in the car and walk away, but the carabinieri did not give him that chance.

'Is he still alive?' I asked.

'I don't know,' said Pucinelli. 'He's gone to the hospital.'

Liberty Market, the company I worked for, was not going to be pleased. It was my job to end a kidnap in a quiet way, and with no trouble. My job to make sure the **victim** stayed safe. But what about Alessia Cenci, one of the best woman **jockeys** in the world? Could I bring her home safely now?

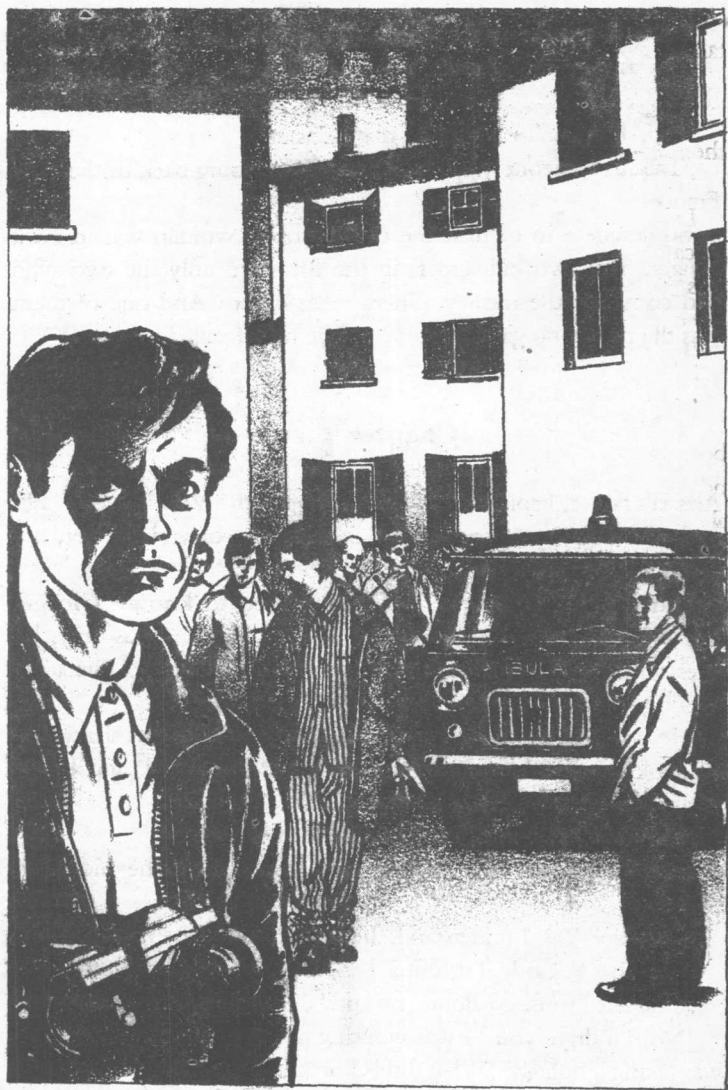
'Advise me,' said Pucinelli. 'It's your job.'

'Phone the kidnappers and tell them you're arranging things and they must wait. It will help to calm things down if you take some time.'

He did this from the van, and I listened. I didn't understand every word of his Italian because he spoke too quickly, but the kidnappers soon stopped shouting at the other end of the phone.

Outside in the street, a crowd of people watched. Newspaper reporters mixed with children and women from other flats. One man was near the ambulance, holding two cameras but not taking photographs. His head was round, he had black hair, and he was wearing a leather jacket. A newspaper reporter, I thought.

The telephone in the van rang suddenly. Pucinelli picked it up and listened. The kidnappers were getting nervous and didn't want to wait any longer. They wanted the police to let them go safely to the airport, and they wanted an aeroplane waiting there to fly them out.



115 Outside in the street, a crowd of people watched. Newspaper reporters mixed with children and women from other flats.

Pucinelli put down the phone. 'There'll be no aeroplane.'

'Do as they say,' I said. 'You can catch them when the girl is home.'

'No,' he said. 'I can't make that decision.'

'Talk to someone who can,' I said. 'I'm going back to the Villa Francese.'

Somewhere in or near the city, a young woman was in great danger. The two kidnappers in the flat were only the two who had come for the money. There were others. And one of them was the man who gave the orders. The man I called HIM.

Chapter Two

Alessia's father, Paolo Cenci, was waiting at the Villa Francese. His wife was dead so Alessia had no mother to worry about her, but Paolo Cenci worried enough for two people.

'Andrew! What happened?' he wanted to know. 'Giorgio Traventi phoned to say his son was shot.' His face was grey, his eyes wide with fear. 'Nobody has told me anything. I've been waiting for five hours!'

He was fifty-six and a strong man, but his voice was shaking as he spoke. I told him everything that had happened, and he sat with his head in his hands and listened.

'They'll kill her,' he said after I stopped speaking.

The telephone next to him rang. Nervously, he picked it up.

'Ricardo? Yes, I understand,' he said. 'I will come now.'

'Was that Ricardo Traventi?' I asked. 'Lorenzo's brother?'

'Yes, but I must go alone,' he said.

'No, I'll drive you.' I was working as his driver. His real driver was taking a holiday. 'What did Ricardo say?'

'The kidnappers telephoned. Ricardo says he must meet us at the usual place.' Cenci was already moving towards the door and I followed him.

The kidnappers telephoned the Traventis' house because they knew the police listened to the phone calls at Paolo Cenci's house. Giorgio Traventi was a lawyer and he took the kidnappers' messages. The whole Traventi family wanted to help, and his son, Lorenzo Traventi, had wanted to take the ransom money. Now the boy was in hospital.

I drove Cenci to meet Ricardo. The meeting place – a motorway restaurant – was HIS choice. At four o'clock in the morning the motorway was quiet, and Ricardo was waiting in the restaurant car park.

'Lorenzo is seriously ill, Papa says,' Ricardo said angrily.

'I'm very sorry,' said Paolo Cenci. 'But what is the message?'

'To stand by the telephones.'

'Was it the same man?' I asked.

'I think so. He said Signor Cenci must be alone, and that if there were any more carabinieri, we wouldn't see Alessia again.'

Cenci was shaking.

'I'll stay in the car,' I said. 'Don't be afraid.'

He walked to the entrance of the restaurant, not looking back.

Ricardo and I waited, not speaking much, and I began to fear that no phone call would come. Cenci came back as the sky was getting lighter.

'He says Alessia is alive, but the price has gone up,' he said. 'I must pay two thousand million lire in two days, and if anyone tells the carabinieri about the new price, Alessia will die immediately.' He looked at Ricardo. 'You must say nothing. Promise me.'

Ricardo, looking serious, promised.

We returned to the villa.

'Do you think we'll get her back?' asked Cenci.

There were pictures of Alessia, the famous girl jockey, in most rooms of the house. I'd never met her, but I'd read about her in the newspapers. 'Yes,' I said. 'The kidnappers don't want to kill her.'

Tears began to run down Cenci's face. With them ran some of the fear, sadness and anger inside him, and I said nothing. We sat for half an hour drinking cognac, then he went to get ready to go to his office.

Chapter Three

I drove Cenci to his office, then went to the flats. The carabinieri's cars and the dark-windowed ambulance were still in the street. A small crowd watched quietly, but everything seemed calm. I pretended not to be too interested because I didn't know who was watching me. After a few minutes I went to find a telephone and I phoned the number of the ambulance. I asked to speak to Enrico Pucinelli.

'Andrew?' his voice said a moment later. 'Nothing's changed. My bosses can't make a decision about the aeroplane. Talk, talk, talk!'

'What are the kidnappers saying?'

'The same. The girl will die if they don't get away safely.'

'Did they talk to anybody during the night?' I said. 'By radio?'

'You think they have a radio? Why do you think that?'

'I thought they might speak to the people keeping Alessia,' I said carefully. I wanted to know if HE knew what was going on.

'What are you not telling me?' said Pucinelli.

Cenci wanted me to keep quiet about the new ransom, and Cenci was paying me. 'Nothing,' I said.



Two days later, Cenci got all the ransom money from his bank.

'I have to go back to the motorway restaurant, tomorrow morning at eight,' he said. 'I have to take the money in my car and wait for him ... for his orders. He'll be angry if I have a driver.'

'Tell him you never drive. And tell him you need to be sure Alessia is alive.'

We drove away from the villa with the money in the back of the car. The traffic was light and we arrived at the restaurant half an hour early. Cenci jumped out of the car and walked across to the entrance. A few minutes later, somebody knocked on the car window next to me. It was a man in a white shirt and a leather jacket, and he was asking me to open the window.

'Who are you waiting for?' he said.

'Signor Cenci,' I said.

'Not Count Rieti?'

'No. Sorry.'

'You're not Italian?' the man said.

'No,' I said. 'I'm from Andalusia in Spain.'

'It's very hot there now,' he said in careful Spanish.

'Yes,' I said. I could speak Spanish and knew Andalusia well.

'Do you always drive for Signor ... Cenci?'

'Yes,' I said. 'He never drives a car himself.'

'Why not?' asked the man.

'I don't know,' I said. 'He always has somebody to drive for him.'

I pretended to lose interest in the conversation and he walked away. I looked carefully at him – the round shape of his head, his black hair, and his leather jacket – *and I knew I had seen him before*. He had been outside the ambulance, near the flats. I had thought he was a newspaper reporter then. Now I knew this meeting was no strange accident.

He knew my face now. Did he believe I was just a Spanish driver? I thought he probably did, or I'd be sitting there with a knife in my back.

It was after nine o'clock when Cenci came back.

'Where are we to go?' I started the car engine.

'To Mazara, twenty kilometres south. Another restaurant, another telephone, in twenty minutes. I heard Alessia's voice, on a cassette. She's alive, because she was reading today's newspaper. But if anything goes wrong this time, he'll kill her.'

The day was becoming warm. The roads were narrow and

straight, with fields on each side. No car followed us. At Mazara, Cenci went to the café and I stayed with the car. I watched him sitting at a table, staring at a cup of coffee. Suddenly, he jumped up and went across to a phone.

A few minutes after this, he came back to the car and got inside.

‘He says...’ He tried to make his voice calm. ‘He says there’s a sort of **shrine** near the road we came along.’

I nodded. ‘I saw it.’

I started the car and drove away from the café. We drove ten kilometres, and there by the road side was a simple stone shrine. It was just a wall about two metres high, with a **Madonna** in front of it. Rain had washed most of the blue paint from the Madonna.

We took the box from the car and carried it to the back of the shrine.

Two thousand million lire. Almost a million pounds.

Chapter Four

We waited the rest of that day and all day Sunday. Cenci seemed to become thinner as each hour passed. At eleven o’clock on Monday morning, there was a phone call. Cenci listened, looked confused by the things he heard, then put the phone down.

‘Something about my things being ready, and to go and get them,’ he said. ‘Do you think ...?’

‘I don’t know. Was it the same voice?’ Cenci was not certain.

‘Well, let’s try,’ I said. ‘It’s better than sitting here.’

‘But where? He didn’t say.’

‘Perhaps the place we left the ransom money.’ I saw hope come into his face. ‘Don’t be too hopeful. He may mean somewhere different.’

I drove fast, but it seemed a lifetime to him. And when we stopped by the shrine, there was nothing to be seen except for the Madonna.

‘Oh no ... oh no!’ Cenci’s voice was breaking. ‘I can’t ...’