



The Devil's Advocate

By Andrew Neiderman

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When Kevin Taylor joins the Manhattan criminal law firm of John Milton & Associates, he's hit the big time. At last, he and his wife can enjoy the luxuries they've so desired -- money, a chauffeur-driven limo, and a stunning home in a high-rise. Then Milton assigns Kevin one of the most notorious cases of the year, with a file that had been put together prior to the crime. Throwing himself into his work, Kevin begins to see a pattern of evil emerging from behind the firm's plush facade. Acquittal after acquittal, every criminal client walks free, and Kevin's suspicions slowly give way to terror. For Kevin has just become *The Devil's Advocate*.

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

DEFENDER OF THE DAMNED...

When Kevin Taylor joins the Manhattan criminal law firm of John Milton and Associates, he's hit the big time. At last, he and his wife can enjoy the luxuries they've so desired—a chauffeur-driven limo, a stunning home in the very building that Mr. Milton himself lives in. Little does Kevin realize that he's joined

A BROTHERHOOD OF BLOOD

John Milton assigns Kevin one of the most notorious cases of the year, along with a file that had been put together prior to the crime. Throwing himself into his work, Kevin begins to see a pattern of evil emerging from behind the plush facade of his firm. As he watches them win every courtroom battle, and sees every criminal walk free, his mounting suspicions give way to all-out terror. For Kevin has become

THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE

and there's no turning back from the world of the damned...

About the Author

Andrew Neiderman is the author of numerous novels of suspense and terror published by Pocket Books and Pocket Star Books, including *Deficiency*, *The Baby Squad*, *Under Abduction*, *Dead Time*, *Curse*, *In Double Jeopardy*, *The Dark*, *Surrogate Child*, and *The Devil's Advocate* -- which was made into a major motion picture by Warner Brothers. He lives in Palm Springs, California, with his wife, Diane. Visit his website at www.neiderman.com.

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From Chapter One

"Mr. Cornbleau, you interviewed the three girls by yourself on Tuesday, November 3rd?"

"Yes."

"The alleged initial victim, Barbara Stanley, told you about them?" Kevin nodded to confirm the answer before he received it.

"That's correct. So I invited them into my office."

"Can you tell us how you began once they arrived?"

"Pardon?" Cornbleau frowned as if the question were ridiculous.

"What was the first question you asked the girls?" Kevin stepped toward the jury. "Did you ask if Miss Wilson had touched them on their buttocks? Did you ask if she had put her hands under their skirts?"

"Of course not."

"Well, what did you ask?"

"I asked them if it were true they were having the same sort of trouble Barbara Stanley had had with Miss Wilson."

"The same sort of trouble?" He grimaced at the word trouble.

"Yes."

"So Barbara Stanley told her girlfriends what allegedly happened to her and the three young girls related similar experiences to her, but none of the three had ever told anyone else before. Is that what you're saying?"

"Yes. That was my understanding."

"Quite a charismatic ten-year-old girl," Kevin quipped, acting as if he had merely spoken a private thought aloud. Some members of the jury raised their eyebrows. A bald-headed man in the front right corner tilted his head thoughtfully and stared intently at the principal.

When Kevin turned and looked at the audience, he saw that the dignified-looking man in the rear had widened his smile and was nodding encouragingly. Kevin half wondered if he might not be a relative of Lois Wilson, maybe an older brother.

"Now, Mr. Cornbleau, can you tell the court what kind of grades Barbara Stanley was getting in Lois Wilson's class."

"She was doing low C."

"Low C. And had she had any problems with Miss Wilson previously?"

"Yes," the principal muttered.

"Excuse me?"

"Yes. On two occasions, she had been sent to my office for refusing to do her work and using bad language in class, but..."

"So you can safely say Barbara was not fond of Miss Wilson?"

"Objection, your honor." The district attorney stood up. "Counsel is asking the witness to make a conclusion."

"Sustained."

"Sorry, your honor." Kevin turned back to Cornbleau. "Let's get back to the three girls, Mr. Cornbleau. Did you ask each of them to relate her experiences to you in your office that day?"

"I thought it was best to get right to it, yes."

"You're not telling us that while one told her story, the other two listened?" he asked, twisting his face to indicate his shock and incredulity.

"Yes."

"Wasn't that inappropriate? I mean, exposing the girls to these stories . . . alleged experiences."

"Well, it was an investigation."

"Oh, I see. You've had experience with this sort of thing before?"

"No, never. That's why it was so shocking."

"Did you advise the girls that if they were making things up, they could be in serious trouble?"

"Of course."

"But you tended to believe them, correct?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because they were all saying the same thing and describing it the same way." Cornbleau looked satisfied with himself and his answer, but Kevin stepped closer, his questions coming in a staccato manner. "Then couldn't they have rehearsed it?" "What?"

"Couldn't they have gotten together and memorized their stories?"

"I don't see . . ."

"Isn't it possible?"

"Well..."

"Haven't you ever experienced children this age lying?"

"Of course."

"And more than one lying at the same time?"

"Yes, but..."

"Then isn't it possible?"

"I suppose."

"You suppose?"

"Well..."

"Did you call Miss Wilson in and confront her with these stories immediately after speaking with the girls?"

"Yes, of course."

"And what was her reaction?"

"She wouldn't deny it."

"You mean she refused to be interrogated about such matters without benefit of counsel, don't you?" Cornbleau shifted his seat. "Isn't that so?" Kevin demanded.

"That's what she said."

"So you went ahead and informed the superintendent and then called the district attorney?"

"Yes. We followed school board policy for such matters."

"You didn't investigate further, call in other students?"

"Absolutely not."

"And before Miss Wilson was indicted on this matter, you and the superintendent suspended her, correct?"

"As I said..."

"Please, just answer the question."

"Yes."

"Yes," Kevin repeated, as if that were an admission of guilt. He paused, a slight smile on his face as he turned from Cornbleau to the jury and then back to Cornbleau.

"Mr. Cornbleau, did you on more than one previous occasion have words with Miss Wilson about her bulletin boards?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"They were too small and not up to standards."

"So you were critical of her as a teacher?"

"Room decor is an integral part of a teacher's effectiveness," Cornbleau said pedantically.

"Uh-huh, but Miss Wilson didn't have...let us say...the same sense of high regard for bulletin boards."

"No."

"She was, in fact, according to what you wrote on her chart, 'disdainful.'"

"Unfortunately, most of the newer teachers are not given the same good background in college." Cornbleau smirked.

Kevin nodded. "Yes, why can't everyone be like us?" he asked rhetorically, and some people in the audience snickered. The judge rapped his gavel.

"You also have been critical of Miss Wilson's clothing, have you not?" Kevin continued more directly.

"I think she should dress more conservatively, yes."

"Yet Miss Wilson's department head has continually given her high marks for her teaching abilities," Kevin interrupted, raising his voice. "On her last report she said"?Kevin looked at his document? "Lois Wilson has an intrinsic understanding of children. No matter what the obstacle, she seems to be able to reach them and get them stimulated." He put the document down. "That's quite a nice review, isn't it?"

"Yes, but as I said . . ."

"No further questions, your honor."

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