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INGUIN ACTIVE READING

*LEVEL 4*

# The Street Lawyer

John Grisham



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**What's the book about?**

- 1 Read the information on the back cover of the book.

The hero of this book, Michael, is a young lawyer. Which of these professionals is most useful to other people, in your opinion? Think of their value to other people's lives and put them in order.

a doctor   a teacher   a lawyer   a policeman

- 2 Lawyers are some of the most unpopular professionals in the United States. Why is that? Look on the Internet for "lawyer jokes." List four things that people dislike about them.

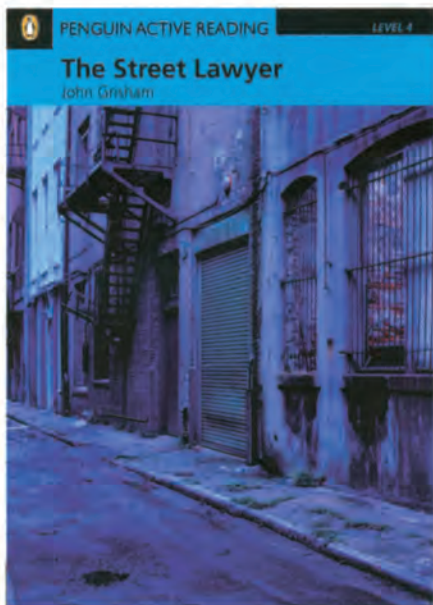
- a .....
- b .....
- c .....
- d .....

**1.2 What happens first?**

- 1 Look at this photo. Discuss whether the professionals in 1.1 above live and/or work in this kind of area. Why (not)?

- 2 The hero of this book is a successful lawyer. At the beginning of the book, do you think Michael is:

- |                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| a a rich man?  | Yes / No |
| b a happy man? | Yes / No |
| c a good man?  | Yes / No |





# Mister

*Mister pointed at the dynamite around his waist.  
"I pull this," he said, "and we die."*

The old black man got into the elevator behind me. He smelled of smoke and life on the streets without soap. His beard and hair were half-gray and very dirty. He was wearing sunglasses, and a long dirty coat hung down to his knees.

He looked fat, probably because he had all his clothes on. In the winter in Washington the street people wear all their clothes all the time. They can't leave any of their clothes at home, because they don't have a home.

The old man didn't belong here. Everything here was expensive. The 400 lawyers in the building, who all worked for Drake & Sweeney, were paid an unbelievable amount of money. I knew that because I was a Drake & Sweeney lawyer myself.

The elevator stopped at six. The man hadn't pushed an elevator button. When I stepped out and turned right, he followed me. I pushed the heavy, wooden door of a big meeting room. There were eight lawyers at the table inside and they all looked surprised. They were looking behind me, so I turned. My friend from the elevator was standing there. He was pointing a gun at me.



‘Put that gun down,’ said one of the lawyers at the table. His name was Rafter. He was a hard man in a courtroom, maybe the hardest lawyer that Drake & Sweeney had.

Suddenly, a shot hit the ceiling. Rafter’s eyes opened wide and his mouth shut. ‘Lock the door,’ the man said to me. I locked the door of the meeting room. ‘Stand against the wall.’ We all stood against the wall.

The man took off his dirty coat and put it carefully on the large, expensive table in the center of the room. He had five or six red sticks around his waist, tied there with string. I had never seen **dynamite** before, but they looked like dynamite to me.

I wanted to run and hope for a bad shot when he fired at me. But my legs were like water. Some of the lawyers were shaking with fear and making noises like scared animals.

‘Please be quiet,’ said the man, calmly. Then he took a long yellow rope and a knife from the pocket of his pants. ‘You,’ he said to me. ‘Tie them up.’

Rafter stepped forward. ‘Listen, friend,’ he said, ‘what do you want?’

The second shot went into the wall, behind Rafter’s ear.

‘Do not call me ‘friend,’’ said the man.

‘What would you like us to call you?’ I asked him, quietly.

‘Call me ‘Mister.’’

I tied the eight lawyers with the yellow rope. One of them, Barry Nuzzo, was my friend. We were the same age, thirty-two, and we had started at Drake & Sweeney on the same day. Only our marriages were different. His was successful and mine wasn’t. He had three kids. Claire and I didn’t have any. I looked at Barry and he looked at me. I knew we were both thinking about Barry’s kids.

We could hear police cars outside and noises as the police entered the building. Mister pointed at the dynamite around his waist.

‘I pull this,’ he said, ‘and we die.’

For a second we all looked at each other, nine white boys and ‘Mister.’

I thought of all those terrible shootings you read about in the newspapers. A crazy worker returns to work after lunch with a gun and kills everybody in his office. There had been killings at fast-food restaurants and playgrounds, too. And those dead people were children or honest workers. Who would care about us? We were lawyers.

Time passed.

‘What did you eat for lunch today?’ Mister asked me, breaking a long silence.







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# The Street Lawyer

John Grisham

American English

*Contemporary*

Michael is a successful lawyer with Drake and Sweeney when a homeless man attacks him. As Michael tries to discover who the man was, he uncovers a dangerous secret about Drake and Sweeney.

*Number of words (excluding activities): 16,407*

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