

ALEXANDER LOHMANN

# COTTON

## FBI

WITNESS PROTECTION



BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT 

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# What is COTTON FBI?

Your name is Jeremiah Cotton. You are a small-time cop in the NYPD, a rookie that no one takes seriously. But you want more. You have a score to settle with the world. And anyone who calls you “Jerry” will be sorry.

A new time. A new hero. A new mission. Experience the birth of a digital cult-series: Cotton FBI is the remake of JERRY COTTON, the most successful series of German novels with more than one billion copies sold, and it tells an entirely new story in e-book form.

Cotton FBI is published twice a month, with each episode a self-contained story.

# The Author

**Alexander Lohmann** was born in 1968 in Munich. He studied computer science, German philology, and history, and has worked as a magazine editor. Reading *The Lord of the Rings* early on awoke his love of fantasy, which he has employed in several different novels. His penchant for tension-filled conflict led him to COTTON RELOADED. Alexander Lohmann is a freelance author, editor, and translator based in Leichlingen.

# **COTTON** **FBI**

## **Witness Protection** **Alexander Lohmann**

Translated by Sharmila Cohen

BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT 

# BASTEI ENTERTAINMENT

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It was dark on the docks of the Upper Bay. A few isolated lamps were lit at the edge of the run-down pier and in front of the red brick buildings on the adjacent property. The smell of the sea, exhaust fumes, and decaying seaweed wafted in from the harbor.

As he had promised, the gate was open, and Laura Robinski hurried inside, crouching down low between the rusty containers.

*Mira*, she reminded herself. Her name was now Mira Anthony and her old life was history. After all these years, she had still never gotten used to it.

A noise made her flinch. A shadowy figure was hiding beside a pile of pallets. Mira's free hand went to her bag.

The stranger in the shadows turned away and shuffled further into the gloomy darkness. Mira heard a muffled clatter and could vaguely make out the edges of the bulging bags in the man's hands. It was just a homeless person looking for trash along the unsecured areas of the docks that he could use toward cheap booze.

Mira relaxed ... as much as she could.

Noise drifted over to the harbor from the busier parts of Brooklyn. There was still activity there at this hour. Floodlights lingered on the rooftops.

The seedy warehouses that Mira was moving between were in an area that was dodgy and unsafe even by day. The cracks in the brittle concrete were filled with weeds. A few sparse containers stood amid the junk and old construction vehicles, which might have been simply parked there or perhaps were waiting to be transported as scrap. Now, at night, everything was deserted although

Mira imagine smugglers and other gangsters lurking behind every corner.

But she trusted the man who had asked her to come. She owed him everything, and if he wanted to talk to her in this secluded location, he must have a good reason for it. She looked around. *Come to the edge of the water*, he had said.

Mira went to the end of the broad pier. A particularly dilapidated brick building with empty windows stood to her left. In front of it lay the remains of a collapsed metal shack — an even more hazardous mess of metal leading from the pier further out onto the water. The shadows between the supports and structures there were impenetrable.

Mira pressed her bag close to her body with her left hand as her right hand reached inside.

“Hello?” she whispered into the blackness.

A sound answered her from the shadows. She stepped back.

“Is that you?” Mira felt a lump in her throat.

“Yes, it’s me, Ms. Anthony.”

The familiar voice calmed her down. “What’s going on?” she asked. “Is something wrong?”

“Shhh!” the man hissed. “Come over here. I don’t want anyone to listen in.”

Mira hesitantly stepped closer. Her eyes became accustomed to the darkness and she saw the outline of the man between the rusty steel beams — a small man, barely larger than herself.

“What’s going on?” she asked again.

He pulled her into a dark corner under the steel beams. Her jacket grazed the sharp edge of a weathered metal plate.

“Do you have a weapon with you?” he asked.

Mira nodded. “Yes,” she then said aloud, realizing that it was impossible for him to see the gesture.

“Show me! Quickly!”



Mira fumbled for the pistol in her bag. Even though she had been holding onto the gun for a few minutes, she barely managed to get the weapon out. "Why?" she stammered. "Did they track us down? Oh, god! You promised me you'd take care of everything."

"That's what I'm doing. Give it to me!"

He took the gun from her hand. "A .25," he said. "How cute!" He pushed back the slide, grunted, and looked in the chamber. "The safety is still on."

"Anyway, there are ..." Mira began.

He abruptly held up the gun and aimed it at her chest. She fell silent.

"Sorry!" he said. "I am ending our working relationship."

He pulled the trigger. The shot rang out in the narrow gap between the steel structures, thundered between the high sheet-metal walls, and reverberated away into the sky.

Mira spun around. Her heart was beating wildly.

The man behind her swore. She heard two more shots as she fled from the dark corner, scurrying between the beams, sheet metal, and various structures and around the corner.

She had always been afraid of firearms, and today she thanked god that she had only loaded blanks. It was as if she had foreseen that someday someone could use her own weapon against her ...

The man was gaining on her. Mira had worn sturdy shoes for her trip to the docks, but the man chasing her was wiry and in much better shape. He would catch up before she even reached the street. She needed a place to hide!

Mira ran to the warehouse with the empty windows. Obstructing her path was the collapsed shack, which was essentially a pile of sheet metal that had partially slipped into the water.

"Mira!" the man called out after her.