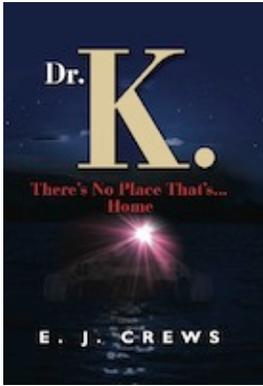


Dr. **K.**

**There's No Place That's...
Home**



E . J . C R E W S



Terrorist attacks and economic and political manipulation are amassed against Dr. K. in this second book in the series. Triggered by the Greek rollout of electronic Work Units, Omni Orion Group (OOG) enlists the help of Dr. K's most vocal detractor, Senator Clarke Lou. Miranda also pays a high price, as does Julie and those actively promoting WU. Amid all of this, Dr. K. retreats to the 'Kai Hau', which becomes his floating sanctuary and fortress.

Dr. K

There's No Place That's Home

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Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-62141-786-6

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-62141-787-3

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

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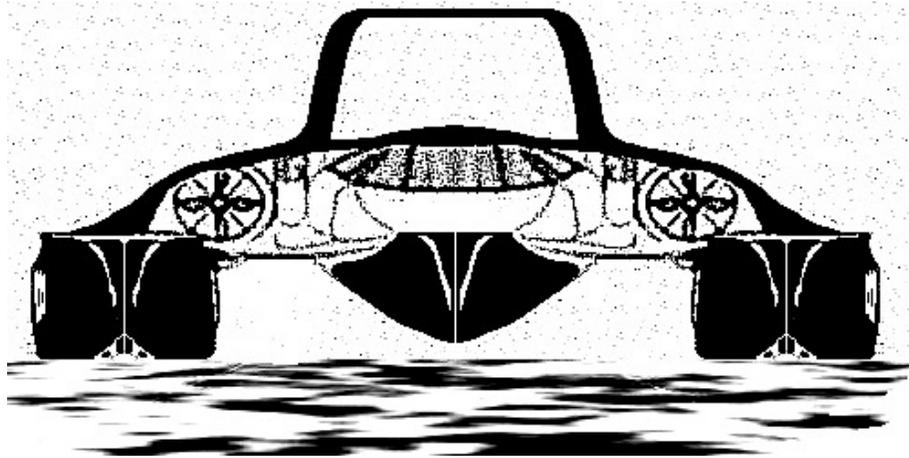
Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper.

Booklocker.com, Inc.

2012

First Edition

**DR. K.
THERE'S NO PLACE
THAT'S...HOME**



E.J. Crews

Chapter 2

Let It Be: 5-7 Lennon & McCartney

The resort town of Vouliagmeni lies south of Athens on the Aegean Sea. There berthed at the exclusive Five Star resort's marina was the 'Kai Hau' yacht, owned by Dr. Kantos. The gold trim, on the black, eighty foot, power yacht, shimmered in the first rays of the morning sun. The flashes off the water, added to the light show that danced the length of it. The large twin wind turbine impellers, (mounted on either side of the central cabin structure), like the turbo fans of a jetliner, spun slowly as the catamaran rocked gently beside the dock.

A very tall young woman, accompanied by an even taller young man, came down the concrete stairs of the quay and onto the floating dock. Neither was dressed for a day on the water, rather they seemed more suited to a boardroom meeting. Julie Tyrrell and Jonathan Evans had come to Greece, for the first time, for just that purpose - meetings. The intended outcome of all the meetings being a plan. One that would replicate the success, that they had months before, in implementing the world's first Work Unit accounting network, in Iceland. Their challenge was to prove that Iceland was not a fluke. To prove that other economies, any economy, can adopt WU for themselves.

Much had been learned, since the network, (that allows for the elimination of paper currency in an economy), had gone live. The little project team, that Jonathan and Julie led, had worked many long days with their Icelandic counterparts, over the past few months. Finally the Icelandic Ministry of Finance signed off on the system and assumed full responsibility of the production system. That brought

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the little company, that they worked for, its first 'pay-day'. But there was no windfall for the team. Dr. Kantos, the benefactor of the start-up company, insisted that they receive half of the company's fee in Work Unit credits on deposit in the new Icelandic Bank of WU, (IBWU). So they left Iceland with much goodwill, but not an abundance of cash.

Yet the team soon learned, when they arrived in Greece, just the day before, that Dr. K. was not at all skimping! They each had suites of their own at the hotel, with sea views and direct access to the beach. Dr. K. had opted to remain aboard the 'Kai Hau', (that he had traveled on, from Iceland), alone.

Julie climbed aboard the yacht first and opened the aft cabin door. It reminded her of a jetliner's door with its rounded corners, curved inward at the top. Jonathan followed close behind and closed the door, saying, just above a whisper, "Julie, slow down... maybe he's still sleeping."

Already ten feet down the narrow passageway, she turned back to him, tossing her long ponytail around from one shoulder to the other as she did, "He said he'd meet us for breakfast! Well, it's almost seven now. He knows we have a lot planned today. That's why he wanted to get going early."

"Yeah, but maybe we should have called first."

"I did, he didn't answer. Look just stay there, I'll check," she turned away and headed up the passageway again.

"Sure, go on... but some people like their privacy - you know!"

Let It Be

She made a face at him as she came to the main cabin's door. She knocked loudly, three times. She leaned her head to the door, listening. She leaned back and said, "Dr. K? It's Julie... are you up?"

"Let him sleep Julie!"

Then, from inside the cabin, came, "I'm up, I'm up, come in!" She turned to Jonathan and stuck out her tongue as she opened the door.

The curtains on the windows opposite the door, were pulled back, letting the morning sun bath the large stateroom in a pink hue. Julie noticed the bed had not been slept in, not even a wrinkle in the dark blue covering. She then opened the door wider and turned to look aft. Dr. K. still wearing his charcoal blazer from last night, was sitting in one of the chairs by the coffee table. It was dotted with empty liquor bottles. He looked up at her. His normally bright blue eyes were barely visible. His eyelids and face seemed puffy, to her. She felt a stabbing pain in her stomach as she looked at him. Still hanging onto the door knob, she turned back and pulled it behind her, as she heard Jonathan coming up the passageway.

"You go on... I'm going to have breakfast with him... we'll catch up to you guys later," she whispered.

He was puzzled by her sudden change of plans, but nodded, "Okay, if that's what you want... We'll be hanging out in Rusty's suite after we eat. See you there."

Julie leaned over and kissed him. "Thanks," she said softly.

She remained holding the door against her back as she watched Jonathan leave. She then turned and re-entered the stateroom. Closing the door quietly she still kept her hand on the knob and her back to him. "I miss her too... my Dad, Jonathan, all of us *really* miss her... but..." she let go and turned quickly to face him. "THIS!" she blurted as she waved her arms out. "You can't *do* this!"

"It's my life... I can do as I please." he leaned forward in the thickly padded chair. Julie darted for the one bottle that had anything left. She got to it before he did. He sat back and looked at her, "There's plenty more where that came from."

"Yeah, but not in reach. You'll have to get on your feet. I'd like to see that, right about now. Go on, stand up," she said as she clutched the bottle to herself.

He dropped his eyes down. "Why don't you go along to breakfast with the others. I'll be fine."

"You're *not* fine! You've been turning into a mess now for weeks. Ever since we finished up the Iceland roll out, you've been late for things all the time. I figured you've been doing something like this!"

"I was too busy then... I've had too much idle time, lately, too much time to think."

In a softer tone, she asked, "Should we delay the Greek project? Maybe you should do something else, for a while. "

He shook his head, "That won't help. What the hell else am I supposed to do? No, the sooner I can get busy on building the next

WU system, the better. It's all I have left. I just... I can't see us ever getting... I mean... what's the POINT?" He launched up out of the chair and kicked the glass topped coffee table. Empty bottles clattered and smashed together and fell onto the thick carpet. Julie was startled by the sound and frightened at the sight of Dr. K. as he stood looking down at the mess.

"That's what they did to me." he said pointing down at the bits of broken bottles. "She died instead of me..." his voice choked as he pointed his finger at his chest and looked up at her. "ME!" he shouted as he slapped his chest with his hand. His eyes were filling with tears, yet a scowl came to his face, so hideous, that Julie took a step back. "Those bastards killed her! And I'm here, when I should be out there! Finding them and ripping their hearts out! I should be looking for them, not here! Not as long as one of them is still breathing! Someone has to stop them!"

"Not *that* way. Then you're no better than them."

"I don't want to be better than them! I just don't want *them*! I don't want to see them, hear them, smell them... I don't want them around to be better than... no, no! I don't WANT THEM! I want them gone, just GONE! The sooner the better... for me, you, the whole God damn world!"

"What are you going to do? Kill them all?" she looked at him and waited. He put his hands on his hips and bit his lip as he bobbed his head from side to side pondering her question. "Cut that out! Like you said, many times, we'd be playing their game - which is exactly what they want! Because then, they would have ALL the advantage.

'They invented the game', you said and you're right. We need to stop 'buying tickets to their game', that's what you said, remember? We'll win, when nobody shows up on the field, to oppose them anymore. Once everyone realizes it's a rigged game, that's what will happen. Then nobody will be in the stands either. People will just live their lives. No more getting jerked around and frightened by their threats to turn our world upside down, anytime they chose. Because without our wealth to fund them, they can't do a thing. They're not bigger or stronger or smarter than the rest of us... they just have all the *damn* money!"

"I know, I know, but you don't know these people, the way I do. I've been around them for most of my adult life. I lived with a group of them on that damn speck of sand in the Pacific. Believe me, they are *way* ahead of us." he said as he looked at her with wide eyes.

"Look, I don't know about all that..."

"Yeah, and you're better off not knowing either," he interrupted. "The technology they have at their disposal... They can bring us hell on earth..." his voice trailed off as he saw Julie's expression grow more pained. "I'm sorry, I don't mean to frighten you about all this, it's just that it all seems so hopeless. I think we're fifty years too late to stop the bastards. They can undermine, infiltrate or co-opt any opposition to them."

"They can't do that to *us*!" she said as she walked over to him. Taking up both his hands in her own, she added, "Because we're like family, now, Dr. K. All of us felt like we had a death in the family, when Edie died. They can't infiltrate a family. And they can't defeat one either when they hold on to each other."

Let It Be

Dr. K. shook his head. "Ahh Julie... you're like her! By God... you are just like Edie, sometimes". She let go of his hands and encircled him in her arms. After she let go and turned around, he quickly wiped a tear from his cheek.

She held the bottle up as she headed for the door. "I'm going to take this back to the galley. I'll wait for you there. Don't be too long, I'm hungry." she said, opening the cabin door.

"What, this ass chewing you just gave me, wasn't enough?"

She turned to him and said, "That was just an appetizer. Trust me, I could go on for hours and no one would notice anything missing. You've really been packing on the pounds lately!"

Dr. K. looked down over his right shoulder and tilted his hip out, "What, where, where?" he called out, as she closed the door.

###

Jonathan returned to the hotel by way of the beach. The water was barely rippling onto the shore as he walked along the low seawall behind the hotel. At this time of day, even the seagulls walked. Without a breeze to soar on, the lazy little moochers opted to wait for one, rather than exert themselves. Jonathan's attention was drawn away from the shoreline by nearby laughter. He looked back at the hotel to see the rest of the Applied Infoworx team sitting around a patio table, out on the terrace to Rusty's suite. He stopped and looked on as they carried on a highly animated conversation.

The three of them were talking at once. Keith, who towered over the others, even sitting down, was leaning across the small table wagging his finger at Ronnie. Rusty sat between them with one foot

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up on the table's rim, balancing his chair on its back legs, his hands folded behind his head. After Keith had put his hand down, Ronnie leaned forward. Keith leaned back in his chair with a grin and began to shake his head slowly.

"Hey, calm down! You'll wake the partygoers. This is a resort, ya know?" Jonathan said as he got closer to the small terrace.

"Yeah, they don't have to get up at the crack of dawn for meetings! The restaurant's not even open!" Rusty said.

"Yeah, well, no rush anyway. Dr. K. is gonna be a little late," Jonathan said as he took up a chair at the table. Their silence was, after a moment, punctuated by a "Humph" from Ronnie. Jonathan turned to him, "What was that for?"

Ronnie shook his head as he reached for the pot of coffee at the center of the table. "Nothing, just that I'm not surprised," he added as he topped up his cup.

Jonathan looked around at the other two. "How about you two? Are you losing your patience for a man who just buried his wife, too?"

"Shit, it's not that, man," Ronnie objected.

"No I think it is! This guy, who took us right from a classroom, and brought us with him, on one of the most incredible, innovative, game changing, projects in economics... in years! He loses his wife and suddenly he's not moving mountains like he used to. Well hell, let's just all go over to the boat and tell him, he's letting us down".

Let It Be

Jonathan violently pushed back his chair and stood up. "Come on let's go tell the shirker!"

"Point made... now sit down," Keith said in a low voice. Jonathan remained standing. Keith looked over to Ronnie and tilted his head slightly toward Jonathan.

"Yeah... I didn't mean anything Jon. Like you always say, 'we're the luckiest bunch of bastards', to have him as a boss," Ronnie said.

"Damn straight, and don't forget it," Jonathan said.

"We're the ones who've been shirkers," Rusty said. They all looked at Rusty, who was still balancing his chair at an angle. "We should be stepping up. We know what we need to do. We were all there in Iceland too. We don't have to put it all on his shoulders, this time. Let's just start working on the stuff we know, will need to be done. You know, the common parts. And leave the few custom parts to be worked out by Dr. K. with the Finance Minister".

"He's right," Keith said, looking up at Jonathan.

Jonathan pulled his chair back to the table and sat down. "That is a good idea, Rusty," he said.

"Hey that's two and it's not even eight yet. That must be some sort of record for you!" Ronnie said as he slapped Rusty's shin.

"What was the other one?" Jonathan asked.

"Tell him!" Keith said.

Rusty took his foot off the rim of the table and pulled his chair in closer. "Well, it's like this... you know all that stuff we saw in the streets, as we drove in from the airport?" he asked Jonathan.

"Stuff? You mean the protesters, the cops in riot gear, the clouds of tear gas? *That* stuff?"

Rusty giggled, "Yeah, that! I think I've got a way to stop it."

"Rusty we do software systems, not military hardware or..."

"I know, I know, listen, listen... we allow people, who have the SP-card, to use it to certify their vote..."

"Everyone already gets checked when they vote!" Jonathan interrupted.

"No, no, I'm not talking about elections. I'm talking about making the whole electing thing obsolete."

"What?"

"Just hear him out," Keith said.

Rusty then retraced his thought process, that led him to his idea. Jonathan then engaged the three of them, in a wide ranging discussion about the idea. It was just as animated as the one that

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Jonathan had interrupted minutes before. They kept at it nonstop, even after they had drained the last of the coffee from the pot. They were so deeply engrossed in their banter, that none of them noticed Julie and Dr. K. come out of the suite and onto the little terrace.

"Hey you guys, are we gonna have breakfast, or what?" Julie asked as she stepped onto the terrace.

"Dr. K. you gotta hear this... come here!" Jonathan said as he waved his arm at Dr. K.. Keith pulled out the last chair at the table, as Dr. K. walked over to join them.

"What about me?" Julie asked.

Jonathan slapped the arm on his chair. "Right here!" he said, without looking up at her. Julie turned, instead and grabbed a nearby chaise lounge and brought it over to the table. She sat on the foot of it between Ronnie and Jonathan. He turned to Rusty, "Go on, tell him!"

"Well, the idea is, well, it seems like everywhere people are pissed at their government."

Dr. K. chuckled, "That's putting it mildly."

"Exactly, like I was just saying, I mean, we drove around a full blown riot yesterday, in the city! I never saw anything like that before."

"The Greeks have a very long history of that," Dr. K. added.

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"Yeah, but it's happening everywhere, these days. So I ask myself 'What's up with that?' Why? Why are so many people doing that, lately?"

"Same reason, they've always done it... nobody will listen to them otherwise!" Dr. K. stated flatly.

"Yeah, but they don't have to do that... not now, not in this day and age."

Dr. Kantos leaned forward in his chair. "Go on," he said in a low voice.

"Years and years ago, people had to physically go to a meeting place and have a meeting. That was ok for town meetings or city councils. Everyone around could go to the same meeting and have their say. But when they grouped more and more regions together, everyone couldn't participate. So they built a central place, a building, in their capital and sent just one elected representative for each area. And only those people would have a meeting and vote on stuff, right? So the whole system of elected representatives was just a solution to a problem of that time. How do you know the will of the people, when you can't get them all together? So sending one person, for many, was their only option. But we don't have that problem today!

Hell, you can get millions of people linked together, over the internet, by cell phones, satellite TV. I mean look at what they do on those TV contest shows. Viewers punch in the phone number of the contestant they want to win..."

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"Wait, wait, you want to chuck congress, or parliament or whatever a country has and run things by plebiscite? Every little thing that concerns the government..." Dr. K. interrupted.

"Or the people, it would work both ways," Rusty corrected him.

"Okay, everything gets put before everyone... for a vote?" Dr. K. asked with a pained expression. "Every little item, that anyone wants, will be brought up for a vote? You do realize, that adding people into any deliberative body lengthens the time it takes for them to reach a consensus? You think congress takes too long to do things now, what do you think will happen when hundreds of millions of people are getting into the act!"

"Well, maybe not every..." Rusty started to say.

"And how do you expect to get this set up? You think the politicians are just going to step aside? What about the constitution?" Dr. K. asked.

"So we do it at the local level," Jonathan said firmly.

Dr. K. sat back in his chair, "Go on..."

"Instead of the representative having to leave their constituents and live in the capital, the national meeting hall is wired. They attend sessions electronically," Jonathan said.

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"Just like the stock exchanges. There's almost no one on the floor of the exchange anymore. And they are doing record amounts of transactions all the time," Ronnie said.

"I get it! You get them away from that 'company town' atmosphere. They stay right with the people who elected them. They see them every day, they experience the same weather, the same traffic, everything. They are right there with them, not hundreds or thousands of miles away!" Julie said with a smile.

Dr. K. chuckled, "Thousands? Sometimes they act like they're from another frigg'n planet!"

"Yeah that whole 'company town' thing is so screwed up. When did people start thinking that being elected to government, was just like being on the board of a company? They all think that the government is a business! They use accounting terms like 'deficit spending', 'revenue' and 'balancing the books'," Ronnie said.

"Most of 'em are lawyers, too, not frigg'n accountants!" Keith interjected.

"Exactly!" Ronnie agreed. "And just what the hell is the 'business' anyway?"

"Us! They're in the business of taking what we earn and spending it on what they, or the lobbyists decide. They're surrounded by them all the time. They live in the same town as them, practically. Who would have more influence? Folks way back home, or people you see every day?" Julie said.

Let It Be

"So then, we have everyone meeting at the local level, not the national level. If the rep is close by, then you can hold regular town meeting type things. People can attend in person, if they want, or log in, or watch on TV. And they use the SP-card to vote," Rusty said.

"Remotely, from wherever they are, at the time," Dr. K. interjected.

"You got it! The representative gets his 'marching orders' directly from the people he represents, *before* he casts a vote in the national arena. There is no way for them to get pushed around, by lobbyists or members of even their own party, for Chrisakes!"

"You wouldn't need parties anymore. I mean, what the hell good are they anyway? To force members to follow the party-line? Bullshit! Let them follow the will of the people, from now on!" Jonathan said loudly. To which they all raised their voices in agreement.

Dr. K. leaned back in his chair and looked at their faces, as they went on talking. They were alight with a glow of passion. Their eyes sparkled, as a child's on Christmas morning, standing before a stack of unopened gifts. He suddenly felt a comforting warmth, wrapping tightly around him. He immediately recognized the feeling. *I needed that one, Edie. I miss your hugs, really I do*, he thought.

###

Milos A. Yuratich III stood at his office window, on the thirtieth floor of the World Commerce Corporation's headquarters building, looking out upon the damp spring morning. He removed his wire rim glasses and reached into the breast pocket of his tailored suit, removed a silk handkerchief and began to meticulously rub the lenses. He lifted them up, to check his work, peering through them, to the city of London, below. He lowered the glasses to work on one

remaining, stubborn, speck. Upon cleaning off the spot, he put the glasses on and smoothed the grey hair of his temples, while he regarded his reflection in the window.

He considered the few wisps of grey, around the edges of his sandy blonde hair, in no way added extra years to his appearance. His tall thin build was outward evidence of a lifestyle as active as anyone, even ten years younger than his forty-five years. While many of his employee's seemed to visibly, wither away, while working under him, he did not share their fate. This was one reason he maintained such a high turnover rate in his subordinate staff. Their fading youth was a constant reminder of what he was determined to cheat. That and his fear that, given enough time, an observant staffer might become suspicious as to how he remained virtually unchanged, year in and year out. As added insurance, he maintained a low public profile.

"Mr. Coates is here, sir," came the measured, clear, female voice, over the intercom on his desk. "Shall I show him in?" she added.

Milos turned and walked to his desk, saying, "No, I'll be there, Cynthia." He took another look at the security photograph, attached to the personnel file, open on his desk, before he flipped it closed and put it into the top drawer. He then buttoned his suit jacket and headed for the office door. With a crisp slap and pull of the door handle, he strode out of his office. He looked directly at the man sitting on the couch opposite and noted his jowls were even more pronounced than in his security picture. "Coates, good to finally meet you," he said, not awaiting a reply. He walked briskly over to his secretary's desk, "Where is Anthony?"

"He's pulled in right behind your car, sir," the young woman replied.

Let It Be

"Very good, Cynthia," he said with a quick nod. "This way Coates, I'll walk you down," he said pushing open the mahogany double doors.

The man rose slowly from the couch and walked over to the desk and addressed her, "Nice to meet you miss," he said, bending slightly at the waist.

Cynthia smiled and nodded to him, "And you." Her eyes darted over to Milos, as he stood holding the door. "Have a nice flight and don't think about the date!" she added.

"What about the date?" asked Milos.

"Today's Friday the thirteenth. We were talking... I told Mr. Coates that I admired his courage. I would never travel today!" she replied.

"Hmm, I see."

Coates gave half a smile to Cynthia. Milos looked down at the scuff marks on the man's brown shoes, then up at the tweed jacket with brown leather patches on the sleeves. In profile, the man's short, straight, black hair, followed closely the shape of his head. Milos also noticed a pronounced stoop in the little man's posture. Quite surprising, for a man of forty-eight, yet, *typical of an academic*, he thought. "Anthony is good, but he's not a miracle worker Mr. Coates. Come, come, you have a plane to catch."

"Lead on," he said as he passed by Milos. The two walked the length of the busy corridor, side by side, without addressing one

another. Along the way, numerous passersby acknowledged Milos with a 'Good morning, sir.' He only nodded in return. Upon reaching the elevator doors, at the end of the corridor, they opened. All the passengers exited. The last person, a grey haired man, upon seeing Milos and Coates approaching, held the doors open.

"Good to see you again, sir. Allow me," he said with a smile.

"Thank you," Milos said as he entered the elevator with Coates close behind. Milos pressed the button labeled 'G'. The doors closed. Milos spoke, addressing Coates's reflection in the polished, darkly tinted, door panels before him. "I want to say right now, Coates; that you were not my first choice."

"I am aware of the selection committee's vote, sir," Coates replied.

"Van Touche's passing has really set our plans back. I wanted to continue searching for a candidate, with experience running a division, the size of Omni Orion Group. But the need to have someone there, to get things moving again, quickly, was the board's overriding concern. They expect you to use the same skills you demonstrated last year, in settling that miners' strike in Chile. They believe that the situation in North America, right now, could benefit from such skills. You understand your immediate role is that of a proxy, for the WCC board here?"

Coates nodded to the reflection, "Yes I do."

"The board, through me, will assign and prioritize all your tasks. The highest priority is to sign off on the liquidation plan, understood?"

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"I have familiarized myself with all of the action items that Van Touche left open, just as you requested. Upon my assuming the chairmanship, at the first board meeting, I will make known our intention to liquidate the assets on the list."

"Good!" Milos looked up at the red digital readout that indicated '3', then asked Coates, "Any questions?"

"As a matter of fact I do have a question about one of the company's relocation forms."

"Go on..."

"I was wondering, as I'm single, I don't have to fill in the part of the form regarding my spouse, but I do have a cat," he paused as the elevator stopped and the doors opened. Milos looked over at him and raised an eyebrow as he waited for him to continue. "Is there another form I should request for her, or would it be alright to put her name down as a 'spouse'?"

His eyebrow still up, Milos exhaled a sigh before he answered, "Ahh... well now, I would think that ah, perhaps you should put a call into HR. Yes, that would be your best bet." He put one hand to Coates' elbow and showed him the direction to the front door with his other, "This way."

The glass doors opened and they were met by two stocky men attired in dark business suits and ties, "Any luggage to pick up before the airport?" asked the man closest to Coates.

"None," replied Coates as the four continued walking toward the two black limousines parked at the curb. Coates noticed the tinted passenger window of the first car was partially down. As he got closer he could see the strikingly beautiful face of a young woman, framed in pale, almost white, blonde hair sitting in the back seat.

"Cat taking another flight?" Milos asked while maintaining a straight face as they reached the second limousine. The man, next to Coates, opened the rear door and stood by.

"She cannot abide flying. I put her on the Queen Mary in Southampton on Tuesday. I anticipate being all settled in by the time she reaches New York on Monday," Coates extended his hand to Milos. "Thank the board for the opportunity, will you?"

Milos closed his mouth, then shook his hand quickly and said, "Yes of course, I certainly will."

Coates held a tight grip as he said, "We two are alike, we both toil in the vineyard of dedication, so to speak. That's why we are single. Married to our careers. Yet dedication does bear the finest fruit, eh sir?" He nodded toward the woman in the back of Milos's limousine, then let go of his hand.

Milos glanced at the car, smiled, then turned back to Coates as he sat in the leather seat. Milos put his hand on the window frame of the door. "Thank you Anthony," he said. The man immediately took his hand off the door and walked around the back of the car. Milos leaned down to Coates, "I'll pass your complement on to my sister. Have a nice flight." He then stood up and closed the door, before Coates could react. The tinted window was not dark enough to suit Coates in that awkward moment, as he looked out at Milos.

Let It Be

Milos watched him as the limo pulled away, but Coates kept his eyes straight ahead. Shaking his head, he walked over to the man holding open the rear door of his limo, "Where are we off to today, Jameson?"

"Harrods, sir."

"Oh, *joy*," he said, as he leaned down to enter the rear passenger compartment. The blonde quickly slid away, across the leather bench seat. She crossed her denim clad legs as she reached the driver's side.

Keeping her face looking forward at the vacant driver's seat, she said, "This is all your idea Andre! Now get in and let's get going."

Chapter 4

Baby You're A Rich Man: 16-18 Lennon & McCartney

Lou stepped off the elevator onto the top floor of the Savoy Hotel in Zurich. He had been summoned by Arnie Rasmussen to come to his suite at 10am, a break from his usual routine of no business before noon. Lou had become accustomed, in the last few months, to Rasmussen's night-owl existence. He managed to adapt well and had compiled the bulk of Rasmussen's life story, (as much as Rasmussen passed on to him, that is). He was looking forward to getting off the Rasmussen 'merry-go-round', (as Rasmussen himself often referred to his life), and return home. He had already convinced Rasmussen that, once he had enough material together, it would be better for him to complete the biography there, in Rhode Island. With the publisher practically being next door, in New York, Arnie agreed with his logic. That was the one thing he could count on, about Rasmussen, his devotion to logic. It was the strongest, of the many traits, that the world's richest man had exhibited to Lou, during their time together.

Lou walked the length of the hall. The man, dressed in a suit, (one size too small), standing beside the door, at the far end of the hallway, knocked on the door. "Mr. Tyrrell is here sir," he said.

"Send him in Samuel," came the loud, deep, gravelly response.

He opened the door and motioned Lou inside. "Out here!" Rasmussen called out.

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Lou headed out onto the covered terrace. There, in a prone position, on a foldable masseuse's table, with only a thick white towel over his posterior, was Arnie Rasmussen. The ever present cigar was smoldering in an ashtray, set on a chair within his reach. The masseuse, standing on the other side of the table was up on the tip-toes of her white, nurse's shoes, kneading his shoulders. Arnie's face was hidden in the padded ring of the table, looking down.

"Oh, Arnie... I think this is the perfect picture for the book cover," Lou said as he extended out his hands to frame the masseuse and Rasmussen.

Rasmussen quickly lifted his head out of the ring, causing the masseuse to lift her hands, "Oh, shit, I thought you had a camera!" he said looking over at Lou. "You are a bastard, Tyrrell!" he added, then chuckled as he placed his face back down into the ring. The masseuse, started up on his shoulders once again. "Get the hell over here, so I don't have to shout at you."

Lou picked up a metal frame chair, near the patio table and brought it over next to the chair with the ashtray. Lou looked at the ash in the bowl and the length of the cigar left. "Damn, you must have been up more than an hour already! I think that is some sort of a record, since I've been with you. You know, you really do put all that 'early to bed, early to rise' crap to shame."

"Franklin was an ass. He was never wealthy anyway! Where the hell did he get off making that crap up?"

"Maybe, but he was quite the man with the ladies and he had more on the ball than most, so two out of three ain't bad, as they say."

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"If you've got enough money, you can buy all the brains you want. Look at me, I've got you. When people read my autobiography, they'll be astounded at how much the kid from Portland knows now."

"What about the health? Look at you, you're forty, no, fifty pounds overweight. The only exercise you get is when you pay woman to move various... of your... body parts around."

The masseuse looked up and smiled at Lou, as Arnie's belly laugh began to shake the flab on his back. She continued on, pressing down harder on his back. She looked away, from Lou to keep herself from laughing out loud.

"See, that's what I'm gonna miss Tyrrell. Nobody else talks to me like that. Not even Preston, the poor bastard," he reached down and picked the cigar up.

"You keep going the way you are, and you'll have a heart attack too. Take it from one who knows."

Rasmussen lifted his head up, took a long pull from the cigar and blew the smoke toward Lou. "Try some... these aren't cigarettes you know. None of that chemical crap and paper being burned. Just grade-A U.S. grown tobacco, just like the Indians smoked." Lou just stared back at him. He put the cigar back in his mouth and lowered his head down into the padded ring. He took another puff and put the cigar back into the ashtray. "Besides, Preston didn't know how to relax. He let shit get to him. That's why he croaked at the first sign of heart trouble. My doctors have been telling me I'm gonna die, if I don't change my ways, for years. I'm still here..."

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"Right..."

"Anyway, Tyrrell, it looks like I'm gonna be losing you, soon."

"Well, once I have a draft..."

"Nah, nah, it's more than that. You're still gonna finish my book, it's just that I've been told they have a new, higher priority, project for you. And they want you back state-side, right away."

"They? Preston hired me to do your book, that was it. Then..."

"Now, now... check the fine print son. You are under contract to O.O.G. You've been living off my generosity and their advance against royalties from my book, for months. They can put you to work on anything they want, for the term of that contract. You're not an employee anymore. You're under contract, with nonperformance clauses up the kazoo, that will have you paying back all you've been getting in penalties, if you breach the agreement. So get over it, son. You made a deal, not with Preston, but with the Omni Orion Group, which didn't die. And they will hold you to that contract for the next three years. Trust me, you don't even want to think about contesting it either." He lifted his head up and looked over at Lou, "Am I clear?"

"Yes Massa!"

"Don't be a little piss-head, Tyrrell. Once the contract is finished, you'll never have to work another day in your life again. Just go along with the deal you made and you'll be well ahead of the game in the end. No crappy little Social Security retirement checks for you."

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Believe me, they have great plans for you. I told them, that getting you, was probably the smartest move Preston made."

"Well thanks for putting in the good word and all, but..."

"No frigg'n buts about it! Now get the hell outta here. You can take the afternoon off. I'm gonna be tied up in meetings all day anyway. I'll get together with you tomorrow, before you leave."

"I'm on this trip, to get a sampling of your business style, in action. But all I seem to do is travel with you, from place to place and hear about what you did, after the fact. Arnie, don't you think the book would be better if I could watch you in action at one of these meetings?"

"Not this meeting! Maybe next time."

"But if I get put onto another project, there won't be a next time."

"Don't worry, son. If you need more material, I'll get you put back on the road with me and we'll get it done. But not today. Now get the hell outta here."

Lou got up from his chair. "Do I have time to visit my daughter, before I return? She's in Greece and..." he paused as Rasmussen lifted his head up.

"That's another thing, stay the hell away from that crazy Dr. Kantos!"

"Arnie, my daughter works with him, I know the man."

"The contract Lou, remember your damn contract!" he said as he grabbed the towel and sat up on the table. "Take five, sweetie," he said to the masseuse. He waited for her to leave the terrace before he continued. "They were ready to come down on you, like a ton of bricks, when you showed up in Iceland! What were you thinking? Public Relations manager? For a G.D. little start-up company from bum-fuck Providence? Are you nuts? I gave them my word you would be on my book FULL TIME! No more WU or Dr. K. stuff! Now don't go putting my nuts in a vice with them, over any more of this Dr. Kantos crap!"

"Arnie, I'll return home and work on whatever the hell they want me to... for the next few years... but... the route I take and the people I see along the way... is none of their God damn business!" he said as he pointed a finger at Rasmussen. "If it makes you feel better, I'll take the flight tickets you give me and get them changed myself." He turned to leave, saying, "That way, you can play dumb, if they get pissed off about it."

"We'll continue this tomorrow!" Rasmussen called after him. Lou ignored him and kept walking out of the suite.

Later that day, Lou sat alone at the hotel bar, eating an early dinner. He had taken a walk down the Bahnhofstrasse to the ferry dock on the lake. There he watched the paddle wheel ferry come and go and walked the shore through the Arboretum. On his way back to the Savoy, he counted the banks he passed and basically frittered away the afternoon. Something he had not done in months, something he did not want to do again. The idle time had allowed memories and concern over Miranda to come flooding back into his head.

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Dr. Kantos had last contacted him, about the search for her, three weeks ago. It was then that he reiterated to Lou, that staying on with Rasmussen, as if nothing had happened, was the best thing to do, right now. Doing otherwise, might raise suspicions and possibly endanger Miranda, before Tom and Brian could locate her. He agreed, as he had months before, that it was the best thing for him to do. But that did not make it any easier as each day passed without knowing her whereabouts.

Ever since she was spirited away from him that night in Newport, (which he still did not fully understand), he had to play a very stressful game of cat and mouse with the people around him. Though he knew he was the mouse, he was not yet sure who the cat was. At times he thought it was Rasmussen. But then Rasmussen would act like they were the best of friends. Other times, he felt that Rasmussen answered to someone else and they were the problem. But after four months, all he knew was he had been allowed to continue working for Rasmussen, and had heard nothing from, or about, Miranda. Maybe the private deal with Preston, (he reasoned), about getting Miranda assigned as his personal assistant, had in fact, been private. If that was the case, then no one else knew Miranda was to have been delivered to him. Which meant that the deal had died with Preston. Maybe, whom ever was told to deliver her, figured they were no longer obligated too, upon Preston's death. Maybe they just decided to keep her. After all, how could they deliver her to someone who had died? That was his hope, anyway, his only hope.

A waitress came out of the swinging door, at the end of the bar, near Lou. He understood only some of the German, he overheard her say to the bartender. But it was enough to make him believe the customer, she was complaining about, was Arnie. No two words better described him than, 'Rauchen' and 'Ungeheuers' a 'smoking monster'. The meeting that Arnie was so dead set against him attending was taking place right here in their hotel. Lou wondered

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what Arnie had been up to, all these hours. It was obviously something he wanted to keep from him. Lou called for his bill and kept an eye on the waitress, as she waited for her drink order to be filled. When she left, through the swinging door, with the full tray of drinks, Lou loudly slammed his money on the bar. When the bartender turned his back, to put the money in the till, Lou slipped out through the swing door after her.

He followed her down the narrow hallway, taking soft steps on the tile floor. Glancing in through the window of each kitchen door he passed on his left, to be sure not to be spotted before he passed. Then, much further down, she stopped and leaned her right shoulder against a door on the right side of the hallway. He paused, near a kitchen door, waiting to see if she would turn in his direction, before he continued. She opened the door while keeping her back to him. After she disappeared through the door, Lou continued, with quickened, louder, steps. He came to the door as it stopped swinging. He peered in through the small window at the darkened room on the other side. The area nearest the door was pitch black, but there was some light further into the room.

It was a very long ballroom, that was lit only by the dim reflection off a large screen hanging from the ceiling. As different slide images were projected on the screen, the room changed color. Only a few large tables, way down in front of the screen, were occupied. Dozens of other tables, with chairs neatly stacked on top, were clustered in rows near the door, he was standing behind. Lou waited for the waitress to draw the attention of the speaker, (who he recognized as Rasmussen), then he pushed open the door and slipped inside. He held onto the door, so it would not swing back loudly, and slowly let it close. He crouched down, in the darkness, beside the tables and stacked chairs. He made his way through a very narrow gap, between two rows of tables. The last table in the row, was right up against the side wall. He ducked under the overhang of the linen

table cloth and made his way under the table, to the other side. He knelt on the floor, just behind the cloth overhang. Slowly, he carefully moved it back, to see the large screen. But before he could read what was up on the screen, Rasmussen walked in front of it and began talking again.

"Just in the nick of time, Sweetie. We've been at this all afternoon, why don't we adjourn 'till tomorrow?" he asked the small group.

Some of the people at the tables, exchanged empty drink glasses for the full ones brought by the waitress. Others leaned back in their chairs, but none gave a response to the question before the group. Then, after the waitress had left the room, one of them, (Lou could not see which one), spoke, "Look, Arnie, it's not that we don't think all of this will turn out just the way you say. It's just taken much longer than we... well, then you, told us it would. Most of the countries you said would vote it in, haven't. People are demonstrating in the streets, some in our own countries. It doesn't look like this can be pulled off any time soon. We're just a bit tired of having our assets tied up this long, with no consideration for the delay... no non-performance penalty or payouts... so we want to cash out. There are other things we can be doing with our money!"

Rasmussen took a last puff from the small remnant of cigar, then crushed it out in an ashtray, on the table where the man was sitting. "Anan, how much did you make in seventy-four, on my advice?"

"Arnie..."

"No, no, how much?" he interrupted.

"A lot!"

"That's right! All of you..." he said as he stepped back from the table. He pointed his finger around at each table. "Every one of you owe MOST of what you have, to ME! Now I need you to stay with me on this one. This is not another oil bubble, or a raid on the yen, or ruble, this one is different. This is only going to happen once! And if you don't get on board, you won't just be left out, you'll be run OVER! Mark my words... those who help make this happen are going to have a place at the 'Big-Boy' table. Those who don't, will be outside in the fucking cold... forever. Now you don't have to give me your answers today, but how about Monday?" Little by little, as Rasmussen looked at each one, they nodded their agreement. "Good, good, drink up and let's call it quits for now."

Lou returned his attention back to the screen. He quickly began to read it. Then the overhead lights of the ballroom came up, dulling the image. He leaned back and let the table cloth fall straight down again. He strained to discern what was being said, as the group erupted into loud conversations. He knelt there for what seemed like hours, picking up bits and pieces of statements, (mostly from Rasmussen, who spoke the loudest). The din gradually lessened, as chairs then moved around loudly on the ballroom floor. After a while, the lights were turned off. Lou sat there in darkness, trying to make sense out of what he had overheard. He especially tried to make sense of what he had read. The last slide shown on the screen had, in large block letters, read, 'The New Alchemy: Turning Carbon Into Gold'. *What was Arnie into now?* Lou thought.

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Lou sat alone, at the table in the formal dining room of the Restaurant Savoy. He had ordered only one cup of coffee, in the thirty minutes he had been there. If Rasmussen stood him up, he did not want to pay for lunch in this place, if he could avoid it. Rasmussen

was, as usual, late. Which gave Lou plenty of time to ponder what he overheard and saw at the tail-end of Rasmussen's meeting, that he had crashed, the day before. There was something about the secrecy of it, (Lou checked with hotel staff and no one could tell him about the use of the ballroom during that time. He had hoped to come by a list of attendees). Add to that, the fact that, he had been in Rasmussen's company, daily, for the past four months, going everywhere with him and yet he had been excluded from attending this meeting. The subject of the meeting was something regarding a handful of investors who Rasmussen was actively courting. From the little that he heard it seemed, to him, that they wanted out and Arnie was going all out to convince them to leave their money in the game.

The 'game' was all Rasmussen lived for, that much Lou had learned about the man. His great gift was his ability to create new versions of the 'game' and find players. But as he had invented the game, he would always come out much better off than any of the players. Just as you cannot beat a casino in gambling, you cannot beat the 'Poohba of Portland' in the game of investing. Especially when he just makes up the rules as he goes along. He also navigates the muddy waters of financial regulations and regulators with great skill. Though often these understaffed and overworked bureaucracies would determine a Rasmussen investment scheme violated their rules, it took them many years. By that time, the 'smart' money, (and Rasmussen), had left. The only ones implicated, were very frequently the ones who made the least and even lost money in the game. The more Lou had learned about all of this, the more and more he believed there is much truth behind the old adage that 'behind every great dynasty of wealth, is a story of a great crime.'

The waiter was showing signs of impatience over Lou continually declining to place his order. Lou could see that the room was filled to capacity and that would-be diners were now lining up at the maître d station. He began to feel very uncomfortable. Not that the people

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waiting were in any danger of hunger pains or fainting from lack of nourishment. They all exhibited waistlines that matched their tans; heavy. Which summed up most of the meals on the lunch menu, that Lou kept reading, to pass the time. Then Lou heard the unmistakable Arnie chortle. He looked up from the menu to catch a glimpse of Rasmussen back slapping a man in line as he passed through. Everyone in the subdued dining room turned their attention to the person who had so loudly broken their spell of gentility. Their eyes followed him as he swaggered over to Lou's table and pulled out the other chair.

He leaned over to Lou, once he had sat down and pulled his chair, as close as his immense belly would allow. "Hell, I just couldn't bear to leave my session with that little masseuse, this morning!" he said in a low tone.

"Spare me..." The waiter arrived at the table, again, before Lou could get another word out.

"There you are, my man. I'll have..." Rasmussen said as he opened the menu. The waiter had changed his expression to such a degree, that Lou had to look twice, to make sure it was the same man. He stood by, smiling broadly at Rasmussen, his pen and pad in hand, eagerly waiting. However he quickly became concerned, about the small size of his pad of paper, as Rasmussen rattled off his order.

"I'll start with the Salade De Humard... and bring a bowl of the Bisque De Homard along with that, and for... the main... let me see... I'll have the Blanc De Turbot Au Four... actually would you add a fillet to my order?" The waiter nodded and smiled. "Thanks." He then folded the menu and handed it to the waiter. "How, about a bottle of Sauternes?" Lou shook his head. "I keep forgetting, you're on the

wagon." He turned to the waiter and asked, "Could you bring me a glass of the ninety-seven Chateau d'Yquem?"

"I'm sorry, sir, we don't sell that by the glass."

"Then bring a bottle."

Lou looked at the gleeful waiter, who now turned to him. "Yeah, I'll have the mixed salad." The waiter took the menus off the table with a smile. He calculated the anticipated gratuity, in his head, as he headed for the kitchen door. Lou saw the smile had grown to an ear to ear grin by the time he turned back to the dining room and leaned against the door. "You, made his day, Arnie."

"Hell, that bottle made his week. So did the concierge pass along your flight info for tomorrow?"

"Yes, he did. But instead of flying to New York on Monday..."

"I don't want to hear it!, "Rasmussen said raising his hand. "Just make sure you make that Wednesday meeting with Preston's replacement. Don't make me look like a screw-up with the guy, his first week on the job," he said as he uncovered the basket of freshly baked bread. He scowled and lifted the basket off the table. "Hey, this is cold!" he said as he held out the basket to the nearest busboy.

"They weren't a half an hour ago," Lou said under his breath.

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Rasmussen leaned in, after he passed off the bread basket, "You could have joined me. She's got an assistant that you just have to see to believe."

"Arnie... I'm not interested in getting a massage first thing in the morning, check that; mid-morning. If I was, it would be because I was hitting the gym or biking or something. But with your constantly changing schedule, I haven't done any of that for weeks."

"You don't need to work out, to enjoy a massage. That's one of your problems, Lou. You think you have to earn life! Just take it, man. Enjoy it, live it - easy. Don't be leaning your shoulder on it, like it was a G.D. boulder you're trying to budge. Come on... lighten up!"

"This coming from the Poohba of Portland! Purported to be the wealthiest..."

"You know I hate that name," Rasmussen said under his breath. "And those lists are a joke anyway. The real heavyweights aren't on them, because no one can trace their assets. It's all in trusts."

"Arnie, while your outlook on life is an anathema to me, I think everyone, in this dining room, probably shares your view. But you know? This is not the real world. Outside of here, outside of this banking city, most people don't have an easy time of it."

"Your, point?"

"Forget it."

"No, no, go on. I'd like to hear."

Lou leaned across the table and in a low voice continued. "You - and them..." he tilted his head toward the next table, for a second, "...*enjoy*, because of what the rest of us actually do! You don't build, you don't create, you don't contribute to the growth of mankind. You push paper around. You take a profit or a tax, on what we build and create. Our growth, our advancement, as a species, has been while carrying your sorry fat asses, for generations! We don't need you, you need us!" Lou leaned back in his chair and kept his eyes on Rasmussen's. He sat placidly for a moment, then reached into the breast pocket of his suit jacket.

"You can't smoke in here," Lou said.

Rasmussen continued and pulled out his alligator-skin cigar case. "You're not putting that shit in my book, right?" he asked as he took out a cigar and put it in his mouth.

"Would it get by you?"

"Hell, no!" he said as he began to roll the cigar from one side of his mouth, to the other. "You really believe that 'working class hero' crap?"

Lou smirked, "There's nothing heroic about being used up and spat out, by you people."

"So now I'm 'you people'?"

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"You said you wanted to hear this, right?" Rasmussen bit down on the cigar and nodded. "Well, anyone, like yourself, whose wealth is derived from a fee or a tax on the labor and assets of other people is little more than a financial parasite. The problem with parasites is they're so damn greedy, that they end up sucking their host dry. And over the last sixty years, that's what this latest generation of financial parasites is very close to doing. Then what will you do? Why can't you people ever learn? You dragged the whole world into a mess in the nineteen thirties and that just set the foundation for the Second World War. What do you expect will happen this time?"

"What do you mean?"

"Arnie, you've got all the chips on your side of the game table. The rest of us don't have anything left to play with! What's next? How do you get the game going again, when you're holding all the chips?"

Rasmussen stared at him and then took the cigar out of his mouth. "Simple, start another game and loan you heroes the chips to play along." He smiled broadly at Lou as two waiters returned with his first course of lobster salad and bowl of bisque. They carefully placed it on the table before him. Lou watched as he set about the task of eating. There would be little opportunity to talk to him anymore, not while there was still food on his plate. Lou sat back and had another cup of coffee and waited for his salad to arrive. Just then a short, stout man with tightly cropped grey hair stopped by, as he was being led to his table.

"Arnie, leave some for the rest of us!" he said as he placed his hand on Rasmussen's shoulder, briefly. Rasmussen looked up from his plate and grunted, just as the man moved on.

"Wasn't that Anan Hareb?" Lou asked in a low voice.

Rasmussen paused and looked up at Lou. His eyes narrowed as he asked, "Yeah, so?"

"Just that he's an oil billionaire many times over and here you are..."

"Lou, this city is full of fucking billionaires all the time. Coming and going every day," he said, then went back to eating.

"That's true... so tell me Arnie... where do the trillionaires hang out? Maybe I'll do my next book on one of them."

Rasmussen chortled and raised his napkin to blot his Van Dyke encircled mouth. His face became red as he muffled his coughs into the folded white linen cloth. He leaned back and smiled at Lou, as he said, "You're such an ass, Tyrrell!"

"No, I'm serious. You and Hareb are passé."

"I'm sure you'll find some in Zimbabwe or someplace like that. Anywhere it takes a wheel barrel full of their currency to buy a loaf of bread, should do. In fact, I think they now have a 100 trillion-dollar note, which is like a thousand bucks or something, down there. Hell, you'd be able to find a trillionaire on every street corner, and I'm not just talking about the street-walkers."

"No, no... not that kind of thing, I mean the *real* rich. The people that you work for...where do they hang out?"

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"I don't work for anyone but myself," he said as he pushed the, still well laden, plate of food aside. He then raised his glass of wine and drank most of it. "What's gotten into you today?" he asked as he put the glass down on the table. The waiter quickly refilled it as Rasmussen waited for Lou's response.

After the waiter stepped back from the table, Lou replied, "How's that saying go now... oh yeah, 'familiarity breeds contempt'. I guess after all this time with you, all I've come away with is one long list of anecdotes. You keep telling me how you got the better of this guy or that industry. How you made money hand over fist from this hot market or that. And I'm tired of it."

"Sound like the makings of a good book!"

"No, Arnie, it's not! All you've been telling me, for months, is what you did, not why you did it. I could have stayed in Rhode Island and gotten the same thing by reading old news articles on you."

Rasmussen waited as the waiters returned and cleared his unfinished first course and brought the second course. Very uncharacteristically, he did not begin eating as soon as the waiter's fingers were off the plate. Instead he lifted the still wet cigar off the table and put it in his mouth. He continued to glare at Lou as he rolled the cigar in his mouth. "You want to know why? Why what?"

"Well, for instance, why does a man with eight houses on four different continents, a private jet, numerous automobiles...oh yeah, why no boats?"

"I can get the same sensation of owning a boat, by standing in my shower, tearing up thousand dollar bills," he said as he raised his wine glass, adding, "I get wet and waste my money!" He took a long, slow, drink. He placed the cigar to his lips with one hand, just as he lowered his glass to the table, with the other.

"Right.. well, why would this man, give a rat's ass about the amount of carbon in the atmosphere? You're a lot of things; competitive, aggressive, instinctive... some would even say amoral. But I wouldn't call you a tree-hugger."

Arnie chortled loudly, again bringing the attention of some of the other diners. He removed the cigar as Lou's comments raised a belly laugh from him. Everyone in the dining room stopped what they were doing. After his laughter subsided, he said loudly, "You're a real pip!" Then with a sigh he raised his glass of wine and drained it, in one swallow. Placing the empty glass down on the white linen table cloth he went on, "I won't ask you how you know..."

"I'm a journalist," Lou interrupted.

"Yeah, don't flatter yourself, that was a rag of a paper. You're better off now, than when you worked there. The sooner you wise up to that, the better. And you're right, I'm far, far, from being a tree-hugger. But I know which way the wind is blowing. And you should, too. It's easy, just look up at the treetops. Right now, the latest craze is carbon. The suckers are coming out of the woodwork, looking for ways to make a buck on it."

"And you've got just the thing for them."

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"Damn straight!" he put the cigar back in his mouth. Then, in a softer voice, went on, "Look kid, I like you. I'd like to think of you as a friend. And I don't have many of them..."

"Because you try and get your hands in the pockets of everyone you meet," Lou interjected.

"Not everyone."

"Okay, you're right. For women, it's up their dresses." Rasmussen gave a low grunt of approval. Lou continued, "Just because I have empty pockets, which means there's no possibility of a future business deal, between us. That doesn't automatically make us friends, Arnie. There's a lot more that goes into friendship, than just not being competitors in business. Real friends confide in one another."

"Oh, you want me to confide something to you?"

"Yeah!"

"Like what?"

"Like this carbon trading meeting yesterday."

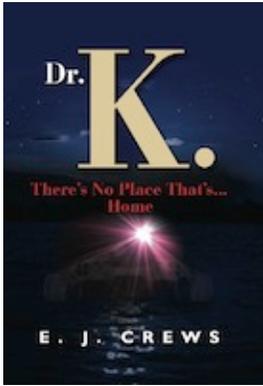
Rasmussen glared at him and stopped chewing on his cigar. Slowly, he slid his chair back and stood up. Dropping his napkin over the full plate of food, he walked over to Lou. He placed his hand on Lou's shoulder and leaned in close to his ear. "Maybe a real friend, doesn't confide toxic truths. You know, something that their friends are better off not knowing." He then straightened up and added,

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"Hey, too bad you have to get back to the States, right now. I was looking forward to showing you around Monaco."

"I'm not much on gambling."

"No, no, of course, I know. I meant the Grand Prix," he paused as he looked at Lou's surprised expression. "It's coming up the end of the month. I've got a place that overlooks the run down to the tunnel. A great spot to watch the race. Be a *friend* and pick this up. I've already checked out and you know I never carry cash." He winked at Lou, patted his shoulder and walked out of the dining room.



Terrorist attacks and economic and political manipulation are amassed against Dr. K. in this second book in the series. Triggered by the Greek rollout of electronic Work Units, Omni Orion Group (OOG) enlists the help of Dr. K's most vocal detractor, Senator Clarke Lou. Miranda also pays a high price, as does Julie and those actively promoting WU. Amid all of this, Dr. K. retreats to the 'Kai Hau', which becomes his floating sanctuary and fortress.

Dr. K

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