

Chapter Fourteen

"Make yourself comfortable, Mr. Howard," Dimitri said, with a phone to his ear, while pointing to a seat opposite his desk. Spinning his oversized leather chair to face the window, on the top floor of the NAPCO skyscraper, Dimitri whispered into the telephone. "I am sure, Mr. K., that you will have little difficulty convincing your disciples to do for you what I require." A brief period of silence followed after which he whispered, "Dangerous? Perhaps, but you will convince them as always and remember, these little chores are of your doing, I do not exist."

Clayton Howard, the newly appointed president of NAPCO, sat nervously before his superior in the ungainly, clear plastic covered chair. Adjusting the soft, cream paisley tie that had

escaped from the confines of his dark, pinstriped suit, he assumed the posture of a mannequin.

"Congratulations, Mr. President," Dimitri exclaimed, while carefully closing the flip phone and smiling broadly.

"I am grateful for your confidence," Clayton said, with a toothy smile.

"Clayton, I hope you do not mind the familiarity?"

"Not at all."

"Good. Well, before the untimely departure of your predecessor, he and I had been discussing a rather delicate matter of great importance."

"I am not aware ..."

"Of course not," he interrupted, "it was quite confidential but it involved a certain task that he was unable to perform, one that I will now pass on to you."

"I will not disappoint you, sir."

"Let us hope not. Now, what do you know about the Debt Consolidation Industry?"