

## **The Man Hunter**

### **By Lordan Brichetto**

The Cerberus Project (TCP) is a secret society dedicated to creating a team of elite special forces and assassins that are controlled by TCP. They are sold to governments and criminal organizations to carry out whatever task is required, whether legal or illegal. TCP's sadistic leader, Dr. Anton Milton, is the developer of the powerful mind-altering drugs, that also have performance-enhancing properties that are used to groom and control the young men and women that are subjected to Dr. Milton's experimentation. They come from various backgrounds, but they all have one thing in common. They were young teens with very troubled pasts. Runaways, drug addicts, and even some that were rescued from prison. Now owned and controlled by TCP, mind, body, and soul, they are obedient, brainwashed assassins that kill on demand, and without conscience.

Dr. Milton's favorite human experiment is Michael Cash. Michael came under Dr. Milton's 'care' at the age of 14. Depressed and orphaned, Michael unknowingly became a very cooperative victim. It started out with simply being grateful for a home, but soon led to prescriptions for depression and anxiety followed by weekly treatments that were introduced as vitamin injections, but soon led to a blur of addiction and total dependency. Somewhere along that dark road, his life became nothing more than eating, sleeping, and taking the next dose of Dr. Milton's drugs. Michael slowly and vaguely recognized that he no longer felt anything other than the need to train his body and to obey whatever Dr. Milton told him to do. On the rare occasion that he felt his soul rise above his addictions, he knew he wanted to escape whatever had taken over his life. But, how?

The answer came in the form of a compassionate nurse that had recently started working for Dr. Milton. Grace was conscripted into the TCP organization much the same way that Michael had been. Her role was to administer the drugs being used to control Michael and the other team members. Due to her role, Dr. Milton needed her to be sober as she went about her duties. Grace, like her unfortunate predecessors, had no knowledge of TCP's true mission. She was disposable and would only be needed for a few months before she also disappeared. To that end, she was groomed to believe that she was helping an elite team of athletes who were in training. She thought she was injecting her patients with vitamins that would enhance the athlete's performance. She had no idea that the 'vitamins' also had mind-controlling properties, and she certainly didn't know that the 'athletes' she treated were, cold-blooded killers. Not at first anyway.

Her first suspicion that something was very wrong came when one of her patients went into a violent rage shortly after his weekly injection. He viciously attacked an orderly that always accompanied her on rounds. The orderly was so severely injured that he never returned to work. He just disappeared, along with several other staff members shortly thereafter. It soon became clear that her patients and fellow staff members were constantly disappearing. The atmosphere around her became increasingly disturbing. She knew something was very wrong, so she began to document the strange events surrounding her work. On the surface, the training center where her patients lived looked normal, but everyone she met was strangely void of emotion and almost robotic.

Everyone, except for Michael Cash. She and Michael connected quickly after they first met. They'd spent many hours talking about their similar pasts, and although their friendship was new, it was special. He even had days where she could tell that he desperately wanted to connect with her, but those days were sporadic and usually coincided with the 2 days before it was time for his next injection. After he received his dose, he returned to a state of disassociation that was common among her other patients. Grace soon became convinced that the common denominator between her patient's erratic behavior and the sudden disappearances of the staff were somehow the result of the drugs that Dr. Milton prescribed for her patients. She knew too much. That fact led Grace to act quickly.

The first step was to drastically reduce the dose that she administered to Michael to clear his body of the drug's effects. She already knew that he wanted to get away from TCP, but those conversations only occurred when the drug in his system was running out. Over the next few weeks, she continued this process in hopes that his mind and body would heal, along with his conscience, and that his will to take his life back would become stronger than Dr. Milton's control over him. They both wanted out, but first, she had to get Michael in his right mind, whether he liked it or not.

"Where is my damn pen?" Milton exclaimed. "I need to document my work with patient 127."

Nurse Grace hands him a pen. "Here, do you need any assistance completing the patient's labs Doctor", she asked with a fake smile. Doctor Milton strokes his mustache and taps his pen on his clipboard while he thinks. Milton smiled with menacing excitement, "No, I need you to escort Michael my office."

Today was the day that Dr. Milton planned to administer a special new variant of his drug, that would ensure that Michael easily terminated targets that were significantly larger and more powerful than he. The unknown factor was the fact that the drug was experimental and could have a very negative effect

on Michael. Not to worry, thought Dr. Milton. As far as he was concerned, Michael was his to use in any way necessary.