



**THE
TROLL
HUNTERS**

Chapter Eight

The Troll Hunter

News Line 9 Breaking News ... The son of prominent Senator Rodrick Domingo (D) California has been found dead of an apparent suicide at the age of 16. Sources in Sacramento have confirmed that Marcus Domingo, 16, took his life live on social media, publicly blaming “Trolls” who he deemed were the ultimate cause of his actions. Although the video has been scrubbed from the most popular social media platforms, copies are said to be widely available.

In a statement from Senator Domingo’s office he states, “We have lost a huge piece of our lives today, please keep our family in your prayers as we cope with this tragic, shocking, and unexpected phase of God’s plan.”

“Did you see the news?” Daniel texted.

“Tell me that wasn’t him,” No-show wrote.

“What? This is great!” Daniel wrote.

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“You went too far, he was just a kid,” No-show wrote.

“It sucks I know. Didn’t expect this, but it’s big for us,” Daniel replied.

“Big? Kid is dead!” No-show said.

“Collateral damage,” Daniel texted in series.

“Survival of the fittest.” Ding.

“Natural selection.” Ding.

“We will not be prey anymore.” Ding.

“We are the lions.” Ding.

“We eat when we’re hungry.” Ding.

“I’ve already put in a call to his office for a meeting.” Ding.

“It’s our time.” Ding.



“The senator will be right with you,” he said.

The assistant at the desk kept his eyes off the two men while slyly paying attention to every word they spoke.

Daniel and No-show, dressed as professionally as their budgets would allow waited impatiently for their face to face with Senator Domingo.

“This is it, do we have everything ready?” Daniel asked.

“Ready as we’ll ever be as long as the sat link stays strong,” No-show told him.

“Gentlemen, the senator will see you now,” the assistant said.

Basic pleasantries were exchanged including a thick blanket of crocodile sorrys and phantom prayers. No-show set up the gear and Daniel did most of the talking.

“So what you’re telling me is you have devised a fool proof way to track, find, and punish people who spend the predominant amount of their time on a computer terrorizing other people?” Senator Domingo asked.

“Well sir, punish is definitely subjective. We prefer the term justice,” Daniel said.

“Son, you can lie to me, lie to your girlfriend or boyfriend, whatever works for you, but never lie to yourself, cause then you’re only lying to God. Now I get that after everything you’ve told me that you haven’t exactly been dealt a fair hand. It’s clearly personal, I get that. Hell, I’ve got reason to make this personal myself. I think that’s why you’re here. Am I wrong?” Domingo asked.

“No, no sir. But considering this is something Tyler and I have been working on for some time, it seems that maybe the timing is, I don’t know, divine intervention maybe,” Daniel said.

Senator Domingo’s face turned flag-red. He wielded the fingers on his right hand like a gun.

“Now you look here Mr. Navarro, before you bring up the grand plans of the almighty here in my office you had better be damn sure you’ve considered every word. Justice? Son I’ve seen the darkest side of men and in all my years I have never seen a product, thought, or plan borne of revenge and labeled as justice that wasn’t more evil

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than the intentional actions of the first party. You get me?” Domingo asked.

“I understand sir. Maybe, if you’d let us demonstrate,” Daniel asked.

“Alright, let’s see what you and your friend here have come up with,” Domingo said.

“As you can see, this person, user name Tyrant1 is an individual with a long list of interactions that almost any sane person at the very least would consider bullying. He is derogatory, rude, foul mouthed, and pretty much as heartless as a person could be. I mean, this is the kind of person we’re dealing with. Their anonymity has given them a shield, a way to hide behind their keyboards if you will. These are the people we call Trolls,” Daniel explained.

On the table before them were three laptop computers. One screen detailed the program as well as diagnostics while the other two displayed and provided access to every electronic signature the online Tyrant1 has left in the last ten years.

“We’ve got it all Senator, where he lives, where he banks, hell, where he fills up his gas tank,” No-show said.

The senator took his time toggling through the information, adjusting the downward slide of his reading glasses as many times as it took for a person to consider it more of a habit than a necessity.

“Impressive. Two things occur to me. In what world do you live where you think that mining this sort of information from an individual is legal? The second thing, ironic as though it may seem is,

what information do you have here that the NSA couldn't get in probably the same amount of time?" Domingo asked.

"Senator, if I may? The NSA would in all reality take hours, days, maybe even weeks before they could compile what we've done here in a matter of moments. Very frankly speaking sir, we know because we've had a hand in writing their programs. Between the red tape and the lack of sharing information between government entities, I mean, this is all instant," Daniel explained.

"I'm pretty sure we addressed that whole sharing between multiple agencies issue with the Homeland Security Act post 911 son," the Senator said while keeping his attention on the screens.

"Yes, you may have written the law and made it possible, but you did nothing to address the individual egos and merit system in place for the men and women who serve in the highest positions. In other words, even if they can share, often times, they won't," Daniel said.

"I'll give you that. So now what? What do you plan on doing with this person's information? How will knowing everything about this person somehow administer justice?" Domingo asked.

"Well, first we freeze all social media accounts. I mean we could administer anything from a warning in the form of a screen message across all the hardware they own, or freeze bank accounts, credit cards—" No-show was interrupted.

"Have his car towed, transfer title of his property, drain his 401, nearly anything we can think of regarding his life. Justice Senator?"

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Excuse my frankness but the people who drove your son to his death did not break any laws. There is no accountability, they are a scourge on society, and we just overlook them. They are nothing more than a byproduct grinding away on our collective psyches hour after hour, day after day. They are literally draining our society as a whole. Justice? Legality? That's exactly why we're here Senator. Yes, I'll say it, maybe God has brought us together for a reason, maybe, just maybe, we are the hands of justice wielded by your grace through the almighty himself," Daniel sermoned.

"Finish it," Domingo ordered.

No-show entered a few moments worth of commands and paused over the enter key for obvious theatrical effect.

"Here we go," he said.

He struck the key twice and all three screens reacted with all of the epileptic seizure inducing flash of a Japanese cartoon.

"It is done," No-show said.

"What is done? What exactly did you do?" Domingo asked.

"No more than we discussed. Right now, his laptop computer, his phone, his tablet, every piece of computer hardware he owns has been frozen and for all practical purposes is under our control. They all share the warning screen with the message you see on the monitor to your right as we speak," No-show explained.

The draw was instant and overwhelming. I moved from a state of non-being to looking on the faces of three men in the time it

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took to blink eyes that I did not have. I could hear them, smell their putrid bodies as if I spied on them in the woods.

They desired evil, I could feel it, it called to me. They couldn't see me. They had no earthly idea I was there. The screens before them were the lenses of my eyes, machine made corneas of plastic and glass.

All the information before them was mine as well, every word ran through me without context leaving me unsure of what should be done.

I became angry as I felt useless. My indignation bred heat which soon became intense, hot enough to reach their world, hot enough to burn.

“Everything okay No-show?” Daniel asked.

“Yeah, yeah, fine, I put extra heavy duty fans in there. I knew these processors would be generating a ton of heat,” he said.

“Yeah but smoke?” Daniel asked.

“Just a little dust that’s all, nothing to worry about, everything is operating perfectly,” he answered.

“Really? Then what is that? Did you put that in and not tell me? The basic warning message was what we discussed. C’mon, we’re partners in this. No surprises today for the good senator,” Daniel stated.

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No-show did not answer or react thinking it best not to throw an unnecessary wrench in the presentation. He too had no real idea what exactly might be happening.

From the second the smoke entered the man's body until he expelled it I was part of him, through his lungs, deep into his blood, I was the smoke. With the physical connection made, using his fear I should have been able to take all that the devil would have regardless. The essence of his soul would have been mine to give to Samedi.

In the brief moment we were together, his fear was not of me, but of his situation. He did not harbor anger nor hate, jealousy or guilt. His fear was instead borne of virtue, for not to disappoint one of the others whom I could see. For this reason alone I could not take him.

As for the others, they could only take in what the first man had exhaled, too weak a connection, but a memory made never-the-less. As they chose at that moment to end their business, I could only say goodbye.

“Excuse my ignorance but that doesn’t smell like electric smoke son, gotta distinct smell of sulfur with it if you ask me,” Domingo said.

“Now Senator, let’s not get superstitious here. This program works, we’ve proven it, and with your help, we can clean the proverbial streets of cyberspace once and for all,” Daniel pitched.

“Maybe you can explain to me Mr. Navarro in no uncertain terms just what in the hell it was that we just saw come across them screens,” Domingo demanded.

“A calling card, that’s all. I mean, our corporate logo at this point is admittedly fluid, Troll Hunters is a solid start, but we had definitely toyed with skull and crossbones types of messages that we might deliver,” Daniel explained.

“Twern’t no kinda skull and crossbones I’ve ever seen. Skull maybe, but with flesh and blue eyes. The kind of thing nightmares are made of,” Domingo said.

“Yes, exactly. And these people have given countless of thousands of innocent people nightmares, and they continue to do so, day in and day out. Like they did to your son Senator. The government is never going to stop them, that we know, but with your help, we can, once and for all,” Daniel said, finishing quietly.

“No way in the world are we ever going to be able to do this thing above board. Too many laws to get by. However, that being said, something has got to be done. Many a back door has been opened under the guise of a government task force operating with the special authority of a federal investigation. Look, let me stew on this for a bit. I don’t want you boys to do a damn thing until you hear from me first got that?” Domingo stated.

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“Yes sir, we’ll just sit tight for now,” Daniel said.

“Oh and boys, not a word about this to anyone, don’t look for investors, and for hell’s sake don’t tell anyone a single word about this meeting. Consider it top secret, hell, above top secret, understand?”

“Yes sir, we read you loud and clear.”

Daniel and No-show were barely able to contain their giddiness as they packed up their equipment in the car. As they drove they laughed and joked about the lines of bullshit they were able to pull from thin air when things began to break down.

“What’s with the face?” Daniel asked.

“I was about to ask you the same thing? I mean, it’s not in the code, doesn’t make any sense!”

“And that smoke?” Daniel exclaimed, “I thought the whole damn thing was going to melt down for a second there.”

“Yeah, me too. Must have torched a wire in the fan, had that plasticky smell,” No-show said.

“Plastic? That’s funny. Domingo thought it smelled like sulfur which was weird because that’s not what I picked-up at all. When I did smell it though, I thought for sure that’s what sold it, you know, what really brought him over to our side,” Daniel said.

“Why? What did it smell like to you?” No-show asked.

“Gun powder, smelled like gun powder to me. No doubt about it.”

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Chapter Nine

Red Wing

Are online bullies ruining your life?

Are you or someone you love being adversely affected by online Trolls? Call 1-85-NO TROLLS today!

Did you know that students who experience cyber bullying are nearly twice as likely to attempt suicide as a result?

Nearly sixty percent of U.S. teens have experienced bullying or harassment online.

It's time to strike back, with The Troll Hunter.

At The Troll Hunter we will find and silence your troll once and for all, guaranteed!

By means of special authorization for a limited time only your personal troll will be exposed, publicly warned and placed on a list with the United States Government as a

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potential terrorist threat subject to possible Federal prosecution not limited to fines and possible jail time!

Don't wait, act now, call for a free quote! 1-85-No Trolls, that's 1-856-687-6557. Take your online life back and call The Troll Hunter today!

“Can you imagine if we'd have got Morgan Freeman for the voice?” Daniel asked.

“Too matter of fact. I like the guy we got, like he could sell you any used car on the lot. Lots of energy,” No-show said.

“Yeah. Reminds me of the guy who used to sell all that infomercial junk on late night TV. Remember that guy? OD'd or something.”

“That's where we're starting too. Hopefully, after a few jobs we can afford to up the advertising budget a little. We gotta watch out for the crazies, make sure they got the money before we do anything, we're like totally tapped-out right now,” No-show lamented.

“Funny you should mention that. I have an idea about how to generate some funds,” Daniel said.

“Like what?”

“Why our good friend Senator Domingo of course. Maybe steer some Uncle Sam dollars our way. We just need to give him something in return, like the guy who pushed his kid over the edge for instance,” Daniel explained.

“You gonna turn yourself in?” No-show asked.

“Funny guy. I still have the content, all of it. How tough could it be to link it to someone else’s history? You know, some dick who really deserves it. We hand it to the good senator as a token of thanks for his support and let him decide the fate of the poor, unsuspecting troll. It’s a win-win,” Daniel explained.

“What about the innocent guy? What does he win?” No-show asked.

Daniel spun his wheelchair around quickly enough to make the tire squeak. He leaned about as far forward as possible without falling onto his angry face.

“There are no innocent trolls. Fuck them, I hope he has him killed,” Daniel said angrily.

“Whoa, whoa, pump the brakes there guy. We’re not in the business of handing out death sentences,” No-show said.

“Maybe we should be No-show, maybe we should be,” Daniel said quietly.

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Dispatcher: “9-1-1. What is your emergency?”

Caller: “My son. My son, he drowned, I think, I think...” (inaudible sobbing)

Dispatcher: “Ma’am? Where is your son now? Is he breathing?”

Caller: “Home, we’re at home, he’s always at home, he’s, he’s, I think he’s dead!”

The caller’s words trailed away into grief-laden, gravelly cries, the sort of human pain that can only be understood by others whom have had all of their love and devotion suddenly and unexpectedly robbed from them. There is no recourse against a universe that does not recognize justice.

“Ma’am? Do you have a pool?” The operator’s question went unanswered. “Ma’am? Are you still with me? I need you to focus. Is your son still in the pool? Ma’am? Ma’am?”

Again, no response, only distant crying.

“Ma’am, if you can hear me, we are dispatching emergency personnel to your location. We need to start CPR immediately. Is there anyone else there who I can speak with? Ma’am? Ma’am?”

“There’s blood, please. He’s only 15...” she managed to say.

“He’s only 15” were in essence the last words she would say to the operator. She repeated them over and over as she lay next to the cold, wet body of her son.

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Brian, the deceased, loved two things in life, trolling people on the internet and swimming. His mother did not drink even though the police noted that she appeared severely intoxicated that evening. Consequently, due to her uncharacteristic intoxication, she was indisposed at the time of the incident. Brian, according to the medical examiner must have struck his head on the concrete bottom of the pool and knocked himself unconscious. Why he was fully clothed was never addressed by the department, most likely dismissed due to the high levels of depressants and cocaine the toxicology report uncovered from his blood. His mother had no idea where or when Brian may have taken the drugs as no paraphernalia or other drugs were found in the residence.



“This facility is gonna be crazy. Nothing else like it anywhere,” Daniel said.

“That we know of anyways,” No-show quipped.

“This is it buddy, everything we’ve been working towards. All the long hours, the late nights, weekends... We find the right people and we have a chance to be the biggest thing the internet has ever seen,” Daniel said.

“You mean *never* seen,” No-show added distantly.

“What’s the matter man? Have you seen this place? Never going to run out of power, ambient temperature, hell, we’ll have more computing power on this site than half of Europe, combined! And you

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seem, well, c'mon man, would you look at this? All the technology in the world and this is how I gotta get in?" Daniel complained.

Daniel drew his chair up to the face of an abnormally tall disintegrating concrete stair. The entire case consisted of about a dozen more just like it, crawling skyward with a pitch closer to that of a painter's ladder than any sort of coded stairway. The safety yellow pipe railing had faded to the hue of a barely dipped Easter egg and the base was nearly rusted gone. At the top was a set-back, riveted steel, thick gray door leading into a concrete box just large enough to house an elevator.

"They talked about this, the entrance has to be above 100 year flood stage and if they go putting in an ADA ramp people are going to be able to spot it from the air. Believe me, it's no picnic for me either. You got it coming anyways," No-show said as he helped Daniel roll backwards up the stairs.

"What? I know you're talking about the kid. I didn't have anything to do with that," Daniel explained.

"Bullshit man, you gave dude all the info, bullshit info. Yeah you didn't pull the trigger, but you did in my mind," No-show said.

"No, bullshit on you man. I gave a grieving man closure, and that kid drowned, he was high as shit. And why bring all this up now? That shit was months ago," Daniel said.

"Cause how much more man? Can't help it, it's been eating at me. How far we gonna go?" No-show asked.

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As they reached the top No-show opened a small, rusty hatch and peered into an eye scanner. He placed his thumb on a pad until it beeped and then entered a six digit code before the heavy door unlocked with a terrible clunk.

The elevator inside was bright stainless steel, doors, floor, walls, everything including the emergency phone. There were four buttons on the panel, "G" and 1-3. Reaching level one, the first level below ground took a surprisingly long time, not considering it was way, way down. The river at that point is nearly 80 feet deep to bedrock, and level one was nearly 40 feet below it.

From the air the sight looked like any other industrial wasteland reflecting a bygone era. Solid poured concrete docks along abandoned railroad tracks stood alone as monuments to a billion pounds of material moved in and through buildings long-gone.

Sprawling concrete, cracked like stained glass with noxious weeds taking the place of hand-laid lead lines was the hat on a head of soil doomed to be contaminated for a thousand plus years.

Occasionally a section of mosaic tile x-marked the spot of an ancient ground floor bathroom. A pile of broken concrete on one end of the sight as big as a house stood testament to an earlier reclamation project when the then government considered it to be no longer useful. The decades old decision has teetered on the secret federal fence ever since.

The abandoned factory complex, a stone's throw from a midwestern river town known for its impressive bluffs, abuts a large

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lock and dam built to aid in the navigation of long strings of tug-driven river barges. Also, in the event of low flow, the damn will keep a static amount of water in the pool above it to cool the nuclear-powered steam generators a mile and up the river. Unknown to the public at large, a channeled flow also powered a set of hydro-electric generators deep underground.

The generators were originally intended as back-up to the original coal-powered plants upstream, shielded from enemy bombs that never came but, if had, they would have otherwise crippled the grid.

Level one housed the bulk of the mechanical including new turbines expected to last well over a hundred years. New wiring throughout the facility boasted the latest in fiber-optics with wireless broadcasting modems inside nearly every individual space throughout the facility.

Level two was where the rubber met the road. Here, thousands of fortified servers worked in tandem with the most powerful computers on the planet, storing and moving massive amounts of information across the world, underground, and even into space. Luxury offices with faux daylight windows allowed users to pick the high-def cityscape of their choice. Niagara Falls, or any one of a thousand other scenes they might want to see outside their office windows.

Finally, level three was designed as luxury condominiums. Built to comfortably house up to 12 families along with a nightclub,

childcare facilities, a school, a restaurant, and even a four lane bowling alley.

The facility made its own power, cooling, heating, purified an endless supply of fresh water, and was virtually indestructible.

Major supplies such as large materials needed to complete the build-out were delivered on the east side of the river, away from the guarded main entrance. A dilapidated and thoroughly rusty steel building leaning into the side of the bluff was home to a freight elevator and emergency exit staircase that could be crippled at the will of the workers underground.

“We’ll be up and running fully online tomorrow Senator. And let me say once again, none of this would have been possible without your help,” Daniel said.

The men were part of a group taking a final tour of the nearly finished facility including No-show, the architect, and various engineers.

“Well Mr. Navarro, an impressive facility to say the least and may I say one hell of a lot of power for one man. That said, besides the opportunity to see this world-class facility today I am here to inform you that I am going to take a special interest in this project for obvious reasons,” Domingo said.

“Now Senator, we agreed that—”

“Now, now, son, before you get your undies in a bundle, we’re talking about a massive chunk of the taxpayers’ money that went to build this, this, eighth world wonder of yours. Normally there’d be an

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entire committee appointed to oversee the day-to-day operations. A committee that you'd have no choice but to answer to." Domingo narrowed his eyes.

"In this case, it's just gonna be me, and maybe a few other carefully chosen confidants if you get my drift. As to repaying us for our tremendous generosity, we might be inclined to access your world's smartest computer from time to time for, you know, various projects. Do we understand each other Mr. Navarro?" the senator asked.

Daniel hesitated, stopping his chair long enough to angrily pound both fists on the armrests of his wheelchair.

"Considering the situation, down south we'd take that as a yes. Am I right about that Mr. Navarro?" Domingo asked.

"Yes," Daniel uttered begrudgingly.

"Oh yeah, one more thing. I was never here, and you've never heard of me. Anyone asks where you got the money to make this all happen you tell them it is strictly classified. I don't care if they put you up in front of the whole damn congress, the fifth is gonna be your best friend and damn well might be the only thing that keeps you and these other men alive. Comprendo? The man behind us is Mr. Carl, he's gonna be my eyes and ears on this thing. Consider him invisible until I need him to not be." Domingo walked quickly forward and rejoined the group.

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Massive amounts of energy surged unexpectedly through the perceived body. The jolt of an invisible defibrillator pulsed across the face of my heart seconds apart over and over again. With every gush of power I awoke from separate deaths only to find a different face hovering over me. I wanted to speak, to access the pain on their faces but instead, was only allowed to repeat the process a million times over.

Time was inconclusive here, what may have been weeks might have actually been seconds. The process was ever maddening, my defacto introduction to the world.

