

The Rewired Series: The Recruiter

by Alexander Mukte

THE RECRUITER

Chapter 7

Special Agent Mikiko Shikibu opened Special Agent Evelyn Blackwood's door abruptly. "Hey, Evelyn, you're needed in the large conference room immediately."

Evelyn looked at her computer. "I don't see anything on my calendar."

"This just came up," Mikiko said, seeming a little out of breath. "Deputy Director Chisholm and Section Chief Appleton are waiting."

"Do you know what this is about?" Evelyn asked. The last time Deputy Director Chisholm was in a briefing was when there was the suspicion that rogue Russian agents had influenced several election results. "She doesn't typically get involved in briefs unless there's a pretty serious situation."

Mikiko just shook her head and led the way.

As Evelyn walked into the briefing room, three well-known faces appear on a large screen covering the wall.

"Thank you for joining us, ladies," Section Chief Appleton said with an annoyed tone. "As I was saying, who can tell me who these three individuals are?"

"Jason Jimenez out of New York, Mike aka 'Mikey' Romano out of Chicago, and the notorious Victor aka 'Big Vick' Ward out of Los Angeles. They are suspected to be the heads of the largest crime syndicates in the US," said an eager analyst from the other side of the briefing room.

Appleton continued, "The fact that these three thugs are missing isn't necessarily something to be bothered with on its own. In fact, I'm kind of glad that someone is doing our job for us. The more concerning thing is that we've received intelligence that a new crime boss is moving to town. We believe that this new player is going to make a move to run the criminal organization in much of the western world."

Appleton paused for dramatic effect before continuing. “Few people can pull this off under the radar. To do so, you need a global network, business fronts to clean your money, and massive legitimate and illegitimate influence to discreetly push things through.”

Appleton stopped and flashed up a photo of one man. He looked tall, fit, and lean. The image showed him walking in a suit with sunglasses and talking on the phone.

This was clearly a surveillance photo, pulled from a file probably filled with other information. Next to that picture, a second photograph appeared on the screen, a close-up of just the man’s face. The man appeared to be in his late thirties, with intelligent eyes, ebony skin, and oddly enough, a big charming smile. The picture looked like it belonged on a professional bio, not a case file.

“We received a tip that this is our guy.” Appleton finished his grand reveal.

“Who is that?” asked Cramer.

“Someone who flies completely under the radar,” Appleton replied. “This is Ori Clayborn, Founder, and CEO of the Singularity Group.”