

## Becomes 114

### Chapter 0114

#### Bill's POV

My eyes are fixed on the laptop screen, watching the live feed from James's body cam. I smirk, knowing Max has nowhere to run. It's like watching the final move of a chess game, a perfect checkmate. [Ww.NoveIWorkM.C\(m\)@iworrm.com](mailto:Ww.NoveIWorkM.C(m)@iworrm.com)

Max shifts in his chair. His body leans away from the paper with the mafia logo.

[www.NoveIWorkM.C\(m\)@iworrm.com](http://www.NoveIWorkM.C(m)@iworrm.com)

"I—I don't know what you're talking about," Max stammers, his voice shaky. "I've never seen that image before in my life."

"Oh! Cut the crap," he says firmly. "We've been tailing you for months. We know all about your money laundering schemes. Witnesses have talked, and we've intercepted your messages. You've been making some very shady deals."

Max jerks against the ropes, his voice rising. "Those deals don't have anything to do with that damn mafia clan!"

Big mistake, Max. You should have just kept denying it.

James stands tall and confident, arms crossed. "Ah! So, you know about Europe's most notorious mafia clan after all," he says. "Talk, or we'll get it out of you the hard way."

He points to an old, rusty metal table with leather straps, its surface covered with tools and syringes.

I chuckle into the earpiece. "Nice prop, James."

"Merde," Max curses, barely a whisper. "Okay, okay. I'll talk."

"Well? I don't have all day," James says impatiently.

Max takes a deep breath, looking defeated. "Fine. Back when I was Luka, just a poor Frenchman in Versailles, I owned a small clothing shop. One day, a high-ranking mafia member walked in. He promised. to make me rich if I helped him move some... products through my store. I was desperate, so I agreed."

"And what kind of products were you moving for him?" James asks.

Max swallows hard. "Anything and everything. Drugs, weapons, counterfeit money. My shop became a front for all of it. And the money... it was too much to turn down. But I never realized how deep I was getting until it was too late."

James nods, taking it in. "Hmm... Everything seemed to be going well for you. Why did you decide to flee from France?"

Max looks frustrated and regretful. "I didn't realize the shop would get so big. I was starting to make a name for myself in the fashion industry. But the more I got involved with the mafia, the harder it was to keep things separate. I just wanted out. I wanted to leave the mafia behind and focus on my business. But

knew getting out would be harder than getting in." [Ww.NoveIWorkM.C\(m\)@iworrm.com](http://Ww.NoveIWorkM.C(m)@iworrm.com)

James raises an eyebrow. "So, you faked your death?"

Max nods. "I had to. It was the only way to keep them from hurting my family."

James tilts his head. "Why flee to America?" he asks.

1/2

+25 BONUS

### Chapter 0114

Max takes a deep breath. "I wanted a fresh start. I thought if I could make it in France, I could make it in the US. It seemed like the best place to disappear and start over."

"And you did," James says. "You became a famous designer. But I don't believe you really wanted a fresh start, not with all the illegal stuff you're still doing."

Max sighs. "Awards and recognition don't pay the bills. I was earning a ton when I worked for the mafia. Going straight didn't bring in nearly as much money."

We have Max cornered now. It's time to squeeze the truth out of him regarding the fashion show. "Ask him now," I tell James, leaning closer to the screen. "Make him admit he sabotaged Serena."

James nods and leans in closer to Max. "Is that why you accepted the bribe to ruin Serena Nixon's jewelry in the fashion show?" he asks, his tone sharp.

Max's eyes widen. "How do you know that?" he asks, his voice edged with anxiety. "Are you working for Bill Richardson?"

Hearing my name, I feel a surge of satisfaction. A smirk tugs at the corners of my mouth. Max knows who's behind this now, and there's no turning back.

James steps forward and grabs Max by the collar, yanking him close. He pulls out a knife and holds it just inches from Max's face. "It doesn't matter who I work for, Max," James growls.

Max laughs. "What? Are you going to kill me now?" he says, his voice dripping with false bravado. "Go ahead."

James lets him go, pushing him back into the chair. "Nah. That would be too easy," he says. "The way I see it, you only have two options."

Max glares at James, trying to mask his fear. "And what are those options?" he asks.

James straightens up, letting the threat hang in the air. "Option one: I take all this information and make it public. Didn't you say you have a family in France? The mafia could go after them now."

[www.NoveIWorkM.C\(m\)@iworrm.com](http://www.NoveIWorkM.C(m)@iworrm.com)

"Fuck you! Don't you dare!" Max yells.

James shrugs, his expression cold and unyielding. "Or, you can tell the truth about what happened at the fashion show," he says. "And we can all forget about this."

Max stares at him, weighing his options, his breath coming in ragged gasps.

Max is on the edge, and this is our chance to break him. The fear in his eyes tells me he's close to cracking. If we can get him to talk about the fashion show, we can save my reputation and Serena's.

"So, which one will you choose, Max?" James asks.