

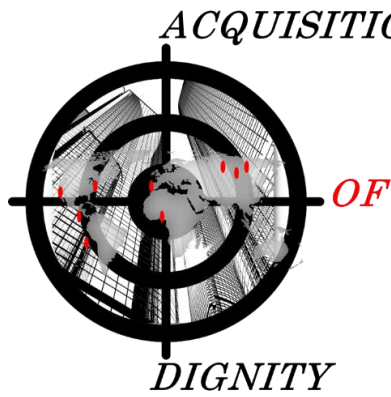
ACQUISITION



OF

DIGNITY

By Claude Garretson



Acquisition of Dignity is a suspense novel about strategy, wealth, power, military confrontation, eternal friendship, love and deliverance. Six men who became friends during their youth at a military academy reunite after years of separation when they attend the funeral of a former loved one. They never imagined how that reunion would change their lives and set a trajectory that would shake the country and rattle the world. When they realize that one friend needs assistance with his business, they bring their diverse knowledge and military experience to his aid. With strategic discipline, they approach each business situation in a military manner, carefully planning each maneuver as if it was a War Game ultimately transforming a small technology firm into a multi-billion-dollar global military defense conglomerate that is one of the most powerful corporations in the world. Their success would be challenged when a simple gesture to use their capabilities and influence to investigate suspicious activities of a government agency in an old neighborhood would put them at war with their former employer and largest client – the U.S. government. In a fight for survival they are forced to reclaim their military experience in

combat, espionage, counter-intelligence, and test their bond.

When Giordan Hunt, the CEO follows through on a simple request from Acie his elderly childhood mentor, what he and his partners find out is shocking. They reveal a connection between the U.S. government including the President, a South American Drug cartel and a scientific research firm. While continuing to conquer the business world on the front lines, they utilize their resources and experience to execute covert operations. They set out to destroy drug transport vessels sailing along the Mexican and South American borders that are being escorted by the U.S. Navy which is not aware of the contraband onboard; and to expose the money laundering of drug money from Russia through an American research firm. When their actions become known they become targets for the government and the cartel. Their efforts are thwarted when Giordan's daughter is kidnapped by the cartel. When they realize the odds are not in their favor, they develop an unorthodox strategy of military operations and urban warfare, and assemble a team of renegades comprised of highly skilled former Navy and Marine Corps soldiers who left the service under unjust situations and former Drug Cartel lieutenants and hitmen with contracts on their life. This rare team of renegades, *codename R135* is utilized to take on the U.S. government and a dominant Cartel in a quest to destroy an international drug ring and uncover a high-level government conspiracy.



Chapter 3 – Omega



*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found
Was blind, but now, I see.*

The soulful voices of the choir saturate the already filled church. Several hundred-people attended the closed casket service: family; friends; patients; family members of current and former patients; colleagues; neighbors; politicians; Moyette's friends and their families; and church members. Cymonne was well-liked and respected throughout the community and the flowing tears amongst the hundreds of faces signified the loss of a wonderful and significant woman. This was Cymonne's church, a non-denominational church; she began attending and became an active member not too long after Moyette was born. She found it to be a refreshing alternative to the rigid churches she attended growing up.

*T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear.
And Grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

Scars and injuries sustained to her head and face from the accident, led her family to decide to close the casket. They wanted everyone to remember Cymonne's beauty. She was dressed in a dark-blue tailored suit with the skirt just above the knee and a jacket with six gold buttons arranged in a 3 x 2 pattern. Underneath the jacket was a blue-white striped blouse with a dark-blue neckerchief. She normally wore this outfit with black leather pumps. She purchased this outfit several years ago with Giordan in mind. He loved to see her dressed in suits when she was interviewing for internships back in college. Her left lapel was adorned with a novelty stick-pin with a photo of her and Giordan at a college party in the head of the pin and the vertical letters –



"I Love You 4 Ever" along the stick. Here she laid with everlasting love upon her. She had requested to be buried in this outfit if she was not and had never been married at the time of her death.

*Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis Grace that brought me safe thus far
and Grace will lead me home.*

Behind the tears, many people were wondering what was going to happen to Moyette as they glanced at her sitting quietly in the first pew. How is this bright energetic 12-years old girl going to move forward with her life? Moyette had not said much since being informed of her mother's untimely death. Initially she profusely cried to the verge of suffering from dehydration causing her to faint. She had become captive in her own world and now sat quietly and motionless staring at box containing the only love she knew.

*The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.*

*Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.*

Giordan dressed in a blue pin-striped suit with a blue and white polka-dot silk tie and black leather shoes sat several pews from the casket in total disbelief. Surrounding him were several college friends. Reconnecting with them provided him some solace in this depressing moment but seeing their faces opened a gateway which led his mind to trek down memory lane. He sat there quiet



and motionless, draped in guilt and regret for leaving her, tears poured alongside his face connecting his eyes and mouth. The last time he saw her face was that day he walked out of her room. His belief in everything was now shattered as he always believed that one day he would see her again. Questions raced through his mind like wild horses. What did she look like before the accident? What does she look like now? What did she feel like? Was her skin still soft and aromatic? What would it have been to make love to her again? What would have become of the two of them had that spent time together? Tears flowed uncontrollably as he sat there drifting in and out of reality. With all these visions, he was still blind. A friend to the right handed him a handkerchief, and another to his left put her hand on his leg. Unintentionally his eyes were continuously pulled toward Moyette. To deflect the pain, he began wondering about this beautiful young girl. Who was she? Was she related to Cymonne? Her daughter? If she was Cymonne's daughter then why didn't Cymonne say something about her during their recent conversations? His mind wandered...thinking about Moyette and reconnecting with old friends; he was unaware of the many pairs of eyes gazing upon him. Old friends began looking at Giordan and then Moyette. People were watching him, watching him watching Moyette, and watching Moyette. The shock from the Moyette-Giordan connection illuminated light bulbs above everyone's head and the facial expressions transitioned from "wondering, maybe, possibly" to "OH MY GOD". If not for being in the House of God, the facial expressions would have transformed to "get the fuck out of here!" How did Cymonne managed to keep so many people including close friends in the dark all these years about Moyette. Now with Moyette and Giordan so close together in this moment, no one could deny their connection.



*When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.*

Here in the House of God, the darkness was eliminated and it became clear to anyone who gave it a speckle of thought that Giordan was Moyette's father...everyone except Giordan who was still drifting in and out of reality desperately struggling to retain control of his emotions. Giving up, he sank his head into his lap and cried uncontrollably. Surrounding friends laid their arms across his back to comfort him. In this moment, he felt the presence of death upon him and he was open to the introduction. His tears steadily flowed, his heart palpitated, and with overwhelming pain, he sat with his head down and cried. From his upper pocket next to his left lapel, a novelty pin falls to the floor. Cymonne is looking up to Giordan from the photo on the pin. As if the stick pin hitting the floor was a cue, Moyette breaks her pose and with no purposeful reason looks in the direction of Giordan and only sees a bent over man in the pew. In that moment, eyes of the past and the future are upon Giordan but he is blind to it all. Moyette resumes her forward-facing pose as Giordan raises his head. Together they slip into another world, sitting motionless, staring at a box that contains the only love they knew.

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.*