

TobaccoPharm

Excerpt (Complete book for sale at [Amazon](#))

What Karl Hauer was about to do would have been absolutely unthinkable a couple of months ago. It was unseemly to move so quickly after Anna's death, but the time to strike a deal was today. Otherwise, Philip Windsor [Windsor Tobacco Company] would find another geneticist. Although Windsor might not be able to get production going as fast as Hauer and Windsor could together, Windsor could, in time, do it. Karl could build facilities and distribution capabilities without Windsor, but how long would that take? Full-scale manufacture of anything, much less a product as delicate as transgenic proteins, was a complicated business. If that weren't reason enough to join forces, they had competitors who were planning similar manufacturing operations.

Nobody, Karl vowed, is going to steal my TobaccoPharm. Something good is damn well going to come out of this.

Then there was the politics—possibly the greatest roadblock for TobaccoPharm. Two hundred thousand deaths in the past few weeks ignited a public firestorm like no other in the history of America. Surviving that might very well require Hauer's and Windsor's joint political influence...

Congressional Hearings

Special Committee on Agricultural
Research and Terrorism

In Session

“DR. HAUER! LOOK THIS WAY!” Camera lights exploded in Karl's face. Then the onslaught of reporters rushed at him, pushing microphones and cameras in his face, and screaming questions. No matter how often this happened over the past several months, it was still hard not to be startled. Police pushed them back out of the way so that he, Larry Billington, and his attorneys could get into the Congressional Hearings. Suddenly, a loud bang cut through the chaos. Several reporters close to Karl hit the deck, ducking what they thought was gunfire. It was, in fact, a book accidentally dropped flat on the marble floor. Karl heard sighs of relief, signaling a false alarm. He breathed deeply. He'd been shot at twice since his name was associated with all the deaths from the contaminated tobacco. A reporter had been hit by one of the stray bullets.

Karl could have used more time to prepare his testimony, but the hastily called Congressional Hearings were better than waiting. The Special Committee provided a public forum to correct the record and hopefully deflect the anger and violence aimed at him...

Several cops surrounded Karl and ushered him through the metal detector, then patted him down. Next came Larry and the attorneys. Karl had been advised by his attorneys to follow protocol and introduce himself to the senior senators of the Committee before questioning got underway.

That's exactly what he was doing when Senator Strauss squeezed Karl's hand, pulled him close, and said in a thick southern drawl, "I'm gonna skewer you for the folks back home, son, then you and Windsor can have your tobacco bidness." Strauss, an obese but elegantly dressed man, was about to release Karl's hand when he pulled him back. "Oh, don't forget the signing bonus..."

"...Senator Strauss was intent on putting Fortenberry in terms the citizens of his "Great State of Mississippi" could understand. He cleared his throat. "Now, Dr. Hauer, you prayed for understanding about good and evil in your opening statement. Do you believe in God?"

"Yes, I do," Karl said. "But explain to me, Senator, how God will capture Lucian Fortenberry or prevent a future Lucian Fortenberry."

"You failed to see the obvious, Dr. Hauer. Lucian, Lucy, Lucifer—man, woman, devil. It takes on any form to advance evil. Science has unleashed the devil on our land. You would understand that, if you had sought inspiration in the Bible and not science—tampering with God's work. Hundreds of thousands of people would still be alive?"

Karl took a deep breath and reminded himself that this hypocritical religious bigot was writing legislation that granted Windsor and him a monopoly worth hundreds of billions at a cost of a two million dollar "consulting" fee for his son. And maybe, just maybe, Karl could use this opportunity to get his message through to a large audience.

"Senator Strauss, Mr. Fortenberry is altogether different from anything ever encountered. He has taught us, should have taught us, to rethink our preconceived notions about weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. The *New World* the Director of the FBI alluded to during this morning's testimony is not, in my view, the suicide bomber with a nuclear suitcase. The *New World* is Lucian Fortenberry, the nonstate purveyor of WMD, an individual in every sense of the word. He has no affiliation with any group, religious or otherwise, but has the ability and the will to create and use, *as an individual*, the brute force previously reserved for armies and nations. We must—"

"He *is* the Antichrist, if ever there was one," Senator Strauss interrupted. "Again, it sounds to me like you're defending this pervert, this abomination. You can't tell me that somebody who—using your statistics—kills hundreds of thousands, maybe millions when all's said and done, isn't the Antichrist. That doesn't make any sense at all."

"If I wanted to praise Mr. Fortenberry," Karl began, confidently, "I'd say the following, Senator Strauss. Mr. Fortenberry single-handedly created and successfully unleashed an original, lethal tobacco in the environment. He shut down the trillion-dollar cigarette business. Mr. Fortenberry had the knowledge to do something about the industry of death. And he used it. How many future billions of people has he saved from the horrible deaths of lung cancer, emphysema, and the like? When *all's said and done*, Senators, will any kid smoke a cigarette ever again?"