

Die Techie Scum

written by

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EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A TEAR GAS CANISTER lands near a crowd of chanting protesters. The human wall ripples open as people cover their eyes and mouths.

A man breaks out from the crowd, a jacket wrapped around his hand. He snatches the canister--tosses it away. Then staggers back to the others, hands around his eyes.

This is CARL KILBERG, 29, skinny, indecisive, more comfortable behind a computer than a barricade. He is clad in all-black.

He expects some praise for his daring action, but soon they are SHOWERED with more tear gas. They decide to break and run.

The wall of police shields advance towards them as the protesters melt into the side streets.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Carl ducks behind a dumpster with three other young ACTIVISTS, including J.T., SIERRA, and the leader TARA. They pant as fleeing people stream by.

J.T.

Are we still gonna do it?

SIERRA

Julio left. He said he was gonna stay with us.

TARA

It doesn't matter. We said we were going to jail tonight. We gotta stick to it.

CARL

Jail?

The others stare at him.

TARA

You attended the committee meeting, Carl! Didn't you see my message on Signal?

CARL

I thought there was a motion to discuss it!

SIERRA

There were supposed to be 10 of us getting arrested!

TARA

It doesn't matter!! We gotta stick to our guns. You understand?

J.T. and Sierra are quiet.

J.T.

Ok. I'll stay with you.

Sierra nods.

They stare at Carl. He looks torn.

CARL

I would but I got this really big presentation tomorrow. At work.

TARA

What happened to "fuck my job?"

CARL

That doesn't mean I can just lose it! Do you know what the market is like now?

TARA

Carl, stop talking right now.

Carl shakes his head.

A POLICE SIREN blares. The cops have arrived at the end of the street.

In the confusion, Carl slips away.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Carl, exhausted from the previous night, sits in a massive conference room with his laptop open. His eyes are still red from the tear gas.

A large TV projects a meeting on Zoom. Just two bored COWORKERS sit at the table with him, each on their phones. One is GABY BEJARANO, 33, a relentlessly upbeat program manager wearing an elephant-themed T-shirt.

CARL

So, as you can see on this graph,
average latency is reduced by, uh,
quite a lot. 30 ms on average.

Silence.

CARL (CONT'D)

Are there any questions about the
figures?

Still nothing. Gaby smiles at him for a moment.

CARL (CONT'D)

Must be doing a good job then.

He fake-chuckles and then moves on his next slide.

On Gaby's laptop, we see she is shopping on Etsy.

CARL (CONT'D)

So, in conclusion, we've reduced
the time needed for the
preprocessing steps, but more work
needs to be done to bring the
entire pipeline below spec.

GABY

Thank you so much for your work,
Carl.

Someone mumbles on Zoom.

ZOOM VOICE (V.O.)

Really good. Good work.

GABY

Now, what issue on the Kanban board
would you say tracks this? Any
items I can close?

CARL

I mean...the issue refers to the
overall pipeline latency. So I
wouldn't close the ticket yet.

GABY

Can I get an estimate on when the
overall issue will be completed?

CARL
Well, it's hard to say. I still
need to characterize the
variability of the later-stage
delay--

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

ARTHUR CHIN, 39, an extremely blunt senior engineer,
interrupts. He sits with his laptop in a beige room alone,
half his screen filled with an e-sports gaming video.

ARTHUR
It's not the variability that's the
issue. The mean latency is too
high.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Another voice cuts in on the Zoom video.

ZOOM ENGINEER
We should measure the standard
deviation...

Carl zones out, his mouth gaping open. As his mind wanders,
the sounds in his head--classical music, Communist speeches,
hardcore porn--drown out the mind-numbing talk.

The voice of KUMAIL MITTAL, 37, a slick manager, cuts in.

KUMAIL (V.O.)
Sorry to break up this great
discussion, but we are at time. Any
last thoughts before we drop off?

ARTHUR (V.O.)
I think we need to have a serious
discussion about metrics.

KUMAIL (V.O.)
Let's discuss that more offline.

People start dropping off the call rapidly.

KUMAIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Thank you Carl, for your
presentation.

Gaby gets up and murmurs something. Carl stares at his
laptop, dead inside.