

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 in black breaks out from the crowd, a jacket wrapped around his hand. He snatches the canister--tosses it back. Then staggers back to his comrades, hands around his eyes.

This is CARL DIEDENBOCKER, 29--skinny, indecisive, more comfortable behind a computer than a barricade.

He expects some praise for his daring action, but they are SHOWERED with more tear gas. The protesters break and run.

The wall of police shields advances 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 SIERRA, J.T., 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.

SIERRA

Fuck yeah.

CARL

Jail?

The others stare at him.

CARL (CONT'D)

Who said--we're getting arrested?

TARA

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

CARL

I thought there was still a motion
to discuss it!

SIERRA

There were supposed to be 10 of us
getting arrested! Spending the
night in jail in protest!

TARA

We gotta stick to our guns.
Stronger together, right?

J.T.

Together. Yeah. I'm in.

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?

SIERRA

Solidarity, Carl! You are with us
or you're with the cops.

CARL

That is very black-and-white
thinking--

A POLICE SIREN blares. Cops swarm from 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, Carl. I appreciate you.

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.

GABY
I just need a date.

CARL
I still need to characterize the
variability of the late-stage
delay--

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

ARTHUR CHIN, 39, an extremely blunt senior engineer,
interrupts. A tall beanpole, he lounges alone with his laptop
in a beige room, half his screen filled with an e-sports
gaming video.

ARTHUR
The variability is not the issue.
The mean latency is too high.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Another voice argues over the Zoom video.

ZOOM ENGINEER
We should measure the standard
deviation...

Carl zones out, his mouth gaping open, mind wandering.

He slips into his favorite fantasy, images playing across his
face: a statuesque Nude Woman waving a red flag astride a
barrier. Triumphant music plays as she leads the masses, even
as he hears mind-numbing talk of latency in the background.

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 these metrics.

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

People start dropping off the call rapidly.

KUMAIL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Kudos, Carl. Nice presentation.