



CHASE SEQUENCE_



The alleyway was just a blur in his peripheral vision as he ran towards the dimly lit street. Pulsing footsteps behind him grew louder and closer. His panting breaths echoed off the walls on either side of him. He felt trapped. If only he could reach the road. Then he could get away. His heartbeat was faster with every step, beads of sweat rolling down his forehead. His vision blurred for a moment and the next thing he knew he was at the mouth of the alleyway. The streets weren't busy, nor were they empty. A dozen or so people walked the sidewalks next to shops and workplaces. The lights from the building's interiors drawing them in, sucking their attention to whatever was being sold. Android vendors replaced most of the human population's jobs. The man from the alleyway shook himself out of the dreamlike trance he had fallen into watching the people. From the gravel under his heels he felt his pursuers gaining. Frantically, his eyes darted around the plaza searching for an escape. The bag of cash slung over his shoulder grew heavier with each breath. He hopped across the street where stairs led down to the subway. Before plunging back into the dark, he glanced over his shoulder for a split second. This revealed his pursuers, in their tight black and grey uniforms only twenty paces behind at most! He took the steps two or three at a time going down to the subway. As he stepped onto the train, he pulled the hood of his tattered duster jacket tightly over his head. He let out small sigh of relief as the doors closed and the train began moving. The relief didn't last long though. He spotted his pursuers three cars down, shoving their way through other passengers towards him. He did the same now, going in the opposite direction away from the two men chasing him. He reached the last car on the train with nowhere left to go. Several times, he contemplated jumping on to the tracks that rushed away from him until the train was no longer underground. Once they were out of the tunnel, he realized he could climb up. Quickly but carefully, he pulled himself and his bag of cash onto the top of the train. He moved swiftly across the top of the cars looking back only once to find his pursuers still following closely behind. He was only four or five cars from the front when the train stopped. They were at a station. He jumped off the train, landing hard on his knees. The pain from the jump wasn't felt until he was running across the street adjacent to the idle train. His knees buckled under his weight. He knew he couldn't keep this up, he needed a car. He crossed the street quickly and flashed his badge at the passengers of a parked minivan, telling them to get out. Sliding into the driver's seat the detective started the engine and floored it. He laughed as he drove off into the night.

CITY LIGHTS_



Speeding through the streets on the outskirts of the city the detective felt alive. The reflection of headlights in his windshield was a blur. Adrenaline still pumping through his blood he slowed the car and put it into cruise control. He leaned over the passenger seat double checking the contents of the black bag that lay there. 75,000 units sat comfortably inside. He hoped that his hunch was right, because if it wasn't, he'd just committed a crime that would not only lose him his detective job in the city, but also cause him to spend the rest of his days rotting in a prison cell. He tried to enjoy the rest of the drive back to his apartment, but he couldn't help looking over his shoulder. The dark quiet streets stretched on forever in every direction. Ever since the second industrial revolution in the 23rd century the whole planet was nothing but streets and cities. He leaned back in his seat and let the city lights in his rear-view mirror hypnotize him. Since re-industrialization almost all of Earth's resources had been tapped out, and those that remained were running dry. It was getting harder to tell where one city stopped and another started, the billowing factory smoke concealing all landmarks. Very few people got by in the new society, most were poor and without homes or jobs. Those who were lucky enough to have a roof over their head were always looking over their shoulder for looters, thieves and killers. It was terrifying what people would do for food and water. Humanity had truly reached its lowest point. Not all was bad though, with the depletion of Earth's resources humanity had to find other ways to go on. With the advent of re-industrialization had also come huge leaps forward in technology. Anyone who had any cash to spare would spend it on upgrades. A new technology that allowed you to modify your physical form. This could be anything from plastic surgery and appearance modification to stronger metal limbs and robotic eyes that allowed for night and x-ray vision. The more units you spent, the better the upgrades were. In the poor districts there were junk doctors who gave upgrades very cheap, but they were dangerous, obvious and seldom lasted long. The homeless would purchase upgrades to try and blend in with the working class, but they didn't fool anyone. The rich and famous could afford proper upgrades that were nearly impossible to tell from the real thing. Everybody had them. On the world stage governments were, to put it kindly, dictatorships. These 'governments' were cruel and unfair. Wealthy individuals would line the pockets of whoever was in office and in return get anything they wanted. From prime real estate to shares in upgrade companies. It didn't take long before the middle and lower classes got fed up with this though. Before the turn of the century the 'All People' group was formed. They fronted as a human rights organization but weren't anything short of terrorists. They had tried to overthrow the North American government a few years back but failed and have been silent ever since. Rumor has it they've been planning something big.



The detective arrived outside his apartment complex and parked his car on the street below. He double checked that the car doors were locked, this was a rough neighbourhood. He entered his personal entry code to get into the lobby of the building, but it seemed pointless. The front doors were glass, if somebody wanted to get in, they could. He hiked up the stairs with the bag of cash slung over his shoulder. His apartment was on the 7th floor. Some fancier buildings in the downtown area had elevators but few worked. The toll of vandalism and time ground away at the whole city like rust. When the detective arrived at his floor, he saw that the door to his apartment was open. Squinting in the lack of light he pulled his service revolver out of his jacket. The weight of the cold steel gun kept him awake as he stalked into his home. It was a small place with nowhere to hide. Not that that mattered, the individual who had broken into his home was standing in the center of the room. He wore the same black and grey uniform as the two men that chased the detective. He was tall but so was the detective. The man moved his hand to his hip where a holstered gun sat comfortably.

"Are you sure you want to do that?" the detective asked, his raised weapon aimed at the intruder in his home. The man's hand shook furiously.

"Just- "The detective was interrupted when the man tried to pull his gun! Two shots in his chest said otherwise though as he fell to his knees. The detective walked over to the bleeding man. "Who sent you?" he asked, pressing the barrel of his revolver into an open gun wound. The man said something faintly. The detective leaned in close before the man spat blood in his face. Pressing the revolver harder he asked again. The man grunted choking on blood and spit. The detective's thumb pulled back the hammer on his revolver slowly. The intruder raised a balled hand before extending his middle finger. The detective smiled in amusement before pulling the trigger. Looking at the intruder's extended arm he saw a large tattoo. This confirmed his hunch even more. The tattoo was a capital letter A with a P next to it, surrounded by a circle. This was the insignia of the All People group.



HUNCHES \$
MIDNIGHT
BRUNCHES _

Looking at the bloodied corpse lying in the center of his apartment the detective contemplated his options. He decided to wait until morning to go down to the station and explain his hunch to the higher-ups. The corpse in his living couldn't wait though. He threw it over his shoulder. His improved strength from upgrades purchased in the past made this easier, but it was still heavy. Sighing, the detective started the long hike back down the stairs. When he reached the ground level he walked across the street to an alleyway. He wasn't surprised to find another fresh body nearby when he ditched the corpse. Lawlessness was prevalent in this part of the city. Once the detective arrived at his floor for the second time this evening, he noticed the light under his only neighbours' door was lit. An old German woman named Frau Schmidt lived there. The gunshot must have woken her. The detective had grown fond of the kind old woman in his time living next to her and decided to check on her. He tapped lightly on her door.

"One moment dear" she said. He heard her footsteps grow nearer as she approached the door.

"Did I wake you?" he asked politely.

"No. But that did." she said, pointing sourly at his revolver.

"Sorry, I-"

"Had some unfinished business I presume?" the small woman pressed.

"It's finished now"

"I thought I told you not to bring any more trouble around here." Schmidt scolded with her thick accent. "Come in, I'm making brunch."

"At midnight?" the detective asked glancing at his watch as he followed her into the apartment.

"Who'd you shoot?" Schmidt asked plainly. This was what the detective liked about her. She saw things simply like he did. She was smart and never wasted his time.

"No one you would know" he replied.

"Why?"

"The toast is burning" he said shrivelling his nose at the smell coming from the kitchen.

"Why?" the woman asked again as she hobbled over to the kitchen.

"It's too complicated to get into now," the detective started. "All I know is that the All People group is planning something big."

"What does that have to do with you shooting people and waking me up?" Schmidt yelled from the kitchen.

"Earlier this evening I gathered some evidence that could take them down, and they're on to me."

"Don't tell me that this evidence has anything to do with the bank robbery earlier." the woman scolded.

"Let's just eat." he said helping Schmidt carry the two plates of toast and eggs to the dining table. The two sat in silence scraping the burnt part off their toast with butter knives. Once they had finished eating, the detective helped Schmidt back to bed and promised not to wake her again. Quietly shuffling through the dark hallway, he gently clicked the door shut behind him. Yawning he stumbled into his own apartment and fell into his bed.



After cleaning up and eating something the now rested detective exited his apartment. Jogging down the stairs to his car he carried the bag of cash from the night before over his shoulder. As he started the engine his next conversation ran vividly through his mind. He contemplated the best way to explain his hunch to the Captain of his precinct. Arriving at the police department a few moments later he exited his car and signed in at the front desk. Bag of cash still slung over his shoulder he entered the captain's office without knocking. Closing the door behind him he tossed the bag of cash on the captain's desk. She looked at him, then the bag.

"What is this?" she scowled.

"It's the money from last night's bank robbery."

"That was fast. Where's the perp?" she asked, her face still shrivelled. The detective smiled.

"Yours truly." he said mock bowing.

"Jesus... You're crazier than I thought." The captain muttered. "Do you mind explaining, all of this!?"

"I had a hunch." He replied.

"You know what? I just about had it with your--"

"A hunch that I confirmed last night." he interrupted calmly. "That bag is my evidence. filled with nearly 75,000 units. 75,000 counterfeit units."

"Counterfeit?" She laughed. "Made by who?"

"The All People Group" He replied. The captain cursed under her breath. She knew he knew too much for his own good. She decided to play along.

"Why?" She asked.

"To de-validate the one constant of power." the detective said, "Money." The captain cursed out loud this time. "Inside that bag is 75,000 units in district scrip, printed and put into circulation by the All People group."

"I know." She said.

"I don't understa--"

"They paid me off, months ago." She exhaled sharply. "Regulating *district scrip*," she spat, "is the only thing the city government controls anymore. If we take that away from them...." Breaking his gaze, she looked out the window. "It's for the good of all of us" She started.

"Yeah, all of us people?" the detective mocked, reciting the rest of the motto of the All People group. "Don't go preaching to me" He spat, "Because your gospel's nothing but lies and pipe dreams."

"If you're smart, you'll take a small cut too and keep quiet" she hissed. The detective picked up the bag and cracked the door. "I'll take that as a no" she frowned. Her hand slid down to her hip where her service weapon sat. She had opted for a more modern weapon, and even if outdrawn would do more damage.

"I regret your decision and am inclined to ask for your resignation" she said scornfully.

"How's this for your resignation" The detective said tossing his badge at her and holding up his left middle finger. "How much are they paying you anyway?" He asked on his way out.

"5 percent." She replied quietly. He laughed.

"5 percent of what?" he asked smiling, "5 percent of love, and happiness. For all people?" He chuckled to himself as he walked out the door.



NEON NIGHTMARES

The detective took the back roads home. He needed time to think over his next move. He passed Frau Schmidt's door in the hallway to his apartment. Her keys were still in the door handle. She must have gone out to run errands and forgot them, the detective figured. She's old, old people forget stuff. Unlocking the door to his own apartment he flicked on the lights. This revealed the mess that lay inside. Sitting on the foot of his bed, the detective fell backwards onto the bed. He couldn't come up with a solution to the puzzle he had just unraveled. If the police chief was paid off chances were so was anyone holding power in the city. So, there wouldn't be a point in going to someone else for help. He was in this alone. Lying on his bed he started to doze off. When he awoke the lights in his apartment had been turned off. His eyes darted around the small room until he'd found the culprit. Frau Schmidt shuffled towards him squinting.

"I turned the lights off when I saw you were asleep." she said quietly. "Would you like something to drink?" As she said this next phrase her voice started to change. It sounded deeper and inhuman. Looking up and away from him the old woman's face began to peel. Her skin melted like the wax of a candle stick, dripping onto the detective. Underneath her face was an empty skull. The vacant holes where her eyes should have been stared at him. He shook her away and nothing, but a pile of bones fell away. The detective stood up and backed towards the wall, away from the bones. His back bumped into something, and when he turned around there she stood, Schmidt, normal as could be.

"Would you like something to drink?" she asked again. The detective's eyes widened. The sound of a gunshot passed through their ears and blood began gushing from Schmidt's stomach.

"Oh dear." she said faintly before vanishing in his arms. He spun on his heel and saw the police captain, smiling with a smoking gun. He ran at her. Tackling her to the ground. But when he looked down, he sat atop Frau Schmidt, who looked startled. "I'm sorry dear, I just wanted to know if I could get you something to drink." she said. "How about some milk?" she said, her voice coming from the kitchen. The detective looked down and she was no longer beneath him but standing in the dark kitchen of his apartment. Behind her the stove burst into flames. He tried to yell and warn her, but nothing came out. She caught on fire screaming at the pain. Then, as she looked at him through the flames, she spoke one word.

"Help." Her skin burning and melting away, she said it over and over. "Please." She sobbed faintly. The detective tried to do something, but he couldn't move. There was nothing he could do but watch. He couldn't make himself look away. "Help... please." she said one final time, desperation in her eyes. The detective shot awake in a cold sweat. He looked frantically around his apartment. The lights were on. There was no fire in the kitchen. There was no Frau Schmidt. Hurriedly he pulled on his shoes and raced across the hall to her apartment to check on her.

THE GRIT_



Her keys were no longer in her door handle. In fact she no longer had a door. Running into her apartment the detective saw her apartment empty. The completely bare walls surrounded an empty room. Taking the stairs down to ground level three or four at a time the detective checked that his revolver was loaded. When he got outside, he saw the tires on his car had been slashed and a man in a black and grey uniform with a large switchblade stood, leaning against the car. As he approached the man he stood up and loosened his shoulder that was holding the switchblade. The detective took two quick steps and was on his opponent, punching him hard in the jaw. He then grabbed the man's wrist that was holding the large knife and thrust his elbow into the car door, causing him to drop the knife. The detective punched the man again, just below his left eye. Picking up the switchblade he used his left forearm to pin the man to his car. In his right hand he held the knife. The other man squirmed, but the detective was stronger.

"What did you do with her?" the detective growled. Confused, the other man asked.

"Who?" The detective frowned, pressing the knife to the man's throat.

"Where is she?" he yelled pressing the blade harder.

"I don't know who you're talking about." the man nervously spat out. The detective moved the switchblade down to below his waist. Thrusting the knife forward he stabbed the man just below his left knee. The man screamed out in pain, and squirmed, trying to break the detective's grasp.

"I'm going to ask one more time," the detective started, "And if I don't like your answer, I'm going to pop your knee cap off." As he finished speaking, he lightly pushed down on the handle of the blade that was sticking out of the man's leg. This caused him to scream out in pain again. "Where is she?" the detective said slowly.

"I swear man, I don't know who you're talking about!" The man desperately yelled.

"Wrong answer." The detective pushed down on the handle until he heard a loud pop. The man reeled over in agony.

"Where's your car?" the detective pressed. The man pointed across the street.

"Keys?" the detective frowned. The man fished through his pocket. A trembling hand held out a pair of car keys. "Thanks." The detective said roughly pulling the switchblade out of the man's knee. This caused him to scream out in pain again. Getting in the other man's car he started the engine quickly. As he closed the driver side door, he saw the man on the ground across the street. Lying on the street bleeding, he reached to his waist for a radio transmitter. The detective revved the engine, he couldn't let the other man call for help, he would be surrounded before he could recite the motto of the All People group. He floored the gas and didn't slow down until he made contact with the other man. His mid rift was pinned between the detective's car with slashed tires, and his own car which the detective was in. The detective put the car into reverse and backed up ten or twelve feet. The other man, bleeding more now tried to crawl out of the way but was too slow. The detective hit him twice more. The harsh sound of bones crunching didn't bother him. In fact, he enjoyed it. Stopping the car, he climbed out and looked at the bloodied body lying in front of him. Schmidt would be very disappointed he thought. She never liked the killing. Not caring about getting blood on his clothes, the detective turned over the mangled corpse. He saw a blinking blue light on the transmitter at the man's waist. Cursing under his breath he got back in the car. Rifling through the GPS history in the man's car he looked for a location that seemed suitable for holding a hostage. He stopped at the listing of an abandoned military building in the industrial colony. That had to be the place.



It was 11:30 when the detective drove away from his apartment building. He flew across the night streets until he reached the old military building 20 minutes later. He felt the crunch of gravel under his shoes as he swung his feet out of the car. He knew he was at the right place because three armed men sporting black and grey uniforms stood at the one entrance to the building. He slammed the car door. Hard. He cracked his knuckles as he walked slowly towards the guards. He stopped six or seven paces away and pulled his revolver out of his jacket. He let the hand holding his weapon hang down, with the barrel of the gun facing the ground. The other three men loosened and prepared to draw. The detective knew he could only get two shots off before one of them got him. He also knew that at this distance those two shots were more than likely to hit their marks. The third man, furthest from the detective flinched and fired off one shot missing by a meter. This gave the detective a chance to take out the other two men. They fell silently to the ground. The third man still shaking, fumbled with his own gun. The detective smirked as he very slowly aimed at the third man. He saw nothing but fear in the man's eyes as he pulled the trigger. Stepping over the three bodies he kicked open the door. The inside of the building was massive. In the center of the large room the police captain stood. Next to her Frau Schmidt sat, tightly bound to a chair.

"Let her go." the detective's voice rumbled as he walked towards the captain. A puzzled look came across her face. Raising his gun, he said it again. The captain looked around the room, appearing confused.

"Please put down the gun" she said calmly.

"Let her go!" he yelled, tightly clutching his weapon. She looked around the room again.

"Put down the gun, and we can talk" she said, trying to calm him. He yelled again. Trembling he pulled back the hammer on his revolver.

"Let. Her. Go." the detective rasped, his voice cracking on the last word. The Police captain let her curiosity take over her. She looked around the room again.

"Who?" she asked. "There is no one here but us."

"No." he stammered under his breath. "She is here," he said frantically looking to where he saw her seconds before. "She has to be." he spoke softly.

"There is no one here." the captain said calmly. The detective's eyes darted frantically around the room but came to the same conclusion. Trembling, he spun around looking throughout the empty room but saw no one else. A single tear ran down his cheek as he looked up to the ceiling and everything rushed back to him.



Frau Schmidt was a German immigrant. She traveled to North America from Europe with her siblings as the second industrial revolution begun. She was 22 then. She got a day job and worked until she could afford to live somewhere other than a cardboard box. She spent the next 40 or so years working and living in the same apartment. She lived on the seventh floor. She retired at the age of 68 and met the detective 2 years later. He lived on the same floor and she despised him at first. He was reckless, young and violent. More than twice a week he would be dumping bodies across the street. Schmidt never liked the killing, but she understood the reason that it had to happen. What she didn't understand was why the detective enjoyed it so much. After several years of being shamed and scolded he finally began to listen to her. They struck up a friendship. She kept him from his old ways and in return he took care of her as she got older. At the age of 84 she was diagnosed with a terminal illness. They both knew she didn't have much longer to live. It was very difficult for the detective, because with the problems he was used to, if worse came to worse, he could shoot his way out. But with Schmidts illness there was nothing he could do. This didn't bother her, but he was torn apart. Two years ago, the illness had finally run its course. She died in her sleep. It couldn't have been more peaceful, but the detective still didn't feel she deserved it. He went out looking for someone to blame. Several times he came close to letting his violent urges resurface, but knew it wasn't what she would have wanted. He blocked the events out of his memory. So much so that he thought she was still alive. He would visit her vacant apartment several times a week, unable to accept that she was gone. Deep down inside though, he knew that she was the only thing keeping him from himself, and if she was gone there was no one to stop him.

THE HIGHWAY_



The detective opened his eyes. He stood across from the police captain, his revolver still raised.

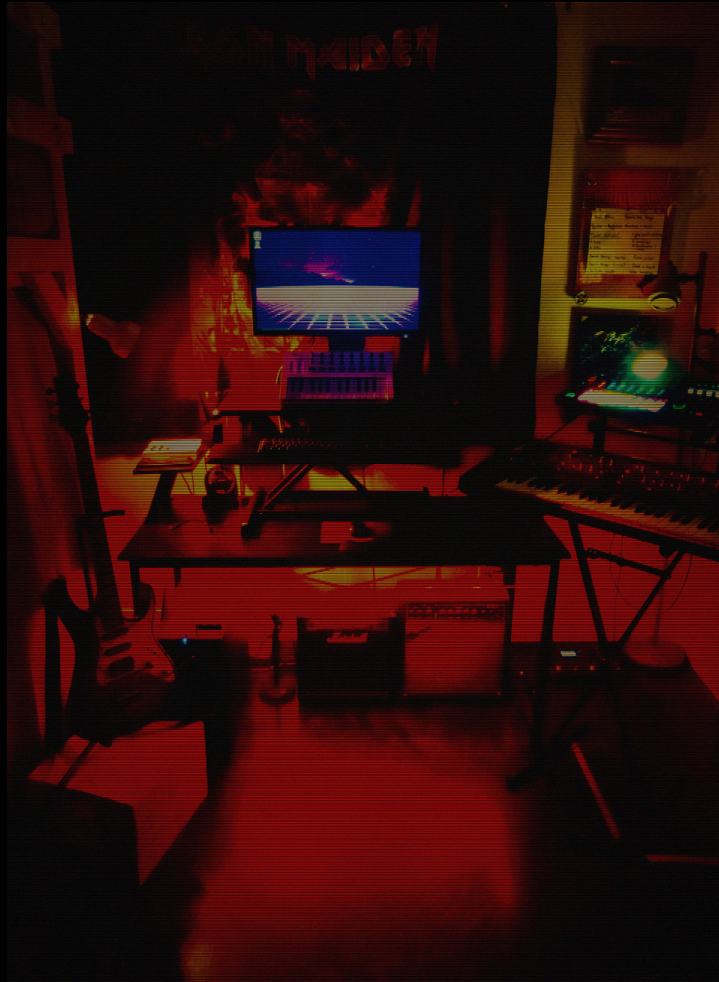
"Killing me won't solve anything." she said. He knew she was right, and even if he managed to take down the entirety of the All People group, another group would rise from their ashes, and it would all start over again. It was an endless loop. He finally understood why Schmidt wasn't bothered that she would die. Because change was inevitable. You could try and fight it, but the only constant is change. Not money, or power. Change. The detective tossed his revolver to the ground.

"Good luck with your revolution." he said sarcastically over his shoulder, as he turned and slowly walked out of the building. He climbed into his car and clicked the door shut. Starting the engine, he thought about the old woman one more time. Smiling he muttered; "Still trying to teach me a lesson. And your dead.". The detective rubbed the bridge of his nose before starting the car. He let the dark roads lead him home.

AP 808_ __ Conceptualizer



AP 117__ _ Laboratory



**It's for the good of all of us,
all of us people.**

