

## **Contract vs Morals**

0600 the target is in my sight. Target Richard Oslof, a 23-year-old white male and targeted for arrest for 5 counts of murder and 7 counts of aggravated assault. The first time I read that profile I knew that this was the only opportunity the police had left to not lose all its power. Those thugs in the Regulator's Private Enforcement had undermined and gained credit for nearly anything the police did, whilst incompetents within the force continued to drive our public standing down.

The target fit the description of messy black hair, around 5'10 in height if we were using the door as a reference. As well as a small scar on his rigid chin everything that needed to match did, good. The excitement in my heart from being able to one-up those thugs was now only increasing.

Target entered the outdated train carriage barely being suitable for the early 2000's let alone 2021 but the companies were having parts issues somehow. I was tasked with observing this carriage, there were four officers on this train with one being in each carriage. He sat in the far corner seat closest to the driver's cabin whilst I sat on the opposite side of the carriage, luckily this isn't a busy line so I don't have to worry about people getting in the way.

Wanting to keep an eye on the target whilst not being obvious I turned on my phone and camera and slouched down in my dirty green chair that was expected for a community train, I pointed my phone to the target whilst leaning against the wall of the carriage so as not to make it look obvious. My phone was a slightly older model so for a better view I had to zoom in a bit or the quality would destroy any chance I could have at seeing something small.

Sadly not everything could go my way as a potential threat had entered the train alongside the target and had something in his pocket that was bulging out. If I acted no and the newcomer was an ally of the target then I'd either be shot or stabbed depending on what they had. The difficulty of this mission just continued to rise, didn't it?

A group of enforcers was on the station in heavy combat gear but wasn't moving in any way. I was slightly taken aback that regulators didn't storm onto the train with handguns drawn but it seems as if they are waiting for something. Those thugs had a habit of using near illegal means to acquire any and all police intel but had they decided not to use it? Was my thought process as I looked out the dirty plastic window to see a full squad of regulators, a terrorist suppression squad, huh maybe something else is going down. The air from the station was tense. People likely knew what division those Regulators were from and did their best to avoid panic.

The tense atmosphere and the Regulator's presence certainly had an effect on me but the main difference between my reaction and the civvies is the emotion felt. The civvies felt fear from their presence whereas I felt only anger unintentionally glaring at them which they noticed but didn't react to, it was like they were damn drones, not people.

This clearly made my target feel uneasy as he was now sporadically looking around for threats glancing my way multiple times. Sadly now was not the scheduled time to apprehend

so I moved from the camera app to the private messaging group chat in this operation and informed them of the developments. Sadly their responses were less than favourable.

'We should end the op now and get more officers. We don't have the means for potentially two threats.' My senior in rank texted with the other two quickly responding with 'agreed', Idiots, are they just going to allow this murderer to escape and kill again whilst giving those thugs the opportunity to sweep in and steal our prey?

'I disagree sir I believe we need to do this today to avoid civilian casualties from increasing and stopping the regulators from gaining any more influence'.

'Lieutenant I understand your thought process but the best we can do now is observe so the op will continue under those orders understood.' We all simultaneously responded with 'yes sir!'

It seems my threat made it through his flimsy skull, that threat being 'stopping the regulators from gaining any more influence.' Something the chief has been desperately trying to do and almost certainly will fire people for not taking the initiative of weakening them.

The Regulator was usually split up by colour like some ridiculous fantasy army. Grey vests usually meant security division, all black clothes were suppression division and navy blue for their naval forces. All of these plus an air force and multiple other divisions resulted in the Regulator Armed Forces

I didn't look out of place in the situation as I was wearing simple civilian clothes. A tan hoodie and blue jeans. I sat next to the train connector door that was behind me if I was to look straight forward. Although I'm especially glad I didn't wear anything white because that would have changed colour from the amount of dust on these green padded seats.

Either way, my anger rose as I saw their full black military uniforms, the only way you could tell that they weren't special forces was that 'Regulator' was plastered all over. This was the same unit that shot dead my brother for simply observing an arrest of a known terrorist, but nobody cared they got the result in a cost-effective manner and decreased crime to near zero per cent. People were fine with dealing with the devils in exchange for low crime rates. Regulators gained nearly unchecked power, so it's surprising seeing those thugs not make a move. Somehow those enforcers got away with stealing his corpse and using it for their own means, and the government turns a blind eye simply because of the influence the regulators possess as the enforcers of the United corporations and organisations.

Something always bothered me about the Regulators. They always seemed to have information or connect dots that were non-existent but it always worked out for them. Everyone believed they were more cost effective than the recently controversial police, due to how some incompetent officers in another country acted. You also couldn't tell what they were thinking from facial expressions, since all of their body was covered with each regulator.

Snapping out of my thoughts I realised that I was starting to bend the metal armrest in anger. Not wanting to grab the attention of the target or the potential ally of the target, since when

the target entered the train he was accompanied by an unknown and talking with great familiarity. Annoyingly the potential enemy had his face covered by a surgical mask in correspondence with the government guidelines to deal with the ravaging global pandemic, and any other identifiers were covered either by his baggy clothes or the sunglasses he was wearing even though it wasn't even dawn.

This could be an issue as we don't have the numbers to deal with two potentially armed targets. This isn't because we require two-on-one to win, all modern-day police are heavily trained in hand-to-hand and hand-to-hand weapon combat, but we needed at least three officers to protect the public. In case they decided to use a civie as a hostage which I'm not willing to put past these scumbags.

The target seemed to have a suspicion cast on me but seemed unsure whether or not to act. This is okay for now as long as I don't do anything to provoke him then he won't act. Additionally, his nervousness will make him more likely to make a mistake allowing for him to be convicted even easier.

The target started to pull something from his coat pocket and there was a dull glint of something metallic. Sadly before I could clearly see what it was with my camera an email notification appeared reading 6:40 A message from Chief Patrick, quickly swiped it so I could see the object but it was now hidden again. I let out a sigh of relief upon realising the plan of the target, the plan was likely to draw a quick unplanned reaction out of me so that I would make a mistake he could exploit. But thanks in part to the email I was able to avoid any mistakes, guess I'll have to pay the chief back for it later.

Despite keeping a watchful eye on the target my gaze was drawn to the dedicated overhead digital screen for news reports. Normally I would ignore these as United had complete monopoly over all televised programs, so you usually just sprouted United propaganda or adverts but today was very different. Today they were actively speaking about a conspiracy theory that United wanted swept under the rugs. This theory was the idea that United uses dead civilians in a cloning process for their Regulator armies. Normally it would be obvious if they decided to sweep it under the rug but United was different they swept any rumour even those profitable for them. They likely did this so they could silence the catastrophically harmful ones whilst not making it obvious but it's impossible to say.

I didn't believe in such conspiracy theories. There simply wasn't enough evidence to support them and the people who wrote them usually came out and said it was a joke. What a very boring joke if that is true.

My gaze was quickly altered to look at the potential threat getting up and walking towards me. When the man got to me he stopped for a second. My hand slid to the bottom of my jacket that had my gun holster. But the threat resumed his walking going through the doors that correct the carriages that resided next to me.

Two stations away from the predicated get-off point an annoyance had to show its ugly head. A single Regulator got on although I couldn't make out his face as he covered it with a surgical mask that was required for the train. He wasn't wearing the usual leather full-face

mask. Must have been a lieutenant or above. Still, this covered enough of his face that I couldn't make any guesses on his identity but something felt familiar about it.

We reached the final station without any further developments. The target seemed relaxed at my presence now, probably figuring I was not an officer. We both got out of our seats so that we would be the last two leaving. I gave a quick look around for my coworkers but no one was anywhere to be seen. I decided I would do this myself if no one else was here.

The station was a single platform that was barely large enough for a small restroom in the centre to be justified. A single led down to a tunnel that led away from the station but many chose to use the opened security gate which had a sign saying don't use it for anything but emergencies. Obviously, no one cared about this rule and the security of the stationed clearly didn't care either, but I suppose it was better than travelling down a dark tunnel that honestly just looked like it was made for crime.

My target unsurprisingly went down the tunnel, When cautiously approaching I heard a conversation taking place. At first, I thought nothing of it but it was probably better to wait and hear what was being said. Going to the very edge of where I could go I listened in like a predator listening for any clues as to the whereabouts of prey.

"You did a great service for us by removing that loose end. We are grateful." A detached, emotionless voice echoed through the empty tunnel. Glad I decided to listen in before making a move.

"Should you really be meeting me here over a dead body like this?" A coarse voice replied. A dead body might be my only chance to catch him and his accomplice red-handed. I needed to go now.

"Don't worry about u-" The emotionless voice started replying before I turned the corner, ordering them to surrender and to raise their hand above their heads. I had my taser drawn but was surprised to see a Regulator in full uniform talking to a serial killer even more so it was the same officer as the one on the train. But even more astonishingly, I saw my brother's face on the regulator's head.

The target pulled out a knife and started moving closer to me and my brother. I fired my taser at the target hoping to bring him down before he could get close to my brother but it was countered by his baggy clothes. Realising my taser was now useless I dropped in quickly coming to my next decision. That decision was to unholster my handgun.

I raised my handgun, a standard issue Beretta towards the man I'd been shadowing all day only to hear a loud bang that echoed through the tunnel and a sharp insufferable pain in my hip. Looking down I saw my free hand covering the wound instinctively but a fountain of blood was rushing out and around my hand dripping onto the stone-cold slab of a stair. I raised my head looking behind me after the only two people in front of me were my brother and the target and the target only had a knife, to my horror no one was there instead I turned to face my brother. I saw only one thing: the vest of the regulator armed forces or more exactly the dark purple and black of their hunter division. I collapsed to the ground and my brother walked over towards me whilst I just stared unable to process what was happening.

“Civilians are unauthorised handgun holders; the penalty is death if used or 20 years imprisonment for attempted usage. Any means are authorised when dealing with potentially violent crimes, especially on regulator personnel.” My brother started in a cold detached voice. What happened to the cheerful pacifist brother?

“I’m a police officer brother you know this and I was trying to shoot the murderer that was beside you,” I replied I wanted to say more but the pain prevented any more words from reaching my brother's ears.

“All official policing has been handed over to the Coalition of Regulator Armed Forces as of 6:30 this morning you should have been notified by 6:50 after that point you are a civilian and required to follow regulator jurisdiction.” I was hoping for some warmth coming from my brother as I clung to the low chance that he suffered memory loss, but he didn’t even acknowledge me as his brother. My mind finally shattered from the stress and a moment later a single bang was heard and my world went dark.