The Courier

The door protested with a faint whine as it was unbolted and opened slowly. Glass crunched under the weight of heavy, black combat boots, attached to the legs of men wearing all black with faces shrouded by balaclavas. “Find him!” commanded one of the men. Cole Freegran lay underneath a worn couch, motionless. He heard his intruders riffling through drawers, and tapping the walls searching for hollow pockets where a certain wall safe may be found. Cole’s heart swelled suddenly as a boot descended onto the grimy, moldy shag carpet mere inches from his nose. Cole thought to himself, “I can’t be caught, not now; I’m too close to delivering the file to Bonum!”

Cole Freegran was what the United States government labeled as a “clouded courier,” a terrorist messenger for the Malum Opus sleeper cell. After World War III between the United States, and Canada in 2042, many border checkpoints could be easily bypassed, leaving all sorts of illegal aliens uncontested entrance to the United States, illegal aliens like Cole Freegran.

The sentry migrated to another room. Cole crawled out from under the couch and stealthily crept toward the door, hugging the wall. Only the left quarter of his face
could be seen as he peered around the corner. An empty hall illuminated by a sliver of moonlight met his gaze. The only obstacle between the door at the end of the hall and him was the glass on the floor. The intruders would hear him; he would be caught, interrogated, and executed publicly for espionage. His only other option was the fire escape. If he made it to the fire escape, he could run.

"Where is the drill?" shouted one of the men. Another voice answered, this time from the room to the right of him, "In here boss."

"Bring it to me!" replied the first voice. Cole contemplated, "Which safe did they find? It doesn't matter," decided Cole, "I'm a dead man anyway."

Cole heard weighted footsteps precede around the corner, likely the man with the drill. His opportunity presented itself. Cole waited for the man to pass by, and then slipped into the room next to him. Looking around, Cole was greeted by his bedroom and a window with shredded curtains gliding peacefully through the wind. Beyond the window, a rusty, red fire escape clutched the faded brick façade with shriveled nails, and sheared bolts.

Stepping onto the fire escape, Cole was met by the ostensible blackness of early morning. Cole commenced his elusion up the fire escape until he was about 20 ft above the roof next to him. One foot was placed on the handrail of the fire escape, soon joined by the other. Cole stopped, closed his eyes, and remembered what Bonum had told him about gap jumps. "A gap jump is the only element of parkour that is completely mental. Believe you can jump, believe you can land, believe you can keep running, and you
"will," mused Cole. He slowly squatted down, toes teetering on the rail, arms moving back, chest rising, all movements forming equilibrium of balance on an inch's width of steel, more than 30 stories above ground. Like a bird taking flight, Cole exploded from his perch. He flew through the air, weightless, until the hand of gravity began to drag him down.

His primal instincts taking over, Cole's feet met the slick, wet concrete of the roof, absorbing the bone jarring impact through his toes, then his feet, then his knees, until dispersing the residual momentum over his hips, back and shoulders as he tucked into a roll. Still carrying momentum, Cole stumbled as he stood up, and kicked a rain collection bucket. A sharp clang echoed throughout the reticent night.

Just as it was returning to its rest, Night was disturbed again, this time by the staccato gunfire of machine guns belonging to the men searching Cole's safe house.

Cole scanned the barren roof for shelter from the lead slugs; there was a roof access door too far to reach, and a small power transformer to hide behind. Cole crouched behind the transformer, covering his head. Out of options, Cole waited for the men to run out of ammo, and then sprinted for the roof access. He kicked the door down like a battering ram. Bullets ricocheted off the wall next to him. Cole knew his only chance of transferring the file to Bonum would be to have Bonum come to him. Cole pressed one of the buttons within the palm of his hand and his hand was suddenly illuminated. He called Bonum. "Why are you calling me right now? We are supposed to be on radio silence!" exclaimed Bonum in annoyance.
"I'm sorry sir, but the only way to get you the file is for you to come to me. I will be at the Portland Brewery in 30 minutes, meet me there," responded Cole who proceeded to shut off his phone. In this age, anything electronic could be tracked unless it was off.

Cole waited in the dim twilight behind the Brewery in a vigilant silence. A nondescript man in tattered jeans and a worn navy sweatshirt approached Cole. "I have the file for you sir," muttered Cole.

"Too bad your victory will go unnoticed," replied a gruff voice. Three short puffs created three red holes in Cole's chest as he fell to the ground, vision tunneling until his existence finally succumbed to pain and injury.