SAMPLE

The Hunted Outlaw

The Personality That Runs With Its Crime

Aiman Sterling

Free sample: Chapter 1

putrabooks.github.io

Buy the full book:

Payhip

Carousell

Lulu

Contents

Chapter 1: The Signature — the Hunted Outlaw at a Glance

Chapter 2: The Core — Flight as Identity

Chapter 3: The Instrument — The Flight Itself

Chapter 4: The Craft — The Outrider's Craft

Chapter 5: The Cost — The Ledger of Perpetual Motion

Chapter 6: The Dark Side — The Self-Administered Sentence

Chapter 7: The Hunted Outlaw at Work — Career, Teams, and the Boss Relationship

Chapter 8: The Hunted Outlaw in Love and Friendship

Chapter 9: The Matchups — Companions, Rivals, and the Other Types

Chapter 10: From Flight to Verdict — the Hunted Outlaw Learning to Stand Still

Afterword

Chapter 1: The Signature — the Hunted Outlaw at a Glance

The Telltale Manner

Before anyone speaks, the room's exits have already been counted — and the pursuit log must open with the honest fact that makes this type so magnetic and so unreachable: the Hunted Outlaw is live flight — not restlessness for its own sake, though it goes about in that coat: the person whose attention, on entering any room, goes first to the doors — how many, which way they open, whether the window behind the table is a door too — and then, only then, to the people; and the signature, the pursuit log has learned to clock it in the first ten minutes or so of any room: watch the seat — the Hunted Outlaw never once sits with the back to the entrance, not at dinner, not at work, not at the wedding of a favorite cousin — the wall at the type's back, the room in the type's sightline, the body angled, always, like a compass needle pointed at away — and the sentence, deployed when the world asks the type to stay, the pursuit log has collected it verbatim in every case: I was never planning to stay long anyway — the farewell, pre-loaded, and the chase log's note: the type says it leaving rooms the type loved. The manner carries the flight, and the pursuit log must render it exactly, because it is so often mistaken for adventure: the Hunted Outlaw is not merely a wanderer — in conversation the type is warm, quick, genuinely present, better company than the settled, because presence, in the type's economy, is an item spent rather than kept — the charge arrives only at the ask to stay: the lease, the title, the vow, the spring — the type's whole weather changes at permanence, the smile, kept, and the eyes, already measuring the door — and the chase log's testimony, gathered from the loved ones of every case, is word for word the same in every file: he is the most alive person I know and the least here — I have loved him for fifteen years and I could not tell you his real name — said with love, and the pursuit log's sharp note: both halves are true — and the second one is the bill.

And underneath the live flight runs the tell the type's loved ones report and the type never sees: the nightly audit — the Hunted Outlaw's quiet, permanent arithmetic of the deed: the scene, replayed at the day's end with the thoroughness of a clerk closing a register — the choice, re-made; the justification, re-tested; the question, asked in the dark, was it worth it? — and the chase log's correction: the type does not experience the audit as guilt, exactly; the type experiences it as bookkeeping — the debt, carried, and the running, the payment plan — and the people near the Hunted Outlaw live the way people live beside a river: everything is always moving, and nothing can be built on the bank — the whole room sensing, correctly, that the freest person present is also the least finished — which is the indictment's own quiet arithmetic: the escape, decades old, and the verdict, still pending — the legs, so loyal, and the courtroom, never once convened.

The Backstory Signature

The pursuit log holds two versions of the origin, both of them true, and they converge on the same reading.

The dramatic version — the chase log finds it in about half the indictments, and the type tells it the way scripture is told: the deed, public — the act, witnessed, the line crossed in daylight: the score settled that everyone knew was owed; the rule broken on behalf of somebody too small to break it; the betrayal, committed by the type's own hand, or merely blamed on it — and the pursuit, real: the town that closed against the type; the family name, handed to the type like a sentence; the door, not slammed but locked, because the deed had made the self, in the town's law, unkeepable — and the departure, administered like a sacrament: I will be free — somewhere else.

The quiet version — the pursuit log finds it in the other half, and it becomes the subtler origin because the deed was never charged: no posse; the act, unseen or unprosecuted — the lie told that saved the family's standing; the robbery, committed for a sibling's medicine; the abandonment, the leaving itself as the crime, a debt of presence walked out on — and the type, pursued by nothing but the knowledge, discovers the quieter warrant: the self's own conscience, deputized by the deed, and the pursuit, staffed entirely from inside — and the quiet version, the chase log notes, is the harder origin precisely because the flight cannot be won: an outside posse can be outrun; a deputized conscience rides with the type, in the same coat, holding the same map.

And the two versions converge, the pursuit log has verified, in the signature that identifies the type at a glance: the deed is remembered, not disputed — the type does not plead innocence to the chase log; the type pleads justification, and the pleading, the pursuit log has learned, is the tell — the justification, rehearsed so often it has become the type's creed — the freedom, quoted like a license purchased with the deed — and, the chase log's tender finding, the type has never once been heard to conclude the story: the deed, told, and the flight, told — and the ending, always, pending — the self, mid-story for a lifetime, and the last page, unwritten because unfaceable — which is the whole case in one detail: the deed, survived, and the self, built to never once be still enough to read its own verdict.

The Childhood Album

The hideout album opens on the scene the type names first, and the pursuit log has learned to let it be told without interruption: the deed's threshold — the moment, always early, when the child learned that acts are unforgettable — the window broken to save the cat, punished anyway; the confession told, and disbelieved, or believed, and never mentioned again; the small lie that worked so well it frightened the child more than being caught would have — and the pursuit log's crucial observation, made in every album: the child discovered, at the threshold, that consequence is not proportionate — the act and the world's answer do not match, and the mismatch is

terrifying: a thing done in a second can be owed for a lifetime — and the child's answer, the hideout album's first artifact: never be where the bill can find you.

The hideout album holds the first flight — the chase log finds it in every case, and it is always smaller than the grown type's retelling suggests, which is the finding: the runaway afternoon at eight; the friend's house, slept at without asking; the bedroom window, practiced like a fire drill — the child, testing the one power the deed taught: the power to be elsewhere — and the hideout album's most reliable artifact: the child was not fleeing danger; the child was fleeing proceeding — the dinner where the thing would be discussed; the school where the note had been sent; the room where the adults would sit the child down — the pursuit log's note, entered gently: the type's whole biography is the child's discovery, scaled: it is not consequences the type flees; it is trials — being held still, and asked, and judged — and the running, begun at eight, was the child's one legal remedy against the courtroom of childhood: the door.

The hideout album holds the warmth on the road — the detail the grown type smiles at and the pursuit log holds carefully: the child, elsewhere, was beloved — the aunt's house, the summer camp, the friend's family that seemed to keep a better copy of the child than the child's own house kept — and the chase log's note, entered with both hands: this is the hideout album's most dangerous page, because it taught the type the lesson that structures the whole biography: new places love me — belonging, experienced only at first — the welcome, warmest at the door, and the type, learning to read the road as the only place where the self is in good standing — and the hideout album's quiet counterpart, the scene the type does not name but the loved ones always do: the second winter — the camp, attended twice, and the magic, gone; the friend's family, visited again, and the type, now a guest rather than a wonder — the chase log's x-ray: the type has loved the first town of every place and never once stayed for the second — the discovery, made early, that the welcome expires — and the conclusion, minted in the hideout album's last page and never once revised: love is an arrival-time phenomenon; leave before it becomes a trial.

And the hideout album closes on the creed, minted in the language of the age: they can't catch what won't stay — and the pursuit log's finding on the creed, the finding the whole case turns on: it was kept — and the child, keeping it, mistook it for a freedom when it was a sentence — the can't-catch, permanent, and the won't-stay, the clause that made it so — the type's whole mobility, the chase log notes, built as a legal defense, and the self, so free from outside, unfree at the center — which is the hideout album's last page and the pursuit log's first finding: the Hunted Outlaw does not have a travel problem; the type has a verdict problem — the road was never the issue; the issue is the courtroom waiting at the end of it, in session since the deed, in the only venue the type cannot leave: the self.

The Type at a Glance

Energy: motion — the type runs on distance: the new horizon, the first week anywhere, the departure itself — and the pursuit log's honest spec: the Hunted Outlaw's energy peaks at the leaving — the road, under the type, is the native

weather; the staying, the chase log notes, is where the type is restless, already hearing the question the staying will eventually ask: and who are you, staying?

Ambition: the unfindable — the type does not want the throne or even, mostly, the wealth; the type wants the clean horizon — and the chase log's dry note: the ambition is pursued by lightness: the résumé, kept portable; the possessions, kept sellable; the name, kept optional — and the world's most mobile self, in pursuit of a stillness it has never once let itself be caught by.

Vanity structure: the escape — the pride is in the never caught — the pursuit, outrun; the room, walked out of with the best lines; the no one owns me, deployed like a credential — and the pursuit log's x-ray: the vanity's secret clause reads that the flight is the identity — the type is quietly, deeply proud of being unhuntable, and the chase log's quiet note: the elusiveness is real; so is the fact that it was built to dodge a trial — the credential, kept current, for a proceeding that was never scheduled by anyone but the self.

Loyalty: to the road-people — the Hunted Outlaw keeps, for decades, the ones met in motion: the stranger who shared the last stretch of highway; the colleague of the one crazy year; the friend made in the new town, kept by letters across every town since — and the chase log's driest note: the loyalty's blind side is its hostility to address: the type will keep the person and lose the place — the friendship, renewed in each new town at the same bar's kind of distance, forever warm and elsewhere — the relationship surviving every geography and never once surviving a lease.

Weakness: the verdict — the one proceeding the type cannot hold: the deed, judged — the question, was it right?, answered — the type's own court, never once convened, because convening it requires the one thing the constitution forbids: standing still long enough to hear the evidence.

Unspoken need: to be acquitted — the one experience the type has never had: the deed, examined, and the self, forgiven or sentenced and either way finished — the trial, survived, and the verdict, worn like citizenship — and the need the constitution guards like a contradiction, because in this biography's language, the courtroom is the end of the road — and the counterevidence — that the verdict is the beginning of it, that a self can only carry a home once the docket is closed — has never once been allowed to exist.

The Type in Five Situations

At a party. The room's comet — the Hunted Outlaw at a party is the guest the gladness runs toward: the entrance, late and warm; the jokes, minted on arrival; the whole room lit for the duration — and the pursuit log's sharp detail: the type's magnetism — the chase log has measured it across every case — peaks at the arrival and the performance, and collapses, quietly, at the third hour — the chase log's line: the Hunted Outlaw is the best two hours any party ever had, and the host's honest report: nobody could tell you when he left — and the tell is in the departure: the type leaves at the peak of being loved — the goodbye, never staged, the coat, gone before

the room noticed — because the third hour, the pursuit log knows, is where the questions begin: so what do you do — where are you from — how long are you in town? — the interrogation the type reads in any other pair of hands.

In a new job. Instant brilliance — the Hunted Outlaw's first quarter is the chase log's most dazzling: the learning, faster than the institution has ever seen; the problems, solved with the strange ease of a self that has rebuilt a life from nothing more times than the institution has reorganized; the charm, aimed at the whole floor — and the chase log's most reliable workplace finding: the type is, by month six, the most valued person in the building and the last one to have signed the benefits paperwork — the type, the pursuit log has learned, works like a self with no succession in the plan — the chase log's arithmetic: the contribution, enormous; the cost, the continuity — because the institution, the whole file notes, promotes on accumulated trust, and the type has left every trust account closed before the interest could accrue — the one meeting the type has never once taken: the annual review, held in a town the type still lives in.

Under sudden pressure. The type's native weather, and the chase log enters it with genuine awe: the Hunted Outlaw in a crisis is the catalog's most unflappable presence — the evacuation, organized like a square dance; the collapse, met with the calm of a self whose whole childhood rehearsed it — where others freeze at the sudden loss of the plan, the type relaxes: the crisis, being nobody's trial, is just weather, and the type moves through it like a homecoming — and the pursuit log's most delicate finding: the emergency is the only room where the type stands still — planted, steady, the last one out — the chase log's line: the world gets this type's most present self in its worst moments — the fact the whole case turns on: the flight was never cowardice; it was avoidance of one question — and the question, the pursuit log notes, is not asked by any crisis, which is why the type is a hero in the flood and gone by the parade.

In a boring meeting. The caged weather — and the chase log's x-ray: the horizon check — the Hunted Outlaw in a settled meeting is the self at the window: the agenda, untouched; the clock, consulted like a border guard; the chair, angled already toward the door — and the type, at the appointed minute, volunteers for the errand — the run to the office across town, the client who needs the in-person visit, anything with legs — and the pursuit log's tender note: the type is not bored by the work; the type is bored by the sitting — the chair, in this constitution's physics, being a holding cell — and the chase log has never once watched a Hunted Outlaw take the seat at the table's inside row, the wall-side seat, the settled seat — the type, always, on the room's edge, keeping the exit honest.

On holiday. The chase log's most hopeful finding for this case: the Hunted Outlaw on holiday is the catalog's most fluent self — and the finding's paradox is the chapter's sharpest: the holiday, for this type, is indistinguishable from the biography — the new town, mastered by Thursday; the strangers, family by Sunday; the farewell, warm and complete — the self, on the road, at home — and the tell is in the reason it works: the holiday removes the trial — a vacation town asks no questions, keeps no records, holds no court — and the road removed from consequence, the self surfaces —

relaxed, funny, whole — the chase log's line on the pattern: the holiday does not remove the deed; it removes the venue — and the self, the whole file has found, is a person in there, settled and good company, that the flight never once let the world keep — the finding the whole case turns on: the freedom was never in the moving; it was in the acquittal the moving postponed — and the homecoming, the whole book will show, is the only trip the type has never once packed for.

Not to Be Confused With

The Branded Outcast (Volume 120) is the nearest confusion, and the pursuit log must draw it first because the shelf itself has paired them as the brand's two answers: both types were handed a verdict by a room, both live outside an inside, and both are fluent in the road — but the Outcast's sentence was written about the self: the exclusion, the label, the door — and the type answered it inbound: belonging as conquest, the room taken by credential; the Hunted Outlaw's sentence was written by the self: the deed, done by the type's own hand, the consequence, owed — and the type answered it outbound: flight as identity, the room declined by distance — the test: watch each of them offered the hometown's apology. The Outcast books the visit the moment the career can carry it — the town, confronted; the arrival, witnessed. The Outlaw drives past at night — the town, avoided; the self, safer for the distance — and the border, dry and final: the Outcast fights for the room; the Outlaw flees the courtroom — and the pursuit log's closing note: the two types are the verdict's two verdicts — appeal and bail — and the chase log's warning to the Hunted Outlaw alone, because the Outcast's war, whatever it costs, at least ends with a seat: the flight, being a postponement, has no ending — no door is taken, no room is won; the type simply keeps not-answering — and the whole file will show: the question the type fled is the type's own, and it has been holding the hearing anyway, nightly, without the type's consent.

The Fate-Breaker (Volume 119) is the sibling confusion, the pursuit log's most instructive, because both types read as freedom and both keep a founding scene at arm's length: but the Fate-Breaker's founding scene was a script — a future written for the self — and the type answered it by tearing: refusal, public, stationary; the Hunted Outlaw's founding scene was a deed — an act written by the self — and the type answered it by flight: escape, private, mobile — the test: hand each of them the pardon. The Fate-Breaker declines it as a script — the decree, forbidden, even when kind. The Outlaw calculates it like a trap — the pardon, being a proceeding, requiring the self to appear — and the border, the chapter's sharpest: the Fate-Breaker refuses the verdict the world hands her; the Hunted Outlaw flees the verdict he wrote himself — and the chase log's closing note: the two types are freedom's two instruments — the no and the gone — and each, the whole file will show, holds half the medicine: the Outlaw has the mobility the Fate-Breaker lacks, and the Fate-Breaker has the standing the Outlaw has never once risked — the self, planted, and the question, faced — the one courtroom the road cannot outrun.

The Relentless Avenger (Volume 9) is the mirror confusion, the pursuit log's most symmetrical, because both types are defined by a deed and both run on it: but the

Avenger's deed was done to the self: the wrong, the trespass, the violation — the campaign, inbound: justice, pursued; the Hunted Outlaw's deed was done by the self: the act, the offense, the flight — the campaign, outbound: consequence, dodged — the test: ask each what the trail behind them holds. The Avenger answers in pursuit — the debt, still owed, the wrongdoer, still findable. The Outlaw answers in flight — the debt, still carried, the pursuer, still assumed — and the border, the chapter's final entry: the Avenger is the posse; the Outlaw is the pursued — two selves, mirror-shaped, running on the same energy from opposite sides of the law — and the pursuit log's closing note, the symmetry the shelf loves: the Avenger's war can end in a verdict — the wrong, answered, the balance restored; the Outlaw's flight has no such closing event, because the verdict it flees is the self's own — no one can acquit the type from outside — which is why the mature file's verdict differs so sharply from the young type's plan: the escape is not won by another town; it is won the day the self stops, turns around, and holds the trial — and the whole file will show: the road was never the freedom; the closed case was.

And the signature file closes with the one field check the chase log saves for the witnesses who have known the type longest, because the tell does not live in the restaurants or the job changes — it lives in the packing: the Hunted Outlaw, the pursuit log has confirmed it in case after case, keeps a bag by the door — packed, current, the papers in the side pocket — through years in which no pursuit existed and no departure was scheduled — and the type, asked about it, laughs and calls it habit, and the chase log's note: the habit is the biography — the bag maintained the way other selves maintain gardens, tended, current, ready, and never once opened in anger or in peace. The check extends to the farewell tenses, and the pursuit log collects these too: the compliment, paid by the type in rooms the type is not leaving — you were great to know, said over a drink in a bar the type will return to next week — and the chase log's finding, entered without judgment because the type means nothing by it: the type speaks in farewell tenses the way the settled speak in future tenses — each sentence of praise delivered pre-nostalgically, embalmed at the moment of feeling, because feeling, in the type's grammar, is safest in the past tense, where it cannot be collected as evidence. And the pursuit log's last signature check, the one the chase log asks the reader to run quietly on the next Hunted Outlaw they meet: watch the phone — the type does not save numbers; the type memorizes them — the contacts list kept short enough to survive a customs check, the important numbers carried in the head like contraband, and the finding underneath the habit: a saved number is an admission — a record, discoverable, subpoena-able — while a memorized one is testimony held in the only vault no warrant can open — and so the type's affections, all of them, are stored in the one place the world cannot seize and the type cannot lose on purpose — and the chase log's closing note on the signature, entered with the tenderness the indictment has earned by now: the bag by the door is not the type's escape plan; it is the type's portrait — a self painted in what is ready to leave — and the reader who has clocked the exits and the farewell tenses and the memorized numbers has read the whole biography in one hallway, and the pursuit log's one-line sketch for the margins: the Hunted Outlaw says goodbye fluently and hello expertly, and the sentence the type has never once been heard to say, in any

town, in any alias, in twenty years of testimony: I live here.

Chapter 2: The Core — Flight as Identity

Every engine has an ignition, and this one has a deed. The pursuit log opens, in every case, on the act itself — the moment the type's own hand wrote the line the whole biography would be spent reading: the betrayal, committed or caused; the rule broken on behalf of somebody; the abandonment dressed as a rescue — and the pursuit log must be honest about the two kinds of deed, because the chase log keeps both and the type is one or the other: the justified deed — done for a reason the type still defends at full volume, it needed doing and no one else would — and the unjustified one — done in weakness, in fear, in a single bad hour, and owned, since, in the type's silence — and the chase log's first finding, uniform across both: the justification matters less than the type thinks — because both kinds converge, at the moment of the act, on the same discovery: the self has a past now — a thing done, unretractable, and a world that keeps records — and the second discovery, made in the same breath and never once wrong since: consequences travel — the deed, registered; the self, findable — and the vow the scene minted, in the language of the maiden flight and never once amended: they can't catch what won't stay.

The engine that grew from the vow is the indictment's namesake: flight as identity. Where other types move to things, the Hunted Outlaw moves from them — and the pursuit log must be precise about the difference, because it is the whole book: moving-to is what a self does with a destination; moving-from is what a self does with a past — and the flight, in every file, runs the same doctrine: the running that began as escape, becoming residence — the first town, fled to; the second, fled to faster; the road itself, adopted as the address — and the type's name kept moving so the past cannot find a fixed place to serve the papers — and the competence this produces is the pursuit log's honest awe: the type can begin better than any self in this catalog — the new town, mastered in a week; the new job, held brilliantly; the new name, warmed into use by Tuesday — the arrival, perfected like a trade — and the chase log's central line on the indictment: the flight is real, the mobility is real, and the escape keeps working — which is the trap, because a working escape is the most convincing argument for never standing trial: every new town is evidence that the strategy works, and the indictment, the chase log notes, is the only one in the catalog where the type's signature tool succeeds too well to be questioned.

And the engine runs on a fuel the pursuit log must name honestly: the pending verdict. The chase log has traced the flight's energy across decades, and its source never changes: the question the deed left open — was it right? — not asked by the world, the pursuit log is emphatic; the world, in most mature cases, forgot the deed years ago — but by the self: the nightly audit, the justification, rehearsed; the horizon, checked twice before breakfast; the conscience, riding along in the same coat — and the flight, the chase log has measured, runs on the question, not on the pursuit — which is the pursuit log's central finding: the posse is a staff of one — the type's own court, convening nightly, and the type, fleeing its own subpoena — and the chase

log's arithmetic, entered as the indictment's own: a self that will not hold the trial carries the docket everywhere — the courtroom packed in the saddlebag, and the road, the whole file will show, being not the escape from the proceeding but the proceeding's venue in exile.

Because the payoff loop is the indictment's true architecture, and the pursuit log has mapped it in every biography: the departure, executed; the horizon, new; the freedom, tasted — and the feeling that follows, which the type describes as liberty and the chase log must describe as relief — the brief, chemical certainty of out of reach again — and the loop's cruel clause, verified in every file: the relief expires. Freedom, held as distance, behaves like distance: it must be maintained — the horizon, renewed; the town, outgrown before it can ask the type questions; the alias, fresh — and the type, three months into the freest chapter yet, is found checking the same horizon — the flight's output, the chase log notes, was never peace; it was postponement — and postponement, being renewable, must be renewed — which is the loop that turns the engine forever: the question, never answered, and the legs, never once allowed to learn what stands behind the answer — the freedom quoted as a creed by a self that has checked the horizon twice before noon.

And what was the engine for? The pursuit log answers with the tenderness every case deserves: the young self was solving for unpossessedness — the deed, done, made the self evidence — and the child's discovery, made at the threshold of consequence and never once revised: the world keeps records, but records need an address — and the solution worked; the pursuit log is unambiguous: the Hunted Outlaw escapes — the pursuit, outrun; the shame, left at the county line; the self, rebuilt from a saddlebag more times than most selves rebuild from a fortune — and the bill arrives exactly where the math predicted it would not: the unpossessed life, unexaminable, is also unacquirable — the chase log's line, the indictment's hinge: a self that cannot be found cannot be known — and cannot, therefore, be forgiven — because forgiveness is an addressable act: it finds the self where the self lives — and the type, so free of the verdict, is thereby unverdicted: innocent and guilty in permanent abeyance, a case, the whole file will show, that stays open because the defendant never appears — and the growth, arriving as the only verdict flight cannot outrun: the self, at a fixed address, holding the trial, and answering — the road's only destination, the whole biography long.

And the core file re-opens the first crime scene one last time, because the chase log has found in every long case a detail the first reading misses, and it matters: the deed, the pursuit log reminds, was an act — committed by the type's own hand — and the running, begun the same week, was also an act, committed by the type's own legs — and what the child discovered at the scene, and never once said aloud, was the difference between the two acts: the deed closed a question and the running opened one — and the running, therefore, became the only part of the biography the type was still authoring — and the core finding, restated in the chase log's plainest ink: flight became identity because flight was the last thing the self did on purpose — everything after it — the aliases, the towns, the jobs taken and left — was dictated by the running rather than chosen, so that the running became the choice that contained all the other

choices, the master act from which the whole autobiography hangs like a coat from one hook. The pursuit log verifies the finding in the type's relationship to speed itself: the Hunted Outlaw, testimony agrees, is never calmer than in motion — the train, the highway, the night flight — the self, at seventy miles an hour, for once in agreement with itself, because motion is the one state where the biography's logic is fully executed: the running, running — the sentence, being served — the plan, in progress — and the type, parked, at a fixed address for more than a season, begins to feel the way other selves feel in a courtroom: watched, waiting, due to be called — and the pursuit log's note, entered for the type who reads this and nods: the calm on the highway is real but it is the calm of a doorman, not a resident — motion cannot be lived in; it can only be passed through — and the core's last finding, the one the whole case rests on: the identity the type authored at fourteen was written in one draft, in a week, by a child under fire — and the pursuit log has never once met a Hunted Outlaw who has re-read the draft as an adult — the type fleeing the deed with the sentence structure of a frightened kid, and the chase log's tender closing line on the core: the running was authored — which means it can be re-authored — the one freedom the type has never used, and the only one, the whole file will show, that ever really mattered: the self, back at the desk, with the old draft open, writing the next act on purpose.

And the core file holds one exhibit in reserve, the one the type will skip past and the reader who loves the type should not: the first crime scene's other discovery, made by the child in the same week as the first and never once entered into the chase log by the type itself — the deed, done, taught two lessons, and the child kept only one: the lesson entered, the world has sheriffs; the lesson suppressed, the world has verdicts — and the two are not the same: the sheriff takes the self away; the verdict resolves it — and the child, terrified of the first, never noticed it had chosen the wrong enemy — and the pursuit log's finding, held for twenty years and entered here in the core's last margin: the running, aimed from the first day at the sheriff, spent its whole force against an officer who retired — while the verdict, the actual proceeding the deed opened, sat waiting in every town the type ever fled to, patient as a docket, available at any address — because the verdict, the whole case will show, is not a thing the self escapes from; it is a thing the self carries, and it weighs nothing, and it weighs everything, and it can be served in a single afternoon by a self willing to sit still for the reading of one old charge — and the chase log's last line on the core, entered for the type who has now met it twice and may yet meet it a third: the identity, re-authored, does not erase the original act — the deed stays done, forever, honestly — it does the only thing the flight never could: it answers the act — and the answer, the pursuit log has collected it from every biography brave enough to hold one, is the one sentence no alias was ever issued for the purpose of saying: I did it — here is what it cost — and I am staying to hear what it means.

Chapter 3: The Instrument — The Flight Itself

The bolt-hole case is the pursuit log's pride, and it must be entered with the respect the chase log has learned to bring: the Hunted Outlaw's signature tool is the flight —

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aiman Sterling is the author of The Archetype Series -- a library of personality portraits drawn the way literature draws characters: the great types of human temperament, recognized at a glance, understood in depth, and followed from childhood wound to mature strength.