

How the Shadowrunner Stole Christmas

It started like it always does, with a meeting with a client. She was a paranoid client, so paranoid that she refused to meet at my office. It had to be somewhere public, so we met at the Lloyd Center in Portland. The elves would never even know we were there.

Because of meeting in a mall, I had to use my real SIN (System Identification Number). The one linked to my private investigator license. Who am I? Well let me back up a little and tell you about me. My name is John Smith. I know, you think it is an alias, but it is my real name and my real SIN.

I am a troll PI who usually works out of California Free State. I fled the state when the Japanese Empire took over, and I moved to Portland. I do miss Cali, but I fragging drecked off some Yakuza when I was younger and I found out there is still a price on my head. With the Japanese moving in to Cali, I figured I would live longer if I left.

I transferred my business to Portland, which the elves were very happy with because it shows the world that they are tolerant to trolls, (they really aren't but they used my story to promote the idea that they were). I have been living and working in Portland for the last five years. Building up clientele, contacts, and generally trying to keep things going.

Ok, enough about me. My client is the interesting one anyway. She is striking, and I don't mean only looks. She has to be a 12 out of 10 in the looks and social meter. She is the most beautiful elf I have ever seen. Dreck, she is the most stunning person I have ever seen, and I am not usually attracted to the other races.

My client, I'll call her Mrs. Johnson from here on out, hired me to find out if her boyfriend had an artifact that belonged to her family and was taken by runners a couple years ago. She said he didn't know she was from that family and she wanted to keep it that way so she couldn't confront him in person.

The object in question was a gold colored candelabra that her family always had as a centerpiece during the Christmas holiday. It was said to have brought the family luck and good fortune for the last 1000 years. It was recently found out that the candelabra was made out of pure Orichalcum, also making it one of the most expensive items the family owned.

Since its disappearance, the family has suffered one financial set back after another. She said that they really needed to get the item back, at any cost. I smiled at that and asked her for 100K Yen, which she agreed to way to quick. That was a dreckload of money, I should have asked for even more.

Mrs. Johnson told me that they, her and her boyfriend, were going to be throwing a major Christmas party that weekend and that I was invited. That would get me access to the house and keep Mr. Johnson (the boyfriend) busy so I can search for the item. Mrs. Johnson also gave me a code that would activate a localized RFID tag that had a very low power. It would show up if I was within 100m of the item. All she knew for sure was that it was at his Villa in the West hills.

It was two days until the party, time to get busy.

First thing I did was reach out to a fixer friend of mine, Quickfingers, and she set me up with a team of runners. I needed deniable assets for this as I would be there under my legal SIN. I didn't want to get messed up in this job.

Secondly, I set up a vehicle to transport the 4 person crew to the party and get them and their gear inside. They would be coming in as part of the caterer's crew. I think I got this idea from an old flat vid I saw.

The decker did a little digging before the run and saw that Mr. Johnson (Confusing yet? He is the boyfriend) was hiring a private company for security. There would be 4-6 guards on duty, a minimum of 1 mage with a spirit, and a decker on matrix overwatch. It should be a fun run.

Our plan was as good as it could get. I had a gunslinger, decker, mage, and a rigger going into the fray. I was hopeful that they would get the item and get out undetected, but we did have a backup plan just in case.

The next day I went to the party dressed to impress. I wore my tuxedo that I had custom made from when I would do personal security work for stars in Hollywood. I had to look the part, down to the mirrored sunglasses and obvious bulge under the jacket. I did it up like that again today.

Security asked me to check my firearm, which I was expecting and did without a second thought. I even checked my holdout pistol that they didn't find just to reassure them that I was legit. I did keep my boot knife and another holdout pistol in my other boot. I couldn't go in unarmed after all.

I greeted the host and hostess and went into the party. The host didn't know me, but he played it off that he invited me to the party as my invite was a real one. I could hear the team readying to start moving on the ear piece that I was wearing. If anyone saw it my SIN transmitted the need for hearing aids. No one would question that.

The decker found the item we are looking for in a locked study that was full of different artifacts. Enough for us to look into getting them all and making a little extra on the job. This would also cover up the fact that we were looking for only one item.

We were a go.

I found a place to sit with a drink in my hand, making idle chat with the person next to me, while really listening to the team as they went forward with the plan. The decker had the security spoofed. He also had marks on the security decker and the host so he could manipulate the system as he needed for the next minute or so.

The mage had concealed the team for their movement using a spirit. They made it to the door of the study without incident. Then came the first bad news. The door lock was manual and no one knew how to pick locks. Before breaking down the door, the gunslinger told everyone to go to plan B. Everyone in the team put on a mask of the Grinch, from 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'.

The decker told the gunslinger where the security guards were, and plan B was in motion.

The gunslinger and rigger both kicked in the door, not to the artifact room as that is being left to the mage and decker, but to the main hall where there are about 35 guests and 3 armed security guards. The guards were taken out quickly with stick-n-shock ammo. A woman screamed and everything got

loud. The decker put up a timer that showed the HRT response time for the area in AR for everyone in the team to see. I saw that they had just under 3 minutes.

The gunslinger yelled over an amplified voice, "Shut yer traps! I want your jewels and cred sticks now!" He then fired 3 shots of APDS ammo into the ceiling. One guy went to run, only to catch two rounds of stick-n-shock in the back. He went down twitching from the electric impulses.

That was all it took, everyone, myself included, put down our cred sticks, comlinks, and any jewels that we had into a big pile. It took just under 30 seconds. The rigger gathered it up and told the decker to put the room in lockdown, allowing them to leave first. The door locked behind them. I noticed then that the team also took all the presents out from under the tree.

Mrs. Johnson looked at me questioningly, I shook my head. I would rather her think I didn't have anything to do with this part of it. She wouldn't know what happened until I deliver the item. Hell, I wouldn't know until tonight anyway.

I heard the decker say that they emptied the study of everything that looked worth anything. And the team moved out to the van. As soon as they left the room people pushed forward trying to get out the door. The host called for everyone to be calm. He said that everything would be ok as the Tier HRT will be here shortly. He said that everyone should have their belongings soon enough.

He was wrong. The HTR did get there and let us out. They also scanned each of our retinas to verify our identity and put a stop to all of our legal cred sticks. All of which were already empty. My cred stick showed a loss of 200 Yen. I had to make it look good.

The team got out leaving nothing to trace it back to them. Even the decker got out and re-formatted the host. I didn't know that could be done. He left no tracks that could lead to us.

After getting processed by the Tier police, I left to go home. I knew they would follow me as I was an odd one to be at the party. I was right. I drove home and went to sleep.

The next day my tail was still there. I left a message at a dead drop in the matrix for the decker. I posted 'Good one. The party was busted. Playing pin the tail on the donkey now. See you soon sweetheart.'

The decker knew what that would mean. She would also not look at the sweetheart bit knowing it was to confuse anyone that could possibly see the message. No one should be able to though. We were thorough.

I stayed home until the next day. My tail had left.

I went to a club that I knew had a stairwell into the Portland underground and slipped in. I would get to the safe house from underground, not traceable. I passed through 2 known mana barriers that were put up to keep spirits from following people, and twisted down the tunnels that went under the Willamette River, blocking electronic tags. While down there I pulled out a tag burner and got rid of the tags that I knew the police put on me last night. They would not be able to follow me.

I moved further along the tunnels until I came to a ladder going up to a trap door. It lead directly to the safe house. I opened the door to a face full of shotgun. Satisfied that I wasn't followed, the rigger lowered the weapon and smiled. He pulled on the Grinch mask and said, 'that went smoother than the original How the Grinch Stole Christmas'. He smiled and laughed.

I got the one item that I was hired to get. Everything else was the runner's property after all. I only get the item that I needed to get paid. I paid the team 25K Yen and thanked them for a job well done.

I smiled as I was leaving rehearsing the orc rigger saying 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'. I laughed again as I said out loud, "How the Shadowrunners Stole Christmas."