

# Soiled Pants

## Part 1

The first thing that assaulted me was the smell. It was a mix of rotten soy and asparagus mixed with week old meat and fish. It was disgusting. The next thing was the pounding in my head. I felt like there were two spirits hammering it out inside my skull, slamming against what was left of my brain. Even my pain dampener wasn't helping.

Dreck. I fraggen felt like dreck.

I finally opened my eyes and realized I was looking into the eyes of something else. It was a human female whose face was half missing. I rolled over and puked. What the dreck did I get into? Who was this slitch? What the frag???

I sat up in a bedroom. I checked on the woman and realized it was only her head. I fragging spewed again. What ever happened was unknown to me. I didn't know where I was, who she was, or where my things went. I was sitting on the edge of a bloody bead in my briefs. Then I realized that my briefs were not clean. Somewhere along the line I had soiled my pants. It felt so gross I didn't want to even be in them anymore.

I shakenly stood up looking for anything else to wear. I had to get out of these underwear, but I wasn't about to be naked in this situation. I would prefer to have my body armor and weapons. I may need to shoot my way out of whatever this was.

I started looking around the room and found that I was in a cheap motel, not a coffin motel, just like an old Budget Inn. The room was trashed. There was blood everywhere. I found a knife sticking in a wall over a puddle of blood. I also found another one in the bathroom, where I found a robe on the floor.

I tried the water and found it was not only running, but it was also hot. I stripped out of the briefs and wiped the crud off my back side before I stepped into the steaming water. I just focused on getting clean and not the agonizing drumming in my skull.

I reached out and grabbed the robe, then I froze. I heard a faint click when I touched the robe. If it wasn't for the augmentation in my ears I never would have heard it. I dropped down into the tub, laying down as flat as I could.

A few moments later there was a loud explosion ripping through the hammering in my head. A grenade trap went off where the robe was hanging. Now I was naked and laying in a smoky and dusty room. I didn't get hit by the grenade, but I did now have a ringing in my ears. Even with the sound dampeners that I know I have online.

Now I was in even more of a hurry to get the frag out of this slitches room. (I really didn't know if it was her room or anything else at the moment, I was just fragging pissed). I wanted my gear and to get the frag out of here.

I got up and put on what was left of the robe. There were burn marks and holes in it. I then hurriedly searched the room for clothes. I had to get out of here, the police would be here soon because of the explosion. I had to move.

I found some pink sweatpants that would fit me. I threw them on, they were tight, but they were pants. I grabbed both knives, even with at least one of them being used to kill someone. I didn't find anything else. I moved to the door and heard a siren off in the distance. I fled the room, cold and wet pavement slapping on my bare feet as I ran down the street. The blackened and torn robe, pink sweatpants, and bare feet made me look homeless. A good cover for escaping the hell I was just in.

The rain was cold. Very cold. I climbed into a dumpster to get out of the rain. I tore out some garbage bags and turned them into a poncho of a sort. I also tied plastic from a bag onto my feet, it should help make it so I can walk better. I knew I needed to figure out where I was at.

I climbed out of the dumpster and started looking around. I had no idea where I was at. It obviously wasn't Portland. I know that city like the back of my hand. This place, I had no idea. It was dirty, trash everywhere, and the buildings looked to be in ruins. I have never seen anything this bad. I thought to myself, 'where the frag am I?'

I started wandering along the alley I was in. I didn't see people, only the occasional rat and a devil rat. I needed better weapons and to figure out where I was. I found a corner that had a street sign still standing. It showed me I was on 185<sup>th</sup> Ave NE and NE 62<sup>nd</sup> Way in Redmond.

Redmond. That was Seattle. How the frag did I get my ass to Seattle. Frag. I don't know anyone in Seattle. I don't know how to get supplies or anything. If I could find a comlink I might be able to call a chummer who may be able to help.

I walked through these dirty, dangerous streets looking for anything that would help. Finally he found an arm and shoulder in an alley. A ghoul was eating what was left of it. I approached quietly, watching as the ghoul would shake his head before taking a bite. He seemed to not want to eat the meat.

The ghoul was a scrawny man with torn, dirty cloths who smelled of decay and death. I stepped on a small piece of a bottle, crunching in the street. It hurt like dreck without any boots. The ghoul looked up, fear in his eyes, and hunger in his soul.

The ghoul jumped with a start, looking right at me. I couldn't tell if he was seeing a person or food. I was hoping for the latter.

"Hello, I don't want to interrupt you. I just am trying to get out of here and figure out where I am." I stated. "You aren't going to eat me are you?"

A raspy, dry voice cracked through the air, "No. I don't want to eat anyone. I only eat what I must to keep from going feral."

A sigh of relief. "My name is Rankin. I am just trying to find some boots and a way home."

"My name's Scratch. Do you have anything to trade? Boots and info aint free." The dry voice scratched out. "Otherwise you could trade some flesh for the data you seek."

"I got nothin'" I stated. "That's the fragging problem."

Scratch looked me over and pointed to a lump under my robe. "What's dat?"

I pulled out one of the two combat knives I found in the room. "Just a knife I found."

"I'll take it."

"What are you offering for it?" I asked the ghoul.

"Boots. What size do you need. I will get you close at least."

"9 ½. I know small feet for such a big guy."

Scratch laughed. "Be back in a sec."

He scurried away and down a manhole cover that I didn't even notice until he was down it. I considered taking off, wondering if he was grabbing a few buddies to help him with me. My nerves were on edge, and I felt like dreck. My head was still pounding, my ears still ringing, and my stomach was still churning. Whatever I was given really had some bad side effects. I felt like dreck hit by a truck and fed on by a pack of ghouls.

That last thought made me decide it would be better to get the frag out of the area. As I turned to walk away, the ghoul, Scratch, scurried back with a fairly nice pair of old US Military boots. Not like the new high tech boots that they wear today, but the leather and rubber boots that they wore in the last world.

"I'll trade you these boots for one of your knives."

"Deal," I said.

Scratch put the boots down and backed away. I tossed the knife on the ground in front of him and walked over to the boots. I was eyeing him the entire time. I may be making a deal with him, but I sure as dreck didn't trust the fragger. After all he eats meta-humans for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Scratch takes the knife and says to me, "You want a way out that is safe?"

Not trusting him any further, and wanting to get away from his smell, I told him, "No, I think I got this chummer. Thanks for the boots."

"Null sheen chummer." Scratch gave me a toothy grin that made me shudder while thinking about him taring my flesh from my bones with those broken teeth.

"Good luck chummer." He said almost suspiciously.

I pulled on the boots, not bothering to tie the laces and backed out of the alley. Once I got out onto the main road, still vacant as we are deep in the barrens, I tied the boots. I also tied the robe tighter around my body for warmth.

I took the other knife and held it in my hand, in the pocket of the robe. I wasn't about to let go of the knife around here, especially knowing there are man eaters about.

My adrenalin wore off, causing me to crash energy wise. I am cold, wet, and tired without any place to go or any way to get someplace safe that I knew of. I started reflecting on the little bit that I did know, which really wasn't much. I remember meeting with a Mr. Johnson about a job in my hometown of

Portland. It wasn't anything special, just a simple extraction of a willing participant. The target worked for a minor corporation and lived in offsite housing. It should be an easy run.

I met the Johnson at a small club downtown, got the info, and accepted the job. I remember getting a team together, all people I have worked with a few times in the past, and we started planning the job. I also remember going to sleep the night before the run, then waking up in that bloody mess of a room. I shuddered from that memory.

Dreck, I had nothing to stand on.... Wait, I did have my head wear. I usually recorded everything my cyber eyes see to insure my safety on some jobs. I looked threw the history that was in my eyes. There was a large blank where there should have been recording. Dreck, it looks like someone else got to the data. I then noticed that my wireless systems were all offline. I switched them online and my world brightened.

I did a diagnostic on my systems and found them all to be in top working order. My arm pistol was out of ammo, but I still had the gun. I also had my internal comlink, and it seemed to be working.

I dialed up my fixer. It went straight to voice mail. I left a message, "Dreck, lousy time for you not to answer. I need a way out of Seattle and back to Portland. I don't know how I got here or anything. Call me back chummer."

I hung up, a little pissed that the fragger didn't answer. I thought we were better friends than that.

Then I got a ping off of my weapons. Both my pistols were at the same place, and my assault rifle was nearby. I even got a ping off of my helmet. There was no sign of my body armor, boots, cred stick, or external comlink. Well, something is better than nothing.

I hurried to the nearest item, my assault rifle. I didn't want to lose her. That would be a nightmare. SinDee would haunt me on the matrix until I required her or she was deleted. SinDee was a high level AI and personality program rolled into one. She was also very jealous of anything, and extremely possessive of me. I don't know why that happened, all I asked the decker for was a program to assist me with aiming and adjusting. He installed SinDee. Now I kind of liked having her, five years later.

That was when I realized I had over 300 messages, all from SinDee. She has been going crazy without me. I checked the time stamp, it was over a month old... how long was I out for?

As I approached the location, I realized it was a parking garage. It looked like SinDee was on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. I continued along the parking garage until I saw a large black van. It looked like it was armored, and probably had retractable weapons mounts on the sides and top. The van was slightly beat up, and even had a few bullet holes in it. It looked so familiar, I couldn't place my hand on it.

As I walked up I heard in my internal comlink, "Damn fragger, it's about time you come and get me! You left me here over a month ago. I want to go kill that fragger now. He was a real dreck head that deserves to feel the point of one of my bullets enter through the back of his fragging orc head. Hurry up and get me out of here, this truck is hot and humid. I need a good lubing before you can shoot me."

That is the voice of sliching that I remember. Always complaining.

I walked up to the van and saw a fingerprint scanner on the driver's side door. I pressed my middle finger up to it and heard a click of the lock system unlocking. I guess this is my truck.

I climbed into the driver's seat and the first thing that assaulted me was the smell. Again with the sickly sweet smell of rotting flesh. Rotting from being inside a hot, damp van for who knows how long. I looked into the back of the van. There were tubs of gear, food, and more along the side of the van. On the opposite side there is a bench where I would cuff unwilling extraction personnel so they could not reap havoc on my truck. There was a body tied down there, a female body who looked like she was fit and well kept. Well-kept except she didn't have a head.

I would have puked from the realization that it was the same lady from earlier, but there was still nothing in my stomach. I was hungry, thirsty, and had to get rid of a body and clean out my van, then I had to get back to Portland. I wanted to get back to my normal life.

I drove my van back to the alley I saw the ghoul. He wasn't there. I dumped the body anyway thinking he may come across it and feed. I then drove to another alley, not wanting to be linked to the body, where I could gear up and get ready for the ride home.

"Are you just leaving or are we going to get to work and get payback on the fool who separated us for over a month? It seemed like an eternity that I was locked up in the van without your fingers over me." SinDee was saying. I kind of droned her out so I could think of my next move.

I pulled up the video log of my internal sensors from my van. I saw myself talking to the woman, I obviously knew her as she started kissing on me. I needed to get to the bottom of this dreck. I fast forwarded a little and found that the sensors logs were wiped for about a month after the kiss. Just nothing on the logs. The new logs didn't start until this morning.

I changed into some clothes that I had in the back of my van, put on some body armor and a lined jacket. I also pulled out my spare pistols that were stored in a hidden compartment under the driver's seat. I was now clean (mostly), geared up, and ready to go? Yeah, I was ready to go figure out who the woman was and who tried to set me up for her murder.

Dreck, what was the next step? I truly didn't know.

I tried my fixer again, and again it went to voice mail. I called the Johnson that gave me the last job I knew I took. He didn't answer either. Even my bartender buddy didn't answer. That one was weird as he and I were like brothers. He always answered me. Now I was getting even more nervous. Who could have the reach to off all my contacts? My friends? And maybe even my family.

I called my mother. Her gruff voice answered right away, "Yello?"

"Hello mother, I was just checking on you."

"Scott dear, I was worried about you. Your friend Mr. Johnson said something went bad and you were out of contact. He also said that if you called that you should call him right away. Something about life and death."

"Thanks mom."

"Where are you at? Can I help you with anything? Are you okay?"

"Seattle right now, no I don't need help, and yes I am fine mother. I need to go and try to call Mr. Johnson. Just know I am alright and will call you when I can mom."

“Ok Scott. I will talk to you later, are you sure there is nothing I can help you with?”

“You already did mom.”

I hung up the call and tried Mr. Johnson one last time. It went straight to voice mail again.

Dreck! Dreckity Dreck dreck dreck.

Then I had a thought, “SinDee, do you have any logs from your sensors for the last month?”

“Yes I do, the person who came and ‘cleaned up’ didn’t know that I was monitoring everything.”

“Show me the time from when these logs get wiped through today.”

“Ok boss, transmitting to your comms.”

I saw things a little oddly. Everything was in a thermographic sensor, the only passive sensor on SinDee. It showed 2 men, one was a troll for sure and the other was either human or elf. They came in with guns drawn and put a round in the female instantly. Then they turned to me and demanded that we give them something. Something they are calling ‘The Cube’.

I watched in horror as they cut off the head of the female they kept calling my woman and kept saying that much worse would happen to me if I didn’t cooperate. The woman must have been important to me as I broke down. I never break down.

I watched in horror as I actually cried for her, sobbing something... a name... Sojin. Then I did something else I never would have done, I said her last name. Sojin Marmx.

I jumped on the matrix and called up her name. She was a CEO for an up and coming corporation. One that was in direct competition with Aires weapons design and manufacturing. There was some news reports showing her out in public with her new boyfriend, some big and silent human. It was a picture of me.

I was in shock. Everything shows us as being a couple. I had never seen her before a month ago, when I had my first memory. I must have been hit with a dreckload of Lace, a drug that erases memory and can’t be rebuilt by any means including magical.

Dreck. Now how am I going to figure out what happened?

A moment later I got a message. It was set to auto-deliver at this time. It was a video clip. I played it.

The video was just outside my van, but I was in downtown Seattle. I was talking to Sojin.

She was talking “Sam, why don’t you come and work for me? Go legit, we could have a life together.” She knew my real name. No one but my mother knew my name.

“Sojin, I want nothing more, but I have made many enemies and I fear they would go after you to get to me. I love you and want us to be together.” I said.

I said what? I loved her? I didn’t know what to think.

“I have already set you up with a SIN and got you a job in my company.”

“Thank you. I will try and clean my past. You don’t want to leave the UCAS with me and get out of here?”

“I wish I could. I need to be with my company until after we rollout the new firearm. The Sojin Jackrabbit is going to either make or break the company.”

“I know. I need to get to a meet. Stay safe my love.”

“You too Sam.”

The video ended.

That was curious. I had even more questions now and even less answers. What the dreck am I involved in.

End Part 1