

Soiled Pants

Part 4 Finale

The next morning I got up feeling renewed. I had more energy and a purpose the first time since I woke up with Sojin's head in bed next to me. I got up and moved to the main room. There is no one awake in out here. I look around and see a security person laying on the couch.

I walked into the kitchen and got a bottle of water out of the fridge. Upon opening the fridge, someone moved into the main room. It was Max, "I thought I heard you up." He stated friendlily, "I am wondering if you have any idea what the code is yet? Possible came back to you in a dream?"

"I was dosed with Lace, there is no memory left of it." I said flatly, "I wish my memory was still intact. I would have liked to have a memory of my wife, my wedding, and how I got out of my problems with the corp."

"I understand, I could have my mage friend try and recall your memories."

I glared at him, "You know that that doesn't work with Lace." I didn't want any finger wigglers poking around in my head.

"Ok, you are correct. I may be able to pull up your messages and Sojin's messages from headquarters. There may be a clue in the videos," he suggested.

"It could be faster and better for us to go into headquarters to get the information, then we could search Sojin's office." I stated knowing what his answer would be.

"For your own safety, we can't do that. We need to make the corp that is after you to think that you are gone. I will have my friend login and pull the data for us."

Just what I thought. "Okay," I stated thoughtfully, but lying about everything with the tone of my voice. It is difficult to keep civil with this 'Max' character and his goons after learning the contents of the Cube. Now I had to keep them thinking I haven't been able to open the Cube and get a way to get out.

Later that day Max came to me with the video feed. Upon first glance it looked like a rough feed, but I noticed, and was careful not to show that I did notice, that some of the areas were edited. I'm sure Max had something to do with this.

I decided to let a little info slip that may get Max's attention and help create a way for me to get out.

"I bet Yacco could get through this encryption on the cube." I said as if contemplating it for the first time.

Max glanced at me, "You know Yacco? As in the decker that assists Digital Doom?"

I looked him square in the eyes and said, "We go way back. I worked with them both a few years back and Yacco and I kept in touch, sending jobs each other's way through the years."

Max looked me over carefully, not believing that I knew a decker of Yacco's caliber. "If you know him, why not give him a call. He may be able to crack the code. What will he want to crack it?"

"I will owe him a favor to be honored at a later date."

"Ouch, that is a steep price."

"You don't know the half of it."

I asked for a comlink, Max still hasn't realized I have one in my head. I sent Yacco a text from my internal comlink, then dialed him on the throw away com that Max handed me.

Yacco's persona appeared in the AR feed of the comlink. His persona is an old black and white cartoon character holding a large hammer with the word Acme printed on the head. Yacco blinked twice letting me know he got the text then said, "Randel, how are you doing chummer? Been a while." His cartoon voice almost always makes me laugh a little, but this time I am too focused on getting out of here.

"I have a job for you, I have in my possession a Storage Cube that has an encrypted message I need decrypted. You think you and your friends could take a hack at it?" I asked.

"Of course Rankin, just drop it at the usual place."

"I'm not in the Tier right now. Do you have any friends in Seattle you trust with a hush job?"

"I am in Seattle right now. I was going to send my Kinder out to pick up the package, but if you are here I will get it from you." His persona smiled. I knew he had my location now.

"How is your son, Kinder anyway?" I asked just to give him a little more time to get things together.

"Great, he is now 16 years old. Not hacking like his dad, but more of a charismatic talker than I ever was." This statement made me wonder what he was saying. Maybe his kid is actually 16 now, damn I felt old.

"That's great news. Keep him out of the shadows as long as you can."

"Will do, where do you want to meet?" Yacco asked me.

"I will have to call you back with that in a few. Need to discuss it with my security detail first. One of these guys will have a good place."

"You know that this means you owe me one?"

"I think that now makes four." I stated.

Laughing Yacco says, "So it does. I will have to start calling in your favors if I ever want to get them from you."

"All right smart ass, I will call you in a few."

I hung up. The message seems to be clear. I was getting away from the gnome and his minions.

"I still can't believe you know Yacco and Doom." He beamed with delight at just seeing one of his idles.

"Running is a small world Max, it's a small world." I replied. "So where should I give the handoff?"

“There is a small park on the west side of Redmond here,” he put an arrow packet on the comlink I was holding. “Tell him to meet us at 1400hrs so we can get there and clear out the park first. I don’t want to take any chances that Ares is going to be snooping around looking for you.”

I smiled and nodded. My gut was turning, but I was able to hold my composure. “Okay, I will send him this packet.” I sent the data packet. A moment later we got the confirmation of reception, then Max broke the comlink.

“You can never be too careful.” He smiled and walked into the back room to chat with one of the ‘security guards’ leaving me in the kitchen and the mage in the main room.

I grabbed a Soyrito from the dispenser and a Soycaf to drink then I went into the main room to watch the trid while I waited for the meet. I smiled to myself at my conversation with Yacco, Max will not see this coming.

Later that afternoon we climbed into the Sojin Security van, I was in the passenger seat, Max in the driver’s seat, and the mage and street samurai were both in back. It seemed the rigger/decker was going to stay at the safe house. ‘I guess it was three favors’ I thought to myself.

We got to the park at 1300hrs. The street samurai and Max both jumped out and walked around the park from different directions. The mage slumped down and went astral. That left me alone in the van, unless the mage has a spirit called up watching me. I decided to stay put for now. The only weapon I had was the boot gun I pulled out of my van last time I was there. Max kept telling me I didn’t need a firearm and he didn’t want me getting hurt from any security forces that may come up. I think it was so if I figured out what was going on that he was afraid I would just kill him. He was right. Whomever hired him had killed Sojin, my mother, all my friends, and started this mess. I would kill him.

I watched out the window at the light rain sprinkling on the window. Then I saw a rotor-drone fly into the park. I wondered if it was for the team coming for me or if it was Max’s rigger. Then the drone did something I knew had to be Yacco, It did a loopy loop.

A few minutes later Max returned to the van, the street samurai stayed in the wooded area on the edge of the park. I guessed with a sniper rifle.

At exactly 1400hrs I noticed a short man, I couldn’t tell what race he was due to the large trench coat and black hoodie he was wearing. His height made me think he was a dwarf. I realized that it was Yacco. He had come in person.

I got out of the van, Max right on my heels, and walked leisurely toward the decker.

Yacco started walking toward me as I approached. Did he misread my message? I was about to find out.

“Rankin, it is so good to see you chummer. I heard from Doom that you were hanging low during a purge from a corporate interest.” Yacco started.

“Yacco,” I smiled, “So good to see you. I have had some problems and have been keeping low.” Turning to Max I gestured toward him, “and this is Max.”

Max was smiling from ear to ear at meeting his idle. He reached out his hand and said, “It is a great pleasure to meet you sir.”

Yacco smiled, "Good to meet you too." He stated.

Yacco looked the gnome over then turned to me. "You have a data cube you said?"

I pulled it out and showed him the initial puzzle where I put my finger into the hole. Showing him the video, we stood out in the open air for a few minutes. Looking around I thought I had not gotten the message through to him. Feeling defeated I continued.

"We need to get into that encrypted file to see what is in it." I was saying. "We need to get this mess cleaned up so I can go upon my life."

"That way you can pay me back the four favors." Yacco stated.

I looked him square in the eyes and said, "Of course, just please not all at once."

I knew he understood then.

Yacco turned to Max, "Max, was it?"

"Yes." Max said simply.

"See, I thought I recognized you. You are known as Maxakillian. A shadowrunner who is known to kill every member of a family. Before you decide to do anything, know that your team is down and there are three guns on you right now. Your mage died trying to fight my friend Titan in Astral combat."

Max started looking confused, first at Yacco then at me. He reached into his pocket for his comlink, it wasn't there. Yacco pulled it out of his pocket. He had expertly pilfered the comlink. He showed it to Max, "You see, your team was calling for your help." He showed the messages, "but you failed to answer. Your PAN is down and your drones are all mine now."

Max went white. All color fading from his face as realization set in. He jumped into action, his hand moving so fast I couldn't even see it. I knew he had top of the line delta grade wired reflexes. As his gun was coming out of the holster he just stopped. I could see his arm quivering, fighting for control of his own cyberware, then he just falls over. I looked at Yacco who was grinning.

"Did you brick him?" I asked.

"Nope, just reset his gear when he was in a startup state. It will take him a minute or so before he can move again."

I smiled even bigger. "Thank you Yacco. Let's get them somewhere where I can interrogate them."

"That will be favor number two." Yacco said laughing. "I almost missed your message in the call. I had to replay it to see if I got it right. The text you sent didn't make sense when you listen to the call. I took your text as fact and the call for info."

"Yeah, I guess texting 'I need help and am calling' could have been better, I just couldn't afford to be found out."

"Can you bring them to the safe house and ping it to me. I need to go take care of some things."

"Yeah, I can do that." He said in a cartoony accent.

“Before I leave, how did you get him to just stop like that?” I just had to know.

“I installed a reset virus into his PAN. I had access to all his cyberware that was wireless. His and his team’s comlinks. I had their locations and knew what we needed before the cube came out.”

“You are good, I didn’t even see you take the comlink, and I suspected you would.”

Yacco smiled and zip-cuffed Max. A moment later three guys came out of the woods carrying the street samurai over one of their shoulders. Another guy was pulling the mage’s body out of the van. “We will dispose of this for you Rankin.” a chromed out super soldier said. I haven’t ever worked with Chrome before, but I knew that this must be the man himself.

“Thank you.” It was all I could say.

I drove away as they were finishing cleaning up the site, headed to first my van, then to Sojin Inc.

I got to my van with no problems. No sooner did I enter my van that SinDee was yelling at me for leaving her alone again. She defiantly didn’t like it when I left her alone. Fragging AI.

“Don’t worry SinDee, I will have a need for you soon. We are going to get back at that gnome soon.” I smiled with the thought.

“Just remember, I want to be the one that does it.” SinDee said to me.

“Okay.”

I drove over to Sojin Inc, right up to the front gate of the parking garage. A guard was sitting in a booth, he roused when I drove up. He looked at me and said, “ID card.”

“I don’t have one.” I stated. “Tell Marcus that Sam is here to see him.”

I waited a few minutes while the guard called into the building. A moment later the guard came back to my window, “Sorry Mr. Mincer. You can park in the VIP area, or I can valet your vehicle for you.”

“No thank you, I will drive it over there.”

“Very good sir.” He said as he opened the gate.

I drove down the parking ramp and followed a sign to the VIP parking. I saw one with my name on a sign in front of the site. I parked there and walked to the elevator. There was a maglock on the elevator, so it I couldn’t use it. A moment later the elevator opened up and I saw a well-dressed middle aged human come out of the elevator.

He approached me and raised his hand offering a handshake. “Sam, it is good to see you again. I know you don’t remember, that is why you are here. We have a lot to go over.”

“Okay, you must be Marcus. I got your message and want to get this thing done. I have a gnome that needs dealing with.”

A look of confusion came over Marcus’s face. I almost laughed with the knowledge, but Marcus ushered me into the elevator and came in behind me. He looked into a retinal scanner and the elevator started going up quickly.

As the elevator rushed up, Marcus started talking to me. "I need to get you sworn in as the CEO as soon as possible. We are in a tight spot and we need a leader before Ares can complete a takeover. We can't seem to get enough of our outstanding stock right now. If you are sworn in, it will make it easier. We need someone that was close to Sojin to make this work. Her husband would be the best."

I shook my head. "Okay, so what is going on? You and Sojin said in the video that you would explain everything to me."

"Right now we don't have time. Ares is buying up the stock fast. We need to do this and get you the votes to keep us separate before the end of the week. I will help with everything."

We exited the elevator in an elegant office. It had a thick white carpet, real cherry wood furniture, and the smell of fresh roses that were actually growing in large pots in front of the floor to ceiling window in the back of the office. I knew it was Sojin's office instantly.

Marcus walked to the desk and asked me to sit behind the desk. He then sat in front of the desk, making me the head of the company. He then pulled out a camera drone and told it to record. It flew out of his hand and started recording.

"Sojin Inc. You know that we have had a time trying to find Sojin's replacement. I am proud to tell you that we have found her husband, safe and sound. He has agreed to take over Sojin Inc and run it the same way Sojin herself ran this great company."

"I would be remiss not to introduce to you our next CEO." He gestured to me, "I would like you to meet Mr. Samuel Mercer."

A roar of cheering could be heard over the AR feed from the drone. This recording was going out live.

"Mr. Mercer was originally a Shadowrunner. He is a strong man who knows the workings of a corporation from the other side of the law. Mr. Mercer will be helping us to grow our security division and helping us to fix our other divisions as needed. Mr. Mercer is a good choice to lead this company into the future and away from the grip of the Mega Corps."

"Mr. Mercer, please know that this company is ready for your leadership and we are looking forward to stopping the takeover attempt."

I looked at Marcus, "Thank you Marcus. I look forward to helping this company to continue to grow. To making it a corporation that even Ares can't get ahold of."

"Mr. Mercer, we will fly you out to one of the Caribbean Islands where you will be sworn in. Sojin was sworn in there, so we thought it best if you are as well. You will be sworn in tomorrow evening, and then you will be the leader of this company." He looked at the camera, "So Sojin Inc, we will have a new leader and a new focus for the company. I will log back in tomorrow to air the swearing in ceremony."

He turned off the drone.

"Now that that is done, I have to ask you to put your right palm on this pad." He held out a palm scanner. It beeped confirming that he was who he said he was.

"I need to finish a few things before we leave." I said.

“We don’t have time. I will give you a comlink when we are in the air.” Marcus replied.

“There is no need. I have one.”

“Okay, you can set up what you need to get done, while we are in the air. I will help you any way I can, but we have to leave now if we are going to make it to the island tomorrow.”

I nodded and started a call to Yacco.

I told Yacco my plan and told him I will have the location tomorrow. He said he understood and hung up.

I laid down the seat in the sub-orbital and went to sleep.

A few hours later I was woken up as the plane was landing. I never could sleep through the landing of a plane.

I was rushed off the plane, and readied to be sworn in. A personal assistant was assigned to me. I think his job was just to make sure I was getting where I needed to be. They rushed me to a hotel where I was showered, measured, and told to put on a new tailored Armani Suit. I have never worn anything this nice before.

I was fed and told to wait in a small room. There was a desk with a vid screen and a couch in the room. I laid down on the couch and fell back to sleep. It had been a busy month.

I was woken up a few hours later, feeling groggy still but ready for whatever came my way. I moved out to a small waiting room where I was to wait until announced.

I was in there for what seemed like a day, but I knew was only a few minutes. Then I was ushered out onto a stage. What I saw took my breath away. There were thousands of people on the beach all looking up at the stage. The stage was looking out over the people and the ocean, the beautiful blue waves crashing on the white sand beach.

“I give you Mr. Samuel Mercer.”

I was ushered out onto the stage.

I walked out and looked over the crowd. I felt exposed being the center of attention.

A man was standing out at the podium ushering me toward the microphone. “Mr. Mercer, the vote of stockholders is in. You are the new CEO of Sojin Inc with a vote of 65% to 35%. Congratulations.”

I smiled my biggest bull dreck smile. Waved to the audience, and said, “Thank you.”

I honestly didn’t know what to say. I was replacing my wife whom I don’t even remember at a company that, for me I hadn’t heard of until a week ago. Things were crazy to say the least. I was just a Shadowrunner. I knew nothing about running a company.

I was about to tell the crowd that when suddenly Marcus came out and started talking. “We just got confirmation that Ares has failed the forced buyout of Sojin Inc!” He was yelling in his excitement. I could get to like this guy. “We now hold 51% of the company in internal hands making us un-beatable by the MEGA corp!”

There was a loud roar coming from the crowd. They were eating it up. Obviously these people loved the company they worked for. Correction, we worked for.

Marcus looked at me and got a bigger smile on his face, if that were possible. "Now, Sam I have a big surprise for you." He turned to face the side of the stage opposite of where I came in. Walking out was the most beautiful human woman I have ever seen, It was Sojin. I don't know how it was her, but there was no mistaking it, she was the same woman I found only a head of weeks ago.

I stood speechless as she walked up to me and kissed me.

She turned to the crowd, "Friends, the rumor of my death was just that, a rumor. I had to keep it this way because there was a party that was trying to get ahold of this company through any means necessary. We have secured our position as a AA corp and have now been granted extraterritoriality." There was a huge uproar at this, the crowd obviously loving the news. "In fact, the Sojin Jackrabbit MP was so successful that the CAS has decided to make it the official machine pistol of the CAS army." Again the people roared their approval.

She turned to me. "Now, my husband and I have a lot to discuss. Just know you are on an island owned by Sojin Inc, so we are safe here. I have increased security and made extra sure that the parties that want us dead can't get to us, ever. They have done enough with the death of so many to get to us. But, as usual, we have won."

"I will leave you with this, Sam and I will run this company. His background will open up many avenues of revenue that mine could not. Together, Sam and I and you all," more applause and loud approval, "and all of you, we will make Sojin Inc to a top 10 company. Good night."

I could see why her company was so good. She had all their attention.

Sojin took my hand and walked me off of the stage. Once offstage, she said, "I know you have a lot of questions, just know it will all be coming back to you in a few minutes. This plan was yours to clear your name and to get Sojin Inc into a position that could withstand the corporate push from the Mega Corps."

Before I could respond she lead me to a quiet room that has a table, a couple comfortable looking chairs, a vid player, and a small wooden box. "Sam my love, sit. Let me show you what you need to know."

I sat down. Her beauty was intoxicating and I was drunk from just being around her.

She sat in the chair next to me and pressed play on an AR feed that I couldn't see. A moment later the Vid came on. It was me and Sojin.

I was talking. "Sam, I know this is weird. I couldn't believe that I came up with this idea, but it seemed the only course of action that would work. I had to get me, Sojin, and the company safe from the past transgressions that we all took part in."

"I found out that Ares had a price on my head. A very large price, from those runs that I did while working in the Tir. The two extractions were for engineers that Ares didn't want to lose, but Sojin needed if the weapons division was going to take off. They didn't only blame Sojin, but also the runner that took the people."

“Know this, Sojin is my wife. I wouldn’t have done this without knowing I would return to her. She will help to get back my memories and help me to see that this was for the best.”

The video ended. Sojin was standing next to me with the little wooden box in her hand. “Sam, you have to trust me with this. Your memories were not lost to you through the use of Lace as you thought, but through Nano-bots blocking part of your brain off. I have here the reversal of this procedure that you came up with.” She pulled out a long needle. “I have to inject it into your skull, through the roof of your mouth.”

I wasn’t sure about this. Everything seemed on the up and up, but it could all be an elaborate hoax to get to me or the company. Frag. What the fragging dreck was I supposed to do. I looked at Sojin and saw a deep love in her eyes. I decided right then that I would trust her and through caution to the wind.

I opened my mouth. A moment later she injected me. It fragging hurt worse than getting shot.

A few moments later my memories started flooding me. Overwhelming me. Making me feel as if I was living the last month in fast forward. I felt sick. Somewhere in the flashes of visions and flood of memories I think I shat myself, again. Dreck this sucked. In front of the woman I now knew was the love of my life I go and dreck myself. FRAG!

The visions went away and I knew everything. This was all done to get Ares off of both me and Sojin. And it worked. The clone head left in bed next to me offered her two weeks of freedom to get things shored up. The two weeks I had cleared my name with Ares, just by getting rid of the teams that were out to get me. Ares pulled the contract as it was getting to be too expensive to keep sending crews after me.

Then I realized SinDee was in on it too. I would have to talk to her about this...

Now that I knew everything, I had one loose end left to clean up, and it would be coming here soon.

For the moment my wife and I had an evening of catching up to do, after I showered and changed out of these soiled pants.

The next day... elsewhere on the island.

“Are things ready Yacco?” I asked.

“Yes Sam, they are. He thinks he will be escaping a convoy on the road right in front of you. When he realizes that it is a trap, it will be too late.”

“We are a go.” I stated happily, “SinDee, shoot straight and true.”

SinDee replied, “I always do.”

I put my eye up to her scope, adjusted for wind, and sat there looking for the gnome to see the note that was left on the side of the road with his name on it. I smiled. The note said simply, “Your family is next.” It was a lie, but he would never know that.