

Eddie's Tool

Part 1: Legwork

Barney is big, even for a troll. At just over 9 feet and 450 pounds he is impressive to see. He is a dark skinned troll with two horns that sweep back into ram horns. Between the horns he has bright purple hair. The same hair color he has had since he was 16.

Barney is a college graduate with a PHD in archaeology from MIT&M. During his internship and later his field work, he got into the habit of wearing a brown duster and a pistol on his hip. You could never be too careful when it comes to a dig. Corporations will try to take them away, you may run across a snake, or worse. It is better for everyone in the dig to be armed.

But all that is long past. The hair, duster, and pistol all remain, but the corporate job and the expedition funding are all gone. Burned by some fragger who wanted the items he was digging up, a manager in some corporate tower who was stealing the items being sent back. And he pinned it all on Barney.

That was 15 years ago. Today he has to make a living outside the laws because of getting burned. No corp was willing to take him in.

The comlink rings, the one that only my fixer has. I answer after only one ring. "What cha want Sam?"

A glowing hologram of Sam's balding head snaps into view. His datajack gleaming in the projection. He pulls a drag off of a troll sized cigar, that looks funny in the mouth of a dwarf. The cherry of the cigar almost matching the red of his beard. Sam gets an enormous smile on his face, "Barney, is that anyway to talk to the person who has an amazing opportunity for you?"

"Is this opportunity for me or a team?" I asked. I needed to know if I was bringing people in or if I was being attached to another team. Either way works for me, I am muscle for any team I am put on.

"It is for a team, I already have one put together. They need someone with your unique skill set to verify they have the tool before going to the Johnson."

That peaked my interest. It isn't usual for a shadowrun to have need of an archaeologists skills. "Ok, I am listening."

"The Johnson wants to have a team pick up a special tool from a museum. This tool belongs to the family and it was on loan to the museum in Seattle. The museum is now reneging on the

agreement and trying to say that it was donated to their organization. The client would like it returned without any harm coming to this tool as it is priceless.”

“Ok, and how does that work to my skills?”

“The item is over 100 years old and needs to be verified before handing it off to the Johnson who will bring it to the client. That is all I can tell you until you agree to take the job.”

“Um, how much does it pay? Remember, I will be doing both runners and doctoral level work for this run.”

“I already calculated that in, the rest of the team will receive 15k each for the job, but because of your expertise you will receive 25K. Do not let anyone on the team know about this difference. It could make it hard to work together if they knew it wasn’t an even split.”

“Ok, I accept the job.”

Sam smile gets even bigger, almost comical. “Good Barney. You will fit right in on this one. It is a good team. Also you will not need to hide your hair.”

“Why would I?” I said, knowing fraggin well what the bright purple hair between my horns has gotten me in the past.

Sam laughs at that, then says, “I sent a packet with all the info in it. I am also offering you a side job that pays 10K more if you can get me the other item at the end of the packet. That one is personal, so it is only if possible. Do not put the run at jeopardy for the extra pay.”

“You hurt me Sam. You know I am a professional. I would never put the job at risk for more money.” I gave him my best troll puppy dog eyes.

He laughs again. “Go over the data and make contact with your team. It is expected to be done by this friday.” Then the line went dark. He hung up without saying anything again. What a fragger.

I opened the packet in AR on my cybereyes. A folder appeared in the air in front of me. I opened it up and found several sheets of paper inside. The first ones heading was ‘The Team’. Okay, time to learn who I would be working with.

Shade, Yacco, Sinder, and Sprocket. I knew most of these guys. Shade is a capable physical adept, Yacco is a fraggin crazy decker, and Sprocket was a good wheelman. Not as good with the drones, but an amazing driver. Sinder I had never met before.

Well, three of the four I had worked with before. Not too bad.

The next sheet was a blueprint of the Museum of Rock and Roll. I got a huge smile on my face. I loved classical music, especially Metallica and AC/DC. This run is getting more and more interesting. I wonder what kind of tools will be at this museum.

The third sheet was a description of the tools and pictures.



The guitar was made for one of the greatest guitar players of all time, Eddie Van Halen. The 5150 has been copied thousands of times through the years, but the original one that was played by Eddie is worth millions. The guitar picks were used by Eddie during all his concerts in 1984. These alone are worth half a million Y.

I really should have tried for more money. Oh well.



Flipping to the last page it is the bonus item. This one made me giddy. I can't believe that that is what Sam wanted. I want it.

The guitar from the great James Hetfield of Metallica. If I can pull this off and maybe get a little more money I could finally retire and open the bar I have been dreaming of. I have been running the shadows for 15 years now. A long time for a troll.

After going through the notes I decided I needed to contact the team. I pulled out a burner com and started a group call. We agreed to meet in person at a dive bar that I knew about in Everett. It was called 'Mom's Basement'. It was a gamer themed bar where I could rent a private game room that had white noise generators on the table.

I ride my Harley to the bar, it is easier to park than the big panel side van that I use on runs. I pull up and see what looks like an old style video game arcade, by old style I mean the 1980's.

A dark front with neon signs depicting different games. The red bricks of the building look worn and faded. Even the drunk puking in the alley next to the joint looks old and decrepit.

Walking in the first thing that is noticed is the bizarre music. It sounds like a house mix of old video game tunes all smashed together. Then the smell hits you, the sour smell of sweat, stale soywizer, and cigar smoke. Between the sounds and smell this place was unnerving.

I got the back room, I even paid for a couple bottles to be in the room for the team. I just wanted to see if I could remember correctly what everyone drank. I also had a few beers just in case.

Yacco was the first to get there. He is a dark haired dwarf that stands just under 1M tall. He is small build and, believe it or not, beardless. He once told me that it just wouldn't grow. He was wearing a large pair of AR/VR glasses, not that he needed it. He had 3 datajacks sticking out of his temple. He was also wearing a long black trench coat and an honest to goodness Anarchy T-shirt.

This dwarf also has naturally sticky fingers. I shook his hand, "Check yourself Yacco." I said. He did a quick pat down of himself and found one of my knives in his pocket. "How do you do that?" I asked as I put the knife back in my boot.

"Honestly I don't know. It just sort of happens. Where did I get this?" he said while tossing me a Lone Star badge.

"Did you have it when you came in here?"

"No, I don't think so. I did a check when I got out of my car. No, I am sure I didn't have it."

"Send a message to everyone else to move the meet to Pier 6. Let them know why so they make sure their not followed."

"Willco. How are we going to get out of here?" Yacco asked. We both stand out in a crowd. Him without a beard and me with my purple hair and ram horns.

I had an idea, I took the bottle of Soyjack Whiskey and splashed it on me and Yacco. I then took a pack of cards off of the shelf and put one in my hair and another in Yocco's collar. "Follow my lead."

I kicked out the door and stumbled out into the main part of the bar. Yacco stumbled out as well, falling all over a female elf who just happened to be too close.

I holored, "That was a fun game Jim!" then I fell onto a table, catching myself before spilling any drinks. I looked at the two elves sitting at the table and said, "Sry my pointy <hic> eared friends"

and moved on. We got out of the bar and as soon as the door closed we both ran to where we parked our vehicles.

I jumped on my bike just as two men, both were large humans from the look of them, came busting out the door looking both ways for us. One of them pointed at me and they both started running. One was running toward me, I would get my bike running before he could get to me, and the other was running toward the alley where they had a car waiting.

Why the frag was Lone Star after me? I haven't done a job against any of their assets or accounts recently. I haven't been ID'd for anything as far as I knew, and I was in Knight Errant territory. What the frag.

I spun my bike around and headed away from the bar at a high rate of speed. I flew around a corner and stopped my binke, pushing it inside of a building I knew to be mostly vacant. Pushing into the entry area and keeping an eye out on the road. I sat in silence waiting. One heartbeat, two, there was the car screaming down the road in the direction I had turned. They were definitely looking for me.

I heard some heavy breathing behind me. I turned and saw a ghastly sight. One I have seen a few times in the past. This human had pale skin pulled taut across his face, teeth exposed. His eyes were glossed over with what looked to be cataracts, all hazy and white. His hair was flat and greasy, just barely hanging onto his head. Then there were his clothes, they were filthy and tattered. This ghoul was staring at me as if I was an eight course meal.

"I'm not here to be eaten Tom." I said casually. The ghoul shook his head and then noticed who I was.

"Barney, good to see you. Sorry about that, I am just hungry." he replied in an airy voice. "Been a dry time around here for fresh food. Da Doctor is supplying us still, just not as much as he was."

"I understand. I don't have any food for you, but," I pulled out and tossed him a burner comlink, "it has my number in it. Call if you need anything."

Tom said in a deadpan voice, "I will, thanks chummer."

Then I pushed my bike out of the building and started down the street, the opposite direction of the security guys.

It took me ten minutes to get over to Pier 6. Pier 6 is a lower middle class nightclub where the upper middle class like to go to say they are slumming it. It is loud and dimly lit, the perfect place for us to discuss the business at hand. Especially if someone from the team got the meeting

room. It is a little known room that was built for runners to make plans. The owner is a former runner.

I walked up to the front, making sure I wasn't followed, and cut in front of everyone trying to get in. When the bouncer saw me, he was... wait... she was a huge troll that made me look small, she leaned in and whispered in my ear, "Go through the kitchen door to storage room 4. They are already waiting for you." I didn't know her, so she must have been told about my hair.

I smiled and sent her a tip through AR.

As soon as I walked through the door of the storage room, my team was throwing questions at me as to why the change of location.

"For some reason Lone Star wants to talk to me. At least I am guessing, two officers were at the last meet site waiting for me. They chased me out and I lost then a couple blocks away. I don't know what they want, I haven't hit anything Star related in a while." I smiled. "Now down to business."

We spent the better part of an hour making plans and going through the packet, minus the last page, where I convinced the team that we needed to confuse the theft by everyone taking something else that could be worth the money. That way the investigators are looking for a few items instead of just one.

We finished planning and decided to wait a day before pulling the job, that way I can make sure I am clean of the Star before we roll out.

I got back to my place, switched on my SIN (system identification number) that has to be transmitted at all times, and went into my house that I have had for years. It was to my real SIN seeing I have a PHD and am an out of work scientist.

I looked at his Tridio and realized that I had a message, so I started it.

The face of one of the Lone Star officers that was in the bar appeared on his screen. "Dr. Jones, I am detective Murf. I have to discuss some matters with you as soon as possible. It is an urgent matter so call me back at this number and we can set up a meet." with that he disconnected.

That got my curiosity up, but not enough to call yet. I have a job to do first. I grabbed my kit and slipped out to go to one of my safe houses, leaving my legitimate comlink and SIN in a locked and shielded box under the bed.

The next day I got ready for the job. I purchased some items that we decided we may need, I bought some high energy snack foods to help us keep going, and I purchased some Long Haul and Kamakazi for those that like the chemical surge of energy.

They all met back at the safe house, it was one Yacco had been to before, so there was no loss here, to finish planning and heading out for some recon. Yacco was first to arrive, his cartoon like motorcycle bounding into the underground parking.

Next was shade, he looked like he was an elf with bushy eyebrows. He had a little bit of dark hair coming off of the back of his ears. His dark skin and hair stood out from the normal elves in this area. Wearing a black bodysuit and a black hooded cape, he looked more like he belonged in a matrix game than running the shadows.

Sprocket pulled up in his panel sided van, a grey Bulldog that was good for moving both the team and equipment. Sprocket got out wearing his usual leather jacket with the logo from an old game called 'Gears of Warfare', bright pink mohawk, and pink combat boots. He pranced over toward me, "Hey honey. Missed you."

I just rolled my eyes. I had forgotten how flamboyant Sprocket could be.

From out of the other side of Sprocket's van came a wonder. She was beautiful, and looked like a supermodel for Aztechnology. She was wearing a sleek black dress with a single crystal attached at the shoulder. This evening dress was so sheer I wasn't sure how she could hide a weapon in it.

I finally got my mouth closed and walked over to her offering my hand, "Sinder I presume, I am Barney."

She smiled and clasped my hand tightly for a human, "Nice to meet you barney, now I know why Sprocket calls you the Purple Dino." she smiles slyly.

I mumble under my breath, my eyes throwing daggers at Sprocket, as we walked into the safehouse.

That night Sinder and Shade went into the museum to track down the items, look for security, and generally case the joint as they said in the last century. Yacco did a lot of whatever Yacco does on the matrix and came up with a lot of paydata. Sprocket was flying some of his drones around the museum to get an idea of police presence. I was doing a reference search and matrix search on the items we are supposed to be grabbing. I needed to know how to authenticate the items.

We finished up that night with no incidents and decided to crash at the safehouse. Tomorrow night we would complete the job.

To be continued...