

Chapter 76: Finishing Loose Ends

“Who did you tell about the mine?”

I pressed my gun to the back of his head.

“...Who are you?” The supervisor of this complex muttered.

“I’m the one asking the questions. Now answer me, who did you tell about the info you just got from your goons?”

“I...I...”

As he stuttered, I tried breaching into his SAID for his records, but as expected, I wasn’t skilled enough to breach those encrypted files. At least we were in the wasteland, which meant he couldn’t have sent any messages outside of this outpost.

“You have to the count of three. One. Tw—”

“I didn’t send it to anyone yet. You have to believe me!”

I took out some bracelets and snapped them onto his hands and feet. They instantly combined to restrain his limbs.

“What are you doing?”

“Shut up,” I said as I threw him into the corner of the room.

I then took his seat and went through his terminal to check the logs. He seemed to have drafted up the information about spotting our construction vehicles and rental records in a report to his superiors, along with his suspicions.

He had it saved to an external data chip, so I quickly deleted everything and pocketed the chip for myself.

“So, you really didn’t inform anyone else in this place?”

“No, none of them have the security clearance to learn about something that doesn’t involve their duties. Only the team that collected the information knows, but I told them to keep quiet. I swear, believe me.”

“Very well, I believe you.”

Sigh, there isn’t much option for me here...

“Wait... What are you—”

I went over to him and placed him in a body bag. Once he was fully inside, I took out the syringe that I used to knock people out and adjusted the dosage.

You got unlucky. There's no way for me to check your SAID's encrypted files and I'm sure as hell ain't bringing you along. It's too risky. The least I can do is make this painless.

I injected a fatal dose of drugs into him and got a detailed scan of his features before I zipped up the bag.

+10 EXP

I then used his terminal to send a message out to his secretary to prepare an empty car for him.

Just in case, I brought along his terminal before I exited his office. I waited by the window until I saw a car pull up outside.

Kiri, have my Shade project an image of our supervisor here.

'Affirmative. Please note the body dimensions have more than 75% variance. Your reach will be significantly different from what is seen.'

The manager may have been a little shorter and rounder... It shouldn't be a problem just to get into the car.

I strode out to the lobby, where the receptionist, who doubled as the supervisor's secretary, immediately stood up and greeted me.

"Sir, the car is ready. Is there anything else you need?"

I shook my head and continued to walk toward the exit without stopping. I didn't possess a voice changer implant, though it may be a good idea to see if I could get one.

"...Sir?"

The receptionist gave me a worried look, but I ignored her and beelined it to the car.

Once I was in, I quickly drove away toward where Thorne had been waiting with the bodies.

Thorne, I'm coming toward you in the car. Turn on your camouflage and get in.

Understood.

I stopped the car where the body bags were and opened the doors to the car. I then proceeded to load up the bags while maintaining the projection of the supervisor.

Once I was done, I got back in and drove away.

“You want me to disguise myself as one of the guards? Or you got a cover story to go out of base alone?” Thorne said, as he materialized in the seat beside me.

“Sure, why not? Go get a scan of one of them.”

A disguise would last longer than being invisible, so it can't hurt.

“Already did.”

We drove straight toward the front gate that was sandwiched by the two watchtowers.

“I got the secretary girl to inform them that I was coming. Try not to speak, who knows if they recognize their voices.”

A guard by the gate came out and watched my vehicle approach. I rolled down the windows, and he saluted me as soon as he saw my face. As my car glided toward the gate, it began to slide open.

The guard looked at me as if expecting orders, but I simply drove off while I had the chance.

A short drive got us back to where we left Andrew and Peng with our Wraith.

“You two, help us carry those bodies over,” I commanded as Thorne and I each threw a body into the back.

As I fostered the task onto my two guards, I went and configured a device to be attached to the car marked with Cipher Corporation.

“You're not taking the car back to be scrapped?” Thorne asked.

“Too risky, who knows if there are trackers or if anyone sees us with it mid-transit? I'll let the wasteland bury this for us.”

Once we transferred over the bodies, I set the car on auto drive a distance away and set the timer on the explosives I just planted.

We watched the car leave until it was out of sight before we got going.

“We need to get the best detection equipment we can get our hands on,” I said, as I sipped on some milkshake while looking around the meeting room.

“We'll also need to purchase a few trucks so we can customize them and add your stealth devices in. All the stock vehicles we rent are subpar compared to the customized vehicles other corps use. Currently, they can estimate our specifications easily as it's all public information,” Vin added.

That is a sore point for us. Having to expand so fast meant we only had the capital to rent instead of buying vehicles. That meant we weren't contractually allowed to customize them.

I took a second to allow everyone else to speak their mind before I continued. "I'll take charge of upgrading our vehicles. I'll come up with a stopgap solution for now until we produce our new models. How is our construction going at the mine?" I looked over at the construction manager responsible for the site.

"Sir, the bare minimum needed to operate it is done. Though it's just roads down to the mine with a gate at the front. The construction of the defensive armaments has slowed as you have instructed transport to be limited to vehicles equipped with stealth fields."

"Understood, I'll prioritize the upgrade of the transport vehicles. Does anyone else have anything to add about our recent operation?" They all shook their heads. "Then that concludes this meeting."

As everyone filed out of the room, Thorne leaned in and whispered, "Claire wanted you to call her when you had the time."

I glanced over at my SAID settings and noticed it was on 'Do Not Disturb' and quickly disabled it to find two missed calls.

"Okay, I'll call her back. You can go do your own thing. I'll be spending time in the workshop."

I exited the meeting room and began heading to the workshop that I'd moved to the garage levels so I could better work with the vehicles. I placed the call to Claire as soon as the elevator doors closed.

"Rollo? Your meeting over already?"

"Yeah. What's up?"

"Wanted to update you on the server room we're setting up in the office. We ordered the equipment and should be finished by the end of this month. We hired several soft techs for the communication app too. Just need you to go over it when you have time."

"Alright, I'll take a look. Message me if you need anything. I gotta go right now."

"Okay, bye."

Once I hung up the call, I immediately did an inventory check in my workshop and began tackling the various projects I had in mind.

Now that we had the materials needed to produce our own vehicles, I had to finish refining the production process into chunks, so the workers only knew about the part they were responsible for.

I then had to modify our transport vehicle's design to fit in our stealth fields and improved motors. And the latest thing added to my agenda after today's meeting was to work on our own detection devices, as the last incident proved we were sorely lacking in that department.

My electrical engineering knowledge gave me a solid foundation in sensors and radar technologies. I had plans in my head on how to improve the resistance to jamming the wasteland's environment constantly emitted, and the range of it, but I needed to consult with other experts while doing a lot of trial and error to design something so specialized.

I spent the next two weeks shutting myself inside my workshop while the construction of the mine proceeded slowly yet smoothly.

The upgraded phased array radars were taking a lot more of my time than expected, seeing how I had to consult with the R&D back in Elevate City. I only left my workshop today because we were finally ready to produce more Wraiths.

With that said, we didn't have to venture out anywhere because the production facility was here, beside my office. Our building was an old warehouse that served as our production facility for our Shades and office space. We were able to rent out the adjacent warehouse and refurbish it to our needs.

We had plans to flat-out buy the buildings and surrounding land, but that would have to wait until we had more cash.

"How's it looking in here, Vin?" I immediately approached the large man visible from the entrance.

"Rollo, we're doing training production runs right now. It shouldn't be too hard, seeing how we're not making the complicated devices or the chips and processors."

"Well yeah, they're like thousands of parts to a vehicle at the very least. We simply don't have the time, resources, and know-how to do a good job if we make everything ourselves."

I stepped forward toward the noise, where several workers were slowly putting a Wraith together. Their eyes glowed, giving away the fact they were consulting with the instructions as they proceeded.

While it was slow, a new Wraith was unmistakably taking shape before my eyes. The vehicle, with our company colors of snow blue and black, was soon completed.

They turned on the vehicle as it softly roared to life. The workers all applauded each other as I went to study the vehicle for defects. Once I was done, a team of security personnel accompanied by one of the workers boarded the vehicle and drove off for the test run.

"Well, everything should be able to run on autopilot from here," Vin said from beside me.

“Perfect. You can focus on recruitment and training, then. We’ll want quality to be on par with middle-tier corporations at the very least.”

“That’s going to be expensive.”

“I’ll make sure to expand the budget. That goes for our team back in Elevate City, too, Thorne.”

“Right, I’ll get on it as soon as we return. When are we returning, by the way?”

“Soon. I’m going to take another week to design the city-variant of the Wraith first while I’m already used to the workshop here.”

“...You sure you have to do it here and you are not making excuses, so you don’t have to go back and face the paperwork awaiting you?”

“Of course...Creators work better in a familiar environment. It’d be a waste of time for us to set up a workshop in the garage over there before I got to work.”

“Sure...You be the one to break it to Claire, though. She is the one covering your work in your stead.”

“...”