

Bad John
A Shadowrun Vignette
By Logan Z. Hill

"You miserable piece of shit!"

Another loud thud resounded in the empty warehouse as Whiskey John kicked the lifeless body of the old man again. He stood there, looking down with his modified Evo Optics eyes sensitive to the thermographic spectrum, watching the heat of the corpse slowly match that of the concrete floor. By degrees he became aware of a sound, as if far away at first, growing louder and louder as his pulse slowed. He then recognized it was coming from the woman behind him.

"John! What have you done!" Lovage screamed again for the third or fourth time, her eyes transfixed on the blood beginning to pool around the left shoulder of the body.

"What?" A smile crossed John's face as he turned to the rest of the crew, gun still in his hand.

"Why'd you do that, John?" Missouri Pete said in a calming tone, his hands at chest level, palms down, as if to signal Whiskey John to put his weapon away.

"What?" John said, his smile disappearing and his face taking on a concerned countenance, "the fucker double crossed us," without turning around he pointed his nickel-plated Ares Predator at the body behind him as his fingers readjusted on the pistol's grip. "Fuck don't deserve the nine nuyen round in his chest."

"You paid nine?" The three meter tall troll at the back of the crew said, baiting John.

"Not now, Alex," Pete hissed. "Damn it, John! He was our Johnson, you didn't even give him time to explain himself."

"This is bad, real bad," Lovage whispered, her hands nervously pulling her enchanted rabbit's foot necklace.

"Look, I did what had to be done," John said, his voice calm and light. He gesticulated towards the group with his gun, "you're all going to thank me, you'll see."

"Damn, John, put that thing away already," Max said as she ducked from the passing gun's line of sight.

"What?"

"Put the gun away, John." Pete commanded, "Lovage, check him for Doc Wagon...we don't need some high threat response medical team dropping in on us for the body."

Lovage did her best to calm herself and soon her eyes glazed over as she turned her senses to the Astral. She couldn't help to notice Whiskey John's aura; relaxed and playful but otherwise emotionless.

The Johnson's body still held a faint aura, the aura of the freshly dead, but the body wasn't acting as a whole and she wasn't able to discern any implanted cybernetic systems except the eyes. She pulled her senses back to the physical world and said, "I, I can't tell."

"Fuck," Pete said looking at the body then at John, "the gun, John!"

John holstered the pistol, "you'll thank me later," he said as he walked passed Pete towards the warehouse's front door.

"Fine," Max said to Lovage and Pete. She walked up to the body, knelt down and checked his wrists. On finding nothing she grabbed his commlink and threw it to Pete. Max then ripped the dead man's shirt open, exposing the bullet hole in his chest.

"Oh, God!" Lovage moaned and turned away as Max inserted several fingers into the wound, grabbed on, and with superhuman strength tore back several ribs. Alex smiled a toothy grin. Pete just focused on defeating the encryption on the commlink, his eyes focused on the augmented reality displays of his own commlink's decryption programs.

Max reached into the wound and yanked out the heart, the back half of which was mangled by John's bullet's path. She held the heart up to the lights, squeezing it slightly, her hands covered in dripping gore. She pinched a spot twice then looked towards Pete, "yeah, he's got something, probably a biomonitor."

"You, you can feel the tag?" Lovage said, her back still to the horrific scene.

"Honey, those hands feel everything," Alex laughed and Max winked back at the burly troll.

"I'm finding three data streams for his comm., one input, two out."

"Bet the one's from his heart," Alex said.

"And one out to Doc Wagon," Max replied.

"And the third to his employer," Pete finished.

"You think Ares is going to go light on us?" Alex said with sarcastic glee, "seeing as how John killed their Johnson with one of their own guns."

"Not now, Alex," Pete said and motioned for everyone to get out of the warehouse, "you should clean up in the bathroom, Max."

"Like anyone will notice lil'old me," she said wiping the sweat from her brow and leaving a streak of blood across her forehead.

But Pete didn't hear her; he just watched Whiskey John's shadow disappear out the front door and paraphrased the man's own words under his breath, "the fuck don't deserve to live."