

Job Satisfaction

-a Capital Infiltration story-

Vodo Biask Taldrya

“Mr Head, I’m pleased to see you”, by all appearances the Twi’lek male seated at the table was nondescript and drew no attention other than he was impeccably well-dressed.

By contrast the Human man who took a seat across from him was dressed more casually, sporting a day old shadow of a beard on his face, and clothes that suggested he was more at home in a popular bar than a high-end restaurant, “Biask.”

Vodo smiled pleasantly, his illusory face far more comely than the one he’d been born with but with all the dignity and easy grace he’d learned, “You might not like me Mr. Head but you like my credits well enough.”

“Frell you”, Richard Head leaned forward, grabbing a roll from the basket on the table and tore into it, “You’re right though. After what you pulled on Agora I didn’t think I’d be hearing from you so soon...”

Vodo took a sip from the caf before him, taking care not to appear as though the man’s ill manners bothered him, “Yes, well circumstances dictated I contact an expert. For all your, shall we say, shortcomings you’re certainly good at what you do.”

Richard’s self-satisfied grin did nothing to shake Vodo’s outward composure but he was reminded why he so often considered snapping the man’s neck.

The Man flagged a server, an actual being and not a droid in an establishment such as this, “Corellian Whiskey, double measure, on the rocks. Stir it a bit.”

“Before noon?” Vodo took another sip of his caf, no stranger to the Corellian liquor himself.

“I don’t take much notice of the rules, it’s why I’m so good at what I do”.

Richard Head was a Taldryan Secret Intelligence Service operative, a Cipher. He operated independently of oversight and official support so that any and all traces that could be linked back to the Clan were entirely disavowable. He had his own credit accounts, ran his own affairs, only received mission goals from his handlers. How he achieved those goals was entirely up to him so long as the mission was achieved. Vodo liked individuals who could be trusted to do their

jobs without his micromanagement. Tools had a purpose but they had to be actively directed to be of any benefit. He had enough tools but Richard Head was something else. Richard was a solution.

“You’re here so you must have what I requested”, the Twi’lek indicated to the server, who had returned with the drink, that he’d take one as well.

“I do.”

“Well?”, Vodo again reminded himself of this man’s value, tempering his growing impatience.

Richard swirled the amber liquid in the clear rocks glass before lifting it to his nose and inhaled deeply, “Oh, this is the good stuff.”

“Mr. Head, my patience with you is not infinite despite the considerable leeway I show you”, Vodo all but snatched the delivered drink from the Server who had come baring his own glass of Whiskey.

“I like pushing your buttons, Biask”, Richard held out his drink towards the Twi’lek and they touched glasses in salute before taking their first sips, “Yeah, I took care of the job.”

Vodo smiled pleasantly, “Good. You have your report prepared?”

“You know I hate those things right? Some bureaucrat, who will never read it, slaps a code on it and files it away where no one will ever read it.”

“That bureaucrat”, Vodo sneered emphasizing that he was that man, “requires those reports to ensure that your actions reflect your orders and the outcomes our ends. However, let me put it to you this way: Its how I determine if you get a bonus or not.”

Richard Head slid a small datadisc across the table discreetly and resumed nursing his drink. Vodo took the disc, palming it nimbly and continued nursing his own, “Very good. I will wire you the funds in a few days via a shell company by the name of Jorsec Holdings.”

Richard threw the rest of his drink to the back of his throat and stood, “A pleasure, as always.”

Denon was the sort of place he liked. An ecunopolis, it was as ancient as Coruscant, and nearly important to Galactic affairs. It had its own flavor, its own distinct identity broken into millions of independent varieties depending on where you found yourself on the planet, on what level you

were in, and with whom you were with. It was easy to lose yourself here and easier to get lost. Blending in meant merely adopting any number of generic styles made easier by the fact there were thousands to choose from. On a world of hundreds of billions even the rarest of beings became almost common.

Richard Head hummed a catchy tune to himself as he verified the payment had gone through. The Quarren in front of him waggled its face tentacles appreciatively and bowed his head before heading away. People hustled for any credit they could make on countless worlds in the galaxy but never so hard, or with as much creativity, as they did in world-cities like this. There was something about the anonymous nature of growing up in and around so many people that made it easier for the entrepreneurial to explore every avenue of profiting. It didn't hurt there were any number of ways to spend those profits when the world itself never really closed.

He wasn't even in the sleaziest neighborhood. He was sitting at a cafe on the top level of the city in broad daylight enjoying the cool but comfortable wind. Across the street, separated by a chasm hundreds of meters deep and 50m across, was an office building. It was trendy, having been recently renovated to keep up with modern tastes and sported a new sign across the top of its spire. It wasn't the tallest building in this part of Denon, not even close, but it was distinguished and attractive. The building would be a site any corporate boss, or franchised goon, would be proud to call his place of business.

Countless hours of footwork had lead him here. He'd paid off slicers to narrow down the location of Capital Enterprise here on Denon. AIN had provided the planet but the Inquisitorus's intelligence had been wanting in specifics. The Slicers had pinpointed two corporate banks on the world that seemed to handle the bulk of CE's transactions, laundering it and making it into clean credits to spend on legitimate functions. Richard, who often went by the nom de guerre Dick, had then spent a few days surveilling the top men of the banks, paying off disgruntled employees and some more of the city's entrepreneurs before he moved on one Banker in particular. The man, an Alsakan, had been completely taken off guard at the tall intruder in his luxurious penthouse atop the Bellfont Skyscraper in Denon's affluent Golden Bee district. Dick extracted some useful information from the man by insinuating that some fairly gruesome methods could have been employed to get the answers he needed. The man spilled his secrets and promptly threw himself from the expansive patio ringing the top of the three-hundred storey tower he bragged to everyone about paying too much for.

One less rich asshole in the Galaxy wouldn't hurt anyone. Richard doubted he'd felt much of anything when he'd finally hit the ground. The Banker's secrets had lead him to this building. The name across the top said Golon & Feers which he had determined through various means was a shell company created by Capital Enterprises to further obscure their connections to the credits flowing through Denon's ample financial markets. The best he could make out, CE had close to five similar ventures on-world and they conducted business independent, and unaware, of one-another so that no one company could ever draw so much attention as to bring scrutiny against it. These Capital Enterprise jerks were thorough, Dick gave them that.

He took a drink from the cup on the table before him, a local variety of caf mixed with a creamy liqueur, and checked the watch on his wrist. He had more than enough time. He stood, buttoning the suit jacket he'd dawned for this role, one handed and finished his drink with the other. He hailed a hover-taxi and directed it to take him a mile down the chasming airway-street from which he crossed to the other side and caught a second taxi back up the street. It deposited him in front of Golon & Feers and he spent a brief moment examining his surroundings for signs he was under observation or worse.

Seeing none he entered the building and approached the lobby security counter, "Devin Sax to see Chesik Derr."

The security guard glanced him up and down, bored, and checked a list of expected appointments for the day, "Yes sir. Take the turbolift to the 32nd floor. The secretary will assist you from there."

Sure enough an attractive Twi'lek female was waiting for him when the doors to the lift opened, "Good day Mr. Sax. Welcome to Golon and Feers. Mr. Derr will be with you shortly, can I get you something to drink in the meantime?"

He flashed her a handsome grin, "Why yes. I'll take a Corellian Whiskey on the rocks. Stir it would you, sugar?"

The smile she returned him was genuine and interested and he watched her with his own genuine interest as she walked away, her hips swaying hypnotizingly in the svelt emerald green business dress she wore. It off-set the light red of her skin and heightened the beauty she was no doubt chosen for. Chesik Derr, his thieving, conniving and underhanded business practices aside, knew what he was about. Dick didn't hold it against the man, he did business with others who were just like him or worse on a weekly basis. One being's crooked financier was another's vulnerable asset. That was the business he was in.

The Twi'lek returned with a small rocks glass with a few measures of amber liquid and led him to a plush lobby furnished richly with smart, modern furniture in the Denoneese style. It was a few minutes before he was finally greeted by the CEO of Golon & Ferrs's Denon branch, Chesik Derr, but Richard soon found himself in the man's generous office. Transparisteel walls encased the room on three sides allowing views of the surrounding skyline and giving the impression the office was outdoors itself.

"Hello Mr. Sax. It's a pleasure to finally meet you in person. A great pleasure, in fact", Derr was a Duros of some stature, taller even than Richard who was tall for most Human men, "I have to say my business partners and I were quite interested in your investment proposal and I would like to extend our hand to seal the deal."

Richard took the man's hand with his right, the left held the glass still, "I did much research before settling on your company. The competition didn't have, let's say... your creativity."

"Yes, well we do specialize in creative applications of the law", the Duros chuckled to himself, believing he was with a customer who wished to invest a great deal of credits with him to be laundered into off-world accounts in a unique, and entirely invented, scheme involving local software production futures.

"Before we get into the particulars, perhaps you could show me around the operation?", Richard could be very charming when he wanted to be, one of the reasons he'd initially been selected for Cipher training-- his proven lethality aside.

The Duros's enormous eyes glittered as though he were a child, excited to show off a beloved toy, "Yes, yes of course. This way."

The tour was lengthy, nearly an hour long, but it soon came to the heart of the operation. Mr. Derr led Richard into the Server room, "We can process 18 billion accounts and their transactions through here every month. Our machines hold secure nearly 73 quintillion units of data for our clients entirely out of reach of the New Republic, the Denon Federal Government, or Hutt Slicers. Your credits, and your information, will be safe here with us."

"Very impressive. So you protect all data of your clients here?" Richard's eyes landed on a terminal against the wall, "How is it physically protected against, say, an intruder?"

The Duros scoffed, "You hardly have to fear anything like that. Not only does Golon and Feers keep a very low profile this room is protected by redundant security systems. The Guards you met downstairs are hired from the galactically-accredited Crimson Corps. There are force fields on each floor as you exit the turbolifts. The walls, ceiling, and floor of this room are made of warship grade durasteel and should an intruder actually make it this far... Well the flame jets should make short work of them."

Richard Head, or rather Devin Sax, returned the alien's self-pleased smile, "It would only make sense to keep the number of people who can control the security systems to a minimum."

"Right you are", Mr Derr placed a palm against his chest where his heart was, "Which is why I am the only partner of this branch with full access."

"Very good", Richard allowed the small holdout blaster up his sleeve to fall into his palm before pointing at the face of the Duros, "You'll kindly deactivate those features now or my first shot will be somewhere painful."

Shocked the Duros stared at him momentarily, "Mr. Sax? Wh-what is the m-meaning of this? You cannot do this!"

Richard glanced at the watch on his wrist and calculated the time left till things started getting too hot. He dropped the barrel of the blaster into the soft of the Duros's shoulder and fired once. The blast cauterized a hole into the flesh there, its retort muffled by the muzzle's proximity to the target. Mr. Derr screamed in pain but shut up when the butt of the pistol knocked him across the head.

"Once more. You'll deactivate the security systems, now, or I'll shoot you. Oh, you might want to do it before those flame jets activate too", Richard wiped some of the blood off Chesik's head where his blow had lacerated him and cleaned it off on the alien's finely tailored suit, "Go on."

Chesik Derr climbed to his feet, clutching the hole in his shoulder with his other hand and wandered to the terminal. His shoulders hunched when he felt the barrel on the back of his head and Richard's voice in his ear, "Nothing crazy now. You'll die before I do should anything unexpected happen..."

The Duros nodded and got to work slowly with his one working arm on the keyboard. A minute later he spoke, "Its done."

Glancing around the alien's large head he confirmed the physical security systems were indeed deactivated on all floors, though an alarm was going off presumably at the guard station downstairs. That would have started when he'd fired the first shot a little over a minute ago. Pleased he turned the alien around and spent a moment straightening Chesik's lapels and tie.

"You'll let me go now?"

"No." The blaster retorted, catching the alien in the belly and once more when he'd hit the ground to ensure he died quickly.

Richard wasted no time grabbing the spike the Quarren had delivered to him earlier from his pocket and rammed it into the terminal. Immediately the screen showed distortions and new dialogue boxes as foreign subroutines implanted themselves and began to establish themselves. A countdown bar showed its progress though each second ticked by like an eternity. Finally the spike finished its work and Richard inserted a Datachip to the terminal and downloaded the files specified by Lord Biask.

Finished at the terminal he fired several bolts into it until it sparked and smoked in smoldering ruins. He reached into his own suit jacket and retrieved a small pair of disks. He clicked the single button on each and tossed them haphazardly onto the data server itself. Seconds later blue arcs of electricity danced over the machine and it too sputtered and sparked until the disks expent themselves. The Server would be worth more as scrap now. Three minutes had elapsed and it was past time he was gone.

He ran from the server room, firing bolts at a few of the faces he saw poking their heads out of executive offices until he returned to Chesik Derr's glorious glass paneled office. Standing towards the back he covered his face and aimed his small blaster at the leftmost pane, the one that overhung other buildings and not the sidewalk below. He wasn't a monster. The holdout blaster screeched five times before the transparisteel shattered and plummeted to the ground far below. Richard raced to the edge and looked out, his left hand on the sill of the wall to steady himself in the wind that suddenly whipped into the office.

His watch buzzed and he slapped it, activating the holo-reciever, "Where the frak are you?"

The woman on the other end shrugged, "There was traffic. I'll be pulling up in probably two minutes."

"This is coming out of your cut", he snarled.

Richard could hear shouting in the hall beyond the office's door. Presumably Security had finally gotten its act together and was preparing to storm the office. He would have bet serious credits they would be heavily armed and probably armored as well considering the Crimson Corps was one of many legitimate fronts of the criminal Crimson Dawn empire. He bent down, lifted his pant leg and pulled a second holdout blaster from its holster and stood with both weapons leveled at the door. The shouting died down and things became eerily quiet.

"Mr. Sax, this is your only chance. Surrender now and you'll be handed over to Denon Police", announced a modulated voice from beyond the office's door.

Richard looked around for any advantage he could leverage but the office, though finely decorated, was bare of anything significant enough to block military grade weaponry, which he had no doubt lay beyond that door, "Don't come in! I'm armed!"

There was no reply but neither did they immediately storm in. That was just fine, all he had to do was buy one more minute. Shadows under the door suggested that he had less than that however. Fair enough. Acting under what one of his combat instructors in the Taldryan Army's Special Operations Directorate had called violence of action, Richard poured scarlet energy into the wood paneled door. His holdout blasters weren't so strong as to punch through the door and into the men beyond but were strong enough that they did pierce it and did startle the Security Forces on the other side into temporarily retreating.

He leapt over to the desk, grabbing a useless ornament, and scrambled over to the door where he threw it open briefly and hurled it down the corridor, "Farewell assholes!"

The men in the corridor jumped for cover as the object flew towards them, afraid it was a thermal detonator. Richard slammed the door shut again after sending a few more shots towards the guards. He went over to the sill again and looked out, still not seeing his rescue.

She was really late now. Voices from the corridor cursed him and his stupid ploy, several blue blaster bolts returned through the door after them. From the corner of his eye he saw it, the speck of a black hover car seperating from the traffic above and circling down towards him. Behind him the corridor went quiet once more.

"Frell", Richard turned to the door and again raised both blasters and held them level at the door.

The wood exploded inward, shattered by the force of the breaching device. Armored men followed after it with practiced precision. Richard Head poured bolts into the men, catching the first two under the helmet in the neck. The third was leveling his weapon on Richard when he hesitated. How could he not when the man simply fell backward out of the building. Richard landed a meter or two below the sill in the backseat of a convertible air speeder.

"Go, go, go! Fraking go!" he screamed at the woman in the driver's seat.

She punched the throttle and off the speeder raced as pot shot blaster bolts knicked its rear fascia. Richard laughed enthusiastically with the joy of life filling his body as he got away scott free. He loved this job.

Vodo Biask Taldrya closed the desktop terminal and sat back in his plush office chair aboard the *Karufu Knight*. He was never sure how much of the Cipher's reports were fiction and how much were merely self-inflated. Surely he hadn't just walked into an office building, murdered a man, stolen the documents, and left from a 32nd floor window by trust-falling. He suspected the man did this intentionally to mock the very thing the reports represented: oversight.

One day Vodo would teach Agent Head a very valuable lesson in mocking him. Others had learned this lesson long ago, Jedi and Sith of great power and prestige had been humbled before his machinations yet this overtrained simian persisted in making jokes at his expense. Vodo's lip curled as he turned his nose up at the thought of it but he would wire the Cipher his bonus. He did good work and good work deserves reward. Besides, there was no reason to throw away the man's usefulness just now. His day would come in its own time.

Pressing a button on his desk he activated a holonet transmission which was soon picked up, "Lord Voice, it's a pleasure to speak with you once more. I have some documents, recently procured from Capital Enterprises, which would be of great interest to you."

