

The Gypsy Chronicles Part I Farsight

Footsteps echoed off the damp stone walls as we made our way down the long, dimly lit corridor towards the innermost portion of our installation. Entering through the heavy sewer door into Regux's quarters, the spectacled man known as Regux, or by his alias 'Rigel', rose from his chair with a wide grin; "Well done, comrades"

Salus huffed past, brushing my shoulder rather brazenly as he approached the navigator's console. "This was but a minor reproduction station! Regux, please tell me. Why must we dabble in this filth when we accomplish naught but minor victories?"

The thin, pale navigator moved towards the two of us, nervously pushing his spectacles back up his nose, his broad smile gradually lessening into a grimace under the force of Salus's frustration. "Salus, you must understand-"

"You must understand that should we move too quickly we will risk bringing the wrath of the gypsy shamans upon us before we are fully prepared." I interrupted, causing Regux a look of relief at the unexpected reprieve. "If we attract the gypsy's attention, before we are ready, the results could prove disastrous." I was relieved to see that Regux nodded in agreement as I spoke.

Salus shook his head, his features betraying his anger as he spoke. "We must act now! Everyday the gypsies grow stronger! Each day their taint spreads wider and more and more people become corrupted by their influence. I will not stand idly by another day and watch as the gypsies grow stronger!" To emphasize, Salus slammed his fist down onto the desk, rattling the assorted empty bottles and computer equipment that littered the surface.

Regux scratched his head slowly, as though visibly pondering Salus's words, brow furrowed in thought. Seconds later, he clapped his hands together loudly, a look of excitement evident on his face. "Actually, I did find a good target for you a while back," he said, turning one of the large computer monitors towards us. An image of a corporate building flashed on the display suddenly, it was several stories tall with large letters 'CIN' adorning the top of the rectangular building. Regux pointed to the image triumphantly, "This is the Central Information Network regional headquarters. They process much of the intelligence and well... information for lack of a better word, which comes through this area. If we hit it we could severely cripple the gypsy's hold over this region." Regux shifted his feet slightly, looking at me and Salus gravely before continuing; "Unfortunately, it's going to be a tough nut to crack. There's a security detachment stationed in the facility at all times and all are members of a private firm meaning-"

I interrupted Regux again, this time earning a slight glare from the pale man. "Meaning we're going to have to be as non-lethal as possible."

By the time the words had passed my lips I had already mentally prepared myself for the irked look on Salus's face at my remark. This would not be the first time we had disputed each other's methodology in this regard; "These people are tainted, if they stand against us they are not worthy of our consideration." He said, "we should put them out of their misery; it would be a better end than allowing them to continue to serve under the gypsies." Salus folded his arms, as though challenging someone to question his logic.

I shook my head, "I do not feel like discussing this now, Lord Op. Perhaps another time, but for now, we shall use lethal force only when necessary."

Salus exhaled deeply, looking at me and then to Regex before conceding. "Very well, I shall restrict myself... for now." He conceded, unfolding his arms slowly. "But should things become dangerous," he continued, producing and cocking his sidearm, "and they will regret their decisions."

Regex clasped his hands together, moving past Salus behind the desk. "Great, well I'll get the data uploaded to your comm. bands. ASAP." The navigator said, rapidly typing in commands on the keyboard. After a moment the image of the office building zoomed in on one particular floor; the solid glass exterior of the building suddenly replaced with translucent blue lines representing the building's interior. "Now we believe that there may be some gypsy officials meeting here over the next few days, if we move in then we'll be able to kill two birds with one stone."

I glanced at Salus, judging by the expression on his face I could tell he was thinking the same thing I was- by hitting the information center we would be able to severely cripple the gypsy's ability to deal with future operations yet at the same time send a strong enough message.

A faint grin spread across Salus's face and I couldn't help but do the same as I spoke; "just tell us when, we'll be ready."

We had been watching the street for several hours now from an unmarked van we'd parked on the topmost story of an adjacent parking structure. From here we had an excellent vantage point of the surrounding area as well as our target in question; the CIN headquarters.

Salus exhaled deeply, handing the binoculars to me. "This waiting... it bothers me. How much longer must we sit here?"

I took the binoculars, shaking my head. "I don't know, Salus. Regex will let us know when to move. Until then, we must be patient." However, inside I was asking the same thing, the wait was nervewracking and sooner or later a guard or pedestrian would bring unwanted attention on us which would force an abort.

It was then that static cracked over our comm. Bands in unison; static shattered the silence that had enveloped us both over the past few hours causing us both to reflexively jump. Salus looked towards me with an irked expression, as though simultaneously annoyed that he had been surprised by the sudden noise and that I had been there to witness it. Regardless, he moved on quite quickly; "Regex?"

The navigator's high voice filled the speakers, replacing the static. "Confirmed, you have the green light. Repeat, mission is a go."

"Perfect." Salus whispered, slapping a clip of tranq-rounds into his pistol. I followed suit, slipping a few clips of tranquilizer rounds for my pistols into my overcoat pockets. Salus opened the driver side door and opened the rear doors; I followed him to the back of the van, helping him take the two cases out of the back. We carried them to the barrier which overlooked the building, opening the case to reveal several pieces of equipment which Salus quickly set to work on assembling into an assault rifle. Screwing on the grappling attachment, he took aim, arcing the shot to take into account gravity. With a dull thump he fired. The grapple flew across the divide and hit its target dead on; the hook cracking the obsidian looking glass as it found purchase in the masonry underneath.

Unhooking the attachment from the rifle, he activated the adhesive padding on its side and slammed it down onto a nearby pillar, tugging on it several times before unhooking a small runner and attaching it to the cable. As he worked, I had begun assembling my own rifle, quickly loading the sniper with the low caliber sniper rounds. Salus stepped up on the top of the barrier, slinging his rifle over his shoulder before giving me a nod. Without a second's hesitation, Salus was off, travelling down the zipline to the building at a tremendous speed.

Taking aim, I fired off two rounds into the glass causing it to shatter seconds before Salus reached the building; granting him an opening into the building. I emptied the clip and quickly replaced it with another from my overcoat pocket. Peering through the sight, I couldn't help but shake my head; Salus had wasted no time in getting to work. Already there were over a dozen comatose workers sprawled across the office floor. He had taken cover behind a large upturned mahogany desk which looked as though it was taking quite a beating from the few security personnel who had responded to the sudden threat.

"You've got four contacts on your six reloading.... now". I whispered into my comm. Band.

Salus popped his head up, popping off a quick burst that took two of the guards off their feet. The remaining two, having finished reloading began firing wildly, causing Salus to duck back behind the safety of the desk.

Sighing, I radioed my partner, trying to keep the annoyance out of my voice. "Distraction standing by." I shot off a pair of rounds past the guards; close enough that the whizzing bullets would scare them a bit. My distraction seemed to work; one of the men dove to the ground while the other, apparently thinking that his partner had taken a hit turned tail and ran. I keyed my comm. Band once more, "you have the green light."

Salus sprang up, firing a short burst into the man lying prone on the floor before he had time to react before putting the last of the clip into the back of the fleeing guard. Seeing only several cowering workers he discarded the spent clip and slammed a fresh one home before disappearing deeper into the bowels of the building.

As though on cue, I heard Regux through my comm. band, his voice terse. "Move! Take out the target ASAP."

With Salus out of visual range, I swung the rifle up to the office building where the targets was supposedly meeting. Sure enough, a few very alarmed looking men were moving about the large forum room in an agitated manner. It was then that I saw the gypsy: he was standing amidst them looking out the window down at the large square where the falling glass had caused quite the commotion. I allowed a grin to spread on my face as I scoped in on the abomination; *May you burn for eternity, daemon*. The round impacted clean through the gypsy's skull; passing through with incredible speed, splattering the stunned officials with a shower of crimson gore.

Regux's voice rang over my band, "Quickly, Salus needs your help! Get to the server room, stat!"

Without a second's thought I slung my rifle over my shoulder and slapped on another runner to the cable, taking a deep breath before kicking off the divider. The trip took no longer than a few seconds yet seemed to take forever as I looked down at the gaping crowd that had assembled below. Then, in an instant I was inside the building; the same place where Salus had entered through earlier. I was surrounded by the unconscious

bodies of 'CIN' employees as well as upturned office furniture and a sea of shattered glass.

As I walked further into the building the sound of howling wind became drowned out by the screeching alarms and I could barely make out Regux when he pinged me over my comm. Band; "Get to the server room. Salus is pinned down." There was a pause and I could vaguely hear the navigator tapping commands into the keypad, "Continue on for ten meters, there should be a stairwell on your right. Take it down three stories. Be aware, Salus has reported the gypsy had guards... they've mingled with the security personnel and they're heavily armed. Use lethal force if you have to."

I huffed my way past the desks towards the stairwell which was just where Regux had said it would be. "Understood; Farsight out."

As I moved down the stairs I pulled out my pistols; my rifle was of no use to me now and although I didn't have tranquilizers equipped in them the fact that the gypsy had brought guards had complicated things greatly to the point where I felt it justifiable to use live ammunition.

Upon arriving at the floor Regux had indicated I was immediately assaulted by the sound of sporadic gunfire. A quick glance to the directory sign that said DATA STORAGE confirmed I'd arrived at my destination. Taking action, I put two rounds into the bolt and another into each of the hinges before stepping back and kicking the door down. Expecting a hail of bullets to greet me threw myself back into the stairwell behind the nearest wall. When none came I poked my head out to see a room full of dark, blinking, servers but no combatants, however, I quickly noticed definite signs of battle; lines of bullet holes trailed up and down the room, some of the servers had been completely destroyed, detritus covered the floor, and there was more than one hole from a grenade detonating. I couldn't help but laugh as I moved deeper into the room towards the sound of gunfire. *Seems that Salus had some help in his mission, they've done more damage than even he could have done on his own.*

After the server room I came to a glass divider where I saw two figures bent down over a metal briefcase. They were twisted, distorted beings whose features were a smattering of randomness which hurt the retinas just to look at: gypsy foot soldiers; the peons of the gypsy machine. I placed two rounds into both their skulls before they knew what had ended their pitiful existence and moved on down a narrow hall. I came upon several other gypsy foot soldiers as I advanced deeper into the structure, all of which I dispatched with ease. I did note that there were several 'CIN' guards smattered about, all killed from lacerations which looked to have been caused by claws or fangs which led me to believe that for some reason or another they had fallen victim to their gypsy overseers. Although it did trouble me I had grown accustomed to the vile ones' barbarisms and for better or worse became numb to their crimes.

The sound of gunfire had grown to a fever pitch at this point and I suddenly found myself face to face with an exceptionally large gypsy soldier. A startled grunt escaped the deformed orifice that I assume had once been his mouth. I brought my pistols up under the beast's jaw and squeezed off a round straight through his cranium; a spray of gore showering my clothes much to my dismay. Unfortunately, the bullet had failed to get the job done because the peon just roared and threw me to the floor with a massive sweep of the hand. As he reared back for a charge I managed to unload the remainder of my rounds into the beast before he could reach me. Nonetheless, I rolled out of the way just in time;

his momentum from the charge carried him past me through the drywall into another room. I shook my head and reloaded my weapons, moving to the next room only to be greeted by gunfire. Several peons had overturned tables and were busy firing wildly into the general direction of what I assumed was Salus hiding behind a doorway.

Unfortunately my spat with the giant had tipped the remainder of the peons as to the new threat I posed and they had acted accordingly. Luckily, I had kept a few grenades on my belt and wasted no time in using them. I pulled the pins on the whole lot of them before hurling them through the doorway off the opposite wall. There was a brief shriek that preceded a deafening explosion as the gypsies inside met their end.

As the smoke cleared, I moved through the gore splattered halls into the next room only to discover Salus with a blade to my throat. His eyes grew wide with surprise and he quickly removed the weapon, putting it back into its sheath. The room was filled with gypsy corpses and spent casings and the air was pinged with the smell of gunfire.

I looked at Salus for a moment, "Is it done?"

The look he gave me as he waved the detonator in the air was a mixture of almost almost comical hurt and irritation. "What do *you* think?"

I shrugged. "Right."

Moments later, the building shook as several dozen explosives detonated in sequence, destroying much of the sensitive monitoring and data storage equipment; greatly reducing the 'CIN' building's abilities for months to come. As the authorities scrambled to scene no one noticed as two figures disappeared into a dark alleyway.