



## Vince's Hunt for Housing

<b>Mission title:</b>	<i>Vince's Hunt for Housing</i>
<b>Mission log:</b>	1-05, Vince
<b>Mission Johnson:</b>	
<b>Mission reward:</b>	
<b>Participants:</b>	Vince

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## 1-05: While the cat's away...

“Dammit!” The outburst was low, but intense. The augmented troll pressed his palms down on dr. Farsight’s table as he rose to his full height. Protesting, the table sagged under the weight enough that the pocket secretary moved slightly. The table groaned, but stayed solid. Vince stretched, feeling the pop-pop-pops in his spine. Jinx murmured in her sleep, and hugged her pillow tighter still.

He always got antsy when there wasn’t enough action to feed his body. Frustration made it worse. And now, for the first time in quite some time, Vince was frustrated. Tremendously so. Why was it so hard to find a new place for the team to hang out in? And why didn’t the team realize that they all *needed* to find a new doss?

The others seemed content enough to be lollygagging around Dirty Nelly’s whenever, and then just up and going back to their separate squats when the beer nuyen ran out. Couldn’t they *understand* that they were going up against some really nasty drek? At least they were out now, delivering that stuff to the Johnson.

First, there was this business with the crates. Straightforward enough, but the neural tissue technology that was running the pocket secretaries *inside* the crates was something else. It felt deeply *wrong*, somehow, that ordinary slags were turned into RAM and CPU for commercial purposes. Selling someone’s organs was one thing. Recycling. This was ... something else. Vince didn’t have much left of anything resembling morals. But this, this set his teeth on edge.

Then, there was this business with the guy with the plague breath. The tank with the worms was bad enough. The living lock that had *oozed* when he broke it, even worse. And the casual calmness with which the rest of the team took it – in stride, so to speak – was really needling him. He didn’t think his body had caught the plague bug, whatever it was that was riding Jinx and Cogwhistle. Vince was even worried about her, particularly now that she had made a seemingly full recovery. Tattoos, appearing from nowhere? And Dr. Farsight, wondering about tag nanites?

They definitely needed a new doss, a new place to stash gear, a new place that they could fortify. Divided, they would fall. Together, they might stand. And, obviously, it would reduce the risk for *his* hideout. The others just weren’t used to the biz. They thought he was paranoid. Perhaps. But if you don’t plan for others to be gunning for you, your hoop would be fragged so bad it would take a team of proctologists a week in diving suits to get the splints all out.

And now, another prime location had been snapped up from the bizboard by some other slag. “Dammit!” For punctuation, Vince popped the end of the bo stick through the empty box of takeout Chinese he had ordered, neatly making a big “O” where the face of the smiling Chinese cook was. Jinx was still lost to the world, and Cogwhistle was still comatose. Vince glanced at the cryptic but colorful medical readout on dr. Farsight’s wall. Everything looked normal, but then Vince didn’t have much to compare with in the first place.



With some satisfaction, he sat down again, putting the bo stick aside for now. Again, he pulled up the adverts, looking for a big enough place in a good enough place, for the right amount of nuyen. His fingers lightly caressed the oversize keys on his troll-adapted pocket secretary. He started scrolling through the posted ads again, refreshing the page with a rhythmic monotony. Somewhere, the perfect doss *had* to exist. It just *had* to be.

## 1-05: Options

Vince stared at his handiwork. He had carefully annotated five separate possible locations for their new headquarters of sorts. Jokingly, he'd even given the so far hypothetical team doss a name – Honbu. And if the others didn't see the funny, then so much the better.

His pocket secretary dutifully projected the options on the wall in front of him. Vince carefully adjusted the projection so that it didn't overlap Cogwhistle's medical readout in the slightest. Standing up was much better for his heavily muscled frame.

Carefully weighing the pros and cons that he'd found for each location, he fiddled with the ordering of the potential locations. He had to present this to the team, but he would have to make up his own mind first. Idly, he scratched one of his horns with the bo stick. It would be fairly expensive, but he thought it would be worth it.

**Vince really liked the first one.** It used to be an old Mom & Pop corner store, so it had a pretty roomy storage space. It even had some shelving and old goods hanging around that was "surplus to requirements", as the poster had said. Windows even had electronic tinting, and after-market armorplas in them.

It was still a brick building, though, and only one bathroom with a small shower. Situated in Renton, close to the border of the Redmond Barrens, it wasn't exactly in a high-value area – but Lone Star *did* do patrolling there. Occasionally. At 28k nuyen per month, one month up front, it wasn't *that* pricy. And that even included utilities "within reason", per the post.

**Vince wasn't sure about the second one.** It was almost too good to be true, which usually indicated that someone was trying to pull a fast one. It was an industrial warehouse in Auburn, right at the edge of the Puyallup Barrens. "Some cleaning needed", it said. Huge space, very little in inventory – and no utilities. It was a steal at 9k nuyen per month, no money up front.

**The third one wasn't bad either** – but situated in Snohomish, it was rather exposed. It was actually a small orchard, complete with farmland around it and a cozy little house, and located smack dab in the middle of ... well, Snohomish. The house was at least a hundred years old, and built from honest-to-God wood – and a deep basement made out of mortar and natural rock. It did have upgraded utilities, but Lone Star coverage was spotty at best. Not necessarily a bad thing, though. At 18k nuyen per month, one month up front, it wasn't all bad.



**Vince had almost struck out the fourth one several times.** It was, basically, a covered pier smack dab in Everett, close to downtown. At least they'd have easy access to water. But then again, it was easy access *from* the water as well. There was a mention of a "small" devil rat problem there. Didn't the little fraggers breathe water or something? Parazoology wasn't exactly Vince's strong suit. At 12k nuyen per month, no money up front – and no utilities – it was dirt cheap for its location. And that worried Vince.

**The fifth one. Hoo boy, the fifth one.** Vince really wanted that one. It had once been an auto shop, complete with the owner's living quarters on top, and it still had some of the hydraulics and everything. It was made out of sturdy concrete, and even had its own solar array on top, making them partially independent from the grid. Located just about where Tacoma, Auburn and Renton met, they weren't that far from anything – and though an industrial area, it still wasn't completely gang infested. It was expensive, though. 35k per month, no money up front.

Pros and cons. And what if the gang rejected all of them? Well, then it would be back to the drawing board, he guessed. Or, at least, his trusty pocket secretary.

## 1-05: The Waiting Game

He plugged the pocket secretary to the mains in order to recharge it. Jinx stirred slightly in her sleep. Vince leaned back on dr. Farsight's couch, glancing over to Cogwhistle's prone form. He was getting real worried about his stout friend. Somehow, he felt perhaps more connected to Cogwhistle than the rest of the people he had started running with. Strange.

Perhaps it was the magic – fascinating to Vince, and something that Cogwhistle was more than happy to demonstrate. Perhaps it was being physically different – human slugs and dandelion eaters didn't know how it felt not to fit in – and Vince was *too big*, and Cogwhistle was *too small*. Vince didn't know. He just hoped his chummer would wake up soon.

When he heard scratching at the door and startled awake, he realized that he had dozed off. Jinx was still sleeping. The door opened, and Vince moved his hand away from the bo stick when he saw Schneider, dr. Farsight and Ricardo coming in through the door. Schneider looked smug, and had her arms full of boxes that smelled *delicious*. Vince's stomach immediately growled, letting him know he hadn't eaten in a while.

"Food! Finally!" Startling Jinx awake, Vince still couldn't stop his outburst. His mouth salivating at the smell, he helped Schneider distribute the boxes. All of them sat down around dr. Farsight's dining table. All, except Cogwhistle...