



Trust Issues

or

Take Those Filthy Tatas Out of My Face

Mission title:	<i>Trust Issues or Take Those Filthy Tatas Out of My Face</i>
Mission log:	1-07
Mission Johnson:	
Mission reward:	2 karma
Participants:	Cogwhistle, Dr. Farsight, Jinx, Ricardo, Schneider, Vince

Table of Contents

1-07: A preamble.....	1
1-07: There's a time and a place for everything (usually college)	2
1-07: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, and the return of the prodigal troll	3
1-07: I'm a lighthouse, your call	4
1-07: Strange places, strange poo, strange spirits	5



1-07: A [preamble](#)

More or less as the rest of the crew sans Ricardo entered dr. Farsight's apartment, Cogwhistle came to. With a satisfied sigh, he stretched luxuriously and seemed quite *unalarmed* by the fact that he was in his birthday suit. Of course, being an Irish dwarf (none of that *Tuatha De Dannan poncy* stuff), he was quite hirsute. And red-haired. Some might say that he looked like an orangutan. Others would just call him – Cogwhistle.

As he was covered with baby oil, Cogwhistle started drying himself off with a [towel](#) that the nurse gimp had *liberated* from dr. Farsight's increasingly tortured bathroom. The sight didn't make dr. Farsight pause – he immediately examined Cogwhistle's vital signs closely. For some reason, the lengthy period that Cogwhistle had been comatose hadn't had any debilitating effect on him at all. To dr. Farsight's great exasperation.

This weird coma thing hadn't been working like medicine said it should *at all*. The rest of the group more or less unanimously decided to grant Cogwhistle his privacy, even though he was positioned fairly prominently in a corner of the living room. More or less at this instant, Vince's trusty pocket computer received a text message. Ricardo had recently touched down at the airport from his business trip to Germany, and was returning presently in his car to dr. Farsight's apartment.

There was a mess to be cleaned up. The nurse gimp was *obviously* excited to work with Cogwhistle's recently-limp body, but was pretty soon commandeered by Vince to help with the healing effort of the burn victims – Schneider, Jinx, and dr. Farsight.

The gimp, with his voice masked by cyberware making him sound like a [malfunctioning robot](#), immediately suggested that he should start out with checking out dr. Farsight. Vince quickly overruled this, and the gimp had to start with the icky ladies. With a sigh, he picked up the economy-sized bottles of baby oil and Aloe Vera that he had been using on Cogwhistle, and ushered the ladies into the bathroom.

Pretty soon, the sound of running water indicated that he had started with a thorough soaking. Ostensibly to soak through the ruined armor and clothes, so that it would stick less to the damaged skin as he carefully removed it using a combination of oil and latex-covered fingers.

In no time at all, the ladies were undressed and promptly covered in Aloe Vera followed by baby oil. The nurse gimp claimed this to be proper [burn protocol](#). Dr. Farsight didn't really care. The nurse gimp then revealed a hitherto unknown facet by revealing an extensive knowledge of hair care, primping and fussing with the hair of the ladies.

Vince declared that he would be off to Deadbeat, their armorer contact, in order to work up a new set of replacement armor for Schneider, Jinx, and dr. Farsight. He got the requisite measurements – and in the case of the ladies, directly from the nurse gimp, complete with digital recording and measurements indicated directly on the imagery.



Though the shots *were* recorded during the shower-based procedure to remove damaged armor and inspect the skin, it only *somewhat* managed to protect the modesty of the ladies. Vince did look through the data twice. To make sure he had gotten all the measurements he needed. Or so he loudly proclaimed before he left.

The gimp nurse added a few burn care items, mostly low-friction body stockings to protect what skin was left, as well as copious amounts of proper burn salve. Ricardo sent a wish list containing a few food items as well. Vince wondered whether he would help Ricardo enable that weird Chinese-German fusion that Ricardo seemed fond of.

Food was fuel for his body and he wasn't exactly a picky eater himself, Vince thought, but "Won Ton Strudel" or "Chow Mein Gott" seemed faintly... [perverse](#). Despite Ricardo's enthusiastic endorsement of it. Or perhaps exactly because of that.

Vince and Ricardo passed each other in the stair case leading to dr. Farsight's apartment, more or less just waving to each other as they passed. If Vince wondered about Ricardo's bags heavily laden with something that looked like presents, the huge troll didn't mention it.

1-07: There's a time and a place for everything ([usually college](#))

Ricardo opened the door to dr. Farsight's apartment with panache. And was promptly greeted by the sight of Jinx and Schneider, mostly skyclad, giggling and pressing into dr. Farsight's bedroom. Cogwhistle was sleeping quietly on his pallet, snuggled under a large, cozy beach towel. Somehow, the nurse gimp had ended up in the bedroom as well, and dr. Farsight seemed remarkably ... sanguine about it all – and somewhat bemused.

Ricardo made some weak protestations while temporarily blocking the door to the bedroom from closing. A very revealing kick to the door later – where the heel kick executed by Jinx had caused the towel she was wearing to mostly undo itself – and a somewhat flushed Ricardo had retreated to the kitchen.

He was busy looking through the shelves of the kitchen for ingredients to his favorite Chinese-German fusion. Despite what most others said, Ricardo genuinely thought that German and Chinese food culture could benefit from being joined together – or so he told himself as he was scrutinizing dr. Farsight's pantry. Pointedly trying to ignore the [sounds](#) coming from the bedroom – mostly fairly feeble protestations from dr. Farsight, and giggling from the women. "The lady doth protest too much, methinks", Ricardo thought as he heard yet another "no, really, I'm way too tired for this" from dr. Farsight.

It seemed unusual behavior for people with severe burns, Ricardo pondered. At least the nurse gimp was in there, keeping everything well oiled. With burns, it seemed prudent to be well oiled at all times, so that friction from clothes wouldn't exacerbate anything. Though clothing seemed quite optional in this case, Ricardo had to admit.



In less time than he had anticipated, but more time than he had thought given dr. Farsight's condition, the women came out of dr. Farsight's bedroom. This time clad in oversize t-shirts liberated from dr. Farsight's closet and giggling to each other as if sharing some secret joke. The nurse gimp made a "shh"-gesture, and closed the door to the bedroom. He then promptly went over to check on Cogwhistle, which was awake now and looking around with a slight smirk on his lips.

Despite wearing nothing more than a towel as a blanket and a smirk, Cogwhistle seemed supremely content where he was, wriggling his toes and watching trid while waiting for Vince to return and for stuff to start happening again.

1-07: Beware of Greeks bearing gifts, and the return of the prodigal troll

Ricardo distributed the gifts. For Vince, he uncovered a huge meat grinder. As the troll wasn't there, it was prominently displayed in the kitchen, with a snazzy little note proclaiming that German meat grinders were the best. For Schneider, an ultra-short dirndl. For Jinx, a model train. Cogwhistle got a large bottle of Schnapps. And for dr. Farsight, some real German sausage, a sausage link the length of Cogwhistle.

After some hinting that the German sausage was the *only* sausage that should be on display, Cogwhistle resignedly got some clothes on. The massage oil had mostly evaporated anyways, and the nurse gimp had washed his clothes too, so there wasn't any incentive not to be clothed.

A text message to Jinx heralded the imminent return of Vince. The text message was from Deadbeat, explaining some extras that he had thrown in when Vince had mentioned who needed the armor. While waiting for Vince to return, Jinx seemed happy enough playing with her train set while wearing the t-shirt liberated from dr. Farsight's closet. And not much more.

Schneider had squealed with glee over the dirndl, and had promptly put it on. As she still lacked underthings and other toiletries (Vince were supposed to pick up that stuff too), she seemed to delight in taunting Ricardo with almost-flashing him while coquettishly sitting on the sofa feigning ignorance to the display she was putting on.

Vince returned from the shopping trip, his arms full of bundles of armor, a rather large bag from a hypermarket nearby, a bag full of burn care items from a local pharmacy – and a small and very delicate bag of ... *delicates* from a rather exclusive chain. A new bo staff was on the troll's back, this one matte black with a strange, glass-like sheen to it when the light hit it right. "Dikoted metacarbonic bo staff", he explained to Ricardo's unvoiced question. "A pimp bo staff", countered Schneider with a lecherous grin.

Vince efficiently distributed the items, though he roughly proffered the bag with the delicates at Schneider rather than unpacking it specifically. It was hard to see through the dermal plating, but the augmented troll might be blushing.



The troll had apparently decided that a lady's underthings was best bought at a place specializing in such, and had gotten some items of clothing that a randy spider probably had woven together – at least judging from the size of the fabric and fineness of the copious amount of lace. In fact, one could argue that the undergarments mostly *were* lace.

In light of their recent behavior, the women decided that they would need some privacy for dressing up again. The two – and the gimp, of course – repaired to the bathroom again, and soon emerged again, clad in new cat suits, with a new coating of burn salve, new armor, and geared up with weaponry again.

About this time, dr. Farsight emerged from the bedroom, looking somewhat worse for the wear. Rather than rested from his ... more or less voluntary exercise and subsequent nap, he seemed gaunt, pale, and distant. He did put on his new armor, and reflexively checked his armaments with practiced, though absent-minded movements.

"I've got a place we should check out", said Vince. "Now that we're all together again," at this he looked pointedly at Ricardo, "I think we should proceed more vigorously with the plan of getting us a base of sorts. I've got a lead, but I think we all should go to this place to check it out – the location's great, but the price's too low, and I might miss whatever the catch is if I'm all by myself. Besides, this affects us all, so we should all be a part of that." The crew nodded assent.

"I'm not expecting any combat, and frankly I don't think we're in particularly good shape for that. Gimp, you're with me. Jinx and Schneider, we take Skidz. Cogwhistle and dr. Farsight rides with Ricardo." With that, the crew packed up and left.

Before they got into the cars, Vince distributed the comms again, explaining, "we have about 200m range under these conditions. My master unit has about a hundred times that if I run the comms repeater in my backpack, but I'd prefer not to do that. Let's stay in comms range at all times – and that includes the drive over to the place in Tacoma."

1-07: I'm a lighthouse, your call

About 10 minutes into the drive, a curt message came from Ricardo. "Damn traffic. I'm getting out of comms range now." And then the link went dead with digital abruptness.

Vince immediately took action. Fuming, he asked Jinx, "can you track them using your electronics equipment?" Fiddling with the stuff in her bag, she answered almost immediately, "I think they've turned around and are going back to dr. Farsight's apartment." Schneider nodded assent. "We're doing the same," Schneider said and promptly turned the wheel. Vince didn't say anything, but narrowed his eyes, scowling.

It was precisely these kinds of shenanigans that really were problematic during an op, and doing this now, during this *milk run* of all things was ... well, unforgivable. Vince sat there,



expressionless, only his white knuckled hands gripping his bo staff in his lap betraying any kind of emotion.

As Schneider pulled Skidz in front of dr. Farsight’s apartment, a delivery truck pulled out from the sidewalk. Ricardo was out on the sidewalk, pocketing something. Cogwhistle also stood there. Dr. Farsight sat in the front passenger seat of Ricardo’s Toyota Elite, with a severe and disapproving frown on his face. In contrast, both Cogwhistle and Ricardo seemed quite upbeat.



Vince rolled down his side’s passenger window on Skidz. With a growl in his voice, he asked, “Are you quite done with this silly business now?” Ricardo, despite being caught in his blatant attempt at lying, simply answered “Yes, we’re quite done now. By all means, let’s go to Tacoma.”

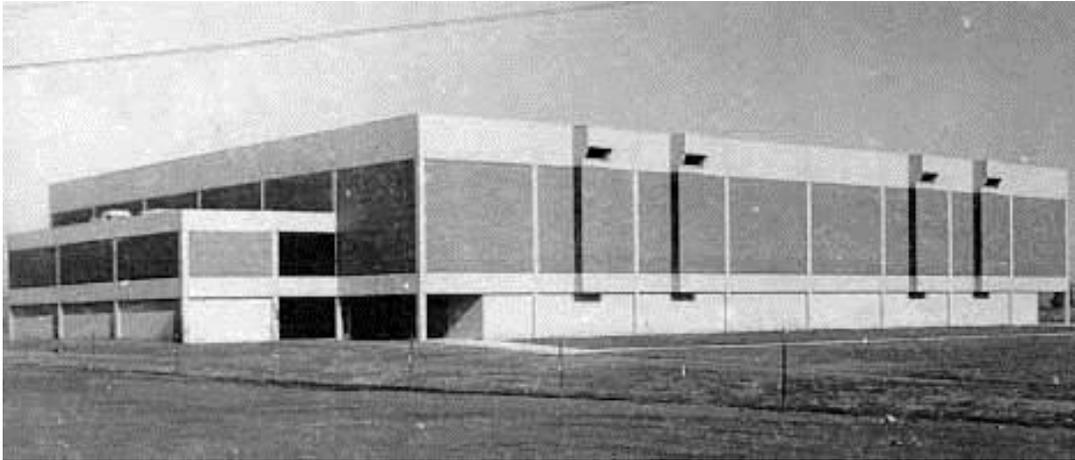
The abortive drive to Tacoma resumed. This time, there was no funky business, and both cars stayed in contact with each other. What damage this had done to the bonds of trust between the members of the crew might be apparent in time.

1-07: Strange places, strange poo, strange spirits

Vince was uncharacteristically slow out of Skidz, Schneider’s car. Usually, the huge troll was always fast, his augments belying the apparent slowness of his bulk. Not so this time. They had pulled up in front of a building in Tacoma. It most of all looked like a school’s physical ed building – a large, rectangular, concrete and steel building that had seen better days. The gleam



of a steel fire door and a fairly new acid-resistant keypad right next to it showed that though it had seen better days, the physical integrity of the building was still uncompromised. The small transparent globe of a wide-angle security camera was stuck so that it overlooked the entrance.



The building was a three story building, but only a few slit-like windows of polyacrylate let in some natural light. Though badly scratched, none were broken. The institutional-like faded sky blue color of the building itself combined with its dark teal concrete walls underlined its school-like purpose.

Vince indicated the security camera, securely encased in its little glass globe. “Jinx, you think you can check whether that is on or not?” Schneider whipped out her Mark 12 silenced semiautomatic pistol, starting to draw a bead on the camera. “Please.” Vince put a large, heavy hand on her arm. “Not unless we have to, and besides it’s too late now at any rate.” Reluctantly, Schneider put her favorite gun away. Jinx nodded to herself, and announced, “I think that camera’s active.” “Well, so it is, I guess.” Vince didn’t seem to be fazed by this piece of news.

Confidently, Vince walked over to the entrance and typed a long passcode. 299 792 458. Obliging, the door’s electromagnet disengaged with an audible clunking noise. He pulled the door towards himself, and it smoothly swung open – though heavy, it was well hung and the hinges well oiled – and the prodigious strength of the huge troll would have taken care of it even if it wasn’t.

They found themselves on a small landing. Directly in front of them, a pair of swinging doors led further into the building. A staircase led both up and down to their right. Jinx wrinkled her nose and said, “It smells like poo in here. But not normal poo – weird poo, like magic cat poo or something. Though it smells like water and sewage from downstairs.”

Hesitating for a moment, the crew milled somewhat uncertainly in the entrance and on the small landing. Vince broke the stalemate by boldly walking down the stairs. Another door – this one had its door pump snapped off, and was hanging slightly open – led into what looked like a



locker room. Further in, some showers were slightly drip-dripping, and the water bends in the sinks had long since dried up – allowing the eau du toilet to emerge from the sewers.

Disgusted, Ricardo flushed the toilets a couple of times, and let the sinks run for a few seconds each – until the rusted water ran clear. Though there was little immediate improvement in the smell, there was some relief to be found in the fact that over time, at least, the smell would fade.

A wide staircase further in led up one flight of stairs again. Deciding against using this, the crew decided to retreat back to the landing at the entrance. Again apparently finding his stride, Vince boldly slammed open the double doors leading further in from the entrance landing. It opened into a large space, likely a converted physical education hall.

From the high ceiling, a variety of long chains, steel wire and harnesses hung. Though used, they weren't very badly corroded. Along one short side of the hall, a small gallery ran along most of the length, protected from the rest of the hall by both a fairly sturdy gridwork of steel bars and polyacrylate sheets. Six security cameras were positioned in the ceiling, three to each side of the hall. "They're off, I think," Jinx said to Vince's unspoken question.

A pungent smell was apparent throughout the entire room. In the corners, one might imagine some remains of animal dung. And, if Jinx was to be believed, very *exotic* animal dung. In the middle of the room there was a large, square section of dark ceramic tile, faintly incongruous in contrast to the rest of the room.

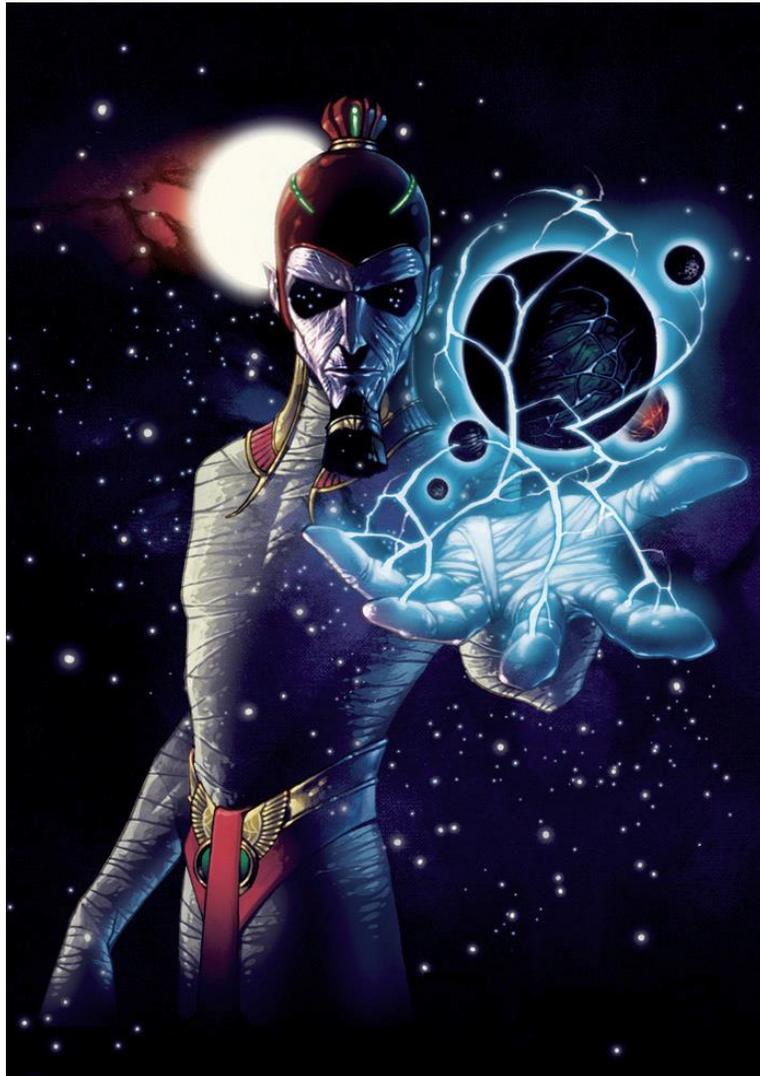
Jinx and Schneider looked around, and Schneider in particular stared at an apparently empty corner for several seconds before resuming her intent scanning of the room. Vince indicated the tiled square to Cogwhistle. "See anything weird?" he asked. Cogwhistle, concentrating for a moment, scrutinized the square. "No," he said. "There's a weak tracery of magic around the square, but I can't see anything that looks like an active effect or anything like that."

Schneider wandered off to the corner of the hall where she had done her double take, and stood there muttering to herself for a little while while craning her neck up and looking at a spot roughly in the middle of the wall. Vince took little notice of this. Again acting decisively, he strode confidently over to the tile floor, and sat down in the middle of it. "Come on," he said, waving the rest of the crew over. "Nothing to be scared of."

Schneider decided to stay where she was, continuing to talk to empty air. Cogwhistle gingerly entered the square, and stood beside the huge troll, warily eyeing his surroundings. Jinx walked over, carefree and with her grenade launcher casually at the ready. Dr. Farsight was last, with bow out and an arrow within easy reach. "I can see that the magic has started to pulse more vigorously, but it doesn't seem to do anything. Oh, and Schneider's talking to a strange spirit of some sort over there."



At this particular piece of news, Vince cocked an eyebrow. “Spirit?” he said quizzically. “Yes,” Cogwhistle said. “It looks like some sort of Spirit of Man, but looks different. I’d be guessing either a free spirit or an ally spirit. He seems quite friendly, and looks most of all like a small, emaciated man with a big head and these weird, really big, black eyes with stars in ‘em. Oh, and he doesn’t have any hair either, and is naked except for some strange, ornamented loincloth, a weird looking van Dyke beard, and a really ornamented hat.”



“Well,” Vince said. “A residing spirit may either be a boon or a problem. Anyways, now that we’ve checked this out, it’s time to leave.”

They all piled into their respective cars, the three men repairing to Ricardo’s Toyota Elite, and the huge troll and the two women going to Skidz. “Dirty Nelly’s?” Vince’s question boomed over the comms. Not waiting for an answer, Schneider pushed Skidz into gear and took off. “I guess the answer to that was ‘yes’, then” Vince said partially to himself and partially to the benefit of those in the other car.