

Chapter 22: Attack On Clinic

The first thing we did when we went inside the clinic was to head straight for the security control room. From the cameras within, we saw about a dozen masked men outside, all armed and wearing ballistic vests who were trying to enter our building. They were only waiting for their vanguard to finish prying open the front doors with a crowbar.

Meanwhile, at the back entrance, there were also two men there, but they didn't seem to plan to enter the building.

We ensured the turrets were ready for them as soon as they entered, while Thorne got geared up.

"Thorne, buy some time up front. I'll go flank them," I said before immediately leaving the room.

Instead of rushing straight out, I headed to my workshop and retrieved the body suit I had been working on. I changed into it as fast as I could. By the time I finished dressing, I heard multiple gunshots coming from the lobby.

Rushing over to one of the empty operating rooms, I popped open the window, activated my new suit, and climbed out into the parking lot. There wasn't any cover, but I boldly strode around the building toward the front.

I watched as the masked men took cover near the front, engaging Thorne and the turrets inside. In fact, I walked straight by them toward their cars behind them. They were only two SUVs, though each had a driver and a gunner manning a light machine gun on the roof of each vehicle.

It was time to test my new creation, so I opted to walk toward them, slightly away from where their guns were pointed, just in case.

I couldn't help but wave at them as I got closer to see if they would notice, and they didn't react. They were still focused on the building and its surroundings.

I looked down at my hands but only spotted it when I really focused on it while it was moving. There were still some kinks to work out as this was still a prototype and was more of a test of the application of some new tech.

At least it is good enough right now for them not to notice. It would be really awkward if they saw me...

Moving to their blind spots, I pulled out my trusty Suri and examined it. It seemed like it was working properly and the camouflage tech was projected onto it correctly, which meant it was invisible, like the rest of my body.

With the two cars right beside me, I lined up the shot at the man through the window and pulled the trigger, rapidly switching to the next targets.

The shattered glass drew the attention of the men in front of the clinic. They quickly took cover either behind cars or forcefully pushed into the clinic, where they had a foothold.

I started moving over to their flank where I could freely lay fired into several of them, but midway toward my destination, I noticed that the camouflage from my suit began to flicker.

Damn it, the battery and the projectors needed some time to cool off. I really should get around to linking the display of its remaining duration to the SAID so it could be displayed on my HUD. I could also add an alert when it was about to turn off.

Thankfully, the men in their cover hadn't spotted me. I had quite some experience sneaking around without the crutch of active camouflage, so I wasn't too worried. I returned to old habits and quietly moved when I knew their attention was directed elsewhere.

The few who had stayed outside were lined up from around the corner of the vehicle I was behind. I drew my other pistol this time, the Electra Force railgun that had much better penetration than the Suri. Though it wasn't suppressed, there was no need for that this time.

Releasing a deep breath, I carefully lined up as many targets as I could and fired the shot.

+10 EXP

+10 EXP

+10 EXP

The kick I got from the railgun was much stronger than the Suri, and it felt satisfying. The blaring sound of the projective breaking the sound barrier was almost unbearable. I really needed to get some auditory implants.

Of the five that I saw outside, three dropped down from my shot. The other two further away turned their gaze toward me as I finished pulling the trigger a second time.

+10 EXP

+10 EXP

With the experience prompts confirming that the threats were neutralized, I took a peek at the camera feeds connected to my optics to see how the situation was. As expected, Thorne was able to hold them off inside with the help of our defensive emplacements. The enemies weren't able to push in without heavy weapons to deal with the turrets.

With the last of them trapped like a fish in a barrel, I notified Thorne that I was in position. I watched as he pulled the pin to a grenade and lobbed it over towards the entrance where the men were pinned down.

I propped my gun on top of a car by the entrance and watched as the masked men tried to retreat away from the grenade, straight towards my line of fire.

<p>+10 EXP +10 EXP +10 EXP</p>
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After three new experience prompts, the grenade exploded. The camera feed confirmed they were all out of commission. I checked in on the two who were posted out back and found that they were gone already.

The suit had recharged by now with the integral parts having cooled down, so I swept the area in search of the two stragglers. They seemed to have escaped, so I gave up as I didn't have any clues to search with.

Instead, there was a whole mess waiting for me to clean up now...just great...

Whoever these guys were, they are so on my list.

The ECPD ended up showing up, but only took brief statements and collected the bodies for 'evidence'.

The unfortunate thing was that as an unlicensed business, I didn't have insurance, so all the damages I had to pay out of pocket. The loot from our attackers that we secured before the police arrived had covered it, though, especially from the two cars they left. Though the police had claimed a part of the loot, it was overall nice that losses were minimal.

One thing I learned from this incident was how fast the construction industry in Elevate City worked. When we called for someone to repair the clinic, they sent someone over to inspect the damage, and the next morning; they had everything repaired within a few hours.

Now I couldn't say all the constant violence throughout the city had no benefit. It certainly gave the construction industry plenty of practice. The help of nanomachines may have played a vital part, but nevertheless, the speed at which the walls and doors were repaired and replaced with the exact same look was quite something to behold.

Once everything settled down the next day, I sent the command to my SAID to place a call.

“Mr. Halls, are you calling about the unfortunate attack on your clinic?” The man on the other side of the call spoke in a rhythmic tone.

“You’re already informed, I see. Yes, I wanted to hire you to learn more about the attackers.” I’m glad he already knew what I wanted before I said anything. A well-informed person was exactly who I needed right now.

“While I would be happy to oblige, the jurisdiction of your clinic lies with the fixer for District 10. It would be better for you to reach out to her. The attackers are likely from around the area as well, based on what I know.”

“...Okay, send me the contact info.” I knew each quest giver had their own jurisdiction. They may be a good chance to connect with someone new, especially since they definitely had some influence with the mercenaries in my district.

“Very well, now if that is all, I will contact you again once I have a job or the information you seek. Best of luck with your endeavors now.”

The contact was sent a short moment after the call ended and I immediately had my SAID dial it.

“Hello, who is this?” A plain-sounding woman answered.

“Hi, is this Oli? Fitel gave me your contact. I have a job that you may be able to help me with,” I said as I made my way to the lobby to pick up the food I had ordered.

“Meet me in Haven in 30 minutes, booth #2.”

The call hung up before I could say anything else. I looked at the food in my hands and scarfed it down.

Coming to Haven in the late morning was a first for me. The main area felt empty compared to usual, while the rooms at the edge of the place had their glass windows tinted or only displayed vague silhouettes. I made my way to booth number two as directed and found a buff cyborg at the door.

“Hi, I’m here to see Oli,” He stared at me for a second before he gestured with his head for me to proceed in.

Once inside, I spotted a middle-aged lady seated casually on the couch, with an elbow on the shoulder of a well-built man. Upon a closer look, my experience with cybernetics told me he was definitely as much of a cyborg as the guy at the door, though he had some quality synth skin to cover it all up.

“Rollo Halls, from the new chrome shop. I can’t say I’m a fan of that corpo wannabe QG you associate with. You should’ve reached out to me sooner instead. Is this about the recent attack?” She said before she reached out for the drink in front of her.

“Yes, can you help me look into the attackers?”

“Of course, as long as you have the credits. I already have preliminary profiles for a few of the people that were on the scene. I’ll need a day or two to dig into the others and uncover the details.”

“Okay, please do so. I’ll take what info you have right now as well.”

A quick transaction of credits and information took place through our implants, “I’ll contact you once I learn more. You’re also available to do jobs for me right?” I nodded. “Great, talk to you soon.”

Taking the hint, I took my leave and returned to the clinic as we were due to open soon. I browsed through the info she sent me on the drive back.

She had profiles for three of the people I had shot, all with various petty and violent crimes. Only one had a more complete profile, Mark “Screwed” Layton, a known harvester in the ECPD database who was previously released due to lack of evidence and likely some bribing involved.

He operated out in this district as well, and an address from the police records that led to one of the megabuildings in the area.

I quickly took the opportunity to send out a text.

Thorne, we got a lead to pursue tonight. Bring along something to disable someone, non-lethal.

A reply soon came, *This is Claire, I’m coming too.*

Why...or how did Claire reply instead?

No, that’s too dangerous.

I’ll stay a distance away. I’ve learned a few things from Lana and Leo that can help.

I could tell that Claire will be stubborn about this, *Fine... remember to listen to us and stay far away from any action.* Allowing her to tag along would let us keep an eye on her.

It seemed like now that we had a lead; we were all looking forward to the counter-attack.

Let’s see where this goes. Hopefully, it will lead me to the mastermind of the attack so we don’t have to worry about them too much longer.