

McCullough and his goons pointed their guns at me, but I was cool enough to call their bluff. They were the ones who invited me into their shithole of a den, and they weren't dumb enough to think that popping a few slugs in the dome of Boston's favorite scrapper was a good idea. No way I was budging until they quadrupled my cut.

"We'll meet you halfway at a million dollars," McCollough said. You shoulda heard his stupid voicebox creak in pain at the thought of losing that much moolah. Only thing better than hearing a cyber in pain is feeling it firsthand through your knuckles. I was ready to seal that deal, but he had more to say. "You lose in the fifth round."

Now, I don't know if you're familiar with the rules, but that's an odd round. Odd means chess, and chess means I ain't losing to a cyber. Fuckers these days in full mech can take more shots to the dome than me, so I got no problems faking a KO. But they still got the same gray shit behind the eyes. The Fisher don't get checkmated by some undercard chump, and I don't give a shit if his name is Deep Fucking Blue Balls.

Yeah, I agreed anyway. You don't say no to a million, no matter how fucking dumb your pride is.

Nobody told me just how stupid this kid was. With a name like Mephisto, I assumed he was worth his weight in something. The idiot lumbered into the ring like a three legged elephant after happy hour. I've seen better armor jobs on cop cars in the south end of Chinatown. Any wins this guy got must have been during amateur hour.

His opening? Fuck me, that was the first time I'd seen some idiot move a rook pawn since I got out of diapers. I wanted to mess this guy up in three minutes flat, just stick a fork in him like a Thanksgiving bird. You have no idea how tough it is to throw a chess game to a chump of this order without looking like you're doing shotput. Whatever. Just play it cool and slow, make one or two mistakes. Don't take his rook the second he pulls its unprotected ass out into the front lines. Resisting that one was hard, let me tell you.

When the bell rang for round two, I was ready to take it all out on this idiot. I didn't plan on killing the guy or nothing. Just, with how much steel he had welded together, I figured he could take a shot or two from me.

Okay, the thing I haven't told you is that my arms ain't exactly street legal. It looks like construction grade stuff, but a few mods by a clever mechanic and they're just short of military strength. But as long as I'm only busting craniums in the ring, ain't nobody checking my regs. I'm all flesh other than these babies, and you got no idea how many full cybers I've smashed to scrap metal with them. I call the lefty X3D and the righty...

Fine, I'll get on with it.

So I went in with a one-two, just working off some steam. Wouldn't you know it, the dumbfuck

leans into my cross, like he was gonna headbutt my fist off. Remember what I told you about how bad that weld job was? His nose guard went right through the back of his head, taking out a big chunk of his brain with it. I mean big comparatively, because this guy couldn't have had much to begin with. I fucking blew it, but shit! Taking down a cyber in one hit like that feels like being king of the world. Crowd must've agreed too, because they started screaming their heads off.

Nah, they were good screams. I knew, because once McCullough and his goons opened fire, they were bad screams. Now, I'm a thug who beats people for money, but McCullough's boys will shoot whoever the fuck. I would've thought that being center stage with all the lights made me an easy target, but I guess McCullough didn't hire those guys for their brains. I picked up that sorry excuse of a dying chess-boxer and draped him over my shoulder when I bolted. Hey, the guy was already on his way to the grave, what the fuck do I care if he takes a few more bullets on the way?

They still ain't found me yet. Like I se eu esaid, McCullough don't hire for brains. And here I am, to testify that McCullough went down with extortion, gambling, and mass murder. So what do you say about offering me that witness protection program?

Tfxea

Wait, it's still homicide if the guy is full cyber? Shit.

Do I get to keep the arms?

