

T+ FOR TEENS PLUS

GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN GRADUATION



CITY OF
CC
Comic Creators
July 2014
Issue 01


BATTLE ROCK
COMICS



This comic is dedicated to the memory of...



David Matthews (1942-2014)

The real-life inspiration behind Jimmy Hellfighter.

Bay of Pigs, Cuban Missile Crisis, U.S.S. Joseph P. Kennedy, Connecticut State Police, Ledyard Volunteer Emergency Squad, Ledyard Fire Department, Ledyard Police Department, Kingston Fire Department, EMT, EMT Instructor, electrician, sonar specialist, construction worker, safety and security director, manufacturing plant manager, quality control, freemason, loving husband, caring father of two, proud grandfather of two.

Proof that you did not need powers to be a hero or to inspire others like a hero. You just need the heart.

He will be missed.

Paragon City: the City of Heroes! The only place in the world where the hero-to-problem ratio is almost one-to-one. If you need a hero in this city, you just have to look around the corner.

But not all heroes are the same. Some are more mercenary than the others. But there are some who see the calling as a sign of brighter days ahead for all mankind. These are the heroes who fight for something better. They are the...

GUARDIANS

OF THE DAWN

GRADUATION

PART 1 - "COMING HOME"

In 2011, the up-and-coming superhero group known as the Guardians of the Dawn were forced to officially disband in order to protect the life and career of one of their own. They could not even defend themselves when they were accused of causing the destruction of Galaxy City, which cost thousands of lives and billions in damage.

For a little over a year, a core group of Guardians were forced to operate in secret as a "Ghost Group", working to clear their group's name while continuing their mission to help bring humanity to that bright and shining future that is always "just over the horizon".

Then, in November of 2012, a "Miracle" happened.

Thousands of lives that were thought missing or dead in Galaxy City were suddenly returned, alive and well. But this "miracle" came with an apparent cost: the life of Doc Tor, the very Guardian that was falsely accused of causing the tragedy in the first place.

The Guardians were cleared and hailed as the heroes they always were. Their status was a group was officially reactivated and restored, and their ranks swelled as old members returned and new ones joined.

Almost two years have since past, and while the Guardians are more popular now than they ever were before, not all is right with the group.

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WHO IS THE "STATESMAN"? MASKED CITIZEN STOPS BANK ROBBERY

POLICE CHIEF PLEDGES SWIFT ARREST OF VIGILANTE



Artist's rendering of the mysterious vigilante known as "Statesman". (Art by Paragon Times Staff)

Paragon City RI - Tuesday was a bad day to be a bank robber in Paragon City.

The Dunkirk Gang found that out the hard way.

The three suit-wearing gangsters thought it was going to be a cake-walk robbing the Paragon City Bank the tellers, and then

Only this time when a wreck on the other wearing a red tunic

Even more shocking was how the masked stranger was seemingly impervious to the hail of bullets by the robbers, who were quickly overpowered and rendered unconscious.

The stranger then returned the stolen money inside before running off, leaving the bank employees, the police, and the city itself with still more questions as to who this man who called himself "Statesman" really is.

(Continued on Page 2)

SAVIOR OR MENACE? CITY DIVIDED ON STATESMAN

Paragon City RI - To the police, he is no different than the criminals he takes down.

"He wears a mask," said Deputy Chief Luis Wilhelm. "That makes him a criminal. If he was an upstanding citizen, he would not need to wear a mask. Only criminals hide behind a mask."

To flower vendor Ida May, he is the savior that Paragon City needs.

"This city has gone through so much," she said. "The Stock Market Crash, the bootleggers, businesses crashing... we needed someone like him to help bring this city back."

"Him" is the masked vigilante known as "Statesman".

Since his first appearance in Paragon City a few weeks ago, Statesman has made a profound impact on a city already suffering from economic troubles and social despair.

Wilhelm calls Statesman a grifter and a fraud.

"When he first said who he was to the press, he claimed that he somehow tapped into his 'inner will' to be able to do the things he supposedly does. Well, we know that's a pile of malarkey. No 'inner will' can let you stand up to a Tommy gun, even if you have a whole suit of armor on."

Wilhelm has been one of the loudest voices from the police department to call for Statesman's arrest, even if other officers have been condoning or even aiding the masked...

(Continued on Page 3)

CRIME GOES ON QUICK DECLINE AS MORE VIGILANTES APPEAR

Paragon City RI - If the criminal element thought things were getting tough with a masked vigilante like Statesman around, they haven't seen anything yet.

In the Hooverville encampment around Perez Park, there are rumors of a dark-skinned black-clothed vigilante keeping an eye on the most vulnerable of citizens. Known as the "Dark Watcher", he makes sure the camps remain untouched by

In Steel Canyon, a patriotic-dressed vigilante himself "Maiden Justice" has been protecting the students of Steel Canyon College from hooligans.

In Paragon Heights, a man wearing a robot-sized suit of armor has been standing up to members of the Family; their shotguns and Tommy guns having no effect on the vigilante.

Paragon City Police refuse to recognize these new vigilantes, partially in fear that doing so would only encourage even more masked adventurers, but their arrivals along with that of Statesman have been making an impact on reported crimes.

Calls to the police switchboard for robberies, assaults, even murders have gone down, while reported vigilante sightings have gone up.

Whole blocks of neighborhoods that used to live in fear have opened up once again, with people willing to sound off against the gangs and the career criminals, knowing that the vigilante are supporting them.

"Statesman started something big," said...

(Continued on Page 5)



GALAXY CITY DESTROYED!



IT'S A CITY THAT KNOWS ABOUT TRAGEDY AND LOSS.

NO MATTER IF IT IS AN AREA...

An unknown hero assesses the devastation near what remains of the Freedom Corps Headquarters in Galaxy City, one of the first casualties of the Shivan meteors that hit the area and brought about numerous Shivan minions from the city's infrastructure. (Photo: B.Style)

More News:

Refugees pour into other districts - Page 2

Bloody Bay survivors remember ordeal - Page 5

Can Galaxy City be saved or must it become another Hazard Zone? - Page 8

Thousands Hurt, Killed, In Shivan Attacks

Paragon City, RI (PTN) - For years, Galaxy City stood as a district defiant not only from the Rikti invaders, but also from the scourge of crime. The district formerly known as Paragon Heights was re-named in honor of Galaxy Girl, Paragon City's longtime heroine who gave her life during the Rikti Invasion of 2002.

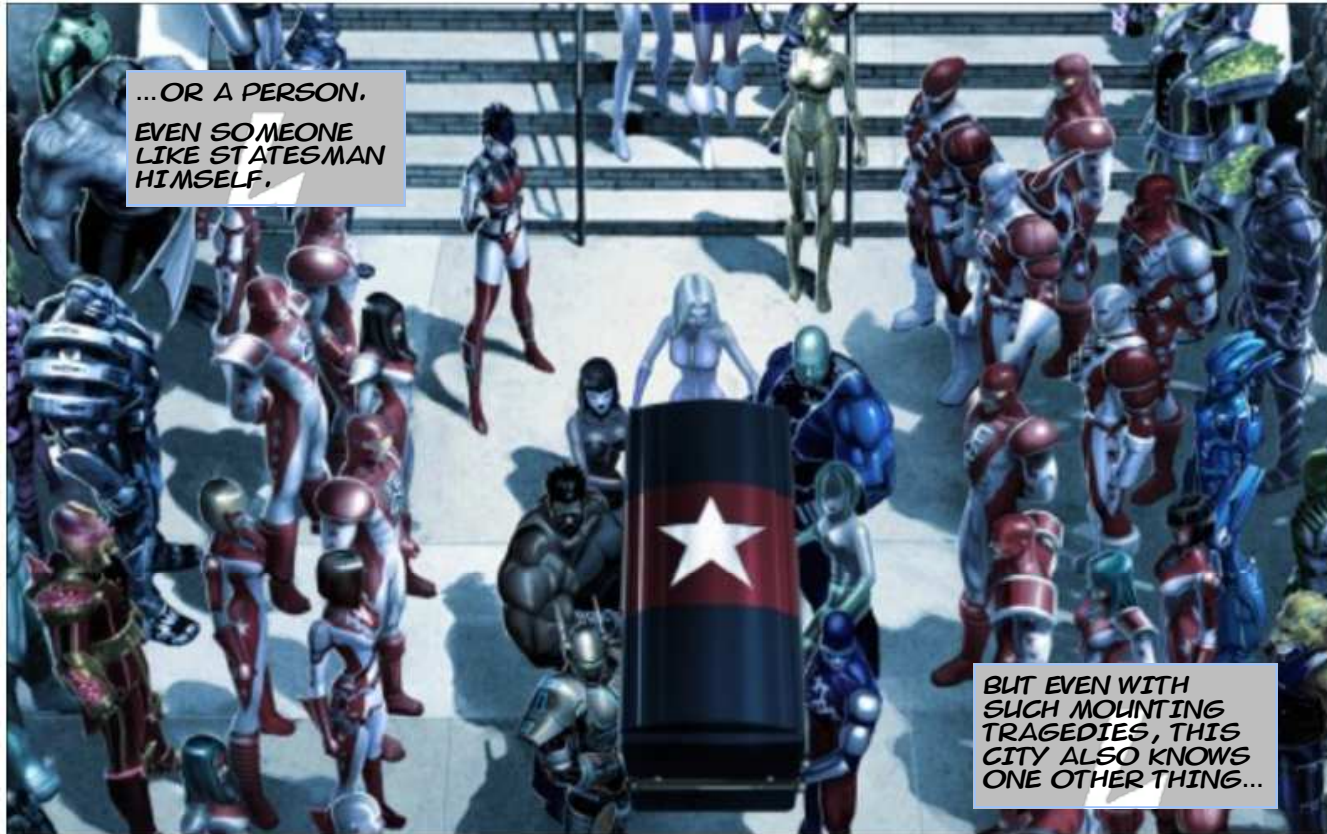
Today, Galaxy City is unrecognizable as death came from above and below, killing thousands and injuring tens of thousands. *(Full coverage continues on Page 2)*

Former TV Host Becker launches website tirade: "Someone knew this would happen! That person needs to be charged and executed for high treason!" - Page 14

Weather:
Today: Sunny, Warm, 70's
Tomorrow: More of the same
More coverage on Page 30



THE WORLD MOURNS THE LOSS OF A LEGEND



...OR A PERSON.
EVEN SOMEONE
LIKE STATESMAN
HIMSELF.

BUT EVEN WITH
SUCH MOUNTING
TRAGEDIES, THIS
CITY ALSO KNOWS
ONE OTHER THING...

Thousands of heroes gather at City Hall to say goodbye to legendary iconic superhero Statesman, who was murdered in a battle with Darrin Wade. Serving as pall bearers (clockwork from top) were the spirit of Numina, Citadel, the spirit of War Witch, Synapse, Positron, Back Alley Brawler, and Desdemona. Also pictured is Luminary and new hero Penelope Yin. (Photo by Paragon Studios)

WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO LAID TO REST AS HEROES CONTINUE SEARCH FOR HIS KILLER

Atlas Park, Paragon City, RI - (PCN) They came from all over the world and even from across parallel universes.

Heroes, civilians, police officers, politicians, soldiers, and even some villains, arrived at Atlas Park to pay their final respects to the man that, for all accounts, was responsible for single-handedly launching the modern age of legends.

Statesman, the iconic superhero, was laid to rest today after his eight-decade campaign for justice was abruptly ended at the hands of the same man that murdered his daughter.

"Statesman was the heart and soul of Paragon City," said City Representative Brigid Moreira. "He was here when the city needed him the most, and he gave us reasons to continue to hope even when all seemed lost."

"Now he's gone, and I don't know how the city will be able to carry on without him."

The young man who called himself "Statesman" first appeared in the

early 1930's. A cross between the Lone Ranger and a guru, Statesman claimed that he had unlocked his "inner will" to give himself the power needed to fight crime and injustice in Paragon City.

While many doubted his claimed source of power, they could not deny that his super-human abilities gave him the edge in going after organized criminals, or that his force of will would inspire other heroes to come out of the shadows.

In 1932, Statesman brought together the city's costumed adventurers to form one cohesive group called the Freedom Phalanx. It is an organization that continues to this very day, although now for the first time under the leadership of someone other than its founder.

"We still have a job to do," said temporary Phalanx leader Positron. "Darrin Wade is responsible for the cold-blooded murder of two heroes now, and we will not stop until he is brought to justice. It is what Statesman was trying to do when he was killed, and we owe it to him to make sure his death is not in vain."

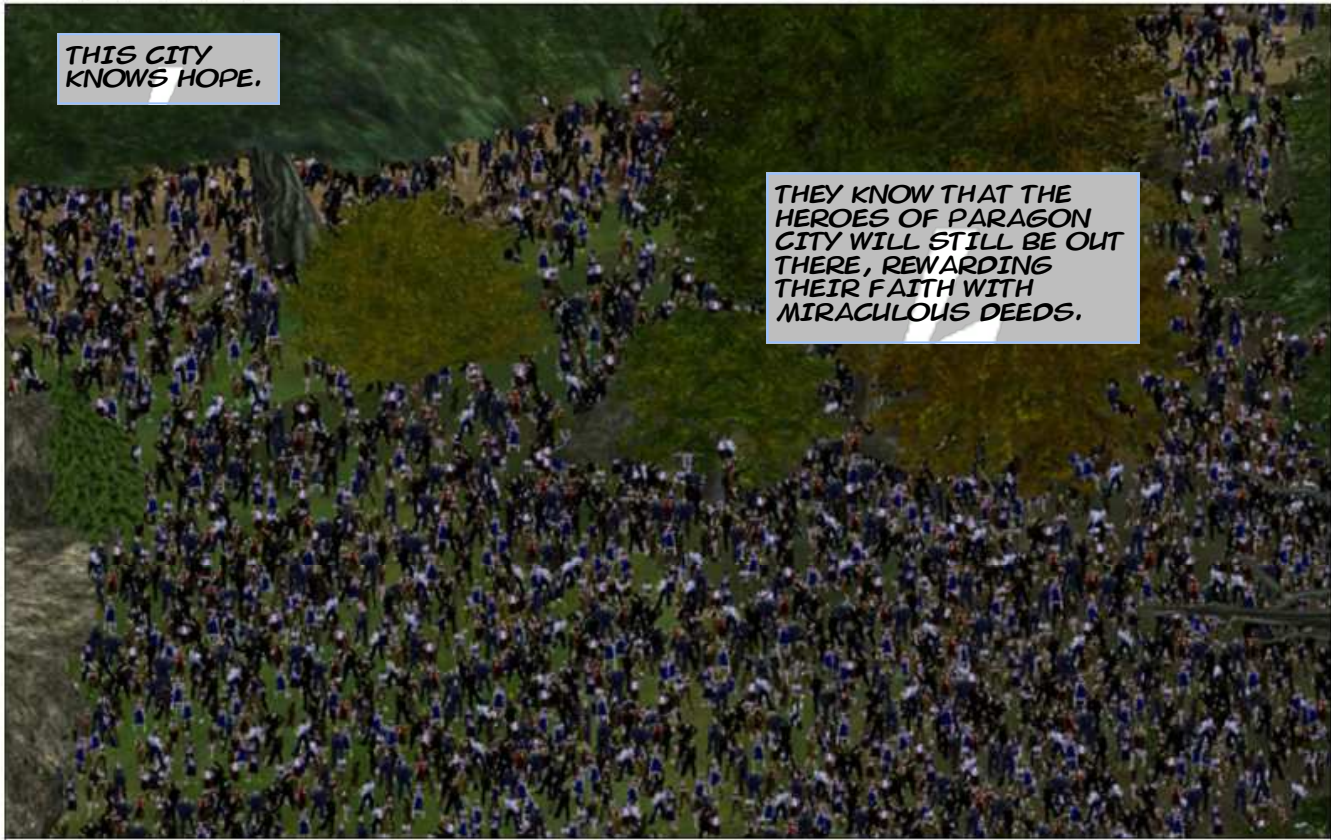
But first, they had to say goodbye to their friend, (Continued on Page 2)



MIRACLE!

THIS CITY KNOWS HOPE.

THEY KNOW THAT THE HEROES OF PARAGON CITY WILL STILL BE OUT THERE, REWARDING THEIR FAITH WITH MIRACULOUS DEEDS.



Overhead view of the survivors of the Galaxy City disaster just minutes after they appeared in a field not far from the Eastgate ruins. Almost 2200 people who were declared missing and/or killed in the Neo-Shivan attack on Galaxy City in 2011 suddenly appeared safe and sound. *(Photo by Overhead)*

2200 PEOPLE CONSIDERED MISSING OR DEAD RETURNED FORMER SUPERHERO GROUP CREDITED FOR MIRACULOUS RESCUE

Eastgate, Paragon City RI - (PCN) In Paragon City, words like "miracle" are not easily thrown about.

And yet nothing can describe the feeling that was exhibited in the wooded area east of Eastgate when over 2200 people initially declared missing or dead from 2011 suddenly appeared alive and well.

The miraculous event began after noontime when a strange energy signature was being detected in the wooded area just north of the Skyway City War Walls gate.

Heroes began investigating the energy, which led to a cautious city-wide alert for fear that it could come from an extra-dimensional portal. Members of the superhero community, Freedom Corps, and Vanguard rushed to the area to offer assistance and to cordon off the area from a possible invasion.

As the energy began to build, the single bright light was replaced with two, and then ten, and then hundreds of smaller lights. Parallels began to be made between this and the Rikti Invasion of 2002, and also with the strange "Red Sky" incident of 2007 just months prior to the Second Rikti

Invasion.

However, messages from Positron and retired hero Icon Powers convinced the gathering forces that the lights were not connected to either the Rikti or other extra-dimensional threats.

Shortly after 2pm EST, the lights erupted in a blinding green flash. When the glare from the flash subsided, the wooded area was surrounded by people.

"At first we thought they were Praetorians," said Paragon Police Sergeant Wayne O'Casey. "But then I realized some of the people were wearing Freedom Corps uniforms. And then I saw Galatea Powers flying overhead and I realized they were ours."

Soon the suspicions were confirmed, that almost all of the 2200 people that suddenly appeared in the wooded area were either declared missing or killed from the Neo-Shivan meteor strike on Galaxy City back on September 13, 2011.

"Everyone you see here were in Galaxy City..."

(Continued on Page 2)

PARAGON CITY, RHODE ISLAND, USA

ATLAS PARK - ATLAS PLAZA

"WE ARE HEROES,
THIS IS WHAT WE DO."

I'VE BEEN HEARING
IT A LOT OVER THE
PAST FEW YEARS.



Galatea Powers
OTHERWORLD HERO

BUT I'VE ALSO
FOUND THAT IT
IS MORE THAN
JUST A SAYING.

STEEL CANYON

IT'S A
PROMISE.



Pharon
EGYPTIAN CHAMPION

TO THE CITY,
AND ALSO TO
THEMSELVES.


KINGS ROW

TO KEEP
THE BATTLE
GOING...



MidKnight X
STREET VIGILANTE

... UNTIL THEY
CAN FIGHT
NO MORE.



PHARON IS WRAPPING UP HIS RAID ON THE OUTCAST GANG.
GALATEA POWERS IS ON HER WAY BACK TO FOUNDERS FALLS,
AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE CLOCKWORK RAIDS HAVE CALMED DOWN IN KINGS ROW.

TURNING OUT TO BE A PRETTY SLOW DAY FOR HEROES, NANCY. I THINK IT'S RATHER REFRESHING.



FLASH MESSAGE FROM COEUR DU FEU... SHE'S AT THE AIRPORT.

GOOD. SHE'S BEEN AWAY A BIT TOO LONG IN MY OPINION.

 **Libertarian Avenger**
VIGILANTE ARCHER



AND NOW THAT SHE'S ON HER WAY BACK...

I THINK IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BRING HOME ANOTHER PRODIGAL GUARDIAN.

PARAGON CITY UNIVERSITY

STEEL CANYON CAMPUS

STEEL CANYON

THIS IS WHERE I COME IN...

MY NAME IS BART WALLACE.
I'M AN ENGLISH PROFESSOR AT PARAGON CITY UNIVERSITY.

BUT IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO THAT I WAS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST A COLLEGE PROFESSOR.

RING-RING
RING-RING

THIS IS PROFESSOR WALLACE.

WE NEED TO TALK.

HELLO ALEX.
HAVEN'T HEARD THE VOICE DISGUISER IN A LONG TIME.

SO WHEN DID HELL FREEZE OVER?
OR DID YOU FEEL NOSTALGIC ABOUT THE OLD DAYS AND JUST WANTED TO SHARE THEM WITH ANOTHER RETIRED HERO?

Prof. Bart Wallace
AKA RYDER LIGHTNING

YOUR RETIREMENT IS WHAT WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT.
MEET ME AT THE CRYPT.

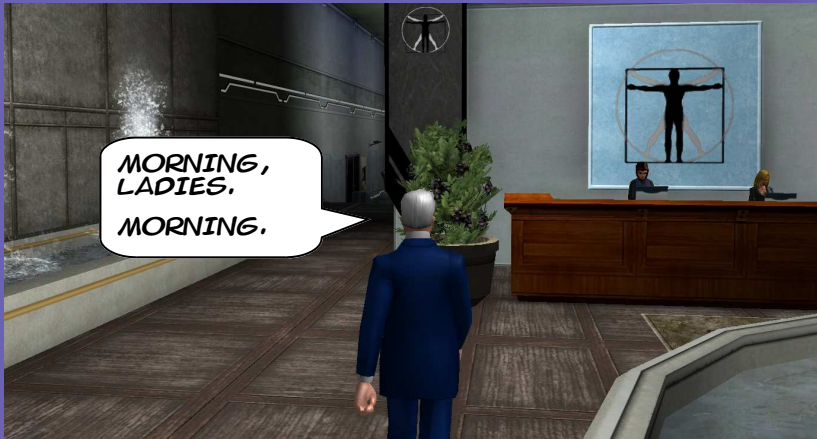
PEREZ PARK - BONEYARD DISTRICT

ROCINANTE GROUP

PARAGON CITY OFFICE



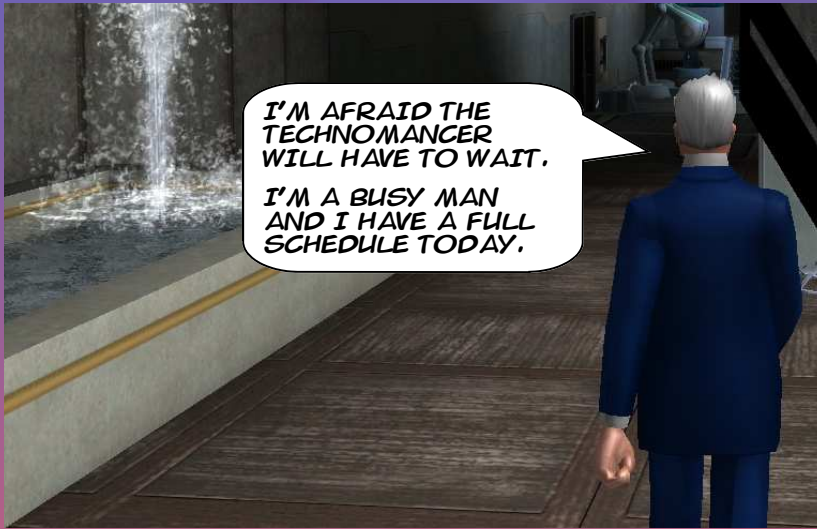
Malcolm Rochspare
COMPANY C.O.O.



MORNING, LADIES.
MORNING.



MISTER ROCHSPARE!
SIR, YOU NEED TO SEE MISTER CADE AT THE JUDICIAL CENTER RIGHT THIS MINUTE.



I'M AFRAID THE TECHNOMANCER WILL HAVE TO WAIT.
I'M A BUSY MAN AND I HAVE A FULL SCHEDULE TODAY.



BUT, MISTER ROCHSPARE...
SIR? SIR?

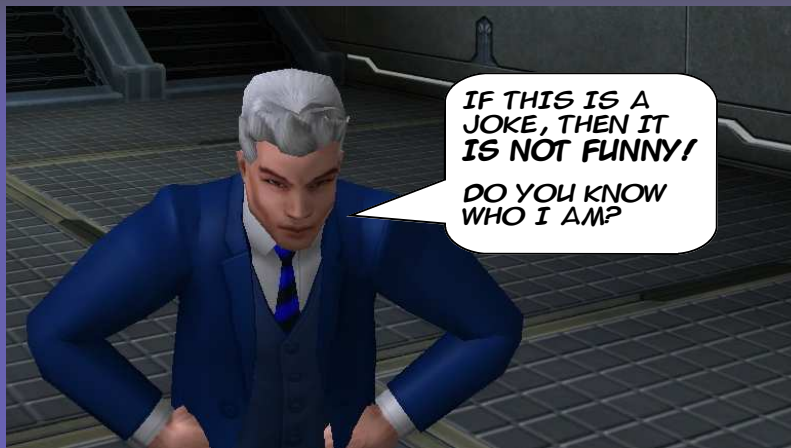


SECURITY, STOP MISTER ROCHSPARE!



WHAT THE DEVIL..?

SIR, WE CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO GO ANY FURTHER.



IF THIS IS A JOKE, THEN IT IS NOT FUNNY!
DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?



WHRRR
CHIK-CHAK

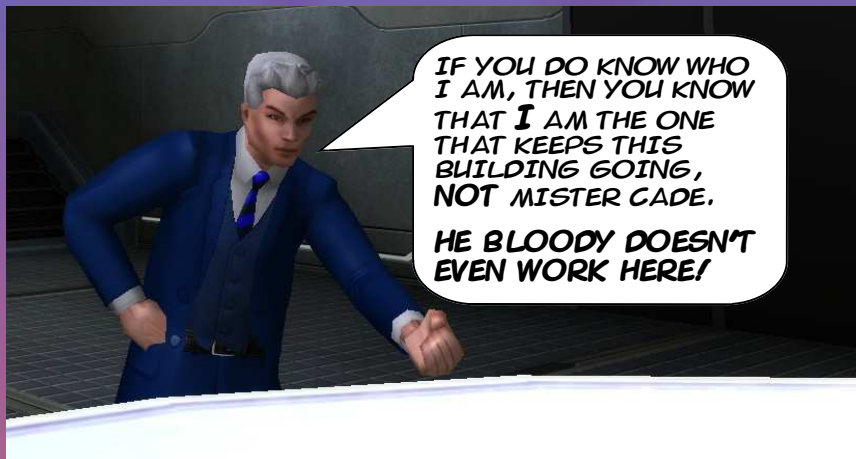
SAFETIES OFF.



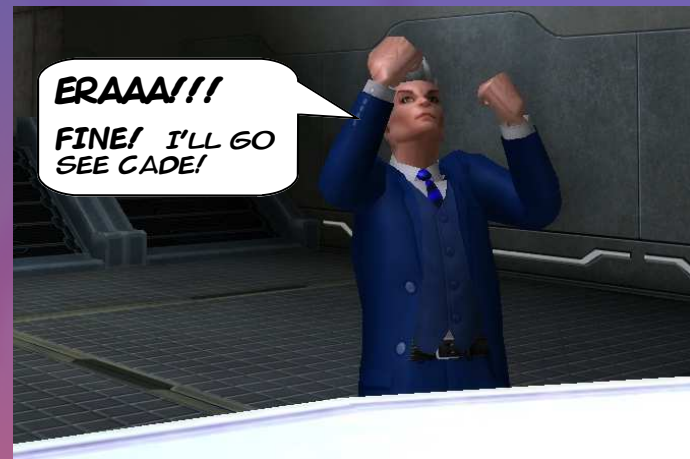
MISTER ROCHSPARE, I KNOW PRECISELY WHO YOU ARE.
I WAS HERE WHEN YOU WERE NAMED CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER.
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.

WE ARE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM MISTER CADE TO PREVENT YOU FROM GOING ANY FURTHER INTO THE BUILDING WITHOUT YOU SEEING HIM FIRST.

AND THAT INCLUDES USING LETHAL FORCE UNTIL WE HEAR FROM HIM SPECIFICALLY.



IF YOU DO KNOW WHO I AM, THEN YOU KNOW THAT **I** AM THE ONE THAT KEEPS THIS BUILDING GOING, NOT MISTER CADE.
HE BLOODY DOESN'T EVEN WORK HERE!



ERAAA!!
FINE! I'LL GO SEE CADE!



AND WHEN I GET BACK, YOU CAN EXPECT THAT WE WILL DISCUSS SOME **DRAMATIC** CHANGES TO THE SECURITY AND FRONT DESK POSITIONS!

BACK ON TALOS ISLAND



WELCOME BACK, MISS HART.

GOOD TO BE BACK!
THAT WAS THE LONGEST TRIP BACK FOR ME!

IF YOU ARE READY, WE WILL BEGIN THE TUTORIAL ON THE CHANGES TO--

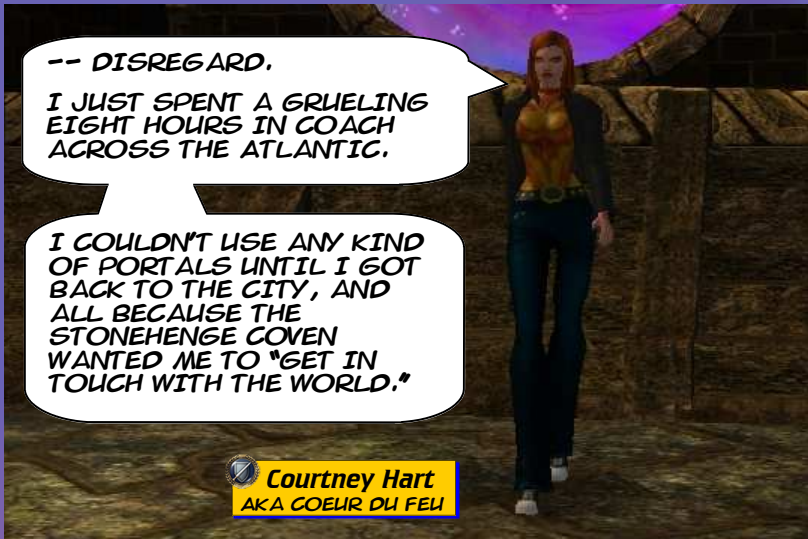


-- DISREGARD.

I JUST SPENT A GRUELING EIGHT HOURS IN COACH ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

I COULDN'T USE ANY KIND OF PORTALS UNTIL I GOT BACK TO THE CITY, AND ALL BECAUSE THE STONEHENGE COVEN WANTED ME TO "GET IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD."

Courtney Hart
AKA COEUR DU FEU



I GOT GROPED BY DRUNK FRENCHMEN. SOME BABY WAS CRYING AND I COULDN'T USE MY MAGIC TO QUIET HER. MY LUGGAGE IS STILL MISSING.



AND THEN, WHEN I GET BACK, I GET A MESSAGE SAYING I'M PULLING MONITOR DUTY IN A FEW HOURS.

WHICH IS WHY IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU BE UPDATED AS TO THE CHANGES MADE TO THE BASE.



A BED! AN ACTUAL BED!
SHOWER... BED...
SHOWER... BED...



CPCU*, I AM GOING TO TAKE A QUICK SHOWER TO GET THE STENCH OF DRUNK FRENCHMAN OFF ME. THEN I AM GOING TO CLIMB INTO THIS BEAUTIFUL BED AND SLEEP UNTIL IT'S TIME FOR MONITOR DUTY.

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT ANY KIND OF CHANGES UNTIL I WAKE UP. IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?

UNDERSTOOD, MISS HART.

(* CPCU: CENTRAL PROCESSOR AND COMMAND UTILITY, THE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE THAT OVERSEES BASE ACTIVITIES.)



THE CRYPT OF HEROES

PARAGON CITY CEMETERY

"THE CRYPT" IS A BIT DECEPTIVE.

PEOPLE THINK THIS IS WHERE THE BODIES OF HEROES ARE INTERRED.

BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT NO BODIES HAVE BEEN PUT HERE IN DECADES.

BETWEEN THE VAHZILOK AND THE OCCASIONAL ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE, NOBODY WANTS TO SEE AN UNDEAD HERO.

THAT'S WHY ALL FALLEN HEROES ARE CREMATED.

BUT THEY STILL KEEP THE CRYPT FOR CEREMONIAL PURPOSES.

THANK YOU FOR MEETING ME HERE, BART.

AND IT'S THE PERFECT MEETING PLACE FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN BY PRYING EYES.

ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY'RE CURRENT OR FORMER HEROES.

I KEEP FORGETTING HOW DARK IT CAN GET HERE SOMETIMES.

EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY, THE MAGIC KEEPS IT ALL CLOUDED.

KEEPS THE BANISHED PANTHEON, MOT, AND THE RIKTI AWAY. ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT THE RIKTI DID TO HERO 1.*


(* SEE THE TOP COW "CITY OF HEROES" SERIES #19-20)

YOU'RE LOOKING GOOD, BART.

GOING A BIT SILVER, BUT OTHERWISE YOU SEEM TO BE DOING WELL.

SAME WITH YOU, ALEX.

I WASN'T ABLE TO TALK WITH YOU AFTER JIMMY HELLFIGHTER'S FUNERAL, BUT I WAS SURPRISED TO SEE YOU BACK AS THE LIBERTARIAN AVENGER.

 Alex Wentworth
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



WELL, I STILL CAN'T DRAW A BOWSTRING.

THE DAMAGE FROM THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT STILL KEEPS ME FROM BEING AN ACTIVE HERO.*

BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CAN'T WEAR THE OUTFIT.

NECESSITY FORCED ME TO BRING THE AVENGER BACK, EVEN IF IT'S JUST AS A FIGUREHEAD FOR THE GUARDIANS.

KENT LEFT US JUST BEFORE THE FUNERAL.

WHAT?!?

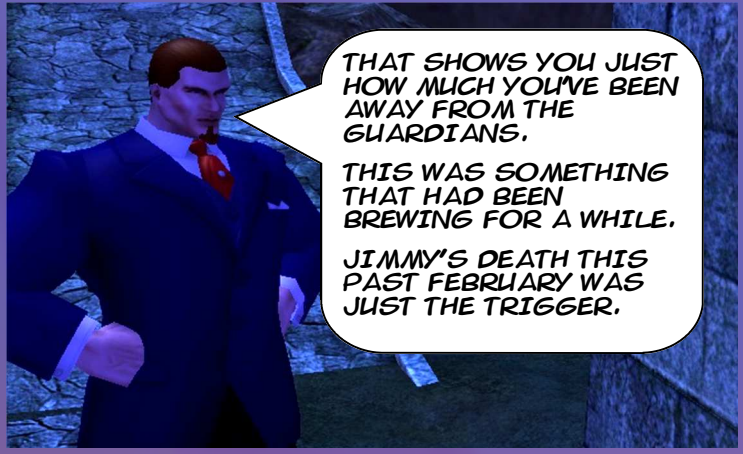
© "GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AFTERMATH"



I DON'T BELIEVE THAT!

KENT POWERS IS ONE OF THE NOBLEST HEROES I'VE EVER KNOWN!

THERE IS NO WAY THAT HE WOULD JUST UP AND ABANDON YOU!



THAT SHOWS YOU JUST HOW MUCH YOU'VE BEEN AWAY FROM THE GUARDIANS.

THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT HAD BEEN BREWING FOR A WHILE.

JIMMY'S DEATH THIS PAST FEBRUARY WAS JUST THE TRIGGER.




WHAT, THAT HE COULDN'T SAVE JIMMY? NOBODY COULD. WE ALL KNEW THAT.

THE SAME RADIATION FROM THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS THAT GAVE HIM HIS POWERS ALSO GAVE HIM CANCER. IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE IT WOULD FINALLY TAKE HIM.

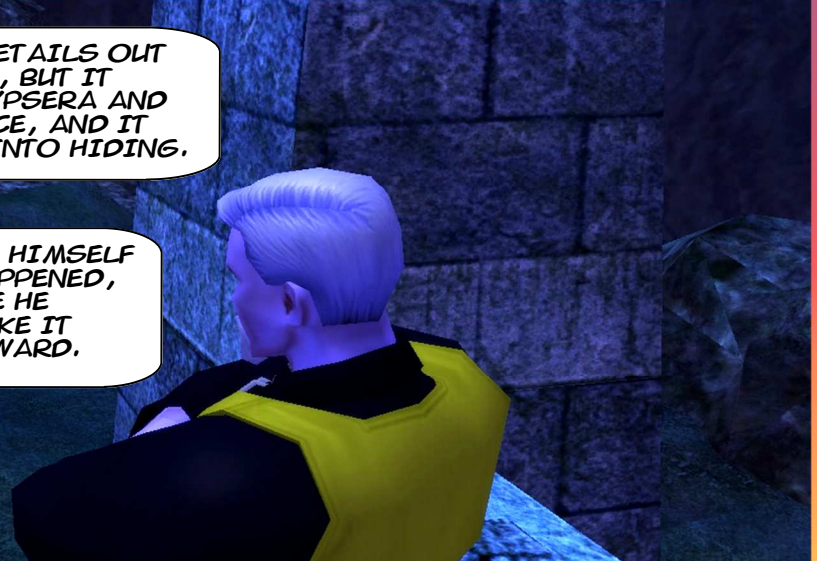


LIKE I SAID, IT WASN'T THE ONLY THING THAT WAS EATING AT KENT.

THERE WAS... AN INCIDENT... LAST YEAR.



WE KEPT THE DETAILS OUT OF THE MEDIA, BUT IT TOOK OUT WHYPSERA AND STREET JUSTICE, AND IT SENT ARKTIC INTO HIDING.



KENT BLAMED HIMSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED, AND BECAUSE HE COULDN'T MAKE IT RIGHT AFTERWARD.



OKAY, SO WHERE IS HE?
I'LL HEAD OVER THERE
AND TALK SOME SENSE
INTO HIM.

GARDIFF. HE WENT WITH
KATIE TO THE POWERS
FAMILY HOME IN WALES.

BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I
CALLED YOU HERE.
THE GUARDIANS NEED
YOU BACK, BART.

MEP

ALEX, I DON'T HAVE MY
POWERS, REMEMBER?
I LOST MY CONNECTION
TO THE VORTEX JUST
BEFORE GALAXY CITY'S
DESTRUCTION.*

AND I KNOW THAT YOU'VE
BEEN SLOWLY GETTING
THOSE POWERS BACK, EVEN
IF THEY'RE NOT NEAR YOUR
PREVIOUS LEVELS.

EVEN SO...WHY MEP?

I MEAN, IF YOU'RE ABLE TO
RESUME BEING THE AVENGER,
WHY CAN'T YOU JUST STAY
AS GROUP LEADER?

(* THE GUARDIAN POWERS #6)

I RESUMED THE GUISE OF THE
LIBERTARIAN AVENGER BECAUSE
THE GUARDIANS NEED
SOMEONE PUBLICLY IN CHARGE.

BUT I AM STILL THE DISTRICT
ATTORNEY FOR PARAGON CITY.
I'M COMMITTING A SERIOUS
CONFLICT OF INTEREST IF I'M
EVEN SUSPECTED OF BEING
BOTH HERO AND PROSECUTOR.

I STILL NEED SOMEONE TO
HANDLE KENT'S DUTIES.

AND, AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT, I
FOUND OUT THAT YOU WERE THE
ONE THAT WAS IN CHARGE OF
YOUR WORLD'S HERO TEAM
AFTER KENT WENT INTO SEMI-
RETIREMENT OVER THERE.

AND MY
UNIVERSE
CEASED TO
EXIST UNDER
MY WATCH.*

YOU COULDN'T HAVE STOPPED ALOR
FROM DOING THAT. YOU JUST
DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER NEEDED BACK
THEN TO TAKE ON A SEMI-GOD.

LOOK, WHY DON'T YOU JUST HEAD
ON OVER TO THE BASE... GET
CAUGHT UP ON WHAT'S HAPPENED.
TALK WITH SOME OF THE OTHER
GUARDIANS. GET A FEEL OF WHAT
I HAVE BEEN DOING THERE.

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN'T CUT IT,
THEN, FINE, NO HARM, NO FOUL.

OH, AND BE SURE TO BE IN YOUR
RYDER LIGHTNING OUTFIT WHEN
YOU DO SHOW UP THERE.

(* WHICH HAPPENED DURING THE
FIVE-PART "TIME AND CHANGES"
STORYLINE IN "SPOTLIGHT".)

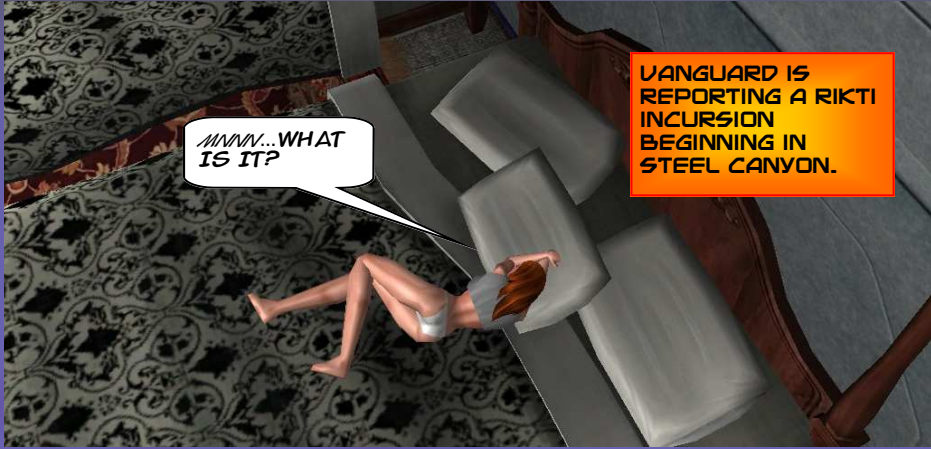
A SHORT WHILE LATER...

ATTENTION!
ATTENTION!
COEUR DU FEU
IS NEEDED.



///VVV...WHAT
IS IT?

VANGUARD IS
REPORTING A RIKTI
INCURSION
BEGINNING IN
STEEL CANYON.



WHAT?!?
OH SHIT!

THE ASSIGNED
MONITOR DUTY
HERO IS REQUIRED.



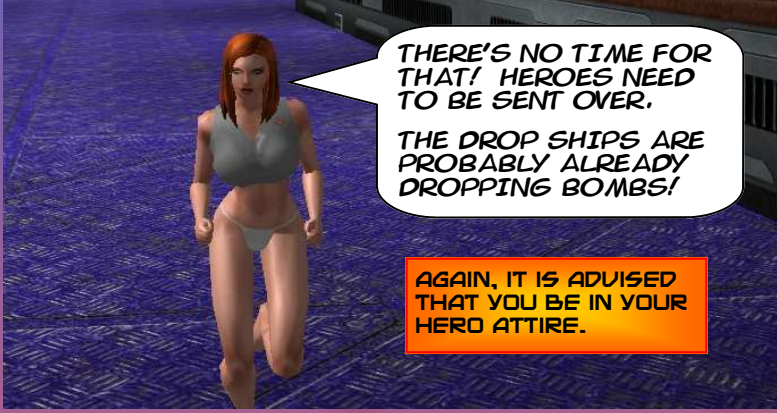
SHIT, SHIT, SHIT!
THIS IS WHAT I
GET FOR
SLEEPING IN!

IT IS ADVISED
THAT YOU BE
IN YOUR HERO
ATTIRE.



THERE'S NO TIME FOR
THAT! HEROES NEED
TO BE SENT OVER.
THE DROP SHIPS ARE
PROBABLY ALREADY
DROPPING BOMBS!

AGAIN, IT IS ADVISED
THAT YOU BE IN YOUR
HERO ATTIRE.



OKAY...NOW...



THIS IS A FULLY-MANNED C-I-C.*

THAT IS CORRECT.

AAAAAAND I'M STANDING HERE IN MY UNDERWEAR.

THAT IS ALSO CORRECT. THIS UNIT DID TRY TO WARN YOU.

C.I.C. - COMMAND INTELLIGENCE CENTER

SMARTASS...

6'5'2"

POOF!

OKAY, LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN...

Coeur du Feu CURSED ROMANTIC

FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER...

ALL RIGHT...THE MOTHER SHIP HAS PULLED AWAY. THE DROP SHIPS HAVE BEEN RECALLED. WAR WALLS ARE FULLY CHARGED AGAIN.

THANK YOU TASHA TIGER, GALATEA POWERS, PHARON, AND ELITE ICE QUEEN FOR YOUR TIMELY ASSISTANCE. GOOD TEAM. PLEASE GIVE MY BEST TO POSITRON AND VALKYRIE. GUARDIAN BASE OUT.

UM... I'M SORRY IF YOU FOLKS WERE SHOCKED BY... UMMM... HOW I ARRIVED HERE EARLIER.

NOT TO WORRY. GALATEA POWERS DID THE SAME THING LAST MONTH. NOTHING WE HAVEN'T SEEN BEFORE.

FOUNDERS FALLS

PARAGON CITY JUDICIAL CENTER

"JUST WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?"

MY JOB.

I AM MAXIMIZING DATA FLOW FROM THESE SERVERS.

Mister Cade
D.A. TECHNOMANCER

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN AND YOU BLOODY WELL KNOW IT!

WHAT THE HELL GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO TELL MY PEOPLE TO DETAIN ME AT THE DOOR LIKE SOME KIND OF INTRUDER?

BECAUSE AS OF MIDNIGHT LAST NIGHT, YOU ARE.

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF BOTH THE ROCINANTE GROUP AND THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR SERVICES THERE ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED.

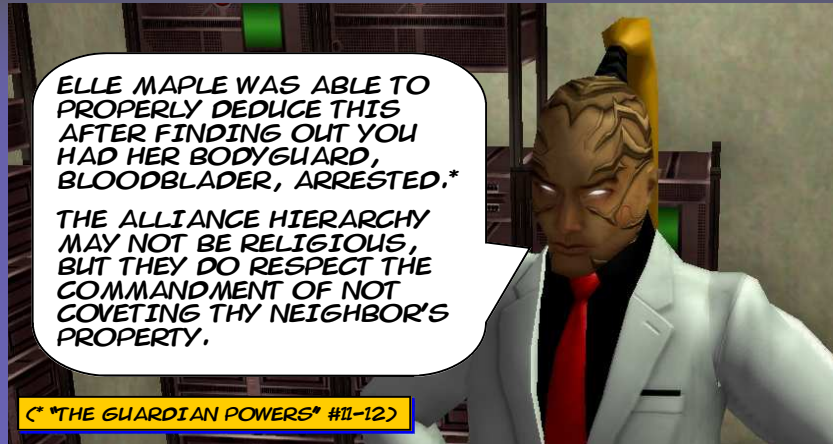
WHAA...?!?

YOU CAN'T DO THAT! THE ROCHSPARE FAMILY HAS BEEN IN THE ALLIANCE FOR GENERATIONS!

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN THE ALLIANCE CANNOT BE READILY TAKEN AWAY, YOUR POSITION WITH THE ROCINANTE GROUP CAN BE.

YOU WERE INITIALLY TASKED WITH HELPING TRANSITION LORD GEDDY AND THE ROCINANTE GROUP INTO THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE.

INSTEAD OF DOING THAT, YOU USED LORD GEDDY'S ABSENCE TO INSTILL YOURSELF INTO A POSITION OF AUTHORITY SO YOU CAN COVET THE GROUP FOR YOURSELF.



ELLE MAPLE WAS ABLE TO PROPERLY DEDUCE THIS AFTER FINDING OUT YOU HAD HER BODYGUARD, BLOODBLADER, ARRESTED.*


THE ALLIANCE HIERARCHY MAY NOT BE RELIGIOUS, BUT THEY DO RESPECT THE COMMANDMENT OF NOT COVETING THY NEIGHBOR'S PROPERTY.

< *THE GUARDIAN POWERS* #11-12 >



MAPLE? SHE WAS THE LUNATIC THAT TRIED TO KILL ME!

HAD SHE REALLY MEANT TO, YOU WOULD NOT BE ALIVE TODAY.



A VERY NOBLE MOVE ON HER PART. A SACRIFICE PLAY TO BRING YOUR ACTIONS TO LIGHT.

SHE IS A RARE WOMAN TO BE WILLING TO GO TO PRISON JUST TO DEFEND HER EMPLOYER.

I'M GLAD YOU'RE IMPRESSED WITH SOME OLD WOMAN'S LOYALTIES.

MEANWHILE THERE IS THE MATTER OF THE OPEN POSITION IN THE HIERARCHY THAT NEEDS TO BE FILLED.

AND DON'T TELL ME YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT "THE VOICE OF PARAGON CITY".



I AM WELL AWARE OF THE POSITION, AS WELL AS ITS SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE HIERARCHY.

THAT IS WHY I WAS INSTRUCTED TO HAVE YOU REMOVED FROM THE ROCINANTE GROUP BUILDING AND TO INFORM YOU OF THE TERMINATION OF YOUR SERVICES FROM THEM.

YOUR BELONGINGS THERE HAVE ALREADY BEEN COLLECTED AND ARE BEING SENT TO YOUR CONDOMINIUM.

ALL VESTIGES OF YOUR PRESENCE THERE HAVE BEEN REMOVED PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL.



"HIS"?
YOU MEAN..?>



NO...NO, THEY WOULDN'T GIVE IT TO HIM.

NOT AFTER ALL THAT I'VE DONE FOR THEM.

BACK AT THE ROCINANTE GROUP...

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

WELCOME BACK,
LORD GEDDY.

WELCOME
BACK, SIR.

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

YOU WERE MISSED,
LORD GEDDY.

WELCOME BACK,
LORD GEDDY.

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

Lord Lee Geddy
MARGRAVE OF NIAGARA

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

WELCOME
BACK, SIR.

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

PLEASE! PLEASE!
THANK YOU ALL
FOR YOUR WELL-
WISHES!

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP
CLAP-CLAP

I KNOW THESE PAST FEW
YEARS HAVE BEEN TRYING
FOR US AS AN
ORGANIZATION.

WE HAVE ALL BEEN
TESTED DURING THIS
PERIOD OF TRANSITION.

BUT I PROMISE
YOU THAT YOUR
LOYALTY WILL BE
REWARDED,
STARTING TODAY.

THOSE OF YOU ALREADY IN OUR PROFIT-
SHARING PROGRAM WILL BE GETTING
AN ENVELOPE THAT WILL SHOW OUR
APPRECIATION.

THOSE OF YOU WHO AREN'T, WE WILL BE
OFFERING A SPECIAL ENROLLMENT SO
THAT YOU WILL NOT BE LEFT OUT WHEN
WE NEXT EXPRESS OUR APPRECIATION...
WHICH WILL BE VERY SOON.

THERE ARE SOME
THINGS THAT HAVE
HAPPENED THAT
CANNOT BE
REVERSED...

SOME PEOPLE
THAT WE WILL
MISS...

BUT THOSE DAYS
ARE IN THE PAST.

IT IS UP TO US TO
FORGE WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT.

THANK YOU
EVERYONE...
NOW, LET'S GET
BACK TO WORK.

"HANK GEDDY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT STRINGS WERE PULLED TO GET YOU RELEASED EARLY, BUT THE FACT IS YOU'RE OUT, AND THAT MAKES ME NERVOUS."

"I KNOW THAT THE FREEDOM PHALANX REMOVED ALL SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE FROM YOUR MIND ABOUT HEROES AND ABOUT YOUR FORMER GROUP AS A CONDITION OF YOUR PAROLE."

"THAT STILL DOES NOT ALLAY MY FEARS, AND I KNOW I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO FEELS THE SAME WAY."



"YOU WILLINGLY TOOK PART IN A FRAUDULENT EFFORT TO PAINT YOURSELF INTO SOME THING THAT YOU WERE CLEARLY NOT."

"A FRAUD THAT INCLUDED THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!*"

"YOU INFILTRATED A SUPERHERO GROUP, STOLE THEIR SECRETS, BETRAYED THEIR TRUST, AND EVEN TRIED TO MURDER SEVERAL HEROES IN COLD BLOOD."

*"GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT" #14)

 **Hank Geddy**
AKA ST ARCYGNUS



"EVEN THOUGH THE COURTS RULED YOU WERE GUILTY WITH DIMINISHED CAPACITY, I AM NOT CONVINCED IN THE LEAST THAT YOU WERE SIMPLY 'CHANNELING' THE RAGE OF ALOR."

"I SAW THE FOOTAGE OF THE DISGUST YOU SHOWED MAXIMUS REX AND POSITRON ONCE YOU WERE FREED OF ALOR'S INFLUENCE, AND I BELIEVE THAT WAS ALL YOU."

*"GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT" #22)



"UNDERSTAND THAT YOU ARE A MARKED MAN, MISTER GEDDY."

★ Ms. Liberty
VINDICATORS

"AS LONG AS YOU ARE OUT AND ABOUT, YOU WILL BE EYED WITH SUSPICION FROM EVERY HERO, PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE."

"AS LONG AS YOU ARE OUT, YOU WILL DO SO UNDER OUR CONDITIONS."

"YOU WILL INITIATE NO CONTACT WHATSOEVER WITH ANY MEMBER OF THE FREEDOM PHALANX OR THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN."

"YOU WILL CHECK IN WITH YOUR PAROLE OFFICER EVERY DAY, AND I WILL CHECK WITH HER EVERY DAY."

"YOU WILL FIND WORK AND A RESIDENCE WITHIN FOURTEEN DAYS, AND THAT WORK MUST NOT INCLUDE ANY KIND OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY."

YOU WILL BE TESTED EVERY WEEK TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE NOT INGESTED ANY KIND OF NANOTECHNOLOGY. THAT INCLUDES DRINKING GREY COLA OR ENRICHE WATER.

LASTLY, YOU WILL NOT UPGRADE YOUR CYBERNETICS, NOR ACCESS ANY NETWORK CONNECTION UNLESS APPROVED OF BY MYSELF IN ADVANCE.

Brigid Moreira
CITY REPRESENTATIVE

DO YOU UNDERSTAND THESE TERMS AS THEY ARE SPELLED OUT, MISTER GEDDY?

YES MA'AM. I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY.

STEEL CANYON

SUPERGROUP PORTAL ACCESS



WELL...
HERE GOES...



WELCOME BACK
PROFESSOR
WALLACE.

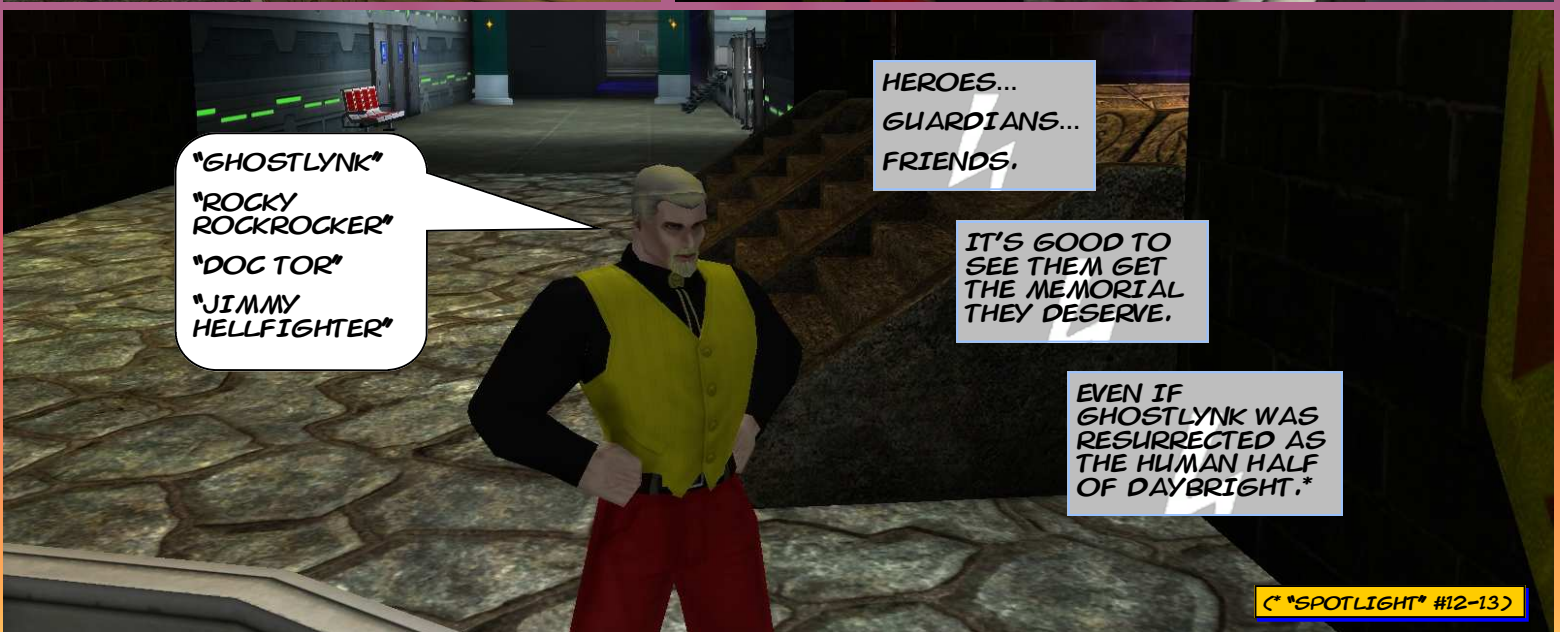


GOOD TO BE
BACK, CPCH.
BUT I'M JUST
VISITING
RIGHT NOW.

AS YOU WISH,
PROFESSOR
WALLACE.



"IN MEMORY OF
THE FALLEN..."



"GHOSTLYNK"
"ROCKY
ROCKROCKER"
"DOC TOR"
"JIMMY
HELLFIGHTER"

HEROES...
GUARDIANS...
FRIENDS.

IT'S GOOD TO
SEE THEM GET
THE MEMORIAL
THEY DESERVE.

EVEN IF
GHOSTLYNK WAS
RESURRECTED AS
THE HUMAN HALF
OF DAYBRIGHT.*

(*SPOTLIGHT* #12-13)



WHAT THE..?



THEY HAVE A NURSE NOW?

SOMETHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH, SIR?



I'M GOOD. THANK YOU FOR ASKING.

THIS IS GETTING STRANGE...



A SECURITY CHOKE-POINT?

HOW WERE THEY ABLE TO DO THIS?

EVEN WITH MONEY FROM THE WENTWORTH FAMILY, THIS SHOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE!



THIS GOES BEYOND THROWING SOME MONEY INTO THE BASE FOR AN UPGRADE.

THIS IS A FULLY-FUNCTIONAL AND STAFFED BASE!

I SUDDENLY FEEL LIKE I'M NAKED.

HOW MANY OF THESE PEOPLE KNOW WHO WE REALLY ARE?



CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?

OR... DO THEY?



NO, THAT'S OKAY, I'M JUST HERE TO... U.M... TAKE A LOOK AROUND. I'M WITH THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD.

REALLY?



TELL YOU WHAT... I'LL COME BACK SOME OTHER TIME, OKAY? JUST TELL THE LIBERTARIAN AVENGER THAT PROFESSOR WALLACE WAS HERE.



USE THE TELEPORT, GET BACK TO STEEL CANYON...

DON'T LET THEM THINK YOU'RE A FORMER HERO BY HEADING BACK TO THE PORTAL.



SECURITY TO TELEPORT ROOM ONE.



SIR, PLEASE DO NOT TRY TO FLEE. I AM WITH HERO CORPS. PLEASE COME WITH ME.



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

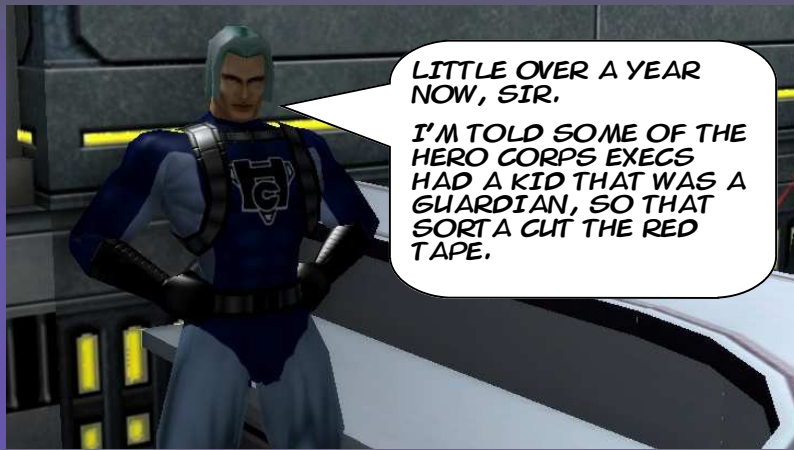
WE JUST GOT THE CONFIRMATION FROM THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD OF YOUR CREDENTIALS, PROFESSOR. WE'RE SORRY FOR THE MIX-UP.

NO, IT'S MY FAULT. I SHOULDVE CALLED AHEAD INSTEAD OF JUST DROPPING IN.

I HAVEN'T VISITED HERE IN A FEW YEARS AND I DIDN'T KNOW THIS MUCH HAD CHANGED.



SO... HOW LONG HAS HERO CORPS BEEN DOING SECURITY FOR THE GUARDIANS?



LITTLE OVER A YEAR NOW, SIR.
I'M TOLD SOME OF THE HERO CORPS EXECS HAD A KID THAT WAS A GUARDIAN, SO THAT SORTA CUT THE RED TAPE.



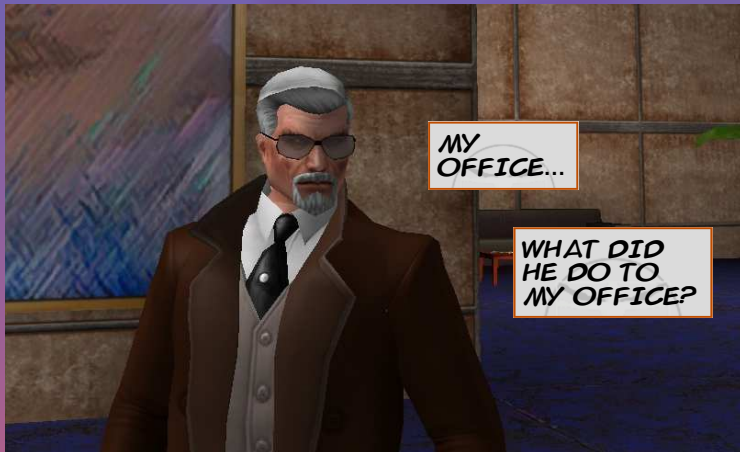
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE...

WHO..?



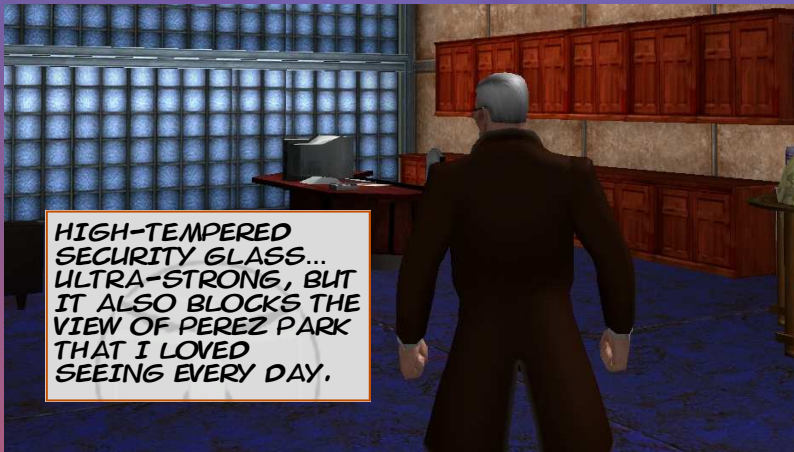
ELLIOT DRAMSAY, GOURMET CHEF AND HERO.
YOU AND ME, WE'RE GOING SHOPPING.

Chef Dramsay
GOURMET HERO

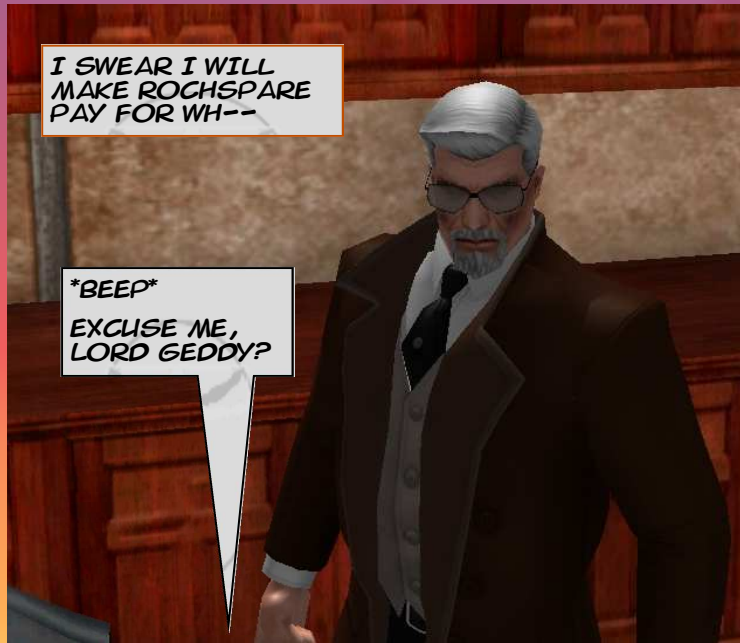


MY OFFICE...

WHAT DID HE DO TO MY OFFICE?



HIGH-TEMPERED SECURITY GLASS... ULTRA-STRONG, BUT IT ALSO BLOCKS THE VIEW OF PEREZ PARK THAT I LOVED SEEING EVERY DAY.



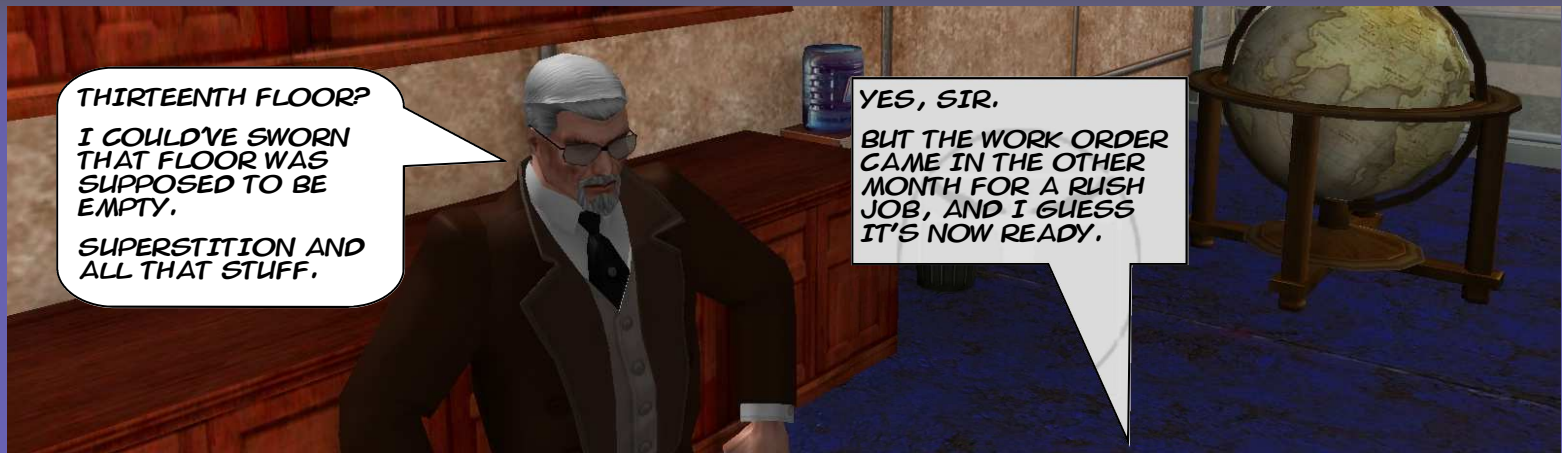
I SWEAR I WILL MAKE ROCHSPARE PAY FOR WH--

BEEP
EXCUSE ME, LORD GEDDY?



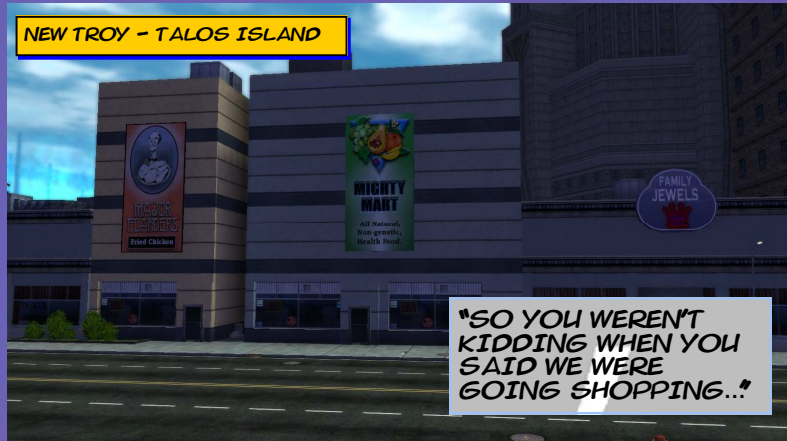
YES?

I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SIR, BUT YOU HAVE A CONFERENCE SCHEDULED ON THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR.



THIRTEENTH FLOOR?
I COULD'VE SWORN
THAT FLOOR WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE
EMPTY.
SUPERSTITION AND
ALL THAT STUFF.

YES, SIR.
BUT THE WORK ORDER
CAME IN THE OTHER
MONTH FOR A RUSH
JOB, AND I GUESS
IT'S NOW READY.



NEW TROY - TALOS ISLAND

"SO YOU WEREN'T
KIDDING WHEN YOU
SAID WE WERE
GOING SHOPPING..."



A GOOD CHEF
GETS HIS OWN
MATERIALS.
BEEN DOING
THIS SINCE I
WAS IN THE
ROYAL ARMY.

SO YOU'RE
PART OF THE
BASE STAFF?



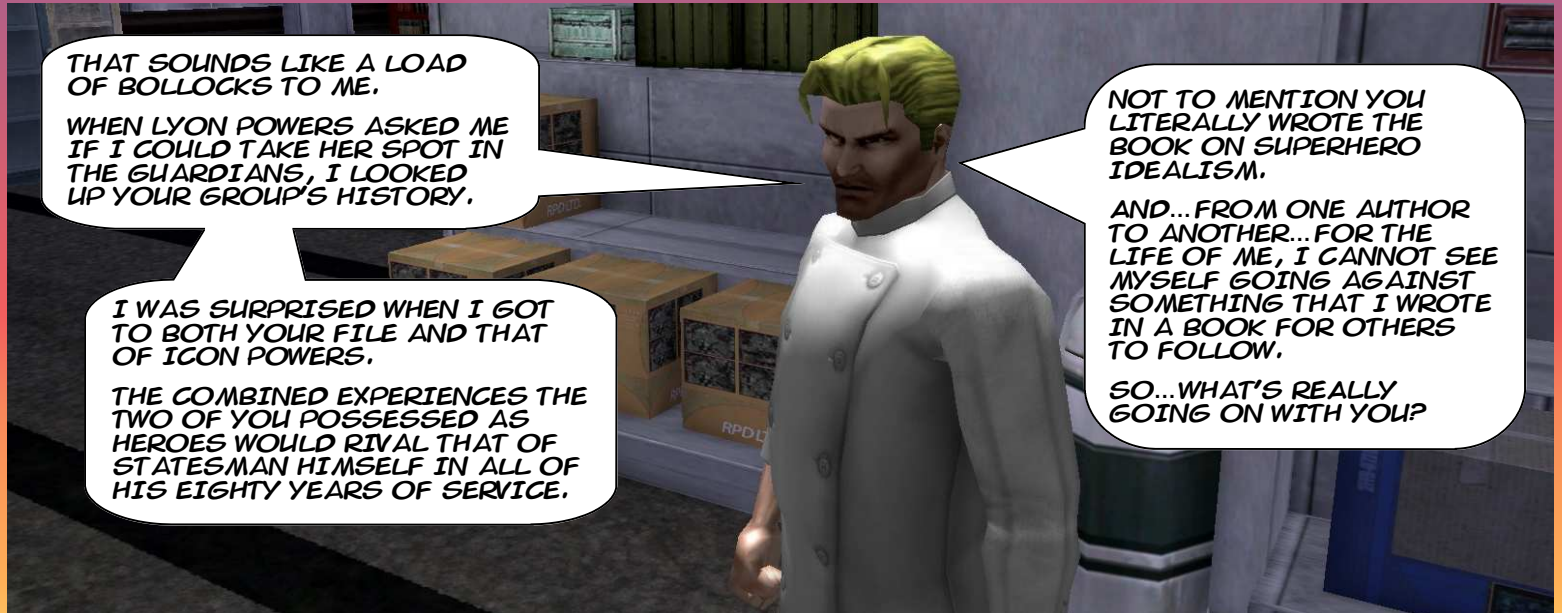
NO, I'M A FULL-
BLOWN HERO;
MEMBER OF BOTH
THE DAWN
PATROL AND THE
GUARDIANS.*

SPEAKING OF
WHICH, YOU WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE
THERE IN YOUR
HERO OUTFIT.

IT'S NOT EXACTLY EASY
GETTING AROUND IN
SPEED ARMOR WITHOUT
THE "SPEED" PART.

I JUST FIGURED I'D GET
USED TO THE PLACE AS...
WELL, AS "ME" FIRST.
I DIDN'T EXPECT THE
BASE TO BE FULLY-
STAFFED.

(* THE DAWN PATROL IS EUROPE'S
PREMIERE SUPERHERO TEAM.)



THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOAD
OF BOLLOCKS TO ME.
WHEN LYON POWERS ASKED ME
IF I COULD TAKE HER SPOT IN
THE GUARDIANS, I LOOKED
UP YOUR GROUP'S HISTORY.

I WAS SURPRISED WHEN I GOT
TO BOTH YOUR FILE AND THAT
OF ICON POWERS.
THE COMBINED EXPERIENCES THE
TWO OF YOU POSSESSED AS
HEROES WOULD RIVAL THAT OF
STATESMAN HIMSELF IN ALL OF
HIS EIGHTY YEARS OF SERVICE.

NOT TO MENTION YOU
LITERALLY WROTE THE
BOOK ON SUPERHERO
IDEALISM.
AND... FROM ONE AUTHOR
TO ANOTHER... FOR THE
LIFE OF ME, I CANNOT SEE
MYSELF GOING AGAINST
SOMETHING THAT I WROTE
IN A BOOK FOR OTHERS
TO FOLLOW.
SO...WHAT'S REALLY
GOING ON WITH YOU?



I'M SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T DROP IN AN F-BOMB OR TWO.

OKAY...

GIVE ME TIME... I'VE GOT RISOTTO ON THE MENU FOR TONIGHT AND MY CREW STILL HAS A HARD TIME COOKING IT.
NOW... OUT WIT' IT.



I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD GET BACK INTO THIS, MUCH LESS LEAD ANOTHER HERO TEAM.

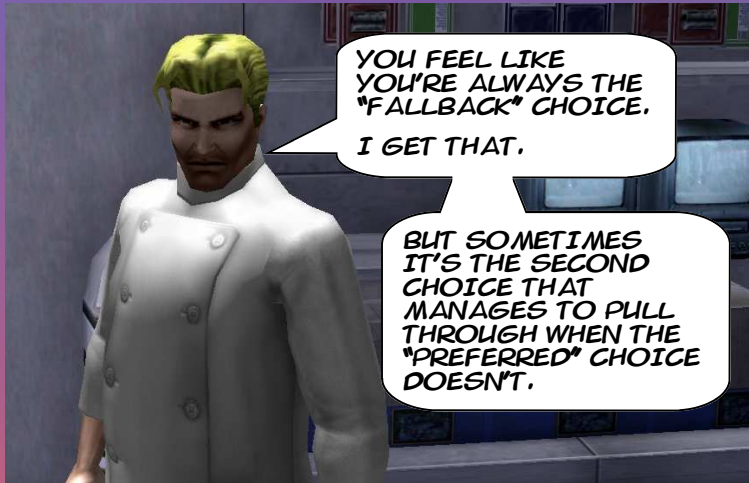
I WAS DOING THIS SINCE I WAS A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD RUNAWAY IN WHAT SEEMS LIKE FOREVER.

I'VE LOST MY WIFE, MY FRIENDS, MY WHOLE UNIVERSE... AND THEN... FINALLY... MY POWERS.

I'VE SPENT ALMOST THREE YEARS LEARNING HOW TO GET BY AT A "NORMAL" PACE, EVEN WHEN I STARTED TO GET BACK SOME OF MY POWERS.

AND NOW HERE COMES ALEX, ASKING ME TO NOT ONLY COME BACK... BUT TO PICK UP FROM WHERE ICON LEFT...

FOR A SECOND TIME, NO LESS!



YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE ALWAYS THE "FALLBACK" CHOICE.
I GET THAT.

BUT SOMETIMES IT'S THE SECOND CHOICE THAT MANAGES TO PULL THROUGH WHEN THE "PREFERRED" CHOICE DOESN'T.



I'M NOT SURE IF I'M READY TO BE THE SECOND CHOICE AGAIN.

LISTEN, YOU SEEM TO ALREADY BE DOING GOOD THERE. WHY DON'T YOU JUST--?



--NO, NO.

FIRST, I HAVE NO DELUSIONS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF HERO I REALLY AM.

I'M SUPPORT. I WORK BEST BEHIND THE SCENES.

BESIDES, WHO DO YOU THINK POINTED ALEX YOUR WAY?

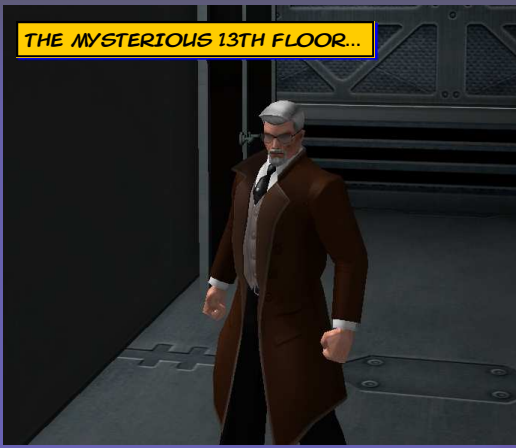
LOOK, JUST... GIVE IT A TRY.

I'LL WALK YOU THROUGH THE BASE STUFF IF IT HELPS, BUT WE REALLY COULD USE YOU OVER THERE RIGHT NOW.

OKAY...
OKAY...

BUT IF I'M GOING TO BE THERE AS RYDER LIGHTNING, THEN I NEED TO MAKE A QUICK DETOUR FIRST.

THE MYSTERIOUS 13TH FLOOR...



"CURIUSER AND CURIUSER..!"



GREETINGS LORD GEDDY.

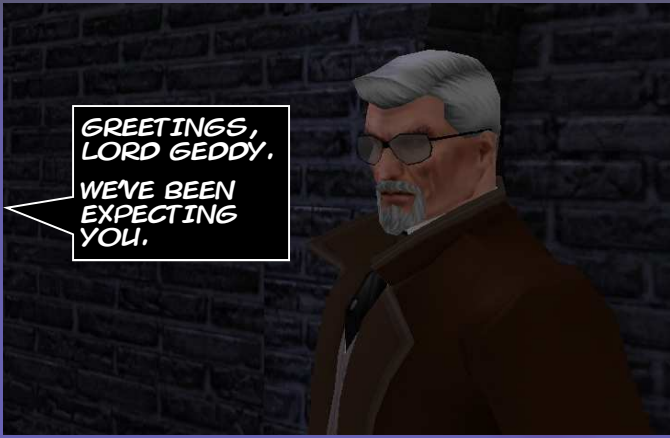


WHAT ROOM IS THIS?



WE DON'T KNOW, SIR. ALL WE KNOW IS THAT WE MUST ONLY ALLOW YOU TO ENTER AND EXIT.





GREETINGS,
LORD GEDDY.
WE'VE BEEN
EXPECTING
YOU.



WHO ARE
YOU?
WHAT IS
THIS PLACE?

WELCOME TO
THE TALON
ROOM.



THE BILDERBURG
ALLIANCE
CONSISTS OF
MANY MEMBERS
FROM MANY PARTS
OF THE GLOBE.



BUT WITHIN THAT
LARGE GROUP IS A
SMALLER ONE.
WE ARE THE HIERARCHY
WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.

EACH OF US HOLDS A
POSITION OF AUTHORITY
AS "THE VOICE" IN OUR
RESPECTIVE AREAS.
WHEN ANDREW WENTWORTH
WAS WITH US, HE SERVED
AS "THE VOICE" FOR
PARAGON CITY.
HE HAS SINCE PARTED
FROM THE ALLIANCE.



SO YOU ARE OFFERING
ME HIS POSITION.
YOU WANT ME TO BE
"THE VOICE" FOR
PARAGON CITY.

THIS POSITION CARRIES
A LOT OF WEIGHT AND
RESPONSIBILITY.
IT ALSO REQUIRES YOU
TO BE ANONYMOUS.
OUTSIDE OF MYSELF, NO
ONE WILL KNOW WHO YOU
ARE, AND YOU WILL NEVER
KNOW WHO THE OTHER
"VOICES" ARE.



EACH OF US HAS A ROOM JUST
LIKE THIS ONE; A REPLICA OF
THE ORIGINAL TALON ROOM AT
THE BILDERBURG MANSION.
EACH OF US WILL BE JUST ONE
FACE ON A VIDEO SCREEN, WITH
JUST A NUMBER FOR A
REFERENCE.
WE DO THIS OUT OF TRADITION,
AS WELL AS TO KEEP US SAFE.



YOU WENT THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE ON THE PRESUMPTION THAT I WOULD SAY "YES" TO YOUR OFFER.

WE MAKE IT A POINT TO KNOW WHO WE INTEND TO CONSIDER FOR THE POSITION BEFORE WE OFFER IT TO THEM.

BUT... BEFORE YOU FORMALLY SAY "YES", WE HAVE TWO CONDITIONS FOR THE POSITION THAT ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE.

I EXPECTED AS MUCH.

THE FIRST CONDITION IS THAT AT NO TIME WILL YOU TAKE ACTION AGAINST ANDREW WENTWORTH, OR ALLOW ANYONE IN THE ALLIANCE TO DO THE SAME.

ANDREW WENTWORTH WAS A VALUED MEMBER OF THE ALLIANCE, AND AS LONG AS HIS DEPARTURE WAS ON FRIENDLY TERMS, THE ALLIANCE OWES IT TO HIM TO CONTINUE TO TREAT HIM WITH RESPECT.

THE SAME DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE GROUP HE HAS ASSOCIATED HIMSELF WITH, THOUGH.

THAT BRINGS US TO THE SECOND CONDITION.

JUST LIKE ANDREW WENTWORTH USED YOU AND YOUR REMADE "SHADOWBORN" ORGANIZATION AS HIS PROXY FOR THE ALLIANCE, SO TOO MUST YOU FIND YOUR OWN PROXY.



FIND SOMEONE WHO IS NOT IN THE ALLIANCE AND CONVINCE THEM DO YOUR BIDDING.

YOU MAY OFFER THEM MEMBERSHIP AS AN EVENTUAL REWARD, BUT BE SURE TO CHOOSE WISELY, LORD GEDDY.

IF THEY EXCEL THEN THEY BECOME PART OF THE ALLIANCE.

AND IF THEY FAIL, IT DOES NOT GET TRACED BACK TO THE ALLIANCE.

PRECISELY.

HMMM...

THEN I THINK I KNOW WHO WOULD BE THE IDEAL PROXY.

SILVER LAKE DISTRICT - STEEL CANYON

OH GOD, THIS REALLY HURTS ME.



IT'S LIKE I'M WEARING A DRENCHED SWEAT-SUIT.

Ryder Lightning
ELECTRIC SPEEDSTER



THANKFULLY I ONLY NEEDED TO HAVE IT ON LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO MAKE IT TO THE TAILOR STORE.

RIGHT ABOUT NOW I WISH I STILL HAD MY ORIGINAL SUIT.

BUT, STUPID ME, I THOUGHT THE SPEED ARMOR WOULD BE MY FUTURE.

AND THEN I LOST MY POWERS.



I SHOULD'VE COME HERE EARLIER.



THE ICON, INC.

THE TAILOR STORE FOR SUPERHEROES.



NOW... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SEE IF I CAN GET THIS DONE BEFORE--



SEND HIM BACK HERE RIGHT THIS MINUTE!

-- TOO LATE.





HELLO SERGE.
HOW HAVE YOU
BEEN?



UPSET.
UPSET THAT
YOU CAME HERE
IN THAT
HORRID SUIT!

Serge
FAMOUS DESIGNER



UM, SERGE? THIS
CAME FROM THE
ICON TAILOR IN
THE VANGUARD
BASE.*

(*SPOTLIGHT* #22)



YESYESYES... AND
"BASED ON DESIGNS
BY SYNAPSE AND
POSITRON", BLAH-
BLAH-BLAH.
BUT IF YOU SAW ME
FIRST, I WOULD
HAVE POINTED YOU
TO A DESIGN THAT
WOULDN'T MAKE YOU
LOOK LIKE A
BATTERY MASCOT.



OKAY, THEN I
ADMIT A LAPSE
IN JUDGMENT,
AND I SEEK
FORGIVENESS
AND A CHANCE TO
GET IT RIGHT.

PLACATING TO MY
EGO IS A GOOD
START, RYDER
LIGHTNING.
GETTING RID OF
THAT HORRID
"SPEED ARMOR"
THING IS NEXT.



BULLLIT...THE COLORS
AND THE DETAILING
WORK...THOSE I'LL KEEP.
IN FACT...
YES, I HAVE JUST THE
THING FOR YOU!

OKAY...
LET'S SEE WHAT
YOU HAVE.

Next Issue:
The Selection



Never Say Never!

Welcome back to “The City”!

I’m sure some of you are scratching your heads right now and asking yourself how the heck I’m able to do stories again from the City of Heroes universe when the MMO has been shut down.

YES, it is true that the City of Heroes MMO was shut down at 11:59 pm EST on November 30th, 2012. It was a sad day for everyone.

NO, the City of Heroes MMO has NOT been reactivated. It is still very much dead.

So how am I able to resume the stories?

Funny you should ask that.

As I said at the end of “The Guardian Powers” #15, there was no way for me to keep telling stories from the City of Heroes universe without new content.

So months go by and I’m working on the “Future’s Guardian” series, which is set in the world of Champions Online. I’m in the middle of their first major storyline, and I get a message from a fellow comic creator.

“What if I could show you how to get City content again?” he asked me.

Well that got my curiosity.

First, he pointed me to a little program called “Titan Icon”. It uses the physical City of Heroes program that is installed on your computer and it allows you to create characters and then move them about in the City.

Of course it’s just the city maps. There are not interactions, because there is no MMO server to connect to. But some of the NPC characters are there. And the program I’m using is the beta of Issue 24, which had a lot of extra features that the City developers at Paragon Studios were ready to launch but just couldn’t because of the shutdown notice.

But that was only the first part. Sure, that allowed me to come up with the cover and a few of the other scenes.

But what about the bases? The Guardian base, the Rocinante Group building, even the mission maps that I used for things like the Judicial Center... those were things you can’t just tool around in even with Titan Icon.

Continues on next page...

Well, that's when I found another surprise.

Before the shutdown, my good friend and fellow comic creator Joseph Cohen, aka Sin Stalker, stopped by the Guardian base for a tour. Our groups were in a coalition for a while, so we had access to each others' bases. Sin spent a lot of time going through each room in the base, taking a look at everything, checking out all of the corners and secret places. Back then I thought he was just understandably curious.

Well the next thing you know I've got my hands on a demorecord file of the Guardians of the Dawn base!

A demorecord is the means for game players to record the activity within a certain game. It can be used for videos or to playback events. And with the right software, it can also be edited, tweaked, and even changed a bit. You can bring in characters or even certain elements from other maps if you know how.

Or, in my case, if you know people who know how to do that stuff.

So for the past few months, that's what I've been doing.. . Tweaking demorecord files and tooling around the City using Titan Icon and the offline i24 beta program. And all the while working on this little secret and also with "Future's Guardian".

Well that's not the only things that was going on with my life.

You may have noticed a certain memorial at the beginning of the issue. My father suffered from prolonged medical complications surrounding his cancer treatments. That took a lot of strength and time from us all, right up until the end, and then even afterward we're still trying to go on without him.

We'll get into some of the details of the return of the Guardians as well as what we have in store for you after "Graduation" in Part 2 of our return to "The City".

<http://BattlerockComics.wordpress.com>



NEXT ISSUE:

RYDER LIGHTNING IS BACK!

AND NOW THE ONCE AND FUTURE SPEEDSTER HAS TO PLAY CATCH-UP WITH WHAT HE'S BEEN MISSING.

WHO IS STILL AROUND? WHAT IS THE "INCIDENT"? AND WHY DID ICON POWERS LEAVE SO ABRUPTLY?

PLUS... JUST WHO HAS LORD GEDDY SELECTED AS HIS "PROXY" IN HIS NEW ROLE AS "THE VOICE OF PARAGON CITY"?

AND WHAT WILL MALCOLM ROCHSPARE DO NOW THAT HE'S OUT OF POWER?



FROM THE CREATOR OF JUSTICE-KNIGHTS...

STALK TRESS

Vengeance or Justice?
Cruelty or Mercy?
Angel or Monster?



JKComics.com



THE GAME IS GONE...



... BUT THE STORIES GO ON!



MMOCOMICINDEX.COM