

T+ FOR TEENS PLUS

# GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN GRADUATION



CITY OF  
  
 Comic Creators  
 July 2014  
 Issue 01

  
 BATTLEROCK  
 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 of the accusations and hailed as the heroes that they always were. Their status as a group was officially restored and reactivated, 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 they pulled their guns, take the money from

Only this time when a stranger wearing a red tunic wreck on the other side of the street, their getaway car was a crumpled mess. His previous place was a man

**IT STARTED WITH ONE MAN.  
A STRANGER ON A MISSION TO MAKE THINGS BETTER.**

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 the police.

In Steel Canyon, a patriotic-dressed vigilante known as "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.

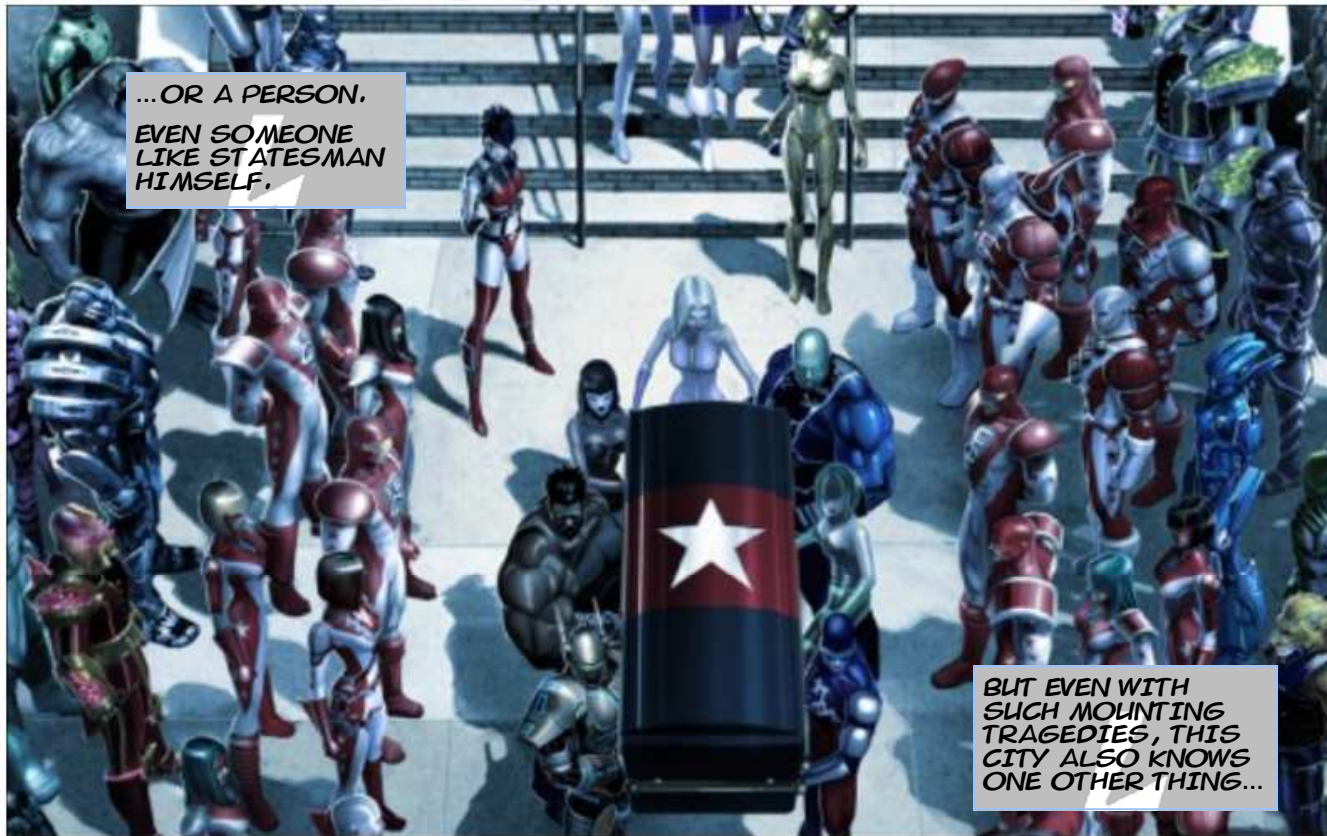
Today, Galaxy City is unrecognizable as death came from above and below, killing thousands and injuring tens of thousands. *(Full coverage continues on Page 2)*

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."

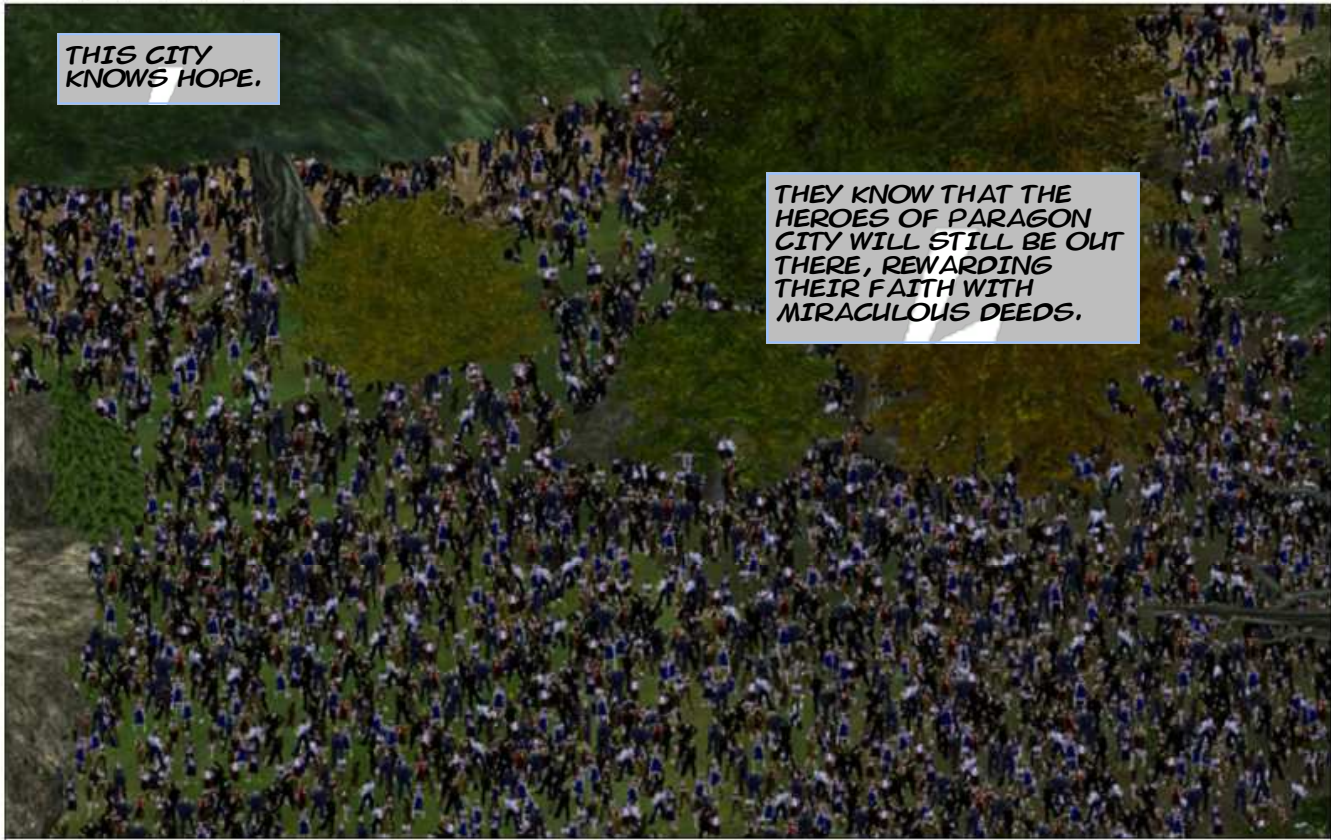
But first, they had to say goodbye to their friend, (Continued on Page 2)



# 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.

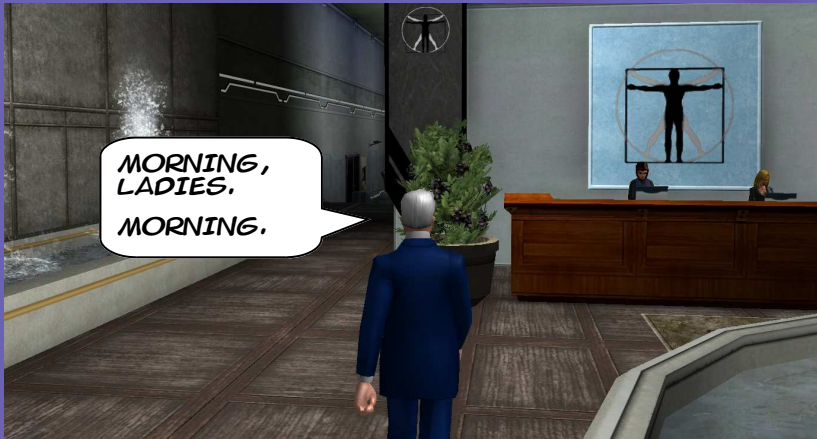
PEREZ PARK - BONEYARD DISTRICT

ROCINANTE GROUP

PARAGON CITY OFFICE



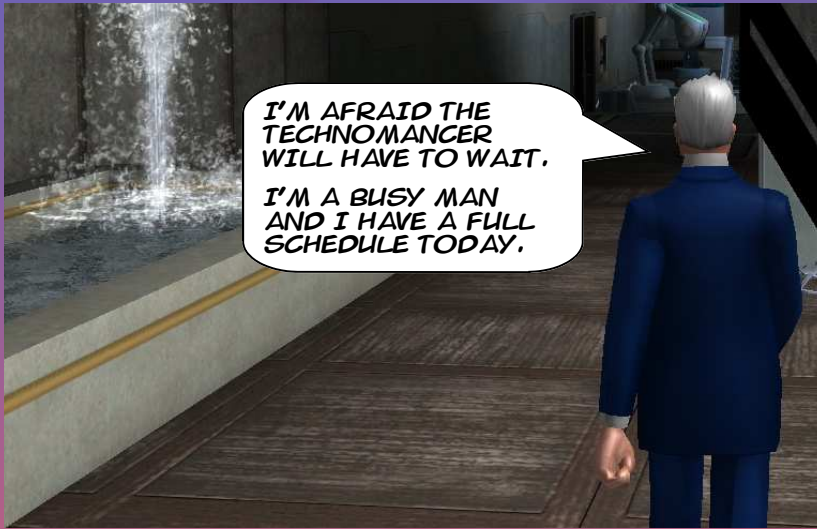
**Malcolm Rochspare**  
COMPANY C.O.O.



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?

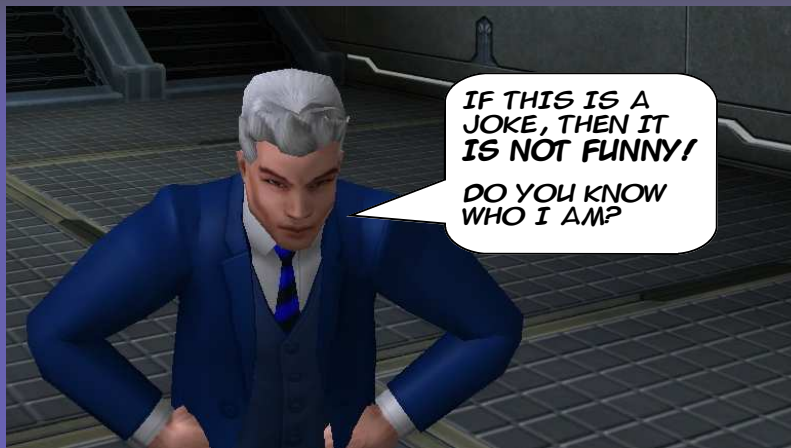


SECURITY, STOP MISTER ROCHSPARE!



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?

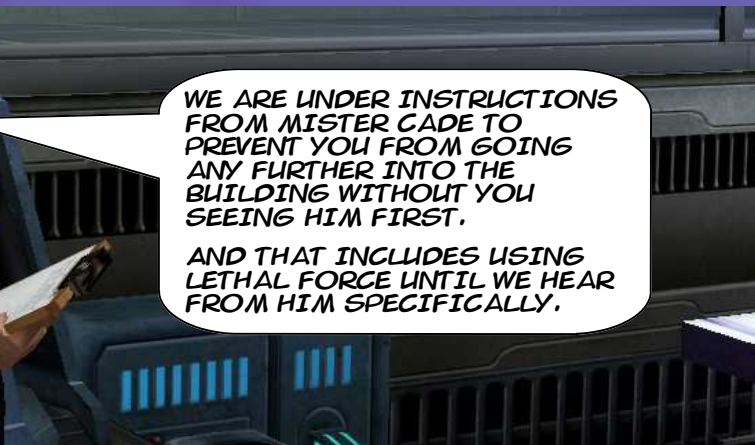


**\*WHRRR\***  
**\*CHIK-CHAK\***

SAFETIES OFF.

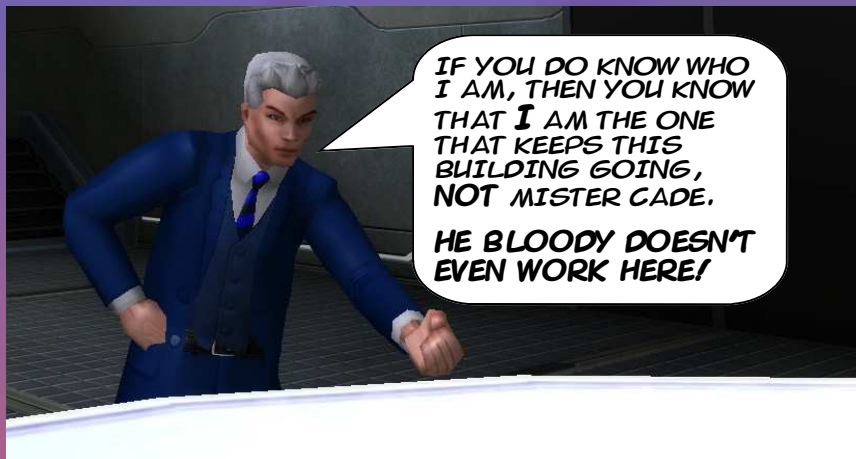


MISTER ROCHSPARE, I KNOW PRECISELY WHO YOU ARE.  
I WAS HERE WHEN YOU WERE NAMED CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER.  
BUT THAT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.

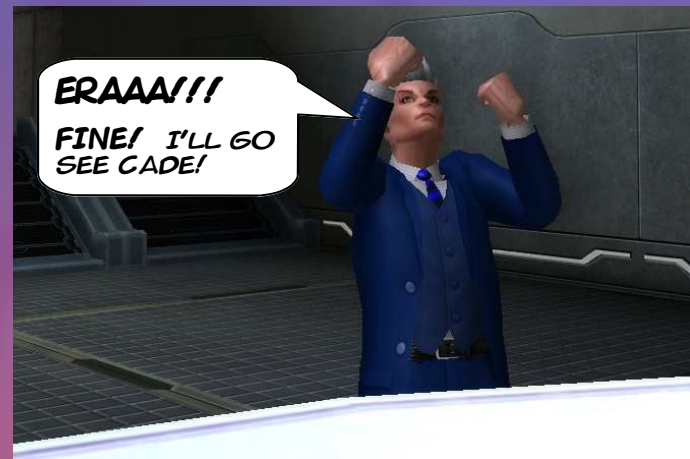


WE ARE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM MISTER CADE TO PREVENT YOU FROM GOING ANY FURTHER INTO THE BUILDING WITHOUT YOU SEEING HIM FIRST.

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--

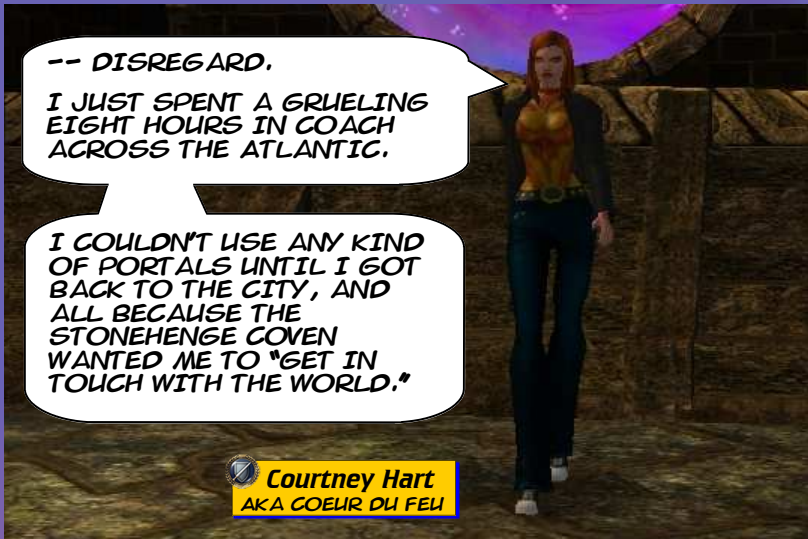


-- DISREGARD.

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?!?

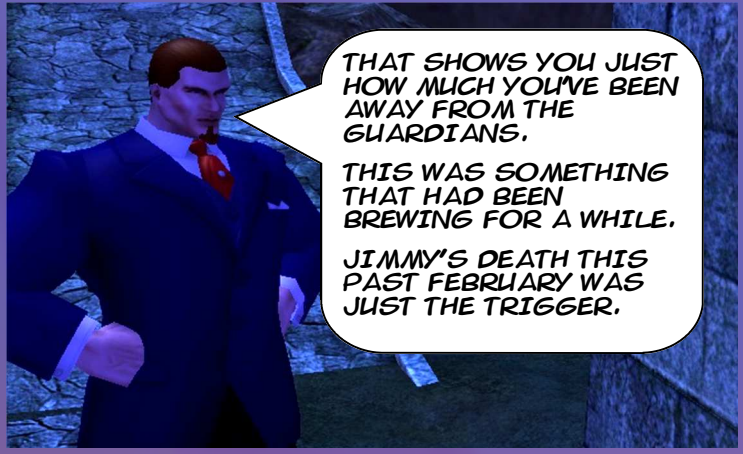
© "GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AFTERMATH"



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 PSEUDO-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 THE "GUARDIANS  
OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT"  
SERIES.)

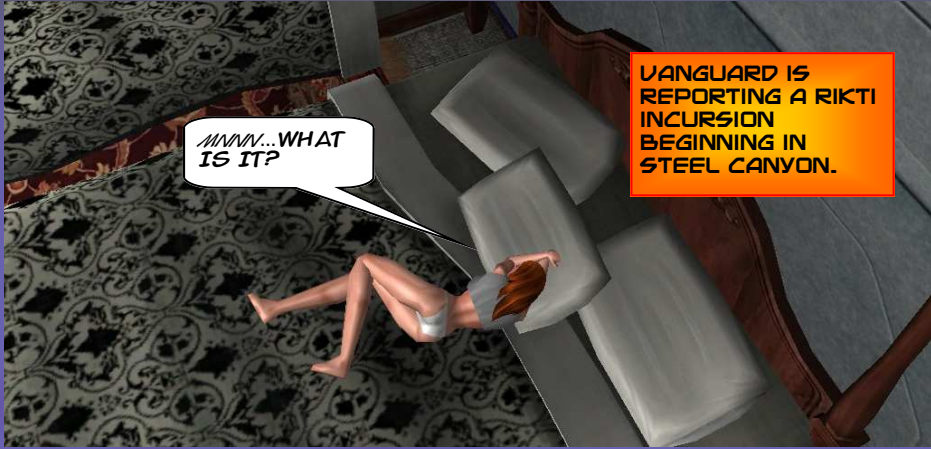
A SHORT WHILE LATER...

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.



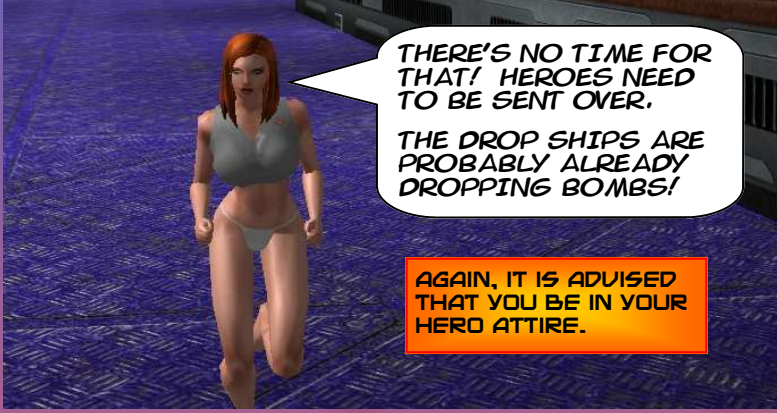
SHIT, SHIT, SHIT!  
THIS IS WHAT I  
GET FOR  
SLEEPING IN!

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...

6'6'6'

\*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.

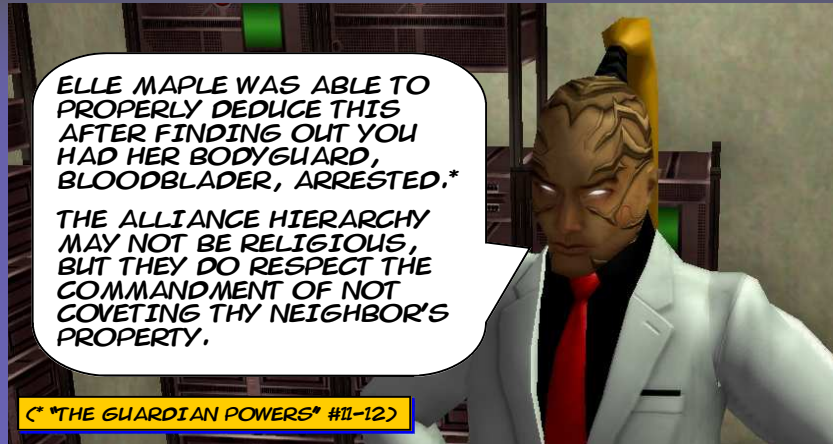
**WHAA...?!?**

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? THAT'S 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 SOMETHING 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.

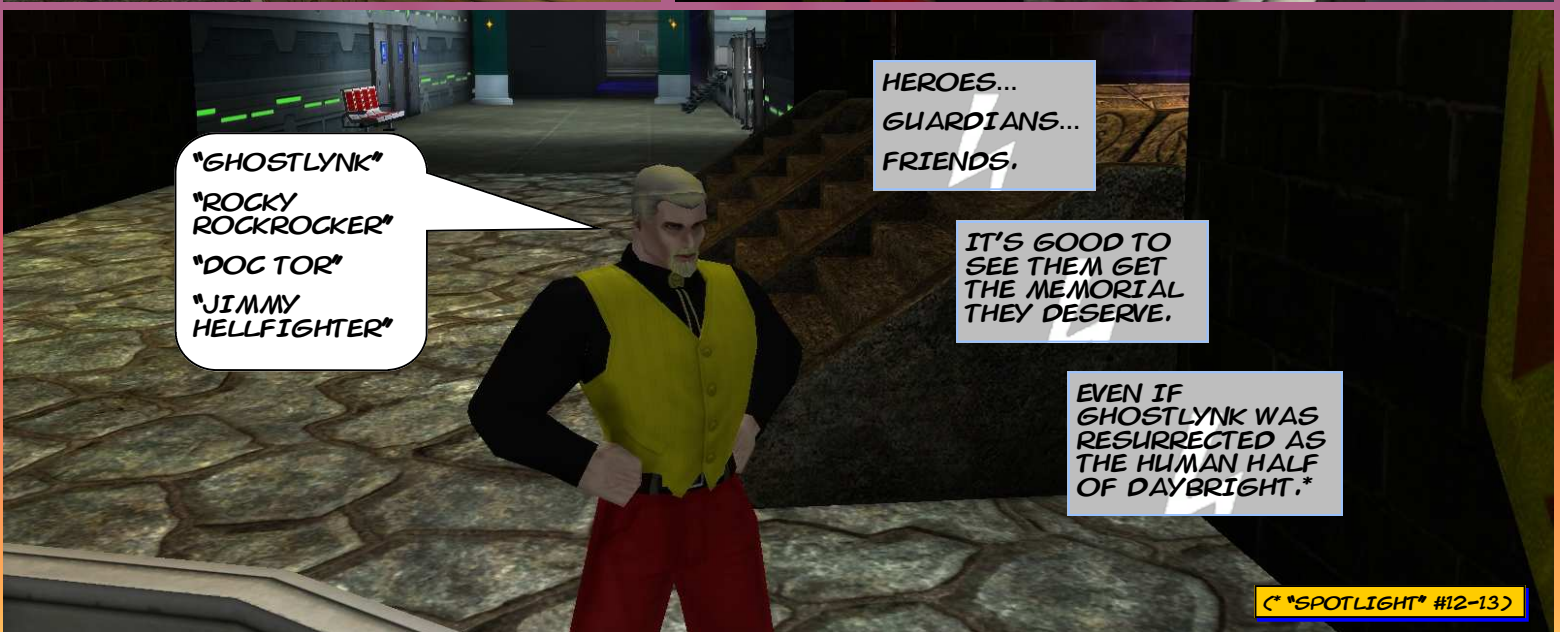


GOOD TO BE  
BACK, CPCH.  
BUT I'M JUST  
VISITING  
RIGHT NOW.

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...

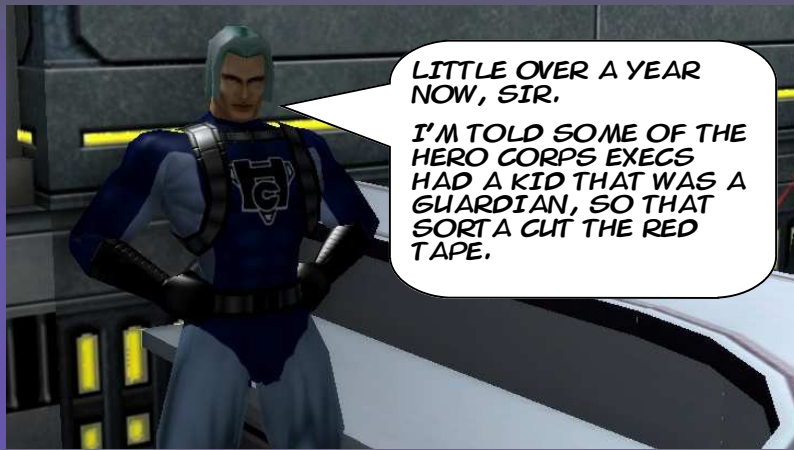
WE JUST GOT THE CONFIRMATION FROM THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD OF YOUR CREDENTIALS, PROFESSOR. WE'RE SORRY FOR THE MIX-UP.

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 EXEC'S HAD A KID THAT WAS A GUARDIAN, SO THAT SORTA CUT THE RED TAPE.



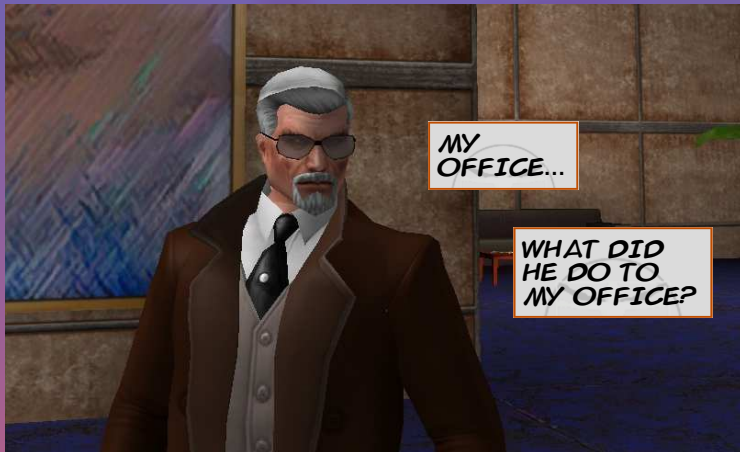
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE...

WHO..?



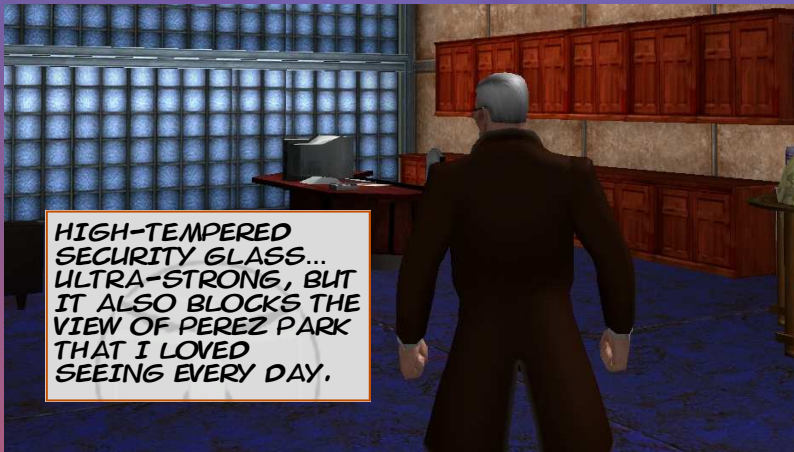
ELLIOT DRAMSAY, GOURMET CHEF AND REGISTERED HERO.  
YOU AND ME, PROFESSOR, WE'RE GOING SHOPPING.

**Chef Dramsay**  
GOURMET HERO

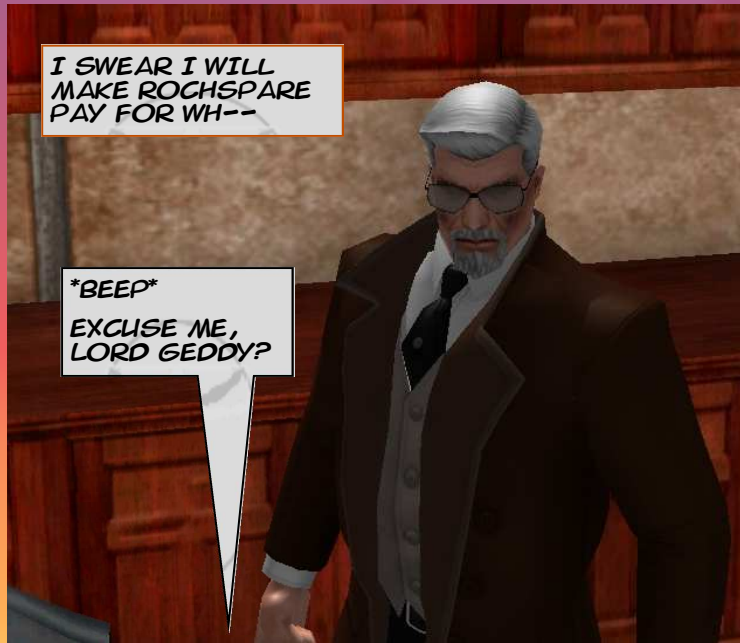


MY OFFICE...

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.



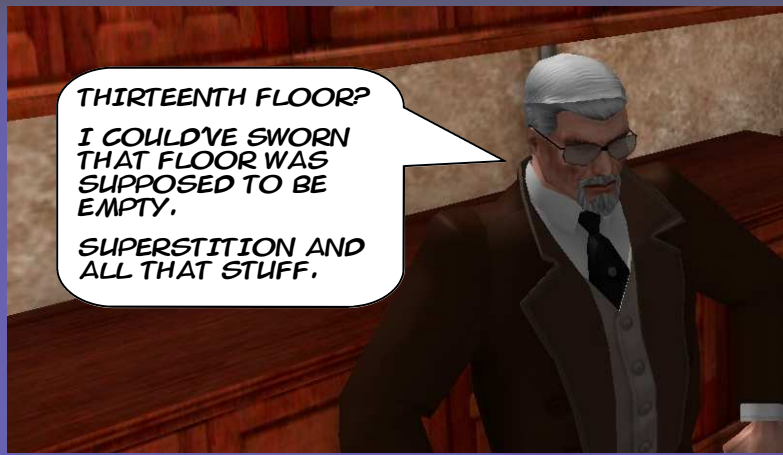
I SWEAR I WILL MAKE ROCHSPARE PAY FOR WH--

\*BEEP\*  
EXCUSE ME, LORD GEDDY?

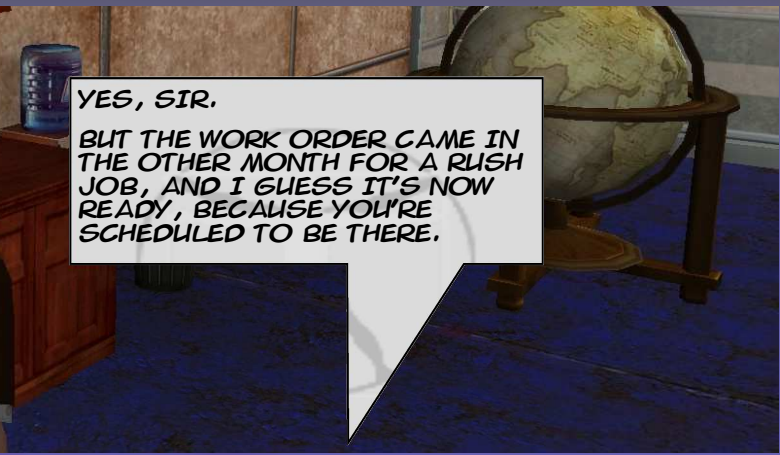


YES?

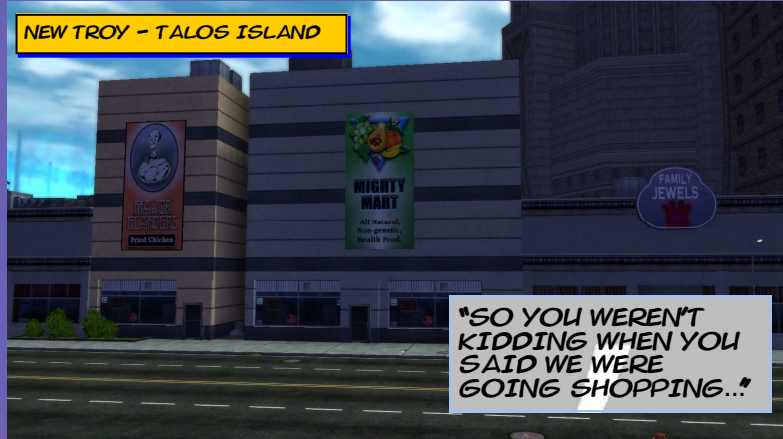
I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SIR, BUT YOU HAVE A CONFERENCE SCHEDULED ON THE THIRTEENTH FLOOR.



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, BECAUSE YOU'RE  
SCHEDULED TO BE THERE.



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?



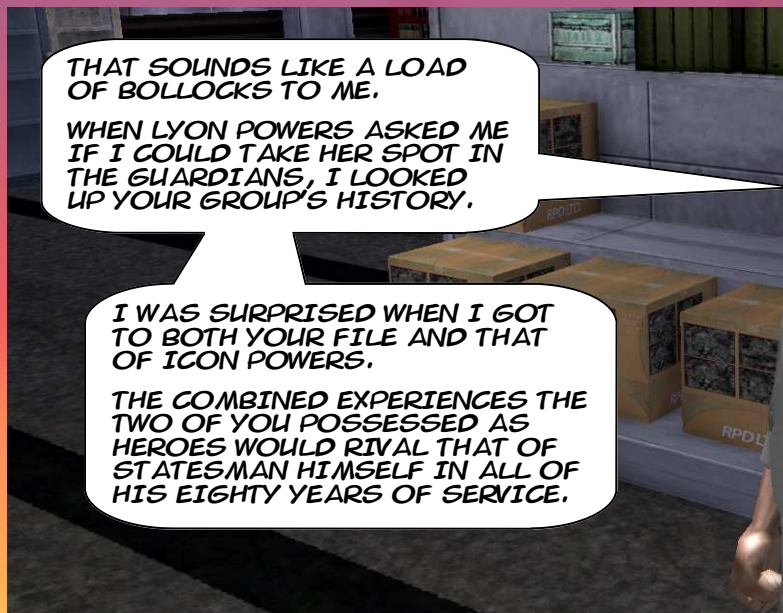
NO, I'M A FULL-  
BLOWN HERO;  
MEMBER OF BOTH  
THE DAWN  
PATROL AND THE  
GUARDIANS.\*

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 AT ALL.

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



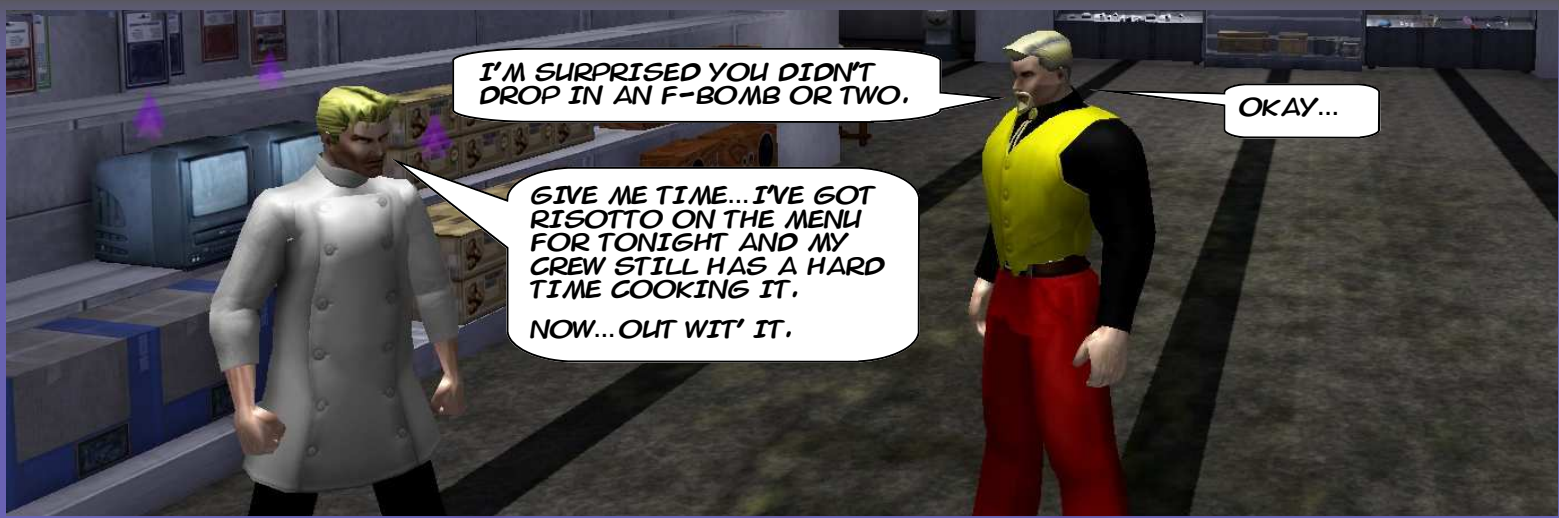
THAT SOUNDS LIKE A LOAD  
OF BOLLOCKS TO ME.  
WHEN LYON POWERS ASKED ME  
IF I COULD TAKE HER SPOT IN  
THE GUARDIANS, I LOOKED  
UP YOUR GROUP'S HISTORY.

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.

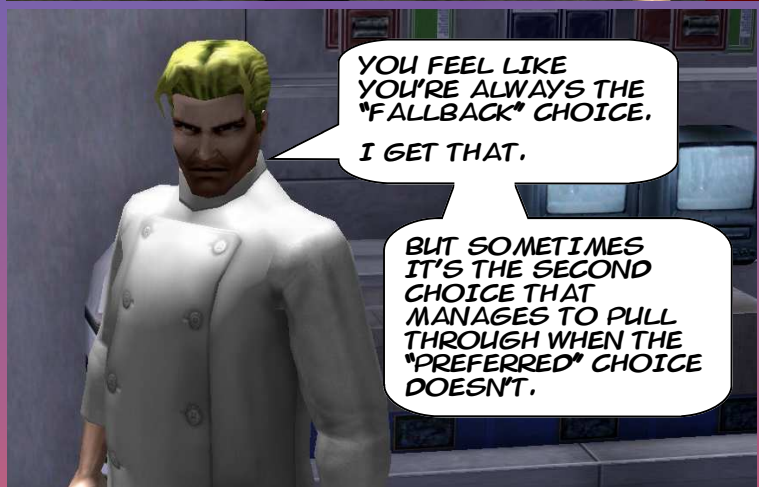


I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD GET BACK INTO THIS, MUCH LESS LEAD ANOTHER HERO TEAM. I WAS DOING THIS SINCE I WAS A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD RUNAWAY IN WHAT SEEMS LIKE FOREVER. I'VE LOST MY WIFE, MY FRIENDS, MY WHOLE UNIVERSE... AND THEN... FINALLY... MY POWERS.

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--?



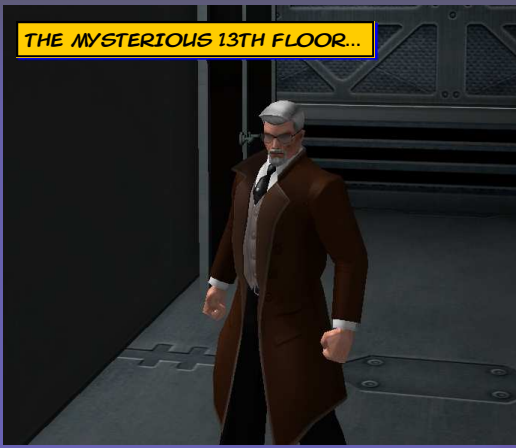
--NO, NO. OUT OF THE QUESTION. FIRST, I HAVE NO DELUSIONS ABOUT WHAT KIND OF HERO THAT I REALLY AM IN A GROUP LIKE THAT. I'M SUPPORT. I WORK BEST BEHIND THE SCENES. BESIDES, WHO DO YOU THINK POINTED ALEX YOUR WAY?

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.

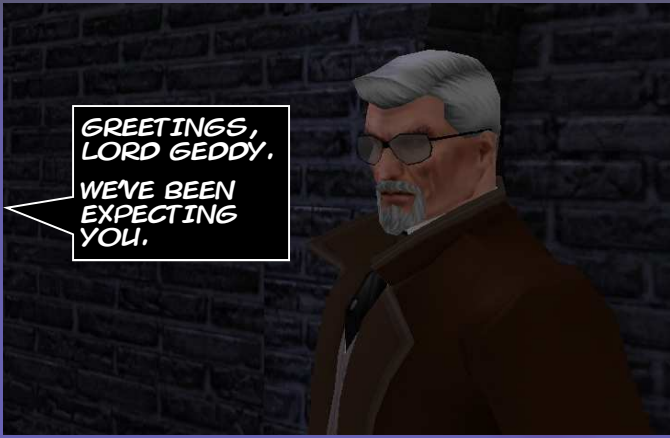


WHAT ROOM IS THIS?



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.

JUST LIKE IT WAS WHEN YOU WERE "ENCOURAGED" TO REMAKE SHADOWBORN.\*

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 SHOULDVE 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 no 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.

Well, that’s when I found another surprise.

*Continues on next page...*

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 is basically a text file that can be used to playback events in the game. 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 was not the only thing 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.

Since he was the inspiration behind one of my characters, it was only right to have that character's fate mirror his own. And, as you will see, his passing will have an impact on some of the other characters.

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?**



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# ... BUT THE STORIES GO ON!

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