

THE GUARDIAN POWERS



ISSUE 04
2012



ARE ON THE HUNT FOR **MidKnight X**



ONCE THEY REPRESENTED THE NEXT GENERATION OF SUPERHERO TEAMS... THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN! THEY BATTLED CRIME LORDS, CORRUPT GOVERNMENT AGENTS, AND EVEN GODS AND DEMIGODS. THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE WHEN MANY BELIEVED THEY WOULD NOT.

BUT WHILE THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN ARE NO MORE, SEVERAL OF THE HEROES REFUSE TO GIVE UP THE FIGHT TO MAKE THAT BRIGHTER FUTURE POSSIBLE. OPERATING ON THEIR OWN, THEY ARE REFERRED TO COLLECTIVELY AS...

THE GUARDIAN POWERS



CAPTAIN PARAGONNA - PARAGON CITY'S SUPERHERO POLICEWOMAN

THE ORIGINAL FOUNDING MEMBER AND FORMER LEADER OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN, STEVIE WALKER-RODGERS CONTINUES THE FIGHT FOR LAW AND ORDER, AS WELL AS BRING THAT PROMISE OF A BRIGHT FUTURE.

ICON POWERS/KENT PODERES - TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

THE GREATEST HERO OF HIS EARTH, AND FOSTER FATHER OF GALATEA, KENT SACRIFICED EVERYTHING, INCLUDING HIS COUSIN'S TRUST. NOW HE HAS LOST MUCH OF HIS POWERS AND SEEKS TO REBUILD THE TRUST OF HIS TEAMMATES.



MIDNIGHT X - STREET VIGILANTE

BORN ON ANOTHER WORLD, JASON KNIGHT LITERALLY FOLLOWED HIS MENTOR'S STEPS FROM THE GRAVE INTO BEING A VIGILANTE. HE'S NOW A GUARDIAN ON A ONE-MAN QUEST FOR JUSTICE... AND MAYBE SOME REVENGE.

NOVAPRIMA - SHADOWBORN HERO/ROCINANTE GROUP CONSULTANT

ONE OF THE LAST PROTÉGÉES OF THE LATE GALAXY GIRL, FLORINA PRIMO WENT FROM BEING A CORPORATE PRIMA DONNA TO BEING A SUPERHERO IN THE 1990'S. SHE HAS NO IDEA THAT SHE REALLY WORKS FOR SHADOWBORN.



BLOODBLADER - SMART-MOUTHED ASSASSIN

SHE IS THE BEST AT WHATEVER SHE PUTS HER MIND TO, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT INVOLVES HER CUSTOM BLADES. THE PROBLEM IS PUTTING HER MIND TO IT. SHE'S NOT REALLY LOYAL TO SHADOWBORN; ONLY TO MS. MAPLE.

"HIDE AND GO SEEK"

- A CITY OF HEROES STORY BY DAVID 2

The Guardian Powers #04 is created using original characters in the City of Heroes Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game. Copyright © 2004-2012 This story is an independent derivative work of the City of Heroes Game. All original rights are reserved by NCsoft and Paragon Studios. NCSoft, the interlocking NC logo, Paragon Studios, City of Heroes, City of Villains, City of Heroes: Going Rogue, City of Heroes Freedom and all associated logos and designs are trademarks or registered trademarks of NCsoft Corporation and Paragon Studios. Cryptic Studios is a trademark of Cryptic Studios, Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.



SOMEWHERE UNDERNEATH PARAGON CITY...

AUGUST 1ST, 2011



WHO'S THERE?

STEP OUT SLOWLY!



"AGENT BLUE"
SHADOWBORN AGENT

WHOA! WHOA! HEY,
HOLD UP, SISTER...
WE'RE ALL ON THE
SAME SIDE HERE.
CONFIRMATION WORD
IS "COBALT", RIGHT?

BLOODBLADER
SHADOWBORN AGENT



WRONG WORD!

"CLICK-CLACK"



REALLY? YOU SURE?
OH WAIT, YOU NEEDED
MY CONFIRMATION
WORD, DIDN'T YOU?
SORRY, IT'S "VIVISECT".

YOU KNOW, I NEVER
COULD GET THE WHOLE
CODE-WORD-FOR-
IDENTIFICATION
THING RIGHT.



I'VE BEEN WAITING HERE
FOR TWENTY-FOUR
HOURS WITH NO WORD
AS TO WHO WOULD GET
ME OUT OF HERE.

I'M COLD, WET, TIRED,
AND I HAVEN'T HAD
ANYTHING TO EAT OR
DRINK. AND I
COULDN'T HOLD EITHER
OF THEM DOWN GIVEN
THE STENCH HERE.



HEY, YOU'RE SINGING TO THE CHOIR,
BLUE. I WAS STUCK HERE IN THE SEWERS
NOT TOO LONG AGO AS WELL.*

THANKFULLY OUR DEAR DEN MOTHER GOT
ME OUT, AND NOW I GET TO DO THE SAME
FOR YOU.

HOT SHOWER, GOOD MEAL, AND A WARM
BED, AND I'M TOLD YOU'RE GOING
SOMEPLACE VERY WARM TO HIDE OUT.

NOT BAD FOR TAKING DOWN A WANNABE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY.**

YOU KNOW, YOU LOOK REALLY DIFFERENT
WITHOUT THE JACKET AND THE BLUE WIG.



(* *GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SPOTLIGHT* #24)
(** *GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AFTERMATH**)



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE AFTER AN ASSASSINATION. THAT'S WHY WE WEAR DISGUISES. DITCH THOSE AND THEN BLEND IN WITH THE CROWD.

BUT YOU STILL KEPT THE WEAPON.

HEY, THE ARMY TAUGHT ME TO NEVER GIVE UP MY RIFLE, NO MATTER WHAT! I WILL ONLY GIVE UP MY RIFLE AT THE SAFEHOUSE, WHEN I CAN BREAK IT DOWN AND DISPOSE OF IT SAFELY. BESIDES, THE JACKET AND WIG ARE DESIGNED TO NOT LEAVE ANY TRACE EVIDENCE BEHIND.



NICE! SO I GUESS THAT'S WHY HOMELAND SECURITY PAYS YOU THE NOT-SO-BIG BUCKS.

WHO'D THOUGHT UNCLE SAM WOULD STILL HAVE IN-HOUSE BLACK-BAGGERS? THEY REALLY SHOULD HAVE OUTSOURCED BY NOW.



LOOK, DON'T GET ME WRONG, THIS BANTER IS... MILDLY AMUSING... BUT CAN WE PLEASE CONTINUE THIS OVER AT THE SAFEHOUSE?



OH, YEAH, SURE, I...

SQUIRREL!

WHAT?



THERE'S NOTHING BACK THERE. IT'S JUST A DEAD END.



YOU GOT THAT RIGHT, SISTER... OPERATIVE WORD BEING **"DEAD"**!



SLICE*SLICE*SLICE*WHIRL*SLICE*SLICE*KA-THUNK!

"SQUIRREL"! OH THAT'S RICH!
I'M SURPRISED THAT TRICK
STILL WORKS!

DID YOU REALLY THINK THAT
THERE WAS A SAFEHOUSE
WAITING FOR YOU?

I MEAN, I KNOW YOU'RE DEAD
NOW, BUT, REALLY? REALLY?

YOU MESSED UP THE
ASSIGNMENT! THE GUY LIVED!

AND NOW, THANKS TO YOU, WE ALL
HAVE TO GO INTO HIDING.

YOU SEE, THIS IS WHY SHADOWBORN
SHOULD STICK WITH PEOPLE LIKE
ME. I MEAN, DID YOU SEE WHAT I
DID TO YOU? THAT WAS ART!

WELL, OKAY, YOU COULDN'T
SEE WHAT I DID, BUT YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN!

I GET RESULTS! YOU... YOU
MISS, AND NOW WE ALL
SUFFER FOR IT.

IT'S DONE.
HUH? OKAY.

I WONDER WHAT HE
MEANT BY "CLEAN UP"
AFTER ME? I MEAN
THERE'S A CREW THAT'S
SUPPOSED TO...

OH WAIT... THAT'S ME,
ISN'T IT?

D'OH!

PEREZ PARK

PRESENT DAY

I'M TOLD PEREZ PARK USED TO BE IDYLIC.

SORT OF LIKE NEW YORK CITY'S CENTRAL PARK ON MY WORLD.

BUT THEN THE RIKTI CAME HERE... AND THEY DROPPED IN SOMETHING HUGE CALLED THE HYDRA; A MONSTER THAT SPAWNED SEVERAL OTHER MONSTERS, INCLUDING THE KRAKEN.

AND NOW, BETWEEN THE HYDRA AND THE GANGS AND THE VAHZILOK, THIS WHOLE AREA REMAINS A "HAZARD ZONE".

ICON POWERS
"RETIRED" SUPERHERO

IT'S STILL BEAUTIFUL BUT NOW IT'S ALSO VERY DEADLY, EVEN FOR HEROES.

YOU CAN STILL COME HERE AND OPEN UP A SHOP OR SET UP AN OFFICE, OR EVEN TRY TO LIVE HERE.

SOME PEOPLE STILL TRY TO DO THAT.

BUT THERE'S NO POLICE TO HELP THEM, AND HEROES COMING TO YOUR RESCUE ARE FEW AND FAR BETWEEN.

AND FORGET TRYING TO GET PHONES OR CABLE.

THAT'S WHY MOST CITIZENS DON'T COME HERE.

BUT IF YOU CAN CONTAIN THE GANGS, IF YOU BRING ENOUGH MUSCLE AND ENOUGH EQUIPMENT WITH YOU, THEN THIS AREA CAN BE THE PERFECT BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF ORGANIZATIONS.

AND THIS IS WHERE LORD GEDDY SET UP SHOP TO RUN HIS INCARNATION OF SHADOWBORN.

ACCORDING TO STEVIE, SHADOWBORN STARTED OUT AS SOME "STAR CHAMBER" SUPER-AGENCY TO GO AFTER THE "UNTOUCHABLE" ORGANIZATIONS.

SOMEWHERE ALONG THE PROCESS, THEIR GOALS STARTED TO GET MIXED UP, AND THEY STARTED WORKING WITH THE CRIMINALS INSTEAD OF SHUTTING THEM DOWN.

STEVIE THOUGHT THE GROUP WAS SHUT DOWN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.*

HERE IN PEREZ PARK... NOT FAR FROM THEIR PREDECESSOR'S BASE OF OPERATIONS.

ONLY TO DISCOVER IT WAS SET UP ALL OVER AGAIN BY LORD GEDDY.

UNDER THE GUISE OF THE "ROCINANTE GROUP".

(* "SPOTLIGHT" #4)

THIS IS AS CLOSE AS I DARE GET TO THEIR HEAD OFFICE.

NO DOUBT THEY'RE ALREADY WATCHING ME.

NO, DON'T DO ANYTHING YET. AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T APPROACH WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM. HE KNOWS WE'RE WATCHING HIM.

 **MS. ELLE MAPLE**
INTERIM SHADOWBORN LEADER

THEY KNOW THAT I'M NOT THE OMINOUS THREAT TO THEIR OPERATIONS.

THEY MAY EVEN KNOW THAT I'M HERE TO TRY TO SHUT DOWN THAT THREAT.



OH COME ON!
WHERE AM I
GOING TO
SLEEPP



AT LEAST GIVE ME
SOME CHANGE SO
I CAN USE THE
TRAIN BATHROOM!



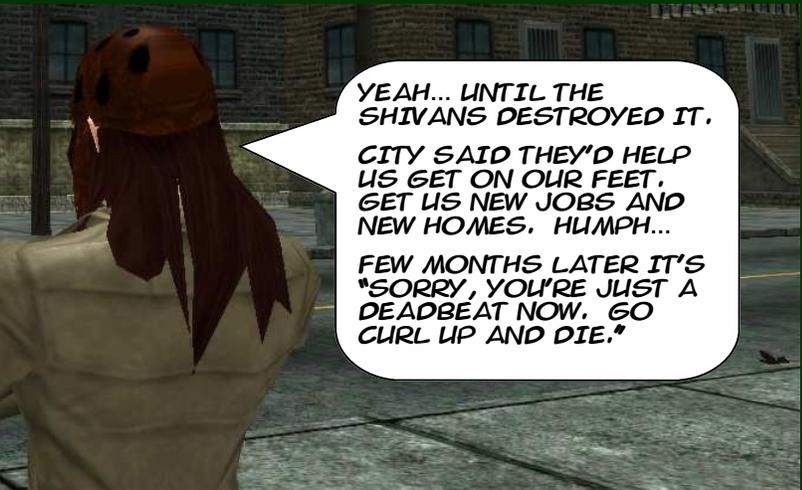
EXCUSE ME... HI,
DID I HEAR YOU
RIGHT? DID YOU
SAY YOU WERE
HOMELESS?



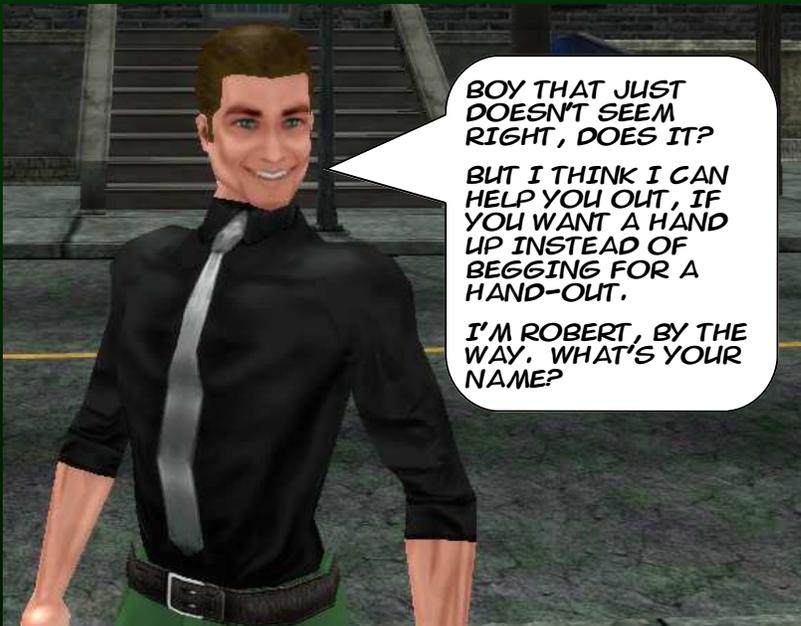
YEAH, WHAT'S IT TO YA?
THEY SHUT DOWN THE
REFUGEE SHELTER LAST
WEEK. BUDGET CUTS, THEY
SAID.
I DON'T HAVE A JOB, I
DON'T HAVE A HOME, AND
THE POLITICIANS TOOK MY
WELFARE CHECKS AWAY 'CUZ
I GOT NO PLACE TO GO.



I'M SORRY TO
HEAR THAT.
SO YOU'RE FROM
GALAXY CITY?



YEAH... UNTIL THE
SHIVANS DESTROYED IT.
CITY SAID THEY'D HELP
US GET ON OUR FEET.
GET US NEW JOBS AND
NEW HOMES. HUMPH...
FEW MONTHS LATER IT'S
"SORRY, YOU'RE JUST A
DEADBEAT NOW. GO
CURL UP AND DIE."



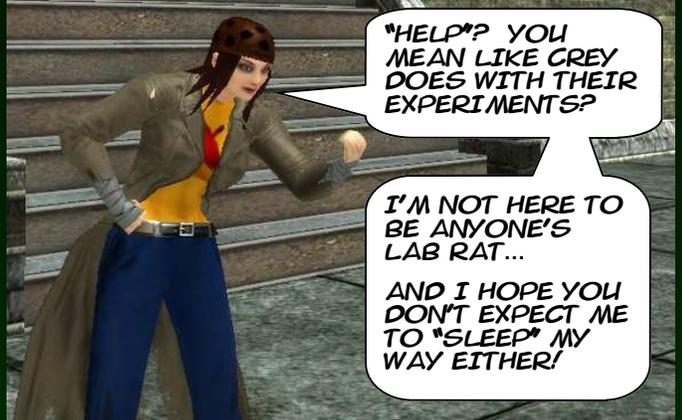
BOY THAT JUST
DOESN'T SEEM
RIGHT, DOES IT?
BUT I THINK I CAN
HELP YOU OUT, IF
YOU WANT A HAND
UP INSTEAD OF
BEGGING FOR A
HAND-OUT.
I'M ROBERT, BY THE
WAY. WHAT'S YOUR
NAME?



IT'S RAVEN.
AND WHAT'S THE
CATCH? MOST
PEOPLE DON'T
ASK STRANGERS
OUT OF THE BLUE.



WELL IT'S NICE TO MEET YOU, RAVEN.
AND I HAPPEN TO BE IN A BUSINESS THAT HELPS PEOPLE LIKE YOU.



"HELP"? YOU MEAN LIKE GREY DOES WITH THEIR EXPERIMENTS?
I'M NOT HERE TO BE ANYONE'S LAB RAT...
AND I HOPE YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO "SLEEP" MY WAY EITHER!



NO, NO, NOTHING LIKE THAT!
NO, I WORK FOR A GUY WHO'S BEEN WHERE YOU ARE NOW. SOMEONE WHO IS EAGER TO SHOW OTHERS A NEW WAY OUT.



"A GUY", HUH?
HE GO BY THE NAME "SANTA CLAUS"?



I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR SKEPTICISM, RAVEN. YOU'VE BEEN JERKED AROUND BY THE SYSTEM, AND IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE CAN BE WILLING TO HELP YOU.

YEAH... OKAY, I GUESS... WHAT TIME?

TELL YOU WHAT... WE HAVE A LITTLE MEETING TONIGHT OVER AT THE OLD JESTER INDUSTRIAL CENTER. YOU MEET ME THERE, AND IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU HEAR, I'LL PAY FOR YOU TO STAY AT A HOTEL FOR A WEEK. SOUND GOOD?



ECONOMIC NEWS



AND THE LOSS OF GALAXY CITY CONTINUES TO TAKE ITS TOLL ON THE REST OF PARAGON CITY AS LOCAL UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUES TO RISE.
EXPERTS PIN THE BLAME ON THE STALLED CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS DESIGNED TO RECLAIM THE SO-CALLED "HAZARD ZONES" ALL THROUGH PARAGON CITY, COMBINED WITH THE NEW AUSTERITY MEASURES IMPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE TO CURB GOVERNMENT SPENDING.

SOMEWHERE IN PEREZ PARK

HEY, ARE YOU LOST, OLD MAN?
DID YOU ESCAPE FROM SOME RETIREMENT COMMUNITY?

"RETIREMENT COMMUNITY"... OH THAT'S RICH.
HAVEN'T HEARD THAT IN, OH, THE LAST SIX HOURS.

I'M JUST HERE TO LOOK IN AN ON OLD FRIEND OF MINE... YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF HIM.
MIDKNIGHT X.
RUMOR HAS IT, HE'S HAUNTING THIS PART OF THE PARK. I FIGURED A KNOWLEDGEABLE YOUNG MAN LIKE YOURSELF WOULD KNOW WHERE SO I WOULDN'T JUST... RAMBLE OFF... AND BE A NUISANCE.

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE FUNNY, GRAMPS?
AM I SUPPOSED TO LAUGH AT YOUR JOKE?

JOKE'S ON YOU, GRAMPS.

BUDDA=BUDDA
BUDDA-BUDDA
BUDDA-BUDDA
BUDDA-BUDDA
BUDDA-BUDDA

THESE KIDS...

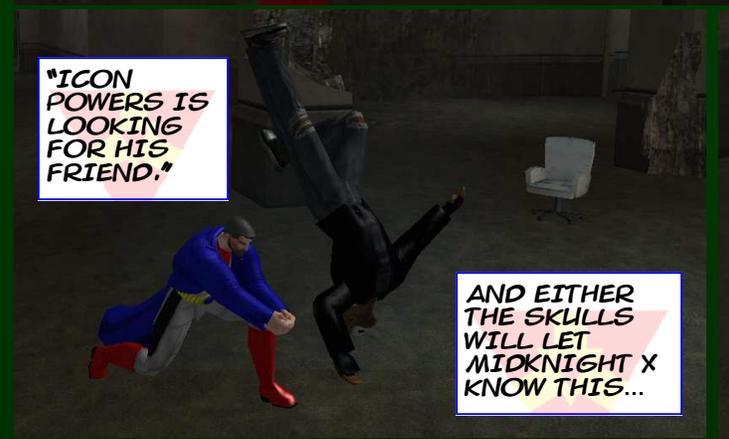


... NO RESPECT FOR THEIR ELDERS.

OF COURSE I DON'T EXPECT THEM TO TELL ME WHERE JASON IS HIDING, EVEN IF THEY KNEW.



I'M SENDING A MESSAGE.



"ICON POWERS IS LOOKING FOR HIS FRIEND."

AND EITHER THE SKULLS WILL LET MIDNIGHT X KNOW THIS...



OR THEY'LL LET THE OTHER PEOPLE LOOKING FOR HIM KNOW THAT THEIR SEARCH HAS JUST BEEN JOINED.



FUNNY WHAT YOU COME ACROSS WHEN YOU START MAKING ENOUGH NOISE.



MEANWHILE...

YOU HAVE YOUR COVER STORY STRAIGHT FOR TONIGHT, AGENT RODGERS?

ABSOLUTELY, LIEUTENANT.

I'VE BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK A FEW TIMES WITH COVER STORIES.

STEVIE WALKER-RODGERS
AKA CAPTAIN PARAGONNA

THAT'S GOOD, AND, NO, I WON'T ASK.

THE D.A.'S OFFICE SAYS THE INFORMATION THAT YOU COLLECTED EARLIER WAS A START, BUT WE NEED TO CONNECT THAT TO A NAME, SOMEONE OTHER THAN JUST "GENERAL INCOME".

WE NEED ACTUAL NAMES OF THESE "RECRUITERS". WE NEED TO KNOW WHO THEY WORK FOR.

WE NEED THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THAT MATERIAL YOU FOUND AND THEM ACTUALLY CONVINCING PEOPLE TO GO ROB BANKS.

THE PAMPHLETS CAN BE EXCLUDED AS BEING FANTASY. A BURN PHONE, NOT SO MUCH.

(← ISSUE #2)

THE RECRUITER SAID THAT HE'D PAY FOR MY WEEK IN A HOTEL IF I "LIKED" WHAT I HEARD FROM TONIGHT'S MEETING.

I DON'T THINK THAT'S SOMETHING HE DOES FOR ANYONE ELSE. I CERTAINLY DIDN'T SUGGEST IT. I WAS WONDERING IF HE EXPECTS ANYTHING MORE FROM ME.

MAYBE.

OR IT COULD BE THAT HE'S JUST SWEETENING THE POT, MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR "RAVEN" TO SAY NO TO THE OFFER.

SO... I'M EXPECTED TO ACTUALLY STAY THERE A WEEK?

TO ACTUALLY LIVE THERE AS "RAVEN"?

IF YOU HAVE TO, YES.

AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T TRY ANYTHING ON YOU, YOU'RE EXPECTED TO STAY UNDERCOVER UNTIL YOU GET THE PROOF WE NEED.

THE CAMERA IN YOUR BELT BUCKLE SHOULD RECORD EVERYTHING, AND OF COURSE YOU HAVE THE DISTRESS WORD: "CLEVELAND". YOU SAY THAT, WE COME RUNNING, AND THEN YOU CAN DO YOUR SUPERHERO THING.

OKAY... I GUESS I DIDN'T IMAGINE SEEING YOU AS I PASSED BY.



WAS WONDERING HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE BEFORE YOU SAW ME JUST SITTING HERE.

NOVAPRIMA
SHADOWBORN HERO



I'D ASK IF YOU'RE OKAY, BUT I'M GUESSING YOU'RE HUMORING THEM BY NOT DOING ANYTHING.



WELL THEY THINK THAT I'M SCARED. THEY ASSUME THAT, BECAUSE I'M NOT WIPING THE FLOOR WITH THEM, THEY THINK THEY HAVE ME.



BUT, IN TRUTH, I'VE JUST BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO SPOT ME AS YOU MADE YOUR ROUNDS.

I HEAR THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR YOUR VIGILANTE FRIEND.

YOU *HEARD*, HUH? I WASN'T EXACTLY QUIET ABOUT THAT.



HEY, GRANDPA, GET YOUR OWN BABE-ON-A-CAN.

THIS ONE IS OURS, RIGHT BOYS?

WE'RE GONNA HAVE US A LITTLE FOUR-WAY PARTAAAAAY!



D@MN STRAIGHT!



I SHOULDA BROUGHT MY CELLPHONE WITH ME TO SHOOT VIDEO!

ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A VIRAL VIDEO STAR!



YOU READY?



PLEASE! THEY'RE JUST GETTING ANNOYING NOW.



OKAY...



KER-ACK!



THEY DON'T REALIZE JUST HOW MUCH POWER SOME OF US HAVE TO HOLD BACK ON TO AVOID KILLING THEM. OF COURSE A GOOD THUNDERCLAP LIKE THAT CUTS DOWN ON NEEDLESS FIGHTS.

NICE TO KNOW YOU'RE NOT AS "POWERLESS" AS YOU'VE BEEN CLAIMING TO BE, MISTER POWERS.

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

CAPE!

SO NOW THE NEXT QUESTION IS... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT SORT OF HELL YOUR "FRIEND" HAS BEEN PUTTING US THROUGH THESE PAST FEW MONTHS?

I'VE HEARD RUMORS.* AND QUITE FRANKLY I'M NOT SURE THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT THE SAME PERSON THAT I'VE KNOWN FOR THE PAST DECADE.

(* ISSUE #2)

LISTEN... I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH THE ROCINANTE GROUP FOR FIVE YEARS NOW, EVER SINCE I WOKE UP FROM MY COMA WHEN THE RIKTI NUKED BALMTON BACK IN 2002.

YOUR POINT BEING...

MY POINT BEING YOUR VIGILANTE FRIEND IS TERRORIZING THOSE EMPLOYEES WITH HIS LITTLE "CRUSADE" AGAINST MY BOSSES, AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW **WHY!**

IT'S BEEN A CHALLENGE TO GET PEOPLE TO COME HERE TO WORK IN A HAZARD ZONE ON A DAILY BASIS. I'VE HAD TO PERSONALLY ESCORT ARMORED BUSES BETWEEN THE ROCINANTE BUILDING AND THE SECURITY ZONES. I EVEN WENT TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE KRAKEN AT ONE POINT...

C'MON... GIT'EM!

I'VE SEEN MIDNIGHT X AT WORK ON MY HOME WORLD WHEN HE WOULD GO AFTER BIG CORPORATE BOSSES. HE DOESN'T TARGET A WHOLE COMPANY. HE ONLY GOES AFTER THE SPECIFIC PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE.

THAT'S BULL! WE HAVE AN AUDIO RECORDING OF HIM THREATENING LORD GEDDY, SAYING THAT THE GUARDIANS WOULD, AND I QUOTE, "TAKE IT TO YOUR OFFICE DOOR." *

(* AN ACCURATE QUOTE FROM "SPOTLIGHT" #28)

AND YOU INTERPRETED THAT TO BE TAKING IT TO THE COMPANY'S FRONT DOOR INSTEAD OF LORD GEDDY'S?

ENF... WOULDN'T YOU?



IF YOU KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE MAN, YOU WOULDN'T.
GET THE ONE BEHIND YOU...



ERF! BUT I DON'T! I DON'T REALLY KNOW EVEN THE ONE FRIEND THAT I HAVE IN YOUR GROUP.

HEY, DON'T TURN YOUR BA-KKKKK...



AND... *WHEW* DOC TOR HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE GALAXY CITY.
I THINK THAT'S THE LAST OF THE GANG MEMBERS IN HERE.



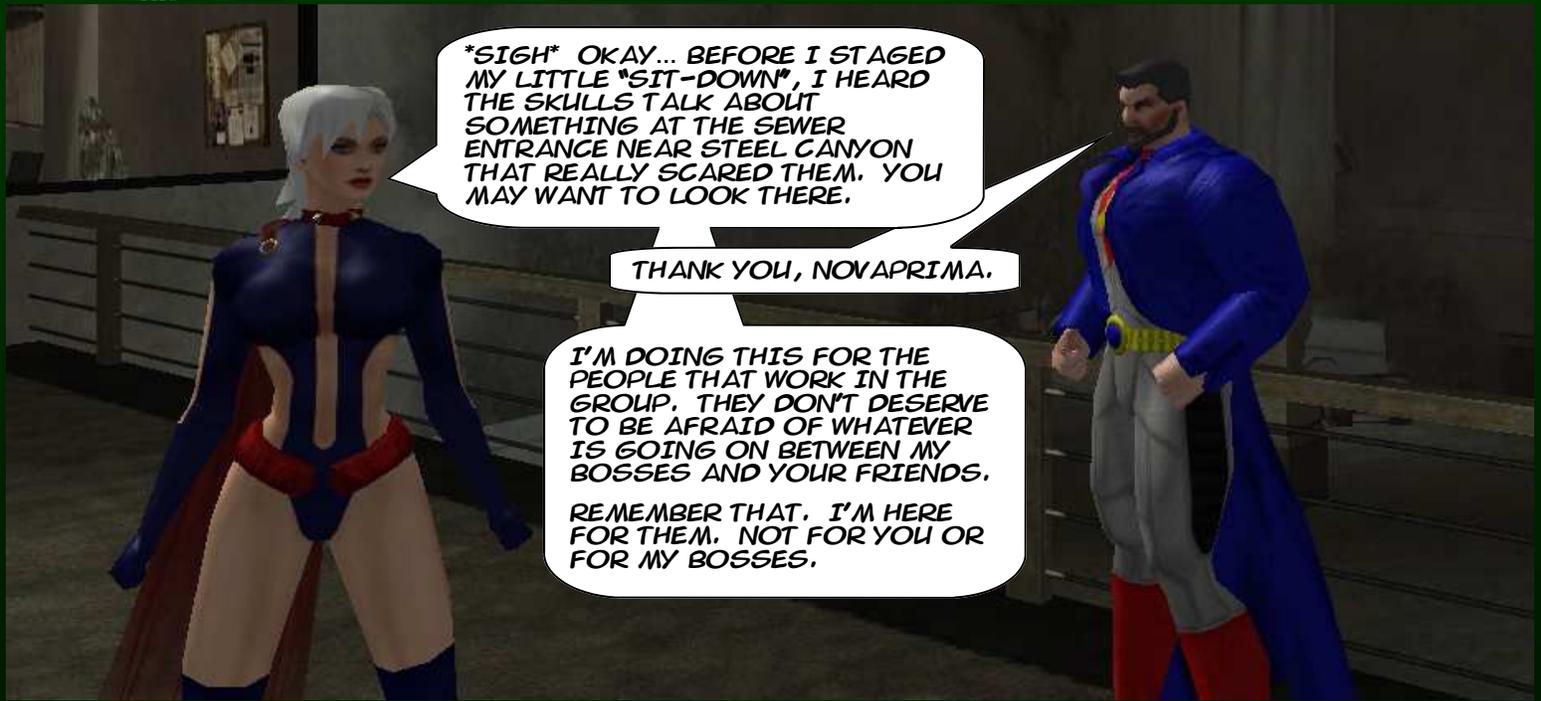
I KNOW... AND I'M SORRY.
WE'RE TRYING TO FIND HIM, TO END THE RUMORS ABOUT HIM.



WE'RE NOT THE BAD GUYS HERE.



FUNNY... I WAS JUST ABOUT TO SAY THE SAME THING ABOUT THE ROGINANTE GROUP.



SIGH OKAY... BEFORE I STAGED MY LITTLE *SIT-DOWN*, I HEARD THE SKULLS TALK ABOUT SOMETHING AT THE SEWER ENTRANCE NEAR STEEL CANYON THAT REALLY SCARED THEM. YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK THERE.

THANK YOU, NOVAPRIMA.

I'M DOING THIS FOR THE PEOPLE THAT WORK IN THE GROUP. THEY DON'T DESERVE TO BE AFRAID OF WHATEVER IS GOING ON BETWEEN MY BOSSES AND YOUR FRIENDS.
REMEMBER THAT. I'M HERE FOR THEM. NOT FOR YOU OR FOR MY BOSSES.

MY NAME IS
GENERAL INCOME!

AND ONCE UPON A
TIME I USED TO BE
JUST LIKE YOU.

AND I LOOK OUT IN THE
CROWD TONIGHT, JUST
LIKE I HAVE FOR THE
PAST FEW MONTHS NOW,
AND I'VE SEEN THE SAME
THING OVER AND OVER.

PEOPLE SCREWED OVER
BY THE SYSTEM, JUST
LIKE I WAS, ONCE.

I USED TO WORK
HARD FOR SOME
CORPORATE ENTITY,
GIVING IT MY ALL,
SACRIFICING YEARS
OF MY LIFE FOR IT.

AND WHAT DID I GET
FOR MY LOYALTY?

JACK AND SQUAT,
THAT'S WHAT I GOT,
ALONG WITH A LETTER
OF TERMINATION!

I KNOW YOUR
DESPERATION... I FEEL
YOUR FRUSTRATION.

WE ALL WERE SOLD A BILL
OF GOODS BY THE BIG
CORPORATIONS!

"WORK HARD", THEY TOLD
US, WHILE THEIR SENIOR
EXECUTIVES WENT OFF TO
THE GOLF COURSE OR TO
SOME CUSHY RETREAT.

"SACRIFICE", THEY WOULD
SAY, WHILE THEY'RE
GIVING THEMSELVES
RAISES AND BONUSES.

THAT PENSION YOU
WERE PROMISED?

GONE.

YOUR INSURANCE
COVERAGE?

RATIONED.

AND ALL THE WHILE,
THEY'RE POSTING
RECORD PROFITS!

THEY GET THE
GOLDMINE... AND
THE REST OF US
GOT THE SHAFT!

BUT I AM NOT HERE TO
PILE ONTO YOUR
MISERY! YOU HAVE ALL
SUFFERED ENOUGH!

NOW IS THE TIME FOR
YOU TO SHINE! IT'S
TIME FOR YOU TO STEP
UP AND HAVE THE
SYSTEM WORK FOR YOU
INSTEAD OF WORKING
AGAINST YOU!

I AM HERE TO SHOW
YOU HOW YOU CAN
BECOME YOUR OWN
BOSS AND HAVE THE
BIG CORPORATIONS
WORK FOR YOU FOR A
CHANGE!

**CAPTAIN PARAGONNA
INVESTIGATION NOTES:**

**2000 HOURS - ATTENDED
"RECOVERY SEMINAR" MEETING
IN JESTER INDUSTRIAL PARK.**

**MEETING IS HOSTED BY
"GENERAL INCOME", A MAN
DRESSED IN A GREEN-AND-
GOLD MILITARY UNIFORM.**

**THERE IS SOMETHING FAMILIAR
ABOUT HIS VOICE. WHERE HAVE I
HEARD HIM BEFORE?**



**NOW THIS IS NOT SOME
PYRAMID SCHEME GETTING
YOU TO PEDDLE SOME
USELESS JUNK.**

**I AM HERE TO SHOW YOU HOW
YOU CAN USE YOUR OWN
TALENTS TO BECOME
SOMETHING THAT EVEN THE
BIGGEST OF CORPORATE
ENTITIES NEED: SECURITY!**



**YOU KNOW WHAT THE MOST ON-DEMAND
POSITION IS IN CORPORATE AMERICA?
CONSULTANTS! CONTRACTORS!**

**LAST YEAR, PARTHENON INDUSTRIAL
INCORPORATED OVER ON TALOS ISLAND
PAID OVER SEVEN MILLION DOLLARS TO
THEIR CONSULTANTS. SEVEN MILLION!**

**THINK ABOUT IT: TEN PEOPLE THAT HAVE
MORE INFLUENCE OVER THAT COMPANY
THAN ALL FIFTY OF THEIR EXECUTIVE
VICE-PRESIDENTS COMBINED EACH GOT
SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS!**

**AND JUST LIKE SOME OF
YOU ARE DOING NOW, I
ASKED MYSELF "HOW CAN
I GET IN ON SOME OF
THAT ACTION?"**

**WELL I FOUND OUT. AND
NOW I'M IN A POSITION
TO HELP THOSE OF YOU
WILLING TO DO WHAT IT
TAKES AS WELL.**



**MY AIDES, SOME OF
WHOM YOU'VE ALREADY
MET, WILL BE
DISCUSSING THE
DETAILS WITH YOU,
HELPING YOU GET WHAT
YOU NEED TO BECOME
THE NEW CONTRACTORS
THAT CORPORATE
AMERICA IS WILLING TO
PAY BIG MONEY FOR!**

**BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE...
THERE IS A WAR BEING
WAGED ON THE WORKING
CLASS!**



**AND IT'S TIME TO STOP
BEING A PRISONER OF
THAT WAR AND TO START
RISING UP TO TAKE BACK
WHAT IS YOURS! IT'S
TIME TO EXPLOIT THE
CORPORATE MACHINE!**

**AND WHEN WE ALL DO
THAT, THEN WE CAN STICK
IT TO THE CORPORATE
LIARS AND THIEVES!**

HIS SPEECH IS LOADED IN CLASS WARFARE RHETORIC.

MOST ARE UNEMPLOYED, SOME ARE HOMELESS, LIKE I PRETEND TO BE.

BUT FROM THOSE I SEE IN ATTENDANCE, MAYBE TWENTY OR SO PEOPLE, THEY DIDN'T NEED MUCH CONVINCING.

I ALSO SAW THE SAME "CLEANERS" I ARRESTED PREVIOUSLY, WHO APPEAR TO BE FILLING OUT THE CROWD.

THANKFULLY THEY DON'T SEEM TO RECOGNIZE ME THROUGH MY DISGUISE.

(← ISSUE #2)

URNS OUT MY "RECRUITER" IS ALSO MY "EVALUATOR".

SO WHAT DO YOU THINK SO FAR, RAVEN?

I THINK IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE A HOME AGAIN... AND A WARM MEAL.

HOW DOES BEING A "CONTRACTOR" GET ME THOSE THINGS?

COINCIDENCE? OR IS HE INFATUATED WITH "RAVEN"?

WELL THAT DEPENDS ON THE SKILLS THAT YOU CAN BRING TO THE COMPANY THAT SPONSORS THIS LITTLE MEETING.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BANKS?

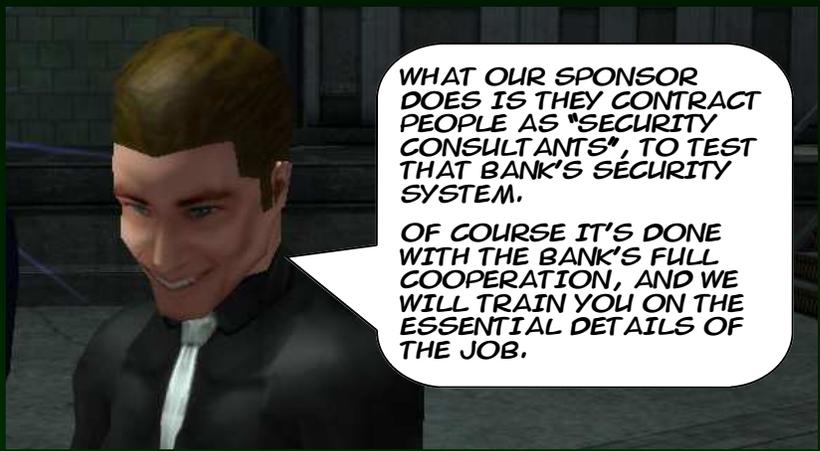
I USED TO HAVE A CHECKING ACCOUNT WHEN I LIVED IN GALAXY CITY.

OKAY... WELL WHEN YOU PUT MONEY INTO A BANK, YOU EXPECT THAT BANK TO KEEP YOUR MONEY SAFE AT ALL TIMES.

UNFORTUNATELY, IN PARAGON CITY, THERE ARE OVER 5300 BANK ROBBERIES EVERY YEAR. OVER A HUNDRED A WEEK!

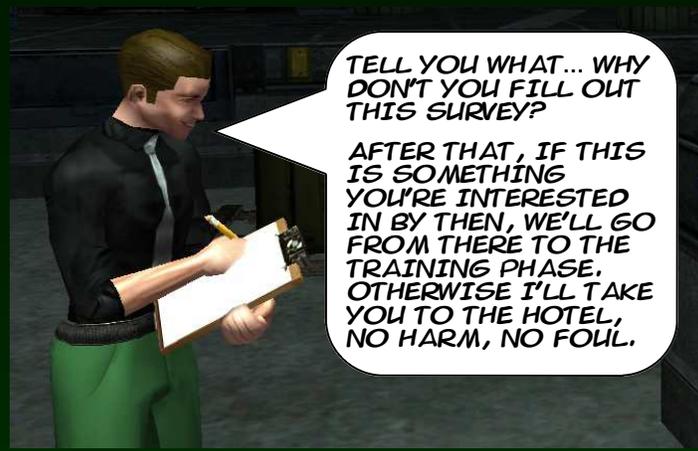
SO OBVIOUSLY SECURITY IS A BIG DEAL TO THESE BANKS.

HE MADE A REFERENCE ABOUT 5300 BANK ROBBERIES. IT SOUNDED FAMILIAR. WHERE HAVE I HEARD THAT STATISTIC BEFORE?



WHAT OUR SPONSOR DOES IS THEY CONTRACT PEOPLE AS "SECURITY CONSULTANTS", TO TEST THAT BANK'S SECURITY SYSTEM.

OF COURSE IT'S DONE WITH THE BANK'S FULL COOPERATION, AND WE WILL TRAIN YOU ON THE ESSENTIAL DETAILS OF THE JOB.



TELL YOU WHAT... WHY DON'T YOU FILL OUT THIS SURVEY?

AFTER THAT, IF THIS IS SOMETHING YOU'RE INTERESTED IN BY THEN, WE'LL GO FROM THERE TO THE TRAINING PHASE. OTHERWISE I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE HOTEL, NO HARM, NO FOUL.



I ALMOST WANTED TO SAY NO, JUST TO SEE IF HE'D TRY ANYTHING IF HE TOOK ME TO THAT HOTEL.

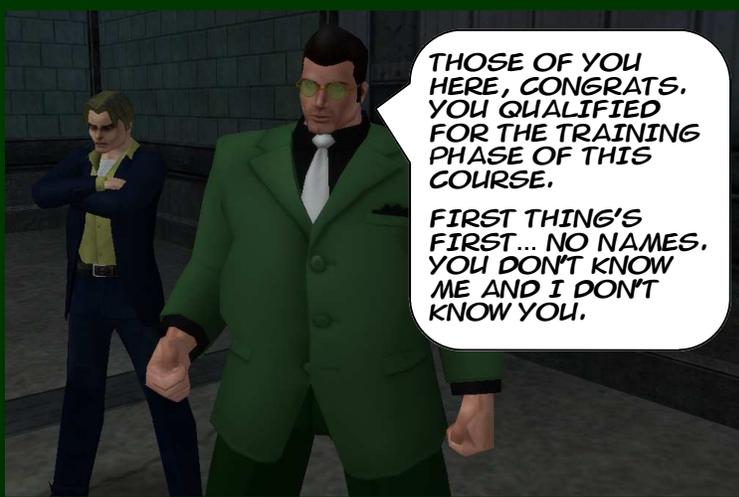
BUT I REMINDED MYSELF THAT I AM HERE TO BUST A WHOLE GROUP THAT RECRUIT PEOPLE TO ROB BANKS, NOT A SINGLE GUY TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A "HOMELESS WOMAN".

THE SURVEY HAD A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BANKING INDUSTRY AND WHETHER OR NOT I THOUGHT FAVORABLY ABOUT THEM.

GIVEN THE RHETORIC THE "GENERAL" USED, I'M GUESSING THEY'RE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR VIEWS.

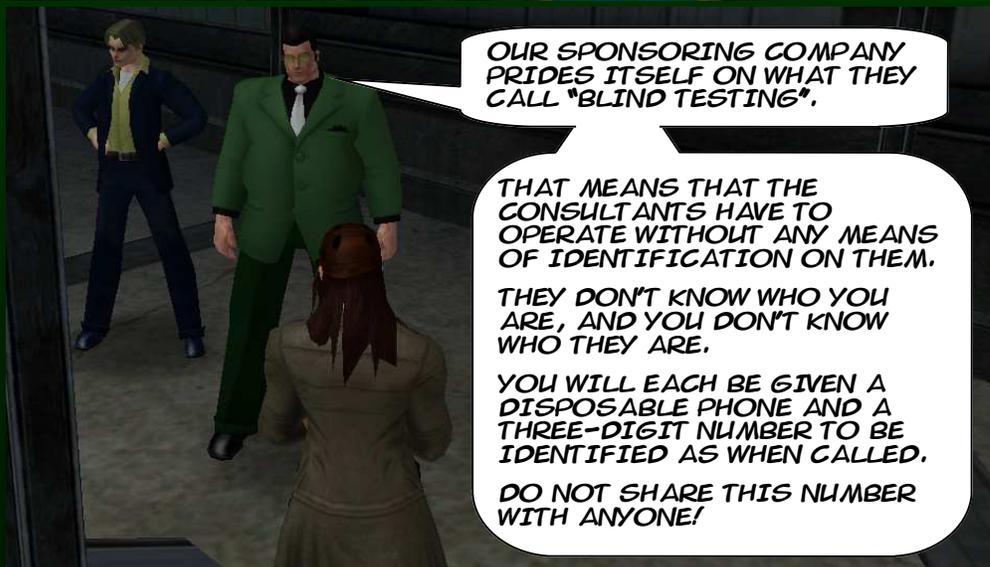


I DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT LONG BEFORE I WAS ASKED TO TAKE PART IN THE TRAINING PHASE.



THOSE OF YOU HERE, CONGRATS. YOU QUALIFIED FOR THE TRAINING PHASE OF THIS COURSE.

FIRST THING'S FIRST... NO NAMES. YOU DON'T KNOW ME AND I DON'T KNOW YOU.



OUR SPONSORING COMPANY PRIDES ITSELF ON WHAT THEY CALL "BLIND TESTING".

THAT MEANS THAT THE CONSULTANTS HAVE TO OPERATE WITHOUT ANY MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION ON THEM.

THEY DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE.

YOU WILL EACH BE GIVEN A DISPOSABLE PHONE AND A THREE-DIGIT NUMBER TO BE IDENTIFIED AS WHEN CALLED.

DO NOT SHARE THIS NUMBER WITH ANYONE!



BURN PHONES, CONTACT ID NUMBERS...

ALL OF THE PIECES ARE COMING TOGETHER FOR THE EVENTUAL BUST.

PEREZ PARK

"SOMETHING" CHASED OUT THE VAHZILOK THAT WERE HIDING HERE.

I HEARD THE SKULLS WHISPER ABOUT THE SEWERS.

"SOMETHING" THAT LOOKED A CERTAIN HOODED DARK FIGURE.

I HATE WORKING IN THE SEWERS.

THE OLD WALLS AND RUSTED PIPES LIMIT MY HYPER-SENSES.

AND JASON KNOWS THIS. THAT'S WHY I THINK THAT HE CHOSE...

GET OUT... NOW.

JASON? WHERE ARE YOU?

LEAVE ME ALONE. LET ME DO MY JOB.

I CAN'T DO THAT, JASON. WE NEED TO TALK.

WE HAVE NOTHING TO SAY. YOU MADE THAT CLEAR WHEN YOU DISBANDED THE GUARDIANS.

IT WASN'T THAT SIMPLE, JASON. YOU KNOW THE DETAILS... YOU KNOW WHAT WAS AT STAKE!*

IT'S ALWAYS THAT SIMPLE. YOU QUIT. YOU GAVE IN TO THE ENEMY, AND NOW YOU'RE DOING THEIR BIDDING.

I'M TRYING TO SAVE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE GUARDIANS, JASON! YOUR ACTIONS ARE CAUSING TROUBLE FOR US ALL!

HIS VOICE IS ECHOING OFF THE WALLS. HE COULD BE TWENTY FEET AWAY... OR EVEN TWO CITY BLOCKS AWAY.

(* GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AFTERMATH*)



GREAT,
HE'S GONE
SILENT.



THIS MEANS HE'S
SHADOWING ME,
TRYING TO SEE IF
I'M GOING TO GET
FRUSTRATED AND
JUST LEAVE IF I
CAN'T SPEAK WITH
HIM ONE-ON-ONE.

WELL THAT'S TOO
BAD FOR HIM,
BECAUSE I'M NOT
LEAVING WITHOUT
SEEING JASON IN
PERSON.



I WORKED WITH JASON'S
MENTOR, THE FIRST
MIDNIGHT, ON OUR
ORIGINAL WORLD.

WE COULDN'T SEE EYE-TO-
EYE IN EVERY INSTANCE,
BUT DAMIAN WILSON
EARNED MY RESPECT, AND
I EARNED HIS.

I THOUGHT THAT I
EARNED JASON'S
RESPECT AS WELL.

THEN AGAIN, HE NEVER
REALLY WAS THE SAME
AFTER COMING BACK
FROM THE DEAD AT THE
SAME MOMENT THAT
DAMIAN PERISHED.*



HE NEVER CAN SLEEP LONGER
THAN AN HOUR OR TWO AT A
TIME. HE HAS NO KIND OF A
PERSONAL LIFE.

HE LITERALLY LIVED THE LIFE
OF A STREET VIGILANTE
TWENTY-FOUR-SEVEN.

(*SPOTLIGHT* #3)

I KNOW WHAT IT'S
LIKE TO LIVE IN THE
PUBLIC EYE TWENTY-
FOUR-SEVEN, BUT
EVEN BACK THEN I
MANAGED TO TAKE
SOME TIME AWAY
FROM BEING A HERO
TO JUST BE A MAN.

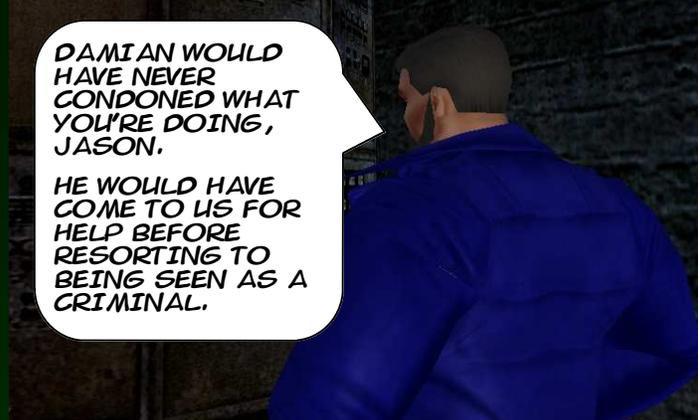
JASON WAS ALWAYS
PUSHING IT, THOUGH,
EVEN MORE THAN
DAMIAN EVER DID.

DAMIAN...
OF COURSE!



WHAT WOULD
DAMIAN THINK
OF WHAT YOU'VE
BECOME, JASON?





DAMIAN WOULD HAVE NEVER CONDONED WHAT YOU'RE DOING, JASON.

HE WOULD HAVE COME TO US FOR HELP BEFORE RESORTING TO BEING SEEN AS A CRIMINAL.



SHUT YOUR MOUTH, POWERS!
YOU KNEW NOTHING ABOUT HIM!



JASON... MY GOD.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO YOURSELF?



YOU WEREN'T THERE WHEN DAMIAN MADE HIS LAST STAND.

HE HAD TO **DIE** BEFORE YOU AND YOUR "LEAGUE OF CHAMPIONS" WOULD STEP UP!

JASON KNIGHT
AKA MIDKNIGHT X



HE NEVER CAME TO US, JASON. WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU WERE KILLED UNTIL AFTER HE HAD BURIED YOU IN THE FAMILY CRYPT.

DAMIAN WAS MY FRIEND, AND I WOULD HAVE BEEN RIGHT THERE WITH HIM HAD I KNOWN ABOUT WHAT WAS GOING ON AT THE TIME!

I DON'T WANT TO HAVE HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF WITH YOU.



NO, YOU MADE IT WORSE.
YOU QUIT. YOU WALKED AWAY!



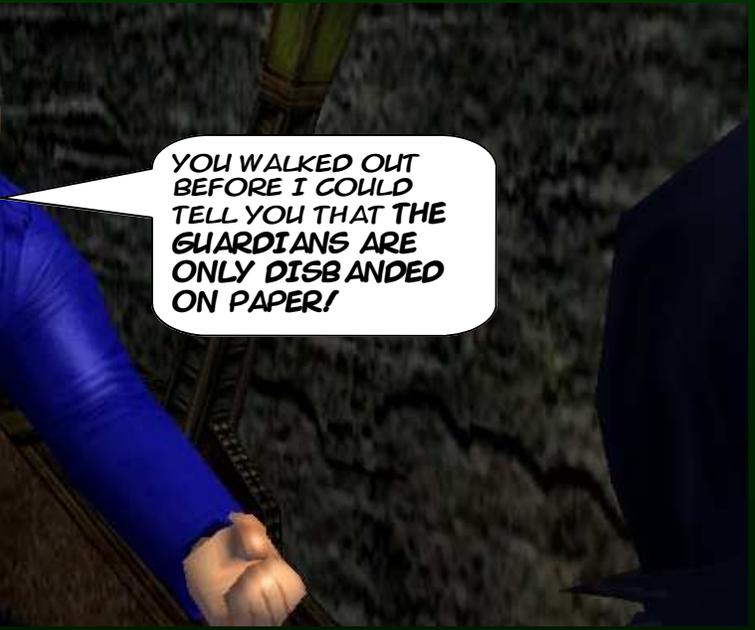
WE DIDN'T HAVE TOO MANY CHOICES.

ALEX WOULD HAVE LOST THE ELECTION IF THE NEWS OF HIS SECRET IDENTITY WAS REVEALED.

DO YOU THINK THAT ANY OF US WANTED TO SIMPLY DISBAND AND BE DONE WITH THE TEAM?

MAXIMUS, TAYA, LYON, RYDER, S.J., ARACHNIA, THEY ALL WANTED TO STAY AND FIGHT!

BUT YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO HEAR THE REST OF OUR PLAN...



YOU WALKED OUT BEFORE I COULD TELL YOU THAT THE GUARDIANS ARE ONLY DISBANDED ON PAPER!

YOU'RE LYING!

YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT. WE CREATED A GHOST GROUP.

IT'S A SMALL GROUP RIGHT NOW. GALATEA, LYON, CAP, MYSELF.

IT'S ALEX'S GROUP, HIS IDEA, BUT I RUN IT FOR HIM.

WE HAVE OTHER PEOPLE HELPING OUT AS WELL.

THERE'S A LOT THAT I WISH I COULD TELL YOU IS GOING ON AS WELL, BUT IT ALL COULD BE UNRAVELED IF WE CAN'T GET YOU TO STEP BACK FROM YOUR VENDETTA.

SO YOU THINK DANGLING A SMALLER TEAM IN FRONT OF ME IS GOING TO GET ME TO COMPROMISE?

... FOLLOW ME.

THE COFFIN APPEARED TO BE ALL-WOODEN, BUT INSIDE WAS LIKE A GIANT COOLER, PRESERVING THE CONTENTS INSIDE AS BEST AS POSSIBLE GIVEN THE AREA.

FOUND THE BODY UNDER THE STEEL CANYON JUNCTURE, CLOGGING UP THE SCRUBBER.

FEMALE, LATE TWENTIES ACCORDING TO THE BONE STRUCTURE. BONES WERE SLICED CLEAN WITH A LASER-SHARPENED BLADE.

COULD YOU IDENTIFY HER?

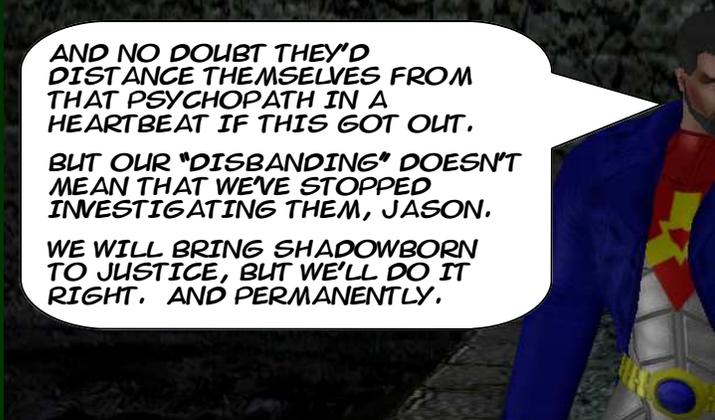
A PLASTIC BAG INSIDE HAD THE REST OF THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, INCLUDING SNAPSHOT PHOTOS OF THE DISCOVERY... AND A BLUE LEATHER WORK SHOE.



NO ID ON HER, BUT THERE WAS JUST ENOUGH PHYSICAL EVIDENCE AT THE SCENE FOR ME TO CONCLUDE THAT SHE WAS "AGENT BLUE", THE SHOOTER THAT TRIED TO KILL ALEX.

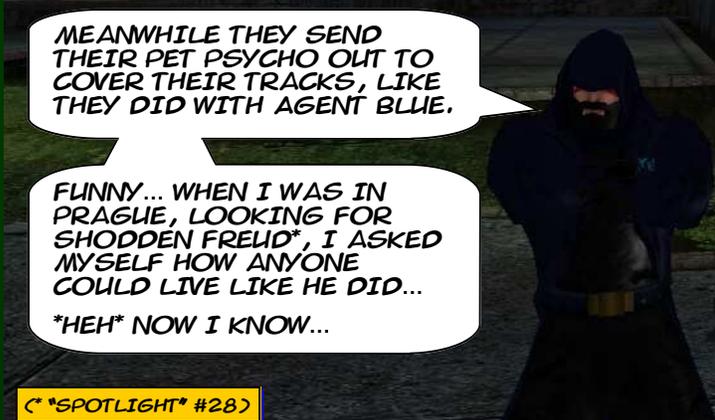


YOU SAW HOW THE BODY WAS CUT UP. THAT'S BLOODBLADER'S SIGNATURE. THAT'S HOW SHADOWBORN REWARDS FAILURE.



AND NO DOUBT THEY'D DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM THAT PSYCHOPATH IN A HEARTBEAT IF THIS GOT OUT. BUT OUR "DISBANDING" DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE'VE STOPPED INVESTIGATING THEM, JASON. WE WILL BRING SHADOWBORN TO JUSTICE, BUT WE'LL DO IT RIGHT. AND PERMANENTLY.

BUT IN ORDER FOR US TO DO THAT, WE NEED THEM TO RELAX. LET THEM THINK THEY WON. ONCE THEY'VE LOWERED THEIR DEFENSES, THEN THE PEOPLE WE HAVE THERE NOW CAN GET THE EVIDENCE WE NEED.



MEANWHILE THEY SEND THEIR PET PSYCHO OUT TO COVER THEIR TRACKS, LIKE THEY DID WITH AGENT BLUE.

FUNNY... WHEN I WAS IN PRAGUE, LOOKING FOR SHODDEN FREUD*, I ASKED MYSELF HOW ANYONE COULD LIVE LIKE HE DID... *HEH* NOW I KNOW...



DON'T MAKE HIS MISTAKE, JASON. DON'T CUT OUT YOUR FRIENDS.

< *SPOTLIGHT* #28 >



I DON'T HAVE FRIENDS... YOU KNOW THIS, POWERS. I ONLY HAVE A NEED FOR JUSTICE THAT COST ME A CITY THAT I ONCE PROTECTED.



THEN WHAT YOU NEED TO DO NEXT IS SIMPLE... TAKE BACK YOUR DOMAIN. LET ME DEAL WITH THE EVIDENCE, AND WE'LL ADD IT TO THE DIRT THAT WE'LL USE TO BURY SHADOWBORN. WORK WITH US, JASON. PLEASE.

THE NEXT DAY...

NO, THEY PUT ME UP AT A HOTEL JUST DOWN THE STREET. THEY GAVE ME CLEAN CLOTHES, BUT I MADE SURE TO KEEP MY BELT WITH THE CAMERA.

I HAD TO BE CAREFUL WITH THE MAKEUP TOO. STILL NEED "RAVEN" TO BE SEEN AS BEING DESTITUTE.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE DOING OKAY. I RAN THE MODEL NUMBER OF YOUR BURN PHONE THROUGH THE POLICE DATABASE FOR YOU, AND IT CAME BACK TO A CASH PURCHASE FROM A STORE KIOSK.

NOT SURPRISED AT THAT. HEY, WHERE ARE YOU CALLING FROM? IT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE YOUR OFFICE AT S.E.R.A.P.H.

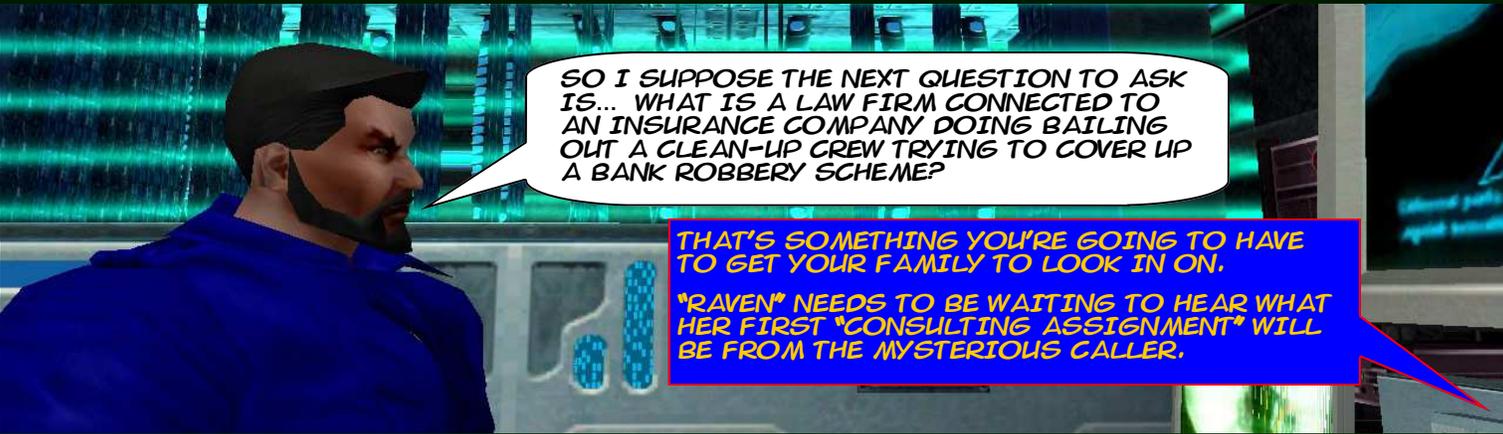
I'M... IN THE SERVER AREA, FINISHING UP ON SOME UPDATES. DON'T WORRY, THIS PHONE IS ROUTED THROUGH A FEW RELAY CENTERS TO PREVENT IT FROM BEING TRACED HERE.

I'M SURPRISED THERE ISN'T AN APP FOR ANONYMITY ALREADY. HEY, DO YOU KNOW IF FACIAL RECOGNITION HAD ANYTHING ON THE VIDEO I TOOK OF THE RECRUITERS?

FACIAL RECOGNITION CAME UP EMPTY. NONE OF THE RECRUITERS HAVE A POLICE RECORD. BUT I DO HAVE SOMETHING ON THE "CLEAN-UP CREW" THAT WERE BAILED OUT IN TIME FOR YOUR RECRUITMENT MEETING. THEY WERE ALL BAILED OUT BY THE LAW FIRM OF GRIZWALD AND CLARK.

PRIVATE LAW FIRM WITH APPARENTLY ONLY ONE CLIENT: SOVEREIGN INSURANCE COMPANY. YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THEIR COMMERCIALS TALKING ABOUT...

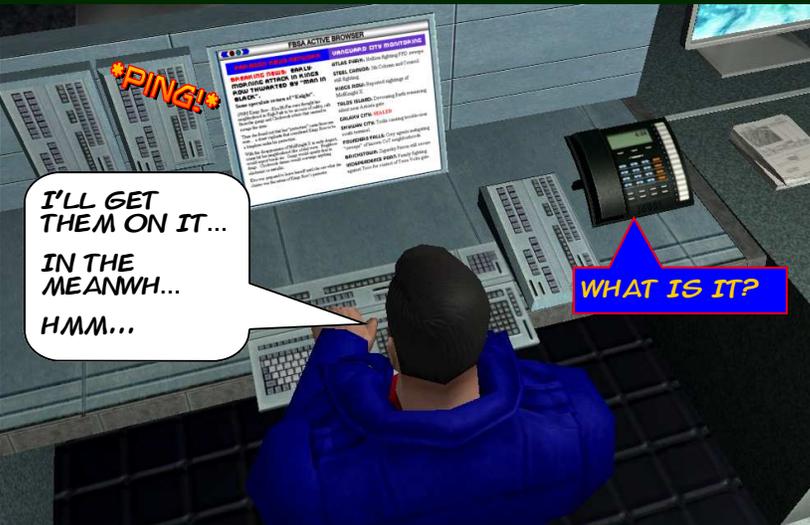
...\$300 BANK ROBBERIES EVERY YEAR!
OF COURSE!



SO I SUPPOSE THE NEXT QUESTION TO ASK IS... WHAT IS A LAW FIRM CONNECTED TO AN INSURANCE COMPANY DOING BAILING OUT A CLEAN-UP CREW TRYING TO COVER UP A BANK ROBBERY SCHEME?

THAT'S SOMETHING YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO GET YOUR FAMILY TO LOOK IN ON.

"RAVEN" NEEDS TO BE WAITING TO HEAR WHAT HER FIRST "CONSULTING ASSIGNMENT" WILL BE FROM THE MYSTERIOUS CALLER.



PING!

I'LL GET THEM ON IT... IN THE MEANWH... HMM...

WHAT IS IT?



NEWS REPORT FROM LAST NIGHT...

SEEMS A BREAK-IN IN HIGH PARK WAS STOPPED BY A SO-CALLED "MYSTERY MAN IN BLACK."



DO YOU THINK IT WAS JASON?



I HOPE SO.

THE MEDIA CERTAINLY WANTS IT TO BE HIM, AND THAT PART OF KINGS ROW IS WHERE JASON STILL HAS A SAFEHOUSE.

IT CERTAINLY WOULD MAKE OUR JOB A LITTLE EASIER KNOWING HE'S NOT STALKING LORD GEDDY.



THEN AGAIN, IT COULD BE SIN STALKER.

I... UH... HAVE IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT IT'S NOT HIM.

OKAY, WE'RE MONITORING YOUR BURN PHONE, SO WHEN YOU GET THAT CALL WE'LL KNOW WHO SENDS IT.

RIGHT. AND HOPEFULLY THE PEOPLE ON MY END WILL BE JUST AS ATTENTIVE.

HAPPY HUNTING.

TO US BOTH, "RAVEN". TO US BOTH.

AGAIN?

BEEP-BEEP
BEEP-BEEP

HELLO?
HELLO?

BEEP-BEEP
BEEP-BEEP

CR@P! IT'S
THE OTHER
PHONE!

BEEP-BEEP
BEEP-BEEP

HELLO?

OPERATIVE 224, YOU
HAVE BEEN SELECTED
FOR A BLIND TEST OF A
CLIENT'S SERVICE.
DO YOU HAVE THE
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT?

WELL IF YOU MEAN
DARK CLOTHING,
POCKET KNIFE,
PLIERS...

WE DID NOT ASK YOU
TO RECITE THE LIST,
ONLY THAT YOU HAVE
THE REQUIRED ITEMS.
YES-OR-NO ANSWERS
ONLY.
DO YOU HAVE THE
REQUIRED EQUIPMENT
FOR THE ASSIGNMENT?

YES.

A VAN WILL MEET
YOU AT MIDNIGHT
OUTSIDE THE
ROYAL FLUSH
MOTEL.
DO NOT BE LATE.
FURTHER DETAILS
WILL BE GIVEN
INSIDE THE VAN.

CLICK

**CAPTAIN PARAGONNA
SURVEILLANCE NOTES:**

1433 HOURS - CONTACTED BY AN
ANONYMOUS CALLER ON THE
DISPOSABLE PHONE GIVEN TO
ME BY THE "RECRUITERS". THE
CALLER INSISTED ON YES-OR-
NO RESPONSES BEFORE GIVING
DIRECTIONS FOR A MEETING AT
MIDNIGHT.

CALL WAS TRACED TO A RELAY
SERVICE. VOICE WAS DIGITALLY
ALTERED TO AVOID IDENTIFICATION.

I MAY BE FORCED TO PARTICIPATE
IN A ROBBERY, OR AT LEAST BE A
PARTY TO ONE, BEFORE THERE IS
ENOUGH EVIDENCE FOR ME TO ACT AS
CAPTAIN PARAGONNA.

CITY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

WELL-
WELL...

ISN'T THIS A PLEASANT SURPRISE...

EDWARD VANCE
DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

HELLO EDWARD.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
I WAS HOPING THAT I COULD DISCUSS A PROCEDURAL MATTER WITH YOU.

ALICE BANKS
PRO-FAMILY CRUSADER

WELL IF BY "DISCUSS" YOU MEAN AS A PROSECUTOR, THEN I'M AFRAID MY HANDS ARE TIED RIGHT NOW.
MY PAST CASES ARE BEING AUDITED, AND I CAN'T HANDLE ANY NEW CASES UNTIL THOSE ARE CLEARED.

YES, OUR NEW DISTRICT ATTORNEY WASTED NO TIME IN HAMSTRINGING YOU, DIDN'T HE?*

NOT SOMETHING I WOULD HAVE DONE HAD I WON THE ELECTION.

(* "AFTERMATH" *)

BUT I'M NOT HERE TO PLAY A GAME OF "WOULDVE-COULDFVE".
I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF THE SPECIAL GRAND JURY THAT I'LL BE CONVENING SHORTLY CONCERNING THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AND THEIR UNDERAGE APPRENTICE, PYROGURL.*

I'VE DONE GRAND JURY INQUIRIES BEFORE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BUT I'M TOLD THE RULES ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT HERE IN PARAGON CITY.

(* ISSUE #1 *)

WELL IF YOU WERE HIRED LIKE NOBLE SON WAS AFTER THE ELECTION*, YOU WOULD HAVE FOUND OUT THAT THE HEROES HERE GET A LITTLE MORE LEEWAY IN THIS CITY THANKS TO THE PRECEDENCE SET BY STATESMAN AND HIS ILK.

THE FEDERAL BUREAU FOR SUPER-POWERED AFFAIRS WILL ACTUALLY BEND OVER BACKWARD TO PROTECT THOSE HEROES.

(* ISSUE #1 AGAIN *)

YES... I'M WELL AWARE OF THIS.
WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME THAT I DON'T KNOW?

WELL... "OFFICIALLY" I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY KIND OF HELP. "OFFICIALLY", THIS OFFICE CANNOT GIVE YOU ANY KIND OF AID WITHOUT TAKING OVER THE GRAND JURY ITSELF, AND OUR DISTRICT ATTORNEY HAS ALREADY REFUSED TO DO THAT.*

HOWEVER, I COULD TELL YOU HOW I WOULD "HYPOTHETICALLY" HAVE HANDLED THINGS IF I WON THE ELECTION.

FOR INSTANCE, "HYPOTHETICALLY", I WOULD HAVE HIRED YOU ON SO YOU COULD CONDUCT YOUR GRAND JURY WITH FULL PROSECUTORIAL POWERS.

(* ISSUE #2)

I SEE... SO I GUESS WE ARE PLAYING "WOULDVE-COULDVE" AFTER ALL.

SO... WHAT ELSE "WOULD" YOU HAVE DONE?

"HYPOTHETICALLY"... IF I COULD HELP YOU...

I WOULD FIND SOME WAY TO GET PYROGURL BACK TO PARAGON CITY TO TESTIFY AND SERVE AS YOUR STAR WITNESS.

IF YOU WERE A DDA, THAT WOULD BE EASY, BUT SINCE YOU'RE NOT, YOU HAVE A THING CALLED THE "CITIZEN CRIME-FIGHTING ACT" STANDING IN THE WAY.

YES I KNOW ABOUT THAT LAW. IT GIVES REGISTERED HEROES THE SAME LEGAL IMMUNITY AS DO POLICE OFFICERS AND MOST CITY OFFICIALS.

WHICH MEANS I, AS A CITIZEN, CAN'T FORCE HER TO COME HERE TO TESTIFY.

SO HOW WOULD YOU GET AROUND THAT?

SIMPLE. BRING HER HERE FOR A DIFFERENT REASON.

A REASON THAT WOULD MAKE HER WANT TO COME BACK.

FOR INSTANCE, YOU MAY WANT TO LOOK AT HER FIRST MISSION BEFORE SHE JOINED THE GUARDIANS.*

(* SPOTLIGHT #15)

I SEEM TO REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT AN INCIDENT BETWEEN MAXIMUS REX AND A FREEDOM CORPS OFFICER IN OUR PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION. I GUESS I SHOULD LOOK FURTHER INTO THAT INCIDENT.

THANK YOU, EDWARD.

GLAD I COULD BE OF "HYPOTHETICAL" HELP, ALICE.

KINGS ROW - LATER THAT NIGHT...



"MIDNIGHT MOVIE", SHE TEXTS...
"I'LL COME PICK YOU UP", SHE TEXTS...
RIIIIIIGHT...

BEEP-BEEP
BEEP-BEEP

"WENDY SLADE"
AKA BLOODBLADER



WHERE ARE YOU ELLE? YOU'VE NEVER STOOD ME UP ON A GIRLS NIGHT OUT BEFORE NOW!

THAT'S BECAUSE MS. MAPLE NEVER REALLY TEXTED YOU EARLIER.
I DID.

OH BABY...



YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO GIVE A PSYCHO AN EMPTY RUSH, DON'T YOU?
LITTLE PHONE GAMES FROM PEREZ PARK...

TURN AROUND.



I DON'T BELIEVE IT...
I DON'T F###ING BELIEVE IT!



HERE YOU ARE, ALL DECKED OUT FOR BUSINESS, AND I'M ONLY DRESSED FOR A NIGHT OUT WITH THE GIRLS.
NO LEATHERS, NO BLADES... I CAN'T EVEN DO THE BOBA THING, CUZ I LEFT MY MASK AT HOME! LAST TIME I MAKE THAT MISTAKE, I ASSURE YOU!

YOU KNOW, YOU DIDN'T NEED THE SUBTERFUGE IF YOU WANTED A REMATCH OF OUR LITTLE FIGHT. STARCYNUS DID CUT IN ON OUR DANCE, AFTER ALL.* I'VE BEEN READY TO CONTINUE THE FOREPLAY WHERE WE LEFT OFF.



(*SPOTLIGHT* #22)



YOU KNOW, YOU CLEAN UP RATHER WELL. IT TOOK ME THREE SHOWERS AND TWO BATHS TO GET THE SEWER STENCH OFF ME. YOU, CLEAN-SHAVEN, SMELLING... WELL, NEUTRAL... AND YOU EVEN MODIFIED YOUR OUTFIT WITH VANGUARD TOYS!

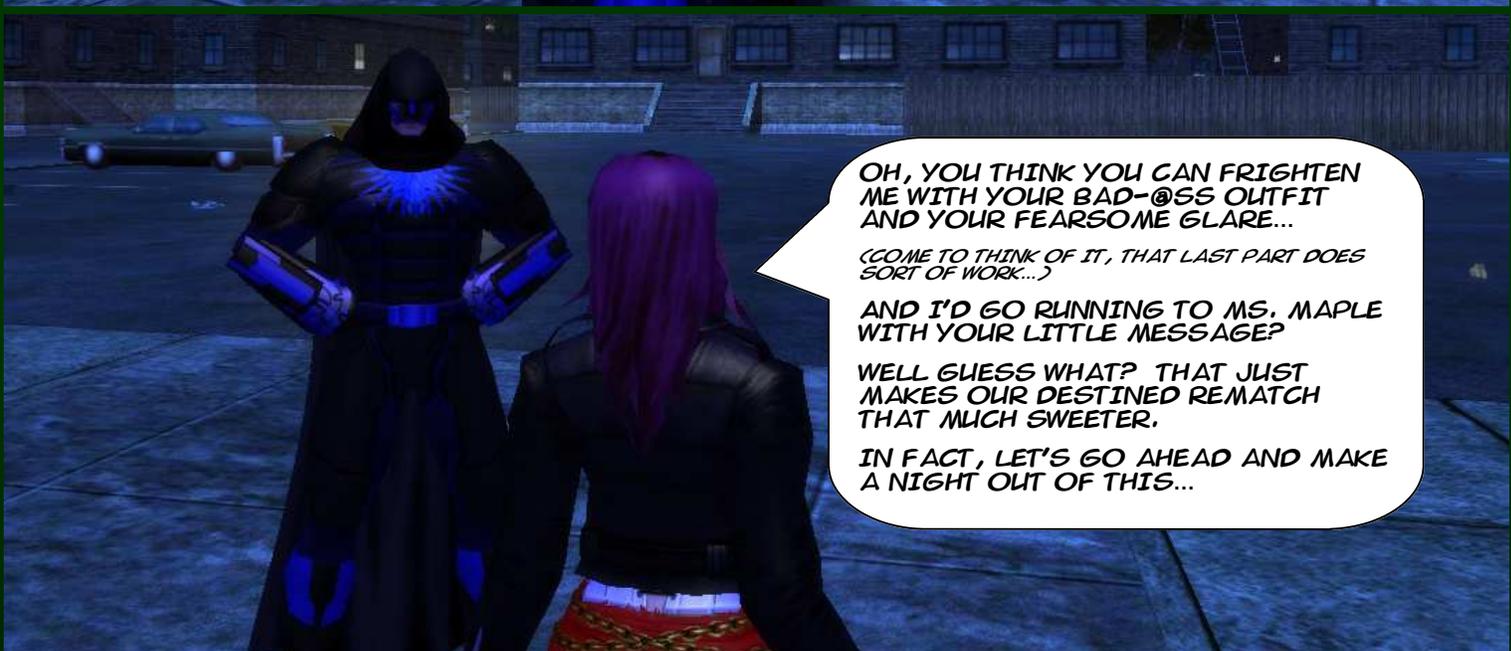
MIDKNIGHT X
STREET VIGILANTE



YOU'RE GOING TO DELIVER A MESSAGE TO YOUR "MISTRESS". I'M NOT FINISHED WITH HER OR HER BOSS, OR WITH SHADOWBORN.

HEY, I RESENT THAT STATEMENT! SHE'S NOT MY MISTRESS!
(MAYBE IN SOME LURID FANFIC STORY, BUT... NEVER MIND.)

I'M TAKING KINGS ROW BACK FROM THE THUGS THAT HAVE INFESTED IT IN MY ABSENCE. TOO MANY BODIES HAVE PILED UP HERE WHILE I WAS AWAY. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M DONE FINDING ALL THE SKELETONS IN YOUR GROUP'S CLOSET, INCLUDING THE ONES YOU YOURSELF ADDED.



OH, YOU THINK YOU CAN FRIGHTEN ME WITH YOUR BAD-@SS OUTFIT AND YOUR FEARSOME GLARE...
(COME TO THINK OF IT, THAT LAST PART DOES SORT OF WORK...)
AND I'D GO RUNNING TO MS. MAPLE WITH YOUR LITTLE MESSAGE?
WELL GUESS WHAT? THAT JUST MAKES OUR DESTINED REMATCH THAT MUCH SWEETER.
IN FACT, LET'S GO AHEAD AND MAKE A NIGHT OUT OF THIS...



STAY HERE, I'LL GET MY BLADES...



HEY! I SAID "WAIT"!

YOU DON'T GET IT...



I'M NOT
PLAYING BY
YOUR RULES
ANY MORE.
MY CITY, MY
RULES.

THIS IS YOUR
ONE AND ONLY
WARNING.
STAY OUT OF
KINGS ROW.

ALL UNITS,
ALL UNITS!
BANK ALARM
AT KINGS ROW
BANK.
ALL UNITS
RESPOND.



OOO... WH... WHERE
ARE... YOU... GOING...
L... LOVER?
WE,, WE'RE JUST...
GETTING... STARTED...

NEXT ISSUE:
CAPTAIN PARAGONNA...
BANK ROBBER?

POWER TRIP



Words of wisdom and reference from writer and creator David 2.

FROM THE DESK OF...

Kent Poderes Technical Consultant

MidKnight X:

On my home world, MidKnight was a name that criminals feared.

The original MidKnight was Damian Wilson, the adopted son of a street cop that could no longer stand by and watch as hardened criminals literally got away with murder. He would put on a mask and body armor over a trenchcoat and put the fear of god into the hardened thugs that preyed on his neighborhood.



Pretty soon, gang members, drug dealers, and even some members of the mob got the message that Hell's Kitchen no longer belonged to them.

Damian didn't have any powers, but he did have military training, and he realized that drug dealers and gang members were no different than terrorists in the Middle East. He knew that as an ordinary person, he couldn't employ the needed tactics against criminals. But as a street vigilante wearing a mask, he was more than willing and capable to dispense justice.

I worked with Damian on more than one occasion, and I considered him a friend and ally, even if we did not agree on his methods. I offered him membership in the premiere supergroup on our world, the League of Champions, but he refused every time.

Eventually Damian took in a young boy name Jason Rich, a child orphaned by a drunk driver. Jason wanted revenge against the driver, but after finding out that his father's killer was himself killed, Jason felt cheated. Damian showed him how to turn that anger into a force for good, and even adopted Jason as his legal guardian.

In time, Damian began training Jason on his skills, but not to be a sidekick. In fact, Jason was forbidden to even operate in public, even in civilian attire. Damian realized that he was getting older and that eventually someone else would have to pick up where he left off, and he intended Jason to be his replacement.

Unfortunately that time came earlier than anyone expected.

A real estate mogul had plans for the city district under Damian's protection, and spared no expense to get the area declared a disaster so he could claim the land cheap and make a fortune. When the mob refused to help him, he arranged for a prison breakout and the release of a destructive new drug that turned even first-time users into super-charged psychopaths. One of those psychopaths put Jason in an impossible situation, and he ended up sacrificing his life to save innocent civilians.

That sacrifice was Damian's last straw. After burying his foster son in the family crypt, he went after the criminals head-on, giving everything he had until he himself was killed by the sheer number of rioters involved.

The word spread quickly that MidKnight was dead. But fate, it seems, had other plans.

Continues on next page...

Jason had a medallion given to him from his birth-mother. When Jason was killed, Damian carried it with him in his honor. The medallion was made from the same strange meteor rock that gave my family members (and various others on our planet) superhuman abilities.

When Damian died as MidKnight, his life-force went from the medallion back to Jason, bringing the young man back to life.

Bear in mind that none of us in the League of Champions knew any of this was happening until after news of the riot came out and a visibly disoriented Jason entered Damian's base of operations. When rumors of Damian's death hit the news, we put an end to the riots quickly, and it was Jason, now dressed as MidKnight, that brought down the mastermind of the whole operation.

But Jason's death and return clearly changed him, and some would say not for the better.

His return gave him added abilities. He was sensitive to more mystical abilities. He could generate fear and terror in others. He could sap their strength and their will. He also became more nihilistic. He wasn't afraid to die, because he believed there was nothing afterward. He joined the League, but only because he could not understand all that was happening to him after his resurrection.

When he came across to this world in 2007, he had little knowledge of who he was previously. He knew his name was Jason. He called himself MidKnight, but added an "X" to his name to reflect that unknown part of his life.

If anything, I believe that he became progressively worse in the transition. He admits he rarely sleeps. He has no kind of life outside of his never-ending crusade to purge the streets of criminals. I don't even think that he thinks of himself as "Jason Knight" anymore, but rather as "MidKnight X" all the time.

Maybe a piece of Jason never came over to this world. Maybe all that was left of him was that endless bitter drive for justice. I would hope we would still find the man behind the urban legend before it becomes too late for either of them.

<http://GuardiansOfTheDawn.wordpress.com>

NEXT ISSUE...



Will Captain Paragonna be forced to commit a crime in order to expose the secret behind "General Income"? And what happens when a returning MidKnight X gets involved?

And will Alice Banks succeed in bringing Pyrogurl back to Paragon City so she could be used to crush what's left of the Guardians?



-- ADVERTISEMENT --

WWW.COMICINDEX.COM

LIFE IS PRECIOUS; SOME SEE JOY IN EVERYTHING, WHILST OTHERS CANNOT AVOID THE HORROR

GRRRR - ISSUE 25
THE LAST ENEMY