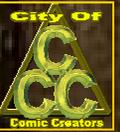


GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN



ISSUE 28
2011



SPOTLIGHT ON... MidKnight X

ON THE HUNT FOR
SHODDEN FREUD



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



NAME:
MIDKNIGHT X

REAL NAME:
JASON KNIGHT

STATUS:
REGISTERED SUPERHERO

ARCHETYPE:
SCRAPPER

PRIMARY POWER:
DARK MELEE

SECONDARY POWER:
WILLPOWER

HAVING STOLEN THE SECRETS OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN AND ATTEMPTED TO SELL THEM ON THE BLACK MARKET, CORPORATE "FACILITATOR" SIMON BARRISTER HAS FLED TO EUROPE TO HIDE FROM THE GUARDIANS AND KEEP THE VITAL INFORMATION HE ACQUIRED.

BUT JASON KNIGHT, THE STREET VIGILANTE KNOWN AS MIDKNIGHT X, HAS USED HIS GROUP'S ALLIANCE WITH THE LEGENDARY EUROPEAN GROUP DAWN PATROL TO LOCATE THE ONE PERSON THAT KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT BARRISTER AND THE PEOPLE THAT SPONSOR HIM...

A HERO THAT TURNS OUT TO BE EVEN MORE OF AN ENIGMA THAN HE IS.

Guardians of the Dawn Spotlight #28 is created using original characters in the City of Heroes Multiplayer Online Roleplaying Game. Copyright © 2004-2011 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, 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.



PRAQUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

WHEN I ARRIVED
IN PRAGUE, I
DIDN'T KNOW
WHAT TO EXPECT...

I'VE BEEN TO EUROPE
BEFORE... BUT ON MY
WORLD, A WORLD
THAT DID NOT
ENCOUNTER THE RIKTI.

I DIDN'T REALIZE THE
DEMORALIZING EFFECT THE
RIKTI HAD WAS FELT IN
PLACES OTHER THAN PARAGON
CITY UNTIL I CAME HERE... A
CITY THAT HAD OLD RUINS
RIGHT NEXT TO NEW RUINS.

THE DAWN PATROL GAVE ME
A NEW PASSPORT UNDER THE
NAME OF RICHARD JAY,
PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR.

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS
FIND SOMEONE WHO FELL
OFF THE GRID YEARS AGO.

SOMEONE WHO MAKES ME
LOOK LIKE A RANK
AMATEUR IN COMPARISON.

ACCORDING TO THE
CELTIC BRAWLER,
SHODDEN FREUD WAS
ONE OF THE GREAT
INVESTIGATORS OF
THE 1950'S AND 60'S.

 **MIDNIGHT X**

WEST BERLIN PLOT FOILED

A plan to poison supplies going to embattled West Berlin was thwarted by the German hero Shodden Freud.

KGB DENIES LOOKALIKE

Soviet officials quickly distanced themselves from an apparent plan to replace key NATO generals with their own agents.

PLANS AT UNITY EXPOSED

Despite talks of renewed hostilities, East and West German officials are prepared to

"CRITICAL CONFRONTATION"

- A CITY OF HEROES STORY BY DAVID 2

HE EXPOSED THE BIG PLANS, THE GRAND
SCHEMES, THE MASTER MANIPULATORS.

BUSINESS LEADERS DENY COLLUSION

Meeting at their annual gathering at the Bilderburg Estates, leaders of Europe's largest corporations actively deny any kind of collusion in the escalating food prices.

UNTIL ONE DAY... HE DROPPED OUT
OF SIGHT AND NEVER RESURFACED.

GERMAN HERO MISSING - PRESUMED DEAD

BUT UNLESS YOU'RE DEAD,
YOU CAN'T REALLY STAY
"OFF THE GRID" FOR LONG.

SHODDEN STILL NEEDS
TO HAVE PEOPLE ON
THE STREETS FOR HIM.

AT THE VERY LEAST
SO HE CAN GET
BASIC SUPPLIES.

AND ONE OF THOSE
PEOPLE IS HERE IN
THIS BAR.

HER NAME IS
ANNA BLATT.

AND SHE IS SUPPOSED
TO BE SHODDEN'S
LATEST PROTÉGÉ.

I JUST HOPE MY
LANGUAGE SKILLS
AREN'T TOO RUSTY.

<SO WHEN
WILL I
FINALLY
SEE YOUR
BOSS?>*

(* TRANSLATED FROM CZECH)

<IN DUE TIME. HE DOESN'T
JUST MEET WITH ANYONE OFF
THE STREETS.

SO, YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND?>

<WHAT KIND OF TALK IS THAT? I'M
NOT HERE LOOKING FOR A DATE.
I'M HERE TO DO BUSINESS.>

<RELAX, ANNA. MY BROTHER
AND I WERE JUST CURIOUS.
MAKING SMALL TALK, THAT'S
ALL. WE SHARE EVERYTHING.>

<THERE YOU ARE! I
WAS WONDERING
WHERE YOU HAD GONE
OFF TO.>

<WHO IS HE
ANNA? I
THOUGHT YOU
WORK ALONE!>

THERE ARE THREE WAYS INTO
THIS CONVERSATION.

I COULD BE HER BOYFRIEND,
A BUSINESS PARTNER, OR A
FAMILY MEMBER.

IT'S UP TO HER TO DECIDE
HOW I SHOULD PLAY IT.

THE OTHER BROTHER IS
TUCKING SOMETHING
BACK INTO HIS POCKET.
CHLOROFORM RAG?





<I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOUR "FATHER".>



<AND YOU'VE RUINED A PERFECTLY GOOD OPERATION, SO I'M SURE HE'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD OR TWO AS WELL...

BUT IN THE MEANTIME, YOU JUST P*SSSED OFF THE OTHER PATRONS.>



WHEN YOU START A FIGHT IN A BAR, NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOU ARE, YOU INEVITABLY END UP FIGHTING THE WHOLE BAR.

AND WHEN YOU'RE IN A BAR LIKE THIS ONE, EVERYONE CARRIES A WEAPON.

IF YOU DON'T OPEN UP WITH EVERYTHING THAT YOU HAVE, YOU'RE DEAD.



BUT THANKFULLY THIS KIND OF FIGHT ALSO MEANS IT ENDS QUICKLY AND NOBODY WILL KNOW WHO YOU ARE IF YOU'RE NOT IN COSTUME.

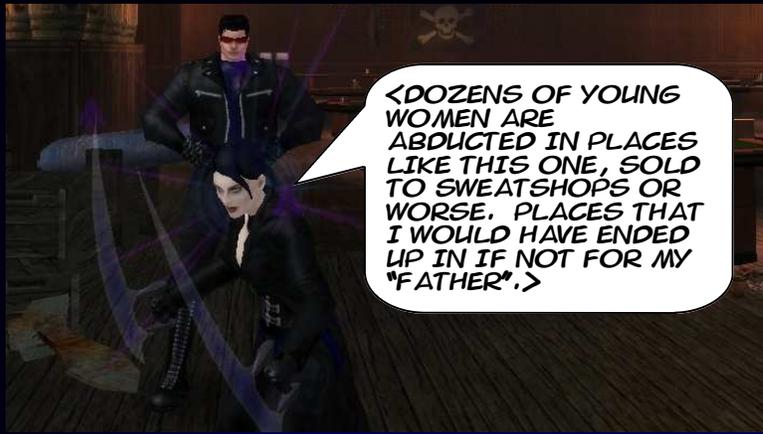
<OKAY... NOW... ANNA?>



<ARE YOU HAPPY NOW? YOU RUINED MY INVESTIGATION. NOW THEY KNOW I'M LOOKING AT THEIR OPERATION.>

WHEN YOU'RE IN A BAR FIGHT, THOUGH, IT'S ALSO HARD TO TURN OFF THE RAGE UNLESS YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE LEFT STANDING.

I CAN SENSE THE RAGE STILL INSIDE HER. IF SHE TURNS TO FACE ME NOW, I'LL BE THE NEXT ONE SHE ATTACKS.



<DOZENS OF YOUNG WOMEN ARE ABDUCTED IN PLACES LIKE THIS ONE, SOLD TO SWEATSHOPS OR WORSE. PLACES THAT I WOULD HAVE ENDED UP IN IF NOT FOR MY "FATHER".>



<NOW... I HAVE TO HAVE A WORD OR TWO WITH SOME OF THESE PATRONS BEFORE THE POLICE GET HERE.
MEET ME OUTSIDE.>



I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF THAT THIS IS NOT PARAGON CITY.

THIS IS HER CITY. WHEN I LEAVE, SHE'LL STILL BE HERE FIGHTING THIS FIGHT.



I HEAR THE CRACKING OF BONES AND A MUFFLED CRY OF PAIN.

SHE'LL GET THEM TO TELL HER WHAT SHE NEEDS TO KNOW SOON ENOUGH.



<I'M SORRY I STEPPED INTO YOUR INVESTIGATION LIKE THAT. WERE YOU ABLE TO SALVAGE ANYTHING FROM IT?>

<THE BROTHERS WERE JUST LOCAL HELP. I HAD TO PRETEND TO BE A RIVAL RECRUITER LOOKING TO EXPAND.

BY THE WAY, YOUR CZECH IS LOUSY. IT SOUNDS POLISH.>



<BUT IT IS STILL BETTER THAN SOUNDING LIKE AN AMERICAN TOURIST FROM PARAGON CITY.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN DEAD FOR TWENTY YEARS?>



<WE BOTH KNOW HE'S NOT DEAD.

HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT SIMON BARRISTER AND THE PEOPLE HE WORKS FOR.>



<BARRISTER... THAT'S A NAME YOU DO NOT WANT TO MENTION TOO OFTEN.

HALF THE BUILDINGS HERE ARE OWNED BY THE COMPANIES HE CONTRACTS OUT TO.>



<I KNOW. WILL YOU HELP ME FIND YOUR "FATHER"??>



<I WILL TELL YOU WHERE YOU COULD GO TO FIND HIM... BUT I CANNOT GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL FIND HIM THERE.

THERE IS A REASON WHY WE CAN'T EVEN SAY HIS NAME OUT LOUD, AND THAT REASON HAS TO DO WITH BARRISTER'S BOSSES.>

<EVEN IN THIS CITY, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE PAID A SMALL FORTUNE JUST TO LISTEN, JUST TO HEAR ANY HINT OF HIS NAME. THEY KNOW HE'S HERE, SO THEY KEEP AN EYE ON HIM, BECAUSE AS LONG AS HE'S HERE, HE'S NOT GOING AFTER THEM.

I WILL POINT YOU IN THE DIRECTION, BUT HE HAS TO DECIDE TO SEE YOU.>



<THANK YOU.>

<DONT.>



<MY "FATHER" IS NOT THERE ALONE. EVERY URBAN LEGEND HAS A GRAIN OF TRUTH TO THEM. REMEMBER THAT AND SURVIVE.>



<AROUND THE CORNER IS A STORM DRAIN. IF YOU CAN PUT UP WITH THE SMELL, YOU CAN TRAVEL THE SEWER TO JUNCTION B-35.>

<LOOK FOR A RADIO PLAYING MUSIC. THAT WILL LEAD YOU TO WHERE HE WANTS YOU TO BE. THEN IT WILL BE ALL UP TO HIM.>

SEWERS... FIGURES... IT'S THE PERFECT HIDING PLACE FOR SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO REMAIN OUT OF SIGHT AND YET STILL HAVE THE RUN OF THE CITY.

I'LL NEED TO DRESS APPROPRIATELY.

NO, I JUST GOT BACK FROM ENGLAND... I'M PLEASED TO REPORT THAT THERE WON'T BE A "ROYAL SCANDAL" TO WORRY ABOUT ANYMORE.

 **SIMON BARRISTER**

HE'S WHERE?
PRAGUE?
THERE'S CONFIRMATION?

YES, I KNOW IF THE OLD MAN'S LITTLE STUDENT IS THERE THEN HE'S NOT THAT FAR BEHIND... BUT TO HAVE MIDNIGHT X IN PRAGUE AS WELL MEANS THAT HE'S LOOKING FOR MORE THAN JUST WHAT I HAVE ABOUT HIM AND HIS GROUP.

NO... NO... IF YOU SEND IN A STRIKE TEAM THEN THAT WILL ONLY ANGER MISTER KNIGHT AND SEND SHODDEN FREID FURTHER UNDERGROUND. WE NEED HIM TO BE RIGHT WHERE HE IS IN PRAGUE, WHERE WE KNOW HE CAN'T HURT US.

MISTER KNIGHT IS LOOKING FOR ME, SO I THINK WE NEED TO LET HIM FIND ME NOW BEFORE HE FINDS ME THROUGH THE HOME OFFICE.
YES, I KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

HAVE A STRIKE TEAM SENT TO MY HOTEL. STANDARD ARMAMENT.
YES, I SAID STANDARD ARMAMENT.
AND SEND A COURIER TO PRAGUE TO FIND SHODDEN'S PROTÉGÉ SO SHE CAN TELL MISTER KNIGHT WHERE TO FIND ME.

SO... MISTER KNIGHT HAS VENTURED OUT OF HIS LITTLE KINGDOM TO LOOK FOR ME.
HE ACTUALLY HAS MORE COURAGE THAN I GIVE HIM CREDIT FOR.

I GUESS I'D BETTER PREPARE FOR HIS ARRIVAL.

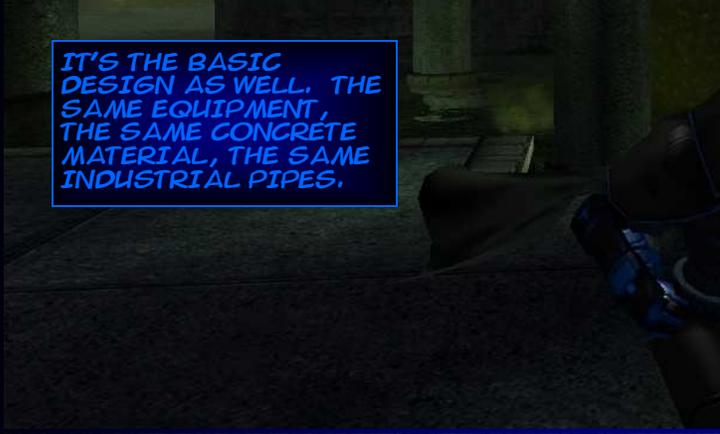


NO MATTER WHAT CITY YOU'RE IN...

THE SEWERS SOMEHOW ALL SEEM TO BE THE SAME.



AND IT'S NOT JUST THE SMELL.



IT'S THE BASIC DESIGN AS WELL. THE SAME EQUIPMENT, THE SAME CONCRETE MATERIAL, THE SAME INDUSTRIAL PIPES.

STILL, AT LEAST THEY'RE BETTER THAN CAVES. EVERY SEWER PATH LEADS SOMEWHERE.



JUNCTION B-35. AND A RADIO PLAYING OLD CZECH SONGS.



<YOU ARE LISTENING TO RADIO-FREE PRAGUE. AND THIS HIT GOES OUT TO THE AMERICAN...>



LUMF!



WHAM!



IT'S FAST,
TOO FAST TO
BE A HUMAN.



ELECTRICAL
ARCS GIVE AWAY
ITS SECRET.



THIS IS A
ROBOT.



SO I DON'T
HAVE TO HOLD
BACK WITH MY
DARK MIASMA.

POW!



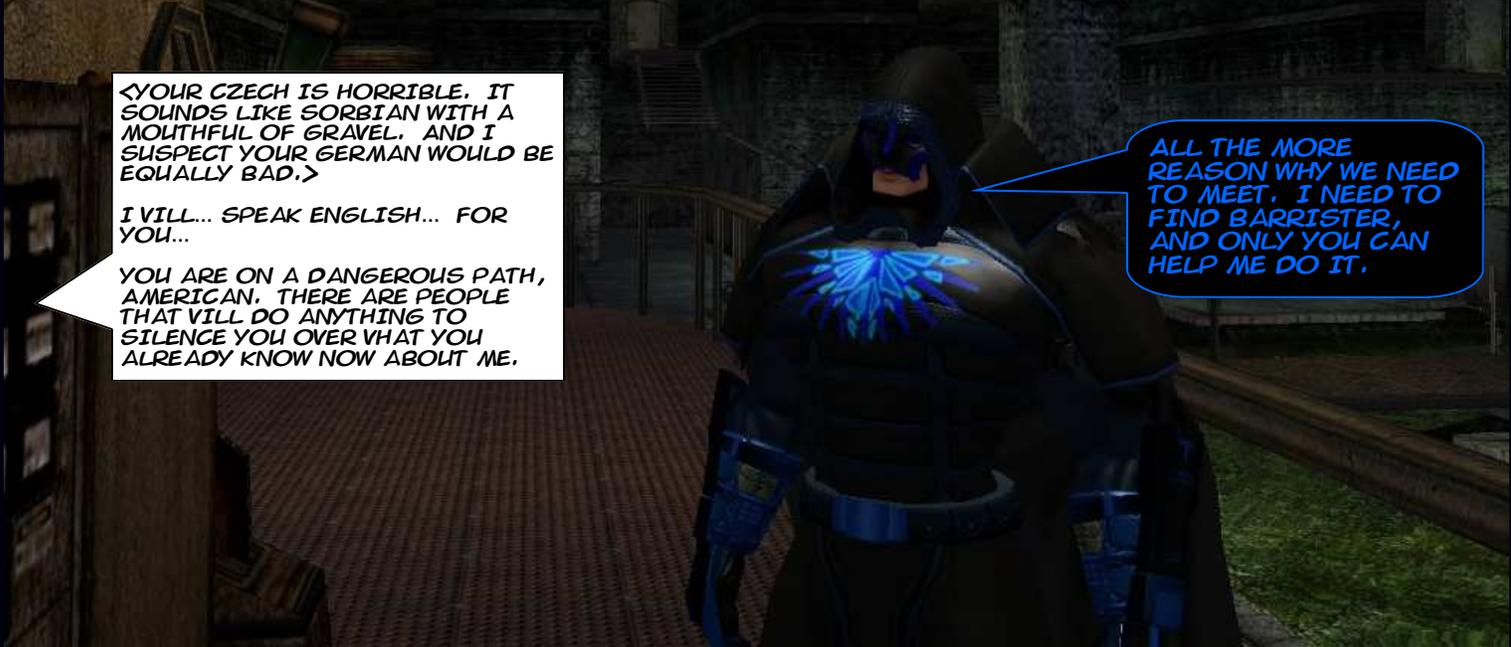
<WELL DONE, WELL
DONE, AMERICAN
HERO. VERY FEW
PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO
DEFEAT MY STAND-IN
HERE IN THE SEWERS.

BUT I PRESUME YOU
ARE NOT HERE FOR
SPARRING PRACTICE.>

<NO, I'M
NOT.>

<I NEED TO FIND SIMON
BARRISTER.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE
WHO KNOWS EVERYTHING
ABOUT HIM AND THE
BILDERBURG ALLIANCE,
AND, THROUGH THEM,
SHADOWBORN.>



<YOUR CZECH IS HORRIBLE. IT
SOUNDS LIKE SORBIAN WITH A
MOUTHFUL OF GRAVEL, AND I
SUSPECT YOUR GERMAN WOULD BE
EQUALLY BAD.>

I VILL... SPEAK ENGLISH... FOR
YOU...

YOU ARE ON A DANGEROUS PATH,
AMERICAN. THERE ARE PEOPLE
THAT VILL DO ANYTHING TO
SILENCE YOU OVER WHAT YOU
ALREADY KNOW NOW ABOUT ME.

ALL THE MORE
REASON WHY WE NEED
TO MEET. I NEED TO
FIND BARRISTER,
AND ONLY YOU CAN
HELP ME DO IT.



SO WHY SHOULD I HELP YOU?

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. IN A WAY YOU REMIND ME OF MYSELF IN MY YOUTH. I AM SURE THAT YOU COULD FIND BARRISTER ALL ON YOUR OWN.

BARRISTER HAS ALL OF THE INFORMATION THE GUARDIANS HAVE THROUGH VANGUARD AND THE DAWN PATROL.

INCLUDING EVERYTHING THAT THE DAWN PATROL HAS ON YOU TODAY.

THAT CONVINCED HIM.

IT WASN'T TRUE, OF COURSE. THE DAWN PATROL MADE SURE EVERY MENTION OF SHODDEN FREUD WAS REMOVED FROM THEIR DATABASE YEARS AGO.

BUT AT THE HEART OF EVERY CONSPIRACY THEORIST IS JUST THAT SLIGHT BIT OF DOUBT THAT THINGS ARE WHAT THEY CLAIM TO BE. HOW CAN HE KNOW FOR CERTAIN IT WAS REMOVED? COULDN'T THERE BE SOME BACKUP OF THE FILES?

AS THE OLD SONG GOES...
"PARANOIA WILL DESTROY YA."



I FOLLOWED HIS DIRECTIONS AND ENDED UP WITH A PLACE THAT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING THAT DR. VAHZILOK WOULD CALL HOME.

I WONDER IF I COULD EVER BE ABLE TO LIVE UNDER THESE CONDITIONS FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME AND NOT GO INSANE.

THE HAIRS ON THE BACK OF MY NECK ARE STICKING UP UNDERNEATH MY HOOD.

WHICH MEANS SOMEONE'S TRYING TO GET INTO MY HEAD.

YOU CAN STOP NOW. I KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT BEHIND ME.

VERY PERCEPTIVE OF YOU. HOW DID YOU KNOW?

I COULD SMELL YOU.

AGAIN I AM HONORED BY YOUR SKILLS. DETECTING MY OLD AND VASTING BODY AMIDST THE PUTRID VATERS AND THE DEAD BODIES IN THE AREA IS INDEED A FEAT.



SHODDEN FREUD

THEN I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF WE SKIP THE PLEASANTRIES AND GET TO THE MATTER AT HAND. TELL ME ABOUT BARRISTER AND THE BILDERBURGS.

ACH! THAT'S AN OLD STORY.

THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE WAS BASED OFF THE ORIGINAL MERCHANT BANKS AND TRADING HOUSES IN EUROPE. THE PEOPLE THAT WOULD BANKROLL WHOLE NATIONS AND THEIR COLONIES AND THEIR VARS.

THE NAME WAS TAKEN FROM THE FIRST CHAIRMAN OF THE ALLIANCE, VICTOR BILDERBURG, WHOSE HOME BECAME THE BASE OF THE GROUP'S OPERATION.

EVERY YEAR, THE BANKERS AND MAJOR MERCHANTS IN EUROPE WOULD MEET THERE TO DISCUSS WORLD AFFAIRS.

"EVERY SHIP BUILT, EVERY COLONY CREATED, EVERY VAR VAGED, THEY ALL CAME THROUGH BANKS AND MERCHANTS. COLONIZATION ITSELF WOULD NEVER HAVE HAPPENED IF NOT FOR THE ALLIANCE."

"AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE WAS MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE ALLIANCE ORDERED SPAIN AND FRANCE TO ASSIST AS AN OBJECT LESSON TO ENGLAND."

"WORLD WAR I WAS STARTED TO FUND ARMS MERCHANTS."

"YOU THINK THE GREAT DEPRESSION WAS CAUSED BY THE EXCESSES OF THE 1920'S? IT WAS ALL JUST FOLLOWING THEIR MASTER PLAN."



I BECAME AWARE OF THE ALLIANCE IN THE 1960'S. I WAS LOOKING FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WERE FUNDING ANARCHIST GROUPS THAT WERE ANYTHING BUT ANARCHISTS. THEY WERE ACTUALLY FALSE FRONTS FOR MERCENARY GROUPS.

THIS SOUNDS ALL INTRIGUING, BUT I DON'T SEE HOW THIS ALL TIES IN WITH SIMON BARRISTER OR WITH PARAGON CITY.

ACH! I FORGET YOU ARE SOMETHING OF A NIHILIST. THE BIG PICTURE IS STILL JUST A BLACK PAGE FOR YOU.

SIMON BARRISTER IS JUST THE LATEST IN A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS THAT THE ALLIANCE EMPLOYS.

MY VIEW OF LIFE-AND-DEATH HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH MY APPRECIATION OF THE GRAND SCHEME.

SO BARRISTER IS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE ALLIANCE.

MORE THAN JUST AN EMPLOYEE, HERR KNIGHT.

HE SERVES AS THEIR REPRESENTATIVE, MUCH LIKE AN ATTORNEY WOULD REPRESENT HIS CLIENT.

AND JUST LIKE AN ATTORNEY, HE HAS MORE THAN ONE CLIENT.

FOR YEARS NOW, THERE HAS BEEN A WORKING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE AND THE ORGANIZATION THAT YOU KNOW AS "SHADOWBORN".

I SUSPECT YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT THEIR LEADER IS LORD GEDDY, SOMEONE OBSESSED WITH CONTROL FOR THE SAKE OF HAVING CONTROL.

I LEARNED THAT THE ALLIANCE SENT HERR BARRISTER TO OFFER HIS SERVICES TO LORD GEDDY...

WAIT... THE BILDERBURGS SENT BARRISTER?

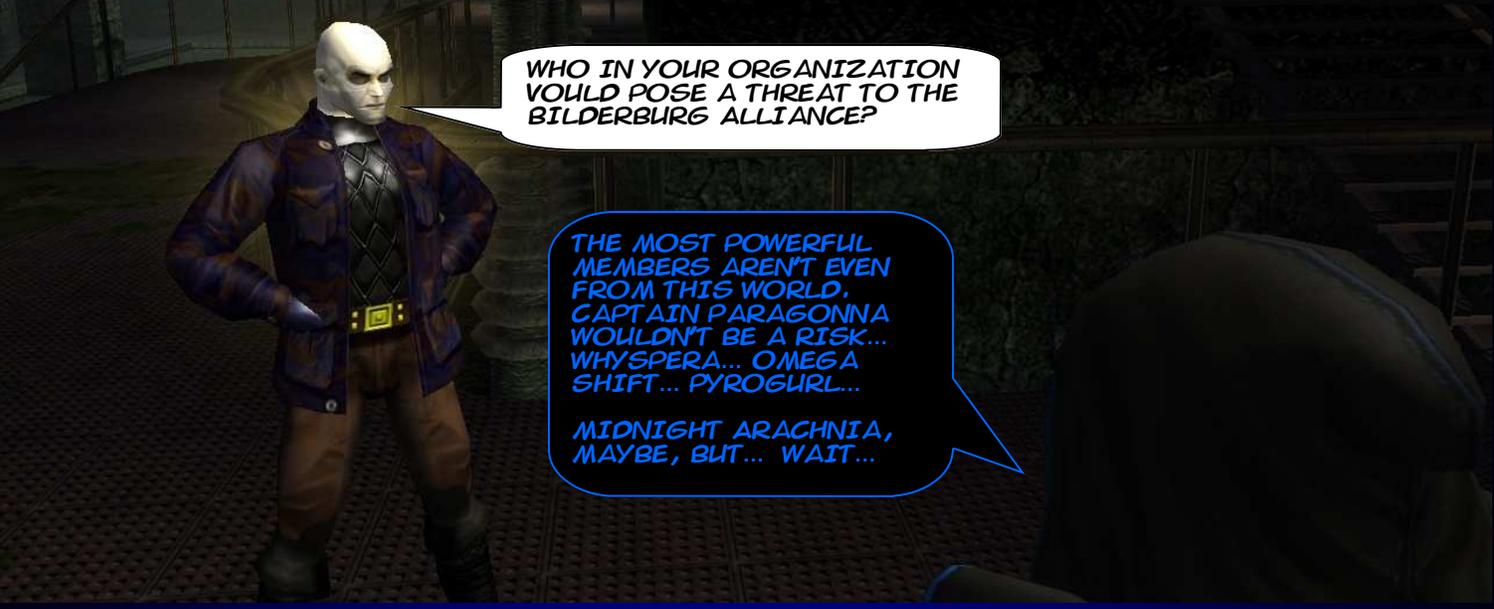
WE WERE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT SHADOWBORN CONTACTED BARRISTER DIRECTLY.



THAT MEANS THAT THE BILDERBURGS ARE THE ONES THAT ARE AFRAID OF THE GUARDIANS... NOT SHADOWBORN!
BUT... WHY?



PERHAPS A BETTER QUESTION WOULD BE TO ASK NOT WHY... BUT WHO?



WHO IN YOUR ORGANIZATION WOULD POSE A THREAT TO THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE?

THE MOST POWERFUL MEMBERS AREN'T EVEN FROM THIS WORLD. CAPTAIN PARAGONNA WOULDN'T BE A RISK... WHYSPERA... OMEGA SHIFT... PYROGURL...
MIDNIGHT ARACHNIA, MAYBE, BUT... WAIT...



THIS LEDGER... YOU SAID THIS LEDGER HAS THE LIST OF ALL OF THE VARIOUS NAMES CONNECTED TO THE ALLIANCE GOING BACK THIRTY YEARS.

YES... THE PEOPLE I WORK WITH THAT KEEP AN EYE ON THE ALLIANCE EVEN THEY HAVE THEIR ANNUAL MEETINGS ARE VERY THOROUGH.

THE NAME STUCK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB...

WENTWORTH.

ANDREW WENTWORTH, ALEX'S UNCLE, HAS BEEN ATTENDING THE ALLIANCE MEETINGS FOR FIVE YEARS.

IF WENTWORTH KNOWS THAT HIS NEPHEW IS THE LIBERTARIAN AVENGER...



I FOUND THE CONNECTION...

AND NOW I NEED TO FIND BARRISTER IMMEDIATELY.



THEN YOU ARE IN LUCK, HERR KNIGHT... BEFORE YOU ARRIVED HERE, I RECEIVED VORD THAT HERR BARRISTER IS AVAITING YOU IN SVITZERLAND.



IF HE KNOWS I'M MEETING WITH YOU, THEN HE'LL PRESUME YOU TOLD ME EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM AND THE ALLIANCE.



THIS HAS TO COME TO A HEAD NOW.

I'LL NEED EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON BARRISTER. HIS STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, FAMILY MEMBERS, ANY SECRETS YOU MAY HAVE UNCOVERED ABOUT HIM...

EVEN IF YOU WERE TO HAVE ALL OF THAT INFORMATION ON YOU, IT WOULD NOT MATTER. BARRISTER IS JUST A CONTRACTOR.

THE ALLIANCE WOULD JUST SEND SOMEONE ELSE TO REPLACE HIM.



RIGHT NOW HE'S GOT ALL OF MY GROUP'S SECRETS. THAT MAKES HIM THE BIGGEST THREAT.

WE'VE ALREADY PLUGGED THE LEAK TO OUR GROUP.* NOW WE HAVE TO GET THOSE SECRETS BACK, OR HAVE THEM DESTROYED.

WE'LL DEAL WITH HIS REPLACEMENT WHEN OR IF THEY SHOW UP.

WILL YOU HELP ME?

(* SEE ISSUE #22)



I'M STYMIED... ABSOLUTELY STYMIED...

THE LATEST POLLS FOR THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY RACE ARE OUT AND APPARENTLY HALF THIS CITY HAS LOST THEIR COLLECTIVE MINDS AND ARE SIDING WITH THE PARTY-HOUND ALEX WENTWORTH!

WHY PARAGON CITY? WHY?

WHY ARE YOU SIDING WITH SOMEONE THAT WOULD LEGALIZE DRUG ABUSE AND PROSTITUTION? WHY ARE YOU SIDING WITH SOMEONE THAT WOULD ALLOW GANGS TO RUN WILD JUST SO SOME POLICE OFFICER DOESN'T INFRINGE ON THEIR "SPECIAL RIGHTS"?

IT Baffles me... it really baffles me how they can't side with someone good and decent like Edward Vance... someone who fights for this city!

GARRY BECKER · DA POLL RESULTS TIED



PARAGON CITY, RI

HERO 1 MEMORIAL

BEAUTIFUL...

LYON POWERS
MANAGED TO
GIVE US THIS
ACCESS... HERO 1
WAS ONE OF HER
FIRST MENTORS.

WE'LL NEED
TO SEND HER
A THANK-
YOU NOTE
WHEN WE ALL
GET BACK TO
BOSTON.

PYROGURL

LOU... YOU PROMISED...

WE'RE NOT GOING
TO SPRING THIS ON
HER AT THE LAST
MINUTE, TESS.

KRYS, WE ARE
STAYING IN
BOSTON...

WHAT? BUT YOU
PROMISED ME THAT...

HERO CORPS JUST MADE ME THE
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR
THE BOSTON OFFICE. THAT
MEANS WE CAN'T TRANSFER
BACK TO PARAGON CITY.

THEN I CAN STAY
WITH NANA LIKE
I'VE BEEN DOING,
AND THEN WHEN I
GET OLDER...

HONEY, NANA
DOESN'T WANT
YOU STAYING
WITH HER AS
LONG AS YOU'RE
A REGISTERED
HERO.

I'M SORRY,
BUT YOU
KNOW HOW
SHE HATES
WHAT WE
DO.

COME ON SIS!
IT'LL BE FUN TO
HAVE YOU BACK
HOME! I EVEN
HELPED BUILD
YOUR NEW
BEDROOM!

KRYS? HONEY?

YOU SHOULD
HAVE ASKED ME
FIRST! IT'S
JUST NOT FAIR!

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

I USE MY VANGUARD ID FOR THE TRIP TO GENEVA. THERE WAS NO USE TRYING TO DISGUISE MY PRESENCE ANYMORE.

I WANT BARRISTER TO KNOW THAT I'M COMING FOR HIM.



THAT WE ARE COMING FOR HIM.



ANNA TELLS ME THESE ARE ALLIANCE STRIKE SOLDIERS.



MINIMAL ARMS AND PROTECTION.



THEY STILL DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST ME. BUT BARRISTER KNOWS THAT.



THIS IS ALL FOR SHOW... ALL SO BARRISTER CAN TELL HIS CLIENTS IN THE ALLIANCE THAT HE DID "EVERYTHING" TO TRY TO STOP ME.



HE KNOWS THAT NOTHING WILL STOP THIS CONFRONTATION.



BRAVO, MISTER KNIGHT... BRAVO...
AND I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D BRING A DATE TO YOUR OUTINGS.



MISS BLATT, I PRESUME?
I HOPE YOU'RE TAKING NOTES SO YOU CAN SEE HOW YOUR AMERICAN COUNTERPART BEHAVES.

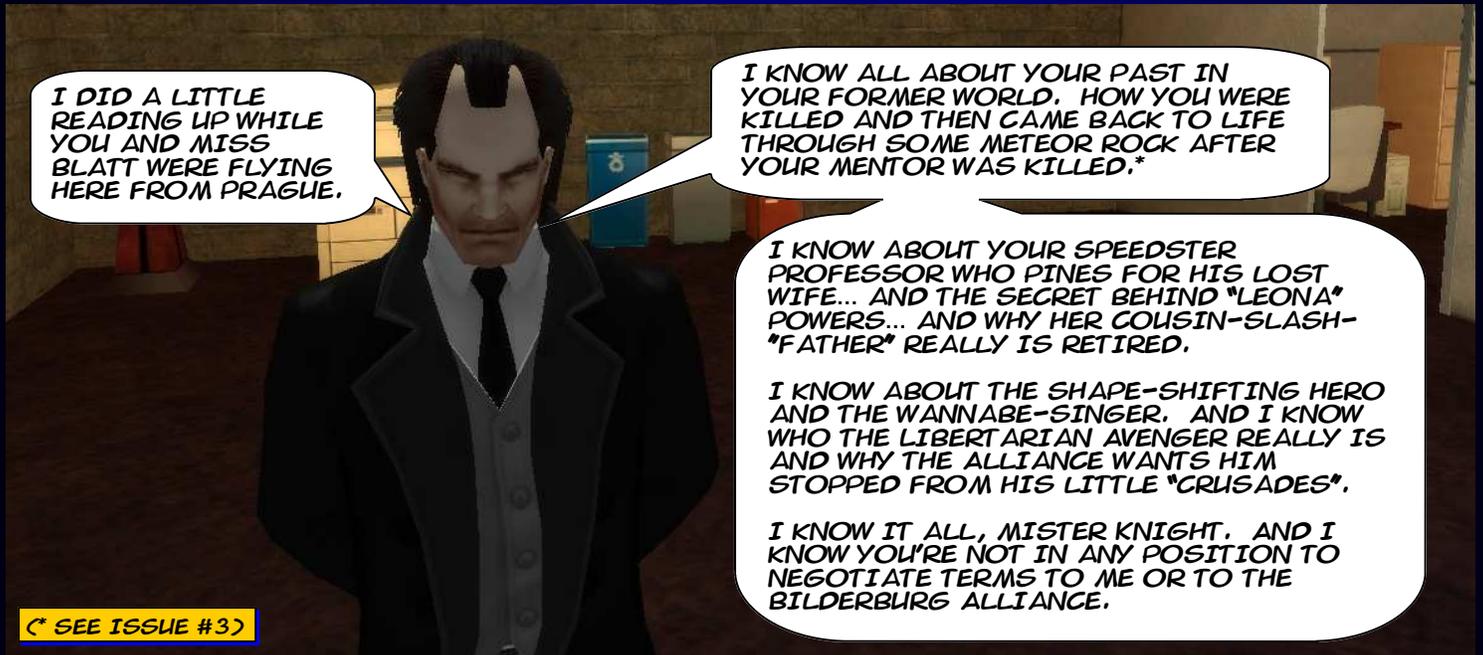


SHE'S JUST HERE TO WITNESS WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.



IT ENDS HERE, BARRISTER.
YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE ME THE DATA FILES YOU STOLE FROM US. YOU'RE GOING TO GIVE US EVERYTHING YOU HAVE ON THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN.
AND THEN YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE US ALONE. YOU'RE GOING TO TELL THE ALLIANCE THAT PARAGON CITY IS OFF LIMITS TO THEM.

REALLY?
TELL ME, MISTER KNIGHT, DID YOUR RESURRECTION MAKE YOU DELUSIONAL AS WELL AS NAÏVE?
YES, I KNOW ALL ABOUT THAT.



I DID A LITTLE READING UP WHILE YOU AND MISS BLATT WERE FLYING HERE FROM PRAGUE.

I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR PAST IN YOUR FORMER WORLD. HOW YOU WERE KILLED AND THEN CAME BACK TO LIFE THROUGH SOME METEOR ROCK AFTER YOUR MENTOR WAS KILLED.*

I KNOW ABOUT YOUR SPEEDSTER PROFESSOR WHO PINES FOR HIS LOST WIFE... AND THE SECRET BEHIND "LEONA" POWERS... AND WHY HER COUSIN-SLASH-"FATHER" REALLY IS RETIRED.
I KNOW ABOUT THE SHAPE-SHIFTING HERO AND THE WANNABE-SINGER. AND I KNOW WHO THE LIBERTARIAN AVENGER REALLY IS AND WHY THE ALLIANCE WANTS HIM STOPPED FROM HIS LITTLE "CRUSADES".
I KNOW IT ALL, MISTER KNIGHT. AND I KNOW YOU'RE NOT IN ANY POSITION TO NEGOTIATE TERMS TO ME OR TO THE BILDERBURG ALLIANCE.

← SEE ISSUE #3 →

YOU HAVE THREE CHOICES...

OPTION ONE IS TO JUST WALK AWAY... RIGHT NOW.

NOBODY WILL STOP YOU. THERE'S NOBODY LEFT TO TRY TO STOP YOU EVEN IF THEY COULD.

MISS BLATT GOES BACK TO PRAGUE TO DO SHODDEN'S DIRTY WORK, AND YOU GO BACK TO PARAGON CITY AND HOPE THAT MY ALLIANCE BOSSES LEAVE YOU RELATIVELY UNSCATHED IN GRATITUDE.

OPTION TWO IS TO PUNCH YOUR LIGHTS OUT AND TAKE THE DATA DISK THAT YOU HAVE IN YOUR JACKET POCKET...

AND THEN SCRUB YOUR COMPUTERS WITH A LITTLE VIRUS I BROUGHT OVER THAT REMOVES ALL TRACES OF THE DATA FROM YOUR DRIVES.

YOU COULD DO THAT...

BUT IN DOING SO YOU'D ALSO BE DECLARING WAR AGAINST THE ALLIANCE AS WELL AS SHADOWBORN.

YOU'D ALWAYS HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HOW MUCH INFORMATION I'D GIVE TO THE ALLIANCE AND HOW THEY WOULD USE IT AGAINST YOU AND YOUR HERO GROUP.

YOUR IDENTITY MAY NOT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU... BUT WHAT ABOUT PYROGURL'S?

BUT I DID SAY THERE ARE THREE OPTIONS...

OPTION THREE IS... YOU COME TO WORK FOR ME.

YOU BECOME MY INSIDE MAN IN THE GUARDIANS TO KEEP TABS ON THEIR ACTIVITIES.

YOU WOULDN'T BE WORKING FOR SHADOWBORN; YOU'D BE WORKING FOR THE ALLIANCE ITSELF, WHICH MEANS YOUR GROUP WOULD, FOR THE MOST PART, BE LEFT ALONE.

OF COURSE THERE WOULD BE SOME MATTERS THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED, SUCH AS THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S RAGE, BUT THOSE CAN BE HASHED OUT LATER.

YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

YOU HONESTLY EXPECT HIM TO TAKE YOU UP ON THAT OFFER AND BETRAY EVERYTHING HE IS?

OF COURSE I DO, MISS BLATT.

I PREPARED FOR EVERYTHING. THAT'S WHY I'M THE BEST IN THE FIELD.

YOU HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE, MISTER KNIGHT.

ALBEIT AN UNPLEASANT CHOICE NO MATTER WHICH ONE YOU MAKE.

ONLY ONE OPTION ALLOWS YOU TO GET WHAT YOU'RE HERE FOR AND FOR THIS TO END.

AT THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING THAT I'VE FOUGHT FOR ALL MY LIFE.

AND THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU'D LIVE UP TO YOUR WORD.

THAT LEAVE ME WITH ONLY ONE CHOICE TO MAKE...

POW!

POW!
POW!
POW!

YOU... MADE... A FATAL MISTAKE...

POW!

WOULDN'T BE MY FIRST.

YOU FORGOT ONE LITTLE DETAIL... THE DAWN PATROL HAS ACCESS TO A TELEPATH NAMED DON JUAN.

WHEN YOU WAKE UP, YOU WON'T REMEMBER A THING.

YOU'RE FINISHED, BARRISTER.

YOU'LL BE SURE TO GET THE WORD OUT, RIGHT MISS BLATT?

WITH PLEASURE, MISTER KNIGHT.

ROCINANTE GROUP

PEREZ PARK

"NO, I UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION QUITE WELL, GENTLEMEN."

IT IS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE CHARGE OF "BREACHING STATE SECRETS" IS SOMETHING OF AN EXAGGERATION IN THIS MATTER.

IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE FOR THE DAWN PATROL TO DETAIN MISTER BARRISTER INDEFINITELY.



SHADOWBORN LORD

NO, HE DID NOT SHARE EVERYTHING THAT HE LEARNED WITH MY ORGANIZATION. YOU KNOW THAT'S NOT HOW HE OPERATES.

IN FACT I WOULD ADD THAT HAD HE SHARED THAT INFORMATION WITH US, WE ALL WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION RIGHT NOW, AND THE GUARDIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN EITHER DISMANTLED OR DISCREDITED BY NOW.

I'M SURE YOUR ATTORNEYS ARE DOING EVERYTHING IN THEIR POWER TO HAVE BARRISTER RELEASED, AND I WILL ALSO OFFER OUR OWN SERVICES TO HELP YOU IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE TO DEMONSTRATE GOOD FAITH IN OUR CONTINUED...

HELLO? HELLO? THERE SEEMS TO BE A PROBLEM WITH THE CONNECTION...

WE NEED TO TALK, GEDDY.

MISTER KNIGHT... WHAT AN UNEXPECTED...

SAVE IT.

WE HAVE BARRISTER. WE HAVE THE DATA HE STOLE FROM US, AND WE HAVE HIS MEMORIES.

WE'RE THROUGH PLAYING THESE CAT-AND-MOUSE GAMES, GEDDY.

WE KNOW WHO YOU ARE NOW. WE KNOW WHERE YOU ARE NOW.

THE NEXT TIME AROUND WE WON'T STOP WITH THE MIDDLEMEN.

THE NEXT TIME AROUND WE'LL TAKE IT TO YOUR OFFICE DOOR.

CLICK



CENTRAL...

CENTRAL VOICE
COMMAND IS ONLINE.

HOW MAY I ASSIST
YOU, LORD GEDDY?

FLASH MESSAGE
SENT TO OPERATIVE.

FLASH MESSAGE
TO CODENAME
"BLUE"...

PROCEED.

THANK YOU.



I DON'T BELIEVE
THAT I JUST
HEARD THAT!!



WE KNEW THAT
SHADOWBORN WAS
BEHIND SOME SHADY
DEALS, BUT IF WHAT I
LEARNED IS RIGHT
ABOUT "BLUE"...



HI... SALLY?
THIS IS GRACE.
CAN YOU DO ME
A FAVOR AND
CHECK ON MY
CANARY?



WHERE ARE YOU?

STILL AT THE
OFFICE... I'M TIED
UP IN "PAPERWORK".



STEVIE WALKER-RODGERS



YOU SAID
"CANARY"... THAT
MEANS SOMEONE
IS IN DANGER.
DO YOU KNOW
WHO?



I FORGOT ABOUT FEEDING
ARCHIE WHEN I LEFT.

"ARCHIE"... AS IN
"ARCHER"? ALEX?

YOU KNOW HOW SENSITIVE
HIS HEALTH IS OF LATE,
I'M TEMPTED TO RUSH OVER
THERE MYSELF.



GRACE, NO. WE SPENT A LOT OF TIME PUTTING YOU IN THERE. WE CAN'T HAVE YOU RUSH OUT NOW.

I NEED YOU TO GET THE INFORMATION WE NEED TO CLOSE THE BOOK ON THEM FOREVER.

YOU KNOW, I FORGOT ABOUT A BILL THAT NEEDS TO BE PAID.

GUESS I HAVE TO RUSH ON HOME TO GET IT BEFORE THE BANK CLOSES. YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE ABOUT TIME. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M THERE, OKAY?



DON'T DO IT... DON'T BLOW YOUR COVER...



I'M SORRY STEVIE... BUT I KNOW WHO "BLUE" IS, AND WHAT IT MEANS.

AND I'M NOT GOING TO ALLOW HISTORY TO REPEAT ITSELF!



 DAYBRIGHT



I DON'T KNOW HOW THE FUTURE GALATEA POWERS GAVE ME THE POWER TO BECOME FULLY HUMAN...*

* SEE ISSUE #2!

BUT SINCE I'M THE ONLY KHELDIAN THAT CAN DO THAT RIGHT NOW, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO CHANGE WITHOUT ANYONE IN SHADOWBORN BEING SUSPICIOUS ABOUT ME.

I JUST HOPE I CAN GET TO ATLAS PARK IN TIME.



DISTRICT ATTORNEY POLL

- 40% ALEX WENTWORTH
- 33% EDWARD VANCE
- 20% ALICE BANKS
- 05% CONRAD BOCHCO
- 01% NOBLE SON

AS OUR LATEST PNN POLL SUGGESTS, DEPUTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY EDWARD VANCE'S CHANCES ARE FADING FAST.



AND NOW LET'S LISTEN IN TO ALEX WENTWORTH'S RALLY OVER IN ATLAS PARK...

CONTINUING COVERAGE OF THE 

THE NEWS, MY FRIENDS, IS GOOD... THE STRUGGLE WE'VE WAGED IS ALMOST AT AN END.

WE'RE ONLY TWO WEEKS UNTIL THE ELECTION AND ALL OF THE POLLS SUGGESTS THAT WE'VE GOT A STRONG LEAD OVER EDWARD VANCE.

YAY! YAY!
Alex! Alex! Alex!

BUT NOW IS NOT THE TIME TO BE CONFIDENT. NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO BE VIGILANT!

THIS IS THE TIME WHEN DIRTY POLITICS COME INTO PLAY! THIS IS THE TIME WHEN MISTER VANCE'S FRIENDS COME OUT OF THE WOODWORK TO PLAY THEIR LITTLE GAMES ON US.

PNN LIVE · LIVE COVERAGE OF ALEX WENTWORTH CAMPAIGN RALLY



IT'S FUNNY THAT THE PERFECT PLACE FOR THIS JOB WOULD BE THIS BUILDING...

THE SAME AE BUILDING WHERE WENTWORTH WOULD HASH OUT HIS LIBERTARIAN AGENDAS.

I'M SURE HIS LIBERTARIAN FRIENDS ARE ON THE FLOOR BELOW, WATCHING HIS SPEECH IN COMFORT, UNAWARE OF WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT.

I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL...

BUT IN TRUTH, IT IS SOMEWHAT PERSONAL.

LORD GEDDY SAYS THE GUARDIANS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF MY SISTER, THE FIRST "AGENT SHADOW".

(* SEE ISSUE #4 *)

AND IF LORD GEDDY SAYS THAT ALEX WENTWORTH IS CONNECTED TO THEM...

OUR TIME IS HERE... THE FUTURE IS IN OUR GRASP! A NEW DAY IS ABOUT TO DAWN FOR PARAGON CITY... ONE WHERE JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL FOR EVERYONE.

Alex! Alex! Alex!
Alex! Alex! Alex!

THEN HE HAS TO GO.

OH WELL...

CLICK-CLACK

THE ONLY THING I REALLY HAVE TO WONDER ABOUT IS...

OPEN GASKET OR CLOSED?

Head Shot
100% Dead

Heart Shot
99% Dead

TO BE CONTINUED...



THE END . . . FOR NOW.

As I put the final touches on this issue, I wondered if I should have wrapped up this story with “THE END” instead of “To Be Continued”...

I certainly left everyone hanging this time... and that, perhaps, is how it should be.

This is the end of this series, at least for the immediate future. Circumstances have forced me to put this series on hiatus while my long-term personal problems get resolved. These are problems that are not related to City of Heroes, but they do affect how I use their MMO.

The good news is that while this may be “the end” for “Guardians of the Dawn Spotlight”, it won’t be THE END of the Guardians. This is only a brief pause. The ongoing stories of Paragon City’s hero team WILL continue, albeit under a different title, and a focus on one of the more popular characters. (You can probably guess which one.)

Some of the questions left hanging...

- Did Barrister REALLY lose everything he has on the Guardians?
- How much does the Bilderburg Alliance really know about the Guardians?
- How much does Shadowborn really know about the Guardians?
- Will Alex Wentworth/Libertarian Avenger survive the assassination attempt?
- Will he win the election and become the next District Attorney?
- Will PyroGurl be forced to leave the Guardians and move to Boston?
- Will Stevie Walker-Rodgers be allowed to become Captain Paragonna again?

Of course not EVERYTHING will be answered when we return to Paragon City. There will be a considerable length of time between now and when the new series picks up, but hopefully SOME of those questions, and a few more not listed, will be answered by then.

The BIG Bag of Thanks...

These are the folks who deserve my thanks for their feedback and assistance for the series. They are in no specific order of importance, and while they may be known only through their screen names or pen names, they are still real people and their comments and suggestions helped to mold this series and keep it going.

Sin Stalker (Joseph Cohen), Night Hornet, ExGemini (Nathan Furian), Task Force UK, Avatea (NCSoft/City of Heroes), theOcho (NCSoft/City of Heroes), Golden Girl, Yaoi-Huntress Earth, Skarmaine, BlackQueen77, iamrhaza3617, PattMatt, Theresa, Phil, RJ, Krys...

And also the folks at City of Comic Creators, NCSoft/Paragon Studios, deviantART, The Cape Radio, Rogues Radio, and the people who invented Comic Book Creator, GIMP, Splasher, and PDF Creator. And of course, you, the readers. Thank you all.

This is not “goodbye”. This is “Until Next Time...” Because I believe THERE WILL BE a “next time”.

AND BEFORE I GO...

There's one little project that will be going on until the new series starts up. You can find it at the Official Guardians website at...

<http://GuardiansOfTheDawn.wordpress.com>

NEXT ISSUE...



Stay tuned for the new series...

Fall/Winter 2011





GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN

<http://GuardiansOfTheDawn.wordpress.com>