

GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN



City of
Comic Creators
ISSUE 16
2010

Get Brutal
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SPOTLIGHT ON... **OMEGA SHIFT**



CITY
of
HEROES

paragon
GAMES

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



SOME HEROES HAVE NO SECRETS.

THEY ARE ABLE TO LIVE WITH THE PUBLIC KNOWING WHO THEY ARE AT ALL TIMES.

SOME HEROES HAVE TO HAVE A SECRET IDENTITY, A WAY FOR THEM TO OPERATE WITHOUT ENDANGERING THOSE THAT THEY CARE ABOUT.

AND THEN THERE ARE THOSE THAT HAVE TO HAVE MULTIPLE IDENTITIES. FOR THOSE WITH SUCH A BURDEN, THEIR GREATEST FEAR IS NOT IN DISCOVERY, BUT IN LOSING CONTROL OF THEIR VARIOUS GUISES.



NAME:
OMEGA SHIFT

REAL NAME:
MAY SHIFT

STATUS: **REGISTERED
SUPERHERO**

ARCHETYPE: **BLASTER**

PRIMARY POWER:
FIRE BLAST

SECONDARY POWER:
ICE MANIPULATION

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AND NOW WITH AN UPDATE ON TODAY'S TOP STORY, HERE IS PNN'S OWN APRIL HERNANDEZ...



TOP STORY - POLICE CHIEF CRITICAL 

THANKS ROBIN.

I AM HERE AT CROWNE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN KINGS ROW WHERE POLICE CHIEF MORTON CLAYTON IS STILL LISTED IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

APRIL HERNANDEZ - PNN REPORTER 

HE WAS BROUGHT HERE LAST NIGHT AFTER BEING VIOLENTLY ATTACKED BY AN UNKNOWN ASSAILANT WHILE INSIDE POLICE HEADQUARTERS.*

(*ISSUE #15)

PPD CHIEF CLAYTON ATTACKED 

CLAYTON TOOK OVER THE DEPARTMENT IN 2008 AFTER THE RETIREMENT OF CHIEF CONRAD BOCHCO, OFTEN CREDITED FOR REBUILDING THE POLICE FORCE FOLLOWING THE RIKTI INVASION OF 2002.

POLICE CHIEF CLAYTON - FILE FOOTAGE 

UNFORTUNATELY CHIEF CLAYTON'S OFFICE HAS BEEN PLAGUED WITH SCANDALS OF LATE, INCLUDING THE SUSPENSION OF TWO OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PRIZED SUPERHERO DIVISIONS, THE AWAKENED DIVISION, INVOLVING KHELDIAN-HUMAN-HYBRID POLICE OFFICERS*...

(*ISSUE #13)

AND THE HERO SHIELD PROJECT, WHICH PRODUCED THE SUPERHERO POLICE OFFICER CAPTAIN PARAGONNA, FORMERLY OF THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN SUPERHERO GROUP, CURRENTLY ON ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE.**

**ISSUE #14)

"IDENTITY" - A CITY OF HEROES STORY BY DAVID 2 

POLICE HAVE RELEASED THIS VIDEO OF THE ALLEGED ATTACKER.

THE ALLEGED ATTACKER IS DESCRIBED AS BEING FEMALE, WEARING A BLACK TECH-POWERED BODYSUIT WITH BLUE-AND-RED CAPE AND MATCHING BLUE HOOD. ANYONE WHO CAN IDENTIFY THE ALLEGED ATTACKER ARE URGED TO CALL THE POLICE TIP LINE.

POLICE VIDEO - SUSPECTED ATTACKER 

POLICE TIP LINE - 555-9111 

APRIL, IS IT TRUE THAT THE POLICE SUSPECT THIS ATTACKER TO BE INVOLVED WITH OTHER ATTACKS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT GROUPS?



ROBIN STEED - PNN CENTER



D@MN YOU ROBIN!

UHH.. YES, ROBIN, THERE IS SOME SPECULATION ON THAT. HERE'S WHAT A POLICE SPOKESMAN SAID ABOUT SUCH A CONNECTION...



APRIL HERNANDEZ - KINGS ROW



WE ARE CURRENTLY LOOKING INTO AN ALLEGED CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SUSPECTED ASSAILANT AND AN INCIDENT INVOLVING THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE A FEW MONTHS AGO, BUT RIGHT NOW IT IS ONLY A RUMOR.



POLICE SPOKESMAN - EARLIER TODAY



AGAIN, POLICE EMPHASIZE THAT ANYONE WHO HAS ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALLEGED ATTACKER SHOULD CALL THE POLICE TIP LINE AT 555-9111.

I'M APRIL HERNANDEZ IN KINGS ROW.



POLICE TIP LINE - 555-9111



AAAAND... WE'RE OFF. GOOD THING ROBIN CAUGHT YOU ON THAT BIT ABOUT THE ATTACKER, APRIL. YOU KNOW THE PRODUCER WILL GIVE YOU HELL FOR MISSING THAT LITTLE DETAIL.

COME ON LINK, YOU KNOW WHEN A STORY IS BEING PADDED. IT JUST DIDN'T SEEM RIGHT TO MENTION IT WITHOUT MORE PROOF.

LISTEN, YOU GUYS GET BACK TO THE STUDIO, I'LL DO A LITTLE FOLLOW-UP HERE, OKAY?



APRIL HERNANDEZ, ON-AIR REPORTER FOR THE PARAGON NEWS NETWORK.

EXCEPT... SHE DOESN'T REALLY EXIST.

OH, THERE WAS AN APRIL HERNANDEZ ONCE UPON A TIME. GRADUATE STUDENT MAJORING IN JOURNALISM AND INTERNING AT WBZ-TV IN BOSTON.

OKAY GUYS, YOU HEARD THE SENIORITA... BACK TO THE SHOP.

UNFORTUNATELY, APRIL HERNANDEZ WAS KIDNAPPED AND KILLED BY THE VAHZILOK FIVE YEARS AGO.

I KNOW THIS BECAUSE I HAVE HER MEMORIES OF WHAT HAPPENED RIGHT TO THE END.

SHE WASN'T THE ONLY ONE EITHER. THERE WERE MANY OTHERS THAT THE VAHZILOK ABDUCTED AND KILLED AS PART OF THEIR DEAL WITH A CERTAIN SCIENTIST.



MY REAL NAME IS MAY SHIFT.

I KNOW IT'S MY REAL NAME BECAUSE I WAS THE ONE THAT PICKED IT NOT LONG AFTER I WAS "BORN".

SORRY, THAT PART WILL REQUIRE SOME SERIOUS EXPLAINING LATER ON.

Initiating analysis of subjects...

Subject One: Unknown female involved in attack of Police Chief Clayton.

Subject Two: Tech-based bodysuit worn by Guardian member **Galatea Powers**.

GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN BASE - TALOS ISLAND

YOU'RE CERTAIN ABOUT THIS?

I'VE BEEN OVER THIS FOR SIX HOURS STRAIGHT AND RAN THROUGH THE ANALYSIS OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

THAT IS CLEARLY NOT KARA'S TECH-SUIT!

EVEN IF THE POLICE ARE COLOR-BLIND, WHICH I HIGHLY DOUBT, THE GENERAL MAKEUP OF THE ABILITIES OF THESE TWO SUITS DON'T MATCH.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE POLICE ARE COLOR-BLIND. ANYONE WILL SAY COSTUME COLORS CHANGE.

IT'S CLEAR THAT SOMEONE HAS REVERSE-ENGINEERED YOUR TECH-SUIT DESIGN AND ARE USING IT TO IMPLICATE KARA'S SO-CALLED "THIRD IDENTITY".

IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT YOU WERE EVEN ALLOWED TO COME UP WITH THIS IDEA IN THE FIRST PLACE, MUCH LESS PUT IT TO USE.



ICON POWERS



MAXIMUS REX



FIRST OF ALL, THE TECH-SUIT IDEA WAS KARA'S, BASED ON SOMETHING I HAD SUGGESTED TO HER.*

SECOND, IT WAS ORIGINALLY SUPPOSED TO BE AN EMERGENCY OPTION UNTIL WE GOT DRAFTED BY THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD.**

(* ISSUE #1 - ** ISSUE #8)



AND AT THIS POINT THOSE REASONS ARE IRRELEVANT.

CAN WE ACCOUNT FOR KARA'S LOCATION WHEN THE ASSAULT TOOK PLACE?



ABSOLUTELY. KARA WAS BUSY AT A S.E.R.A.P.H.* LAB IN STEEL CANYON.

(* SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION RESEARCH AND APPLICATION TO PARANORMAL HUMANS - SAY THAT THREE TIMES FAST!)



FOOLISH MORTAL! YOU DARE STAND IN THE WAY OF AEGEAP

Video Footage

S.E.R.A.P.H.



YUP. US SUPER-MORTALS DO THAT SORT OF THING.

 GALATEA POWERS

Video Footage

S.E.R.A.P.H.



OH, AND BEFORE I FORGET...

... WE ALSO HAVE A LEASH LAW FOR YOUR UGLY DOGS.

Video Footage

S.E.R.A.P.H.



OKAY, I'LL HAVE TO TALK WITH HER ABOUT HER WITTICISMS.

THIS IS PROBABLY THE ONLY GOOD THING ON OUR SIDE RIGHT NOW. WE CAN ACTUALLY PROVE THE ATTACKER WASN'T GALATEA POWERS IN DISGUISE.

UNFORTUNATELY IT ALSO MEANS WE HAVE ANOTHER PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH.

SOMEONE IS USING THE MEDIA TO LINK THIS ATTACKER TO GALATEA'S "THIRD IDENTITY". ALL THEY HAVE TO DO IS LINK THIS TO THE RAID AT DDA VANCE'S OFFICE* AND FROM THERE TO THE GREY POLICE ATTACK** AND THEY'LL PRESUME THAT KARA HAMILTON IS THE ATTACKER. IT'S THE "AGENT BURKE" FIASCO*** ALL OVER AGAIN.

(* ISSUE #8 - ** ISSUE #1 - *** ISSUE #7-8)

BUT "KARA HAMILTON" IS A VANGUARD-CREATED SECRET IDENTITY FOR GALATEA...

WHICH THE PUBLIC DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT.

SO IF THE MEDIA LINKS "KARA" TO THE ATTACK ON CLAYTON, THAT MEAN WE EITHER OUT KARA AS BEING GALATEA AND LINK HER TO THE TWO EARLIER ACTS...

OR WE ALLOW "KARA" TO BE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH ASSAULT AND KEEP HER REAL SECRET IDENTITY INTACT.

WE SEEM TO BE THE FOCUS OF A LOT OF MEDIA ATTENTION OF LATE. OVER ONE-HUNDRED REGISTERED GROUPS, BUT THE MEDIA SEEMS TO KEEP THEIR SPOTLIGHT ON US.

IT'S A MIXED BLESSING, MY FRIEND.

TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO KNOWS.

MEANTIME, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T UNRAVEL THIS GORDIAN KNOT.

A WHAT?

"GORDIAN KNOT"... SORRY, I DIDN'T KNOW YOUR UNIVERSE DIDN'T HAVE ONE.

GORDIA WAS THE CAPITAL OF PHYGIS IN MODERN-DAY TURKEY. THEY SAID THE MAN WHO COULD UNRAVEL A SUPER-COMPLEX KNOT WOULD BE KING.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT SOLVED THE PROBLEM BY CUTTING THE KNOT IN HALF WITH HIS SWORD.

MY UNIVERSE HAD AN ALEXANDER, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING "GREAT" ABOUT HIM.

BUT I LIKE YOUR PARABLE. IT'S JUST A PITY THAT OUR KNOT CAN'T BE SO EASILY CUT IN TWO.

I HOPE OUR FIELD AGENTS FARE BETTER THAN WE ARE.

TALKING WITH THE POLICE IS A WASTE OF TIME.

THEY STILL FEAR ME.

BUT THEY FEAR RETRIBUTION WORSE IF THEY TALK WITH ME.

WHOMEVER ATTACKED CLAYTON, THEY FEAR THAT PERSON EVEN MORE. I CAN'T ALLOW THIS TO GO ON IN MY DOMAIN.

 MIDNIGHT X

I DON'T LIKE WORKING IN MIDNIGHT X'S DOMAIN AT NIGHT.

THE MAN IS VERY TERRITORIAL ABOUT THIS PART OF PARAGON CITY, AND I DON'T BLAME HIM.

BUT THE PRESENCE OF EXTRA POLICE ON THE STREETS AND AROUND THE STATIONHOUSE TELLS ME THAT THEY'RE NOT GOING TO EASILY TALK TO A STREET VIGILANTE.

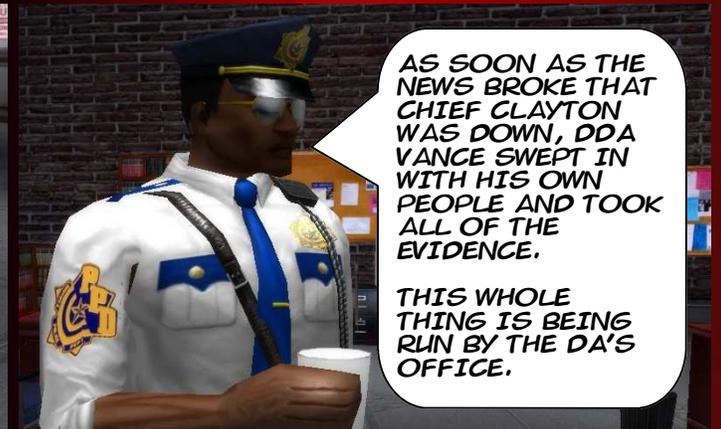
THEY WILL, HOWEVER, BE MORE RECEPTIVE TO A FRIEND IN THE MEDIA.



IT WAS ONLY A DROP OF SUPERADINE...

SORRY APRIL, BUT IT'S REALLY OUT OF MY HANDS HERE.

SERGEANT ERNIE WINSTON, MY POLICE CONTACT.



AS SOON AS THE NEWS BROKE THAT CHIEF CLAYTON WAS DOWN, DDA VANCE SWEEPED IN WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE AND TOOK ALL OF THE EVIDENCE.

THIS WHOLE THING IS BEING RUN BY THE DA'S OFFICE.



I DIDN'T EVEN GET T'SEE TH SWIRLEY DOTS. WHAT KIND A TRIP DOZEN 'AVE THAT?

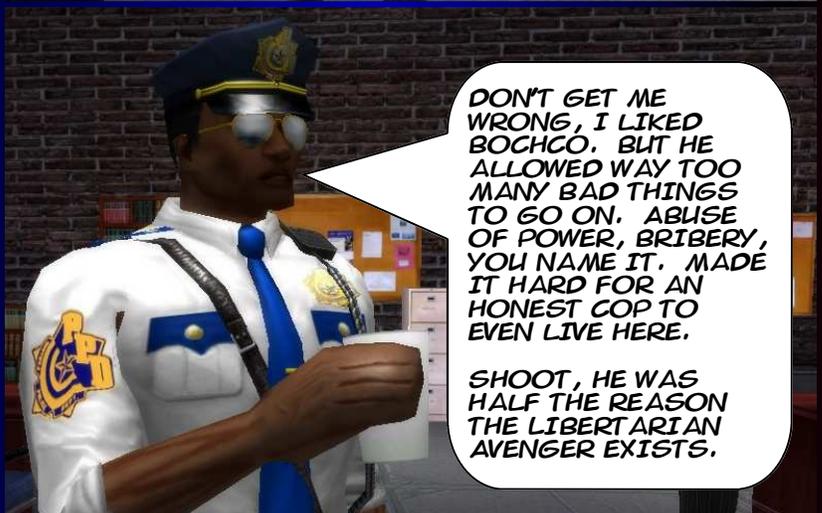
BUT THAT DOESN'T MAKE ANY KIND OF SENSE AT ALL.

THE DA'S OFFICE IS SUPPOSED TO HANDLE PROSECUTIONS, NOT THE WHOLE INVESTIGATION OF CRIMINAL MATTERS.



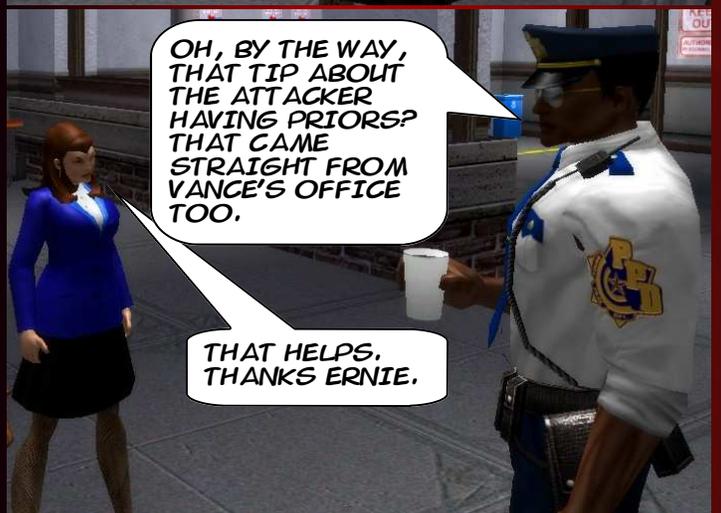
I KNOW, I KNOW... IT'S BEEN CRAZY AROUND HERE EVER SINCE.

THE POLICE UNION IS GOING BONKERS BECAUSE THEY BACKED CLAYTON, AND NOW WE HEAR CHIEF BOCHCO MAY COME BACK FOR A BIT.



DON'T GET ME WRONG, I LIKED BOCHCO. BUT HE ALLOWED WAY TOO MANY BAD THINGS TO GO ON. ABUSE OF POWER, BRIBERY, YOU NAME IT. MADE IT HARD FOR AN HONEST COP TO EVEN LIVE HERE.

SHOOT, HE WAS HALF THE REASON THE LIBERTARIAN AVENGER EXISTS.



OH, BY THE WAY, THAT TIP ABOUT THE ATTACKER HAVING PRIORS? THAT CAME STRAIGHT FROM VANCE'S OFFICE TOO.

THAT HELPS. THANKS ERNIE.

EDWARD VANCE IS SLIME,
AND THAT'S EVEN BEFORE
HE TRIED TO RAILROAD
MIDNIGHT ARACHNIA FOR
TREASON.*



HIM BEING
INVOLVED IN THIS
WHOLE THING
ADDS A WHOLE
NEW WRINKLE TO
THE CASE.

(* ISSUES 7-8)

I THINK I BETTER
DRESS FOR THE
OCCASION.



THANKFULLY
THE GOO
EVAPORATES
QUICKLY...



GOODBYE APRIL
HERNANDEZ,
ON-AIR PNN
REPORTER...

SAY HELLO TO
OMEGA SHIFT...
MUTANT
SUPERHERO.



"PLEASE...
PLEASE LET
ME GO..."

OMEGA SHIFT

OH GOD, THIS IS THE
PART THAT I HATE
WHEN I CHANGE...

"I WON'T SAY
ANYTHING! HONEST!
I DON'T EVEN KNOW
WHO YOU ARE!"

EVERY TIME I USE
SOMEONE'S PHYSICAL
TEMPLATE, I HAVE ACCESS
TO THEIR MEMORIES, THEIR
PERSONALITIES, WHO THEY
ESSENTIALLY ARE.



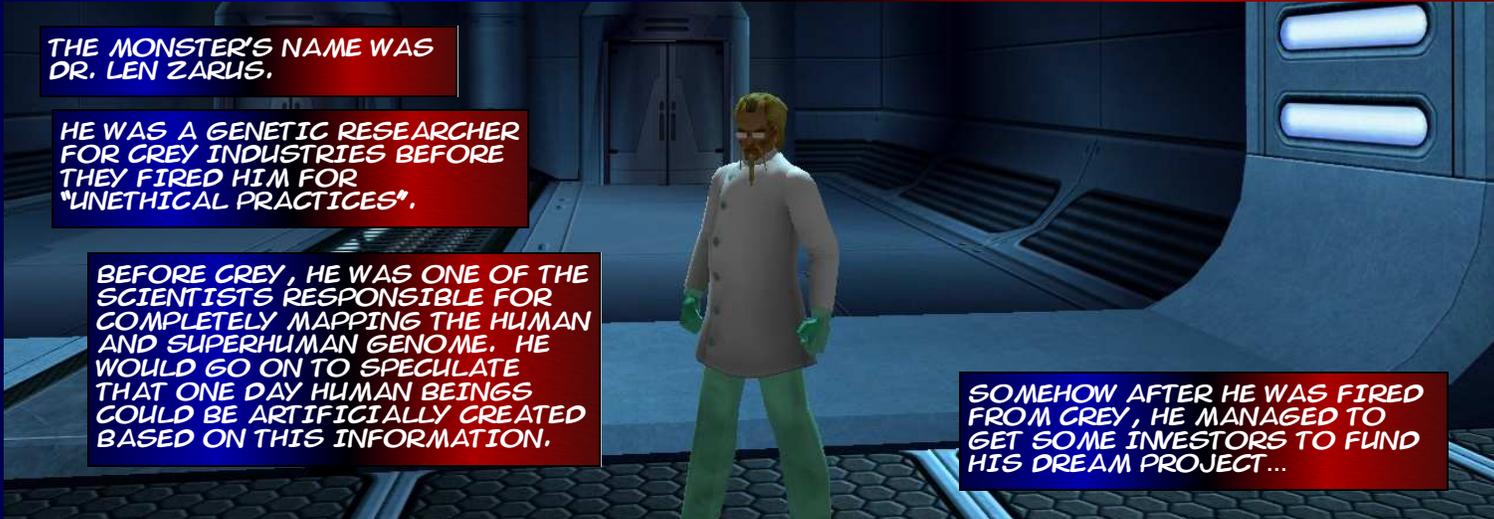
"PLEASE... PLEASE I'M
BEGGING YOUUUUUUUU..."

SOMETIMES WHEN I LEAVE THAT
TEMPLATE, I GET THEIR LAST
MEMORIES... BEFORE THEY DIE.

"NOOOOOOOO!!!!!"

AND EVERY TIME I DO, I
CURSE THE MONSTER
THAT DID THAT TO THEM.

THE MONSTER THAT CREATED ME.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white lab coat and green pants, stands in a futuristic laboratory. The room has blue lighting and various pieces of equipment.

THE MONSTER'S NAME WAS DR. LEN ZARUS.

HE WAS A GENETIC RESEARCHER FOR GREY INDUSTRIES BEFORE THEY FIRED HIM FOR "UNETHICAL PRACTICES".

BEFORE GREY, HE WAS ONE OF THE SCIENTISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR COMPLETELY MAPPING THE HUMAN AND SUPERHUMAN GENOME. HE WOULD GO ON TO SPECULATE THAT ONE DAY HUMAN BEINGS COULD BE ARTIFICIALLY CREATED BASED ON THIS INFORMATION.

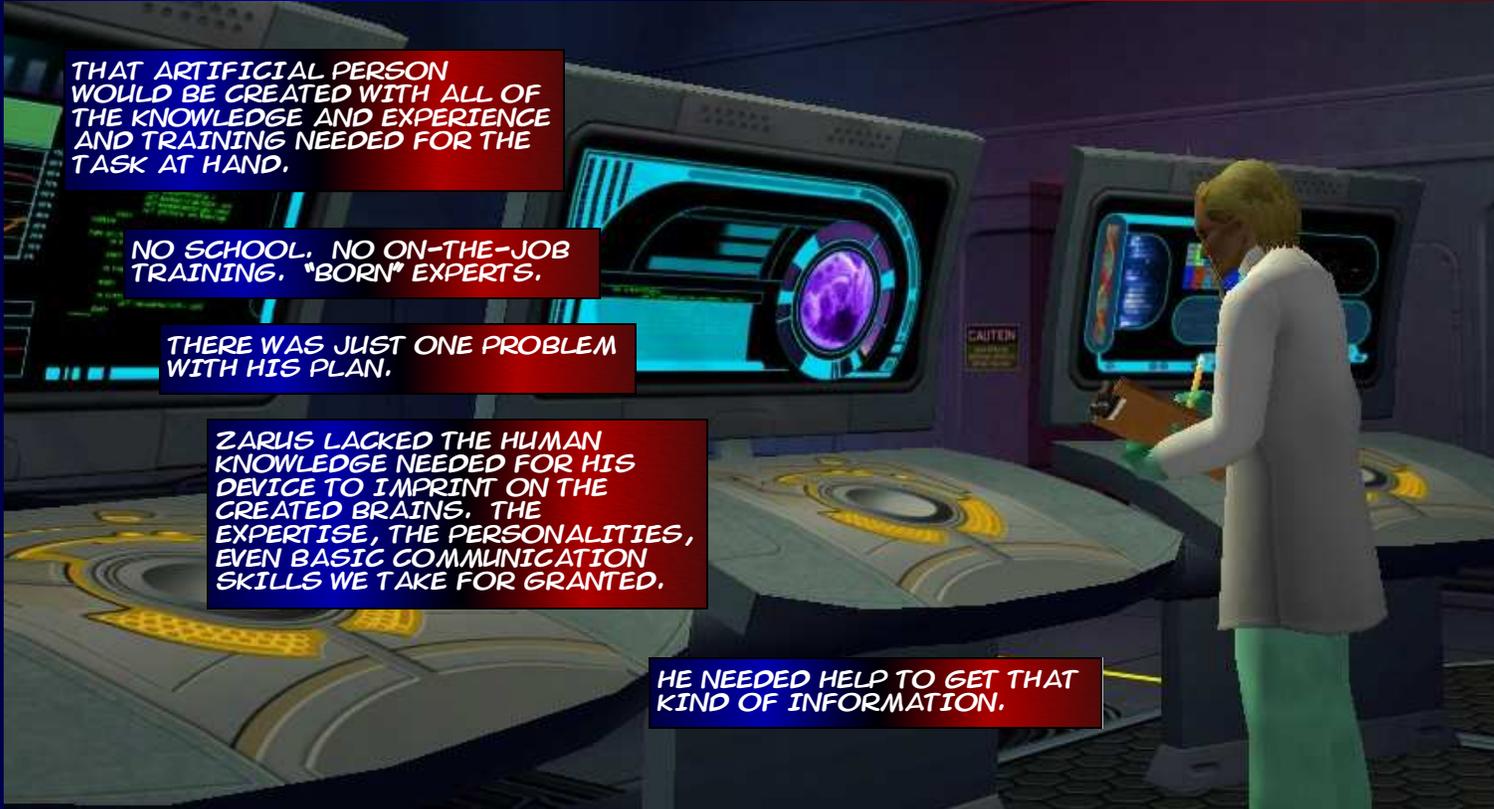
SOMEHOW AFTER HE WAS FIRED FROM GREY, HE MANAGED TO GET SOME INVESTORS TO FUND HIS DREAM PROJECT...

Dr. Zarus is seen from behind, standing in a laboratory filled with rows of blue incubators or bioreactors. The lighting is dim and blue.

THE OMEGA-GENESIS PROGRAM...

A PROGRAM TO ARTIFICIALLY CREATE HUMAN LIFE.

ZARUS BELIEVED HE COULD SKIP THE FORMATIVE YEARS OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT... CHILDHOOD, PUBERTY, THE TEENAGE YEARS... AND CREATE FULLY-GROWN ADULTS, WITH CUSTOM ABILITIES AS WOULD BE NEEDED.

Dr. Zarus is at a control console with multiple monitors. One monitor shows a glowing purple brain. The room is filled with technical equipment and blue light.

THAT ARTIFICIAL PERSON WOULD BE CREATED WITH ALL OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING NEEDED FOR THE TASK AT HAND.

NO SCHOOL. NO ON-THE-JOB TRAINING. "BORN" EXPERTS.

THERE WAS JUST ONE PROBLEM WITH HIS PLAN.

ZARUS LACKED THE HUMAN KNOWLEDGE NEEDED FOR HIS DEVICE TO IMPRINT ON THE CREATED BRAINS. THE EXPERTISE, THE PERSONALITIES, EVEN BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED.

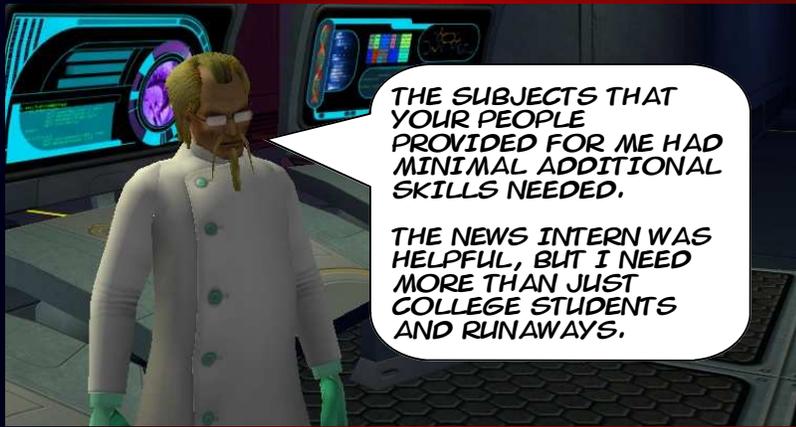
HE NEEDED HELP TO GET THAT KIND OF INFORMATION.



THAT'S WHERE DR. VAHZILOK COMES IN.

WELL DOCTOR?

DR. VAHZILOK

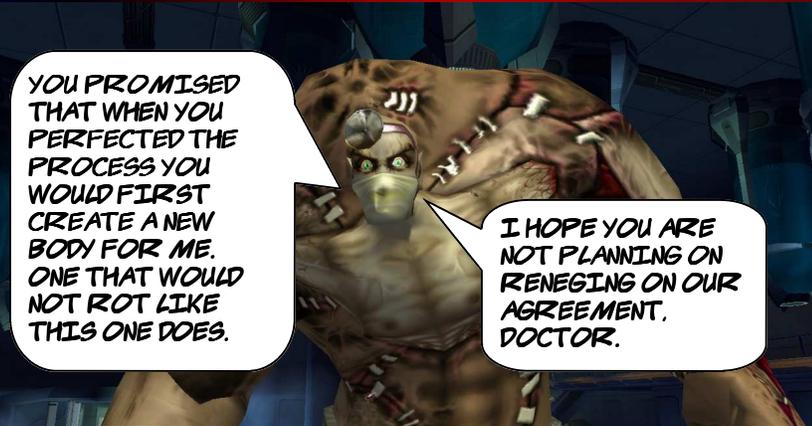


THE SUBJECTS THAT YOUR PEOPLE PROVIDED FOR ME HAD MINIMAL ADDITIONAL SKILLS NEEDED.

THE NEWS INTERN WAS HELPFUL, BUT I NEED MORE THAN JUST COLLEGE STUDENTS AND RUNAWAYS.



MY VAHZILOK MINIONS TAKE MANY RISKS TO GET YOU THESE PEOPLE... AND TO DO SO WITHOUT ATTRACTING ATTENTION FROM THE HEROES.



YOU PROMISED THAT WHEN YOU PERFECTED THE PROCESS YOU WOULD FIRST CREATE A NEW BODY FOR ME. ONE THAT WOULD NOT ROT LIKE THIS ONE DOES.

I HOPE YOU ARE NOT PLANNING ON RENEGING ON OUR AGREEMENT, DOCTOR.



ABSOLUTELY NOT! BUT FIRST WE MUST MAKE SURE THE PROCESS WORKS BEFORE WE IMPRINT YOUR BRAIN.

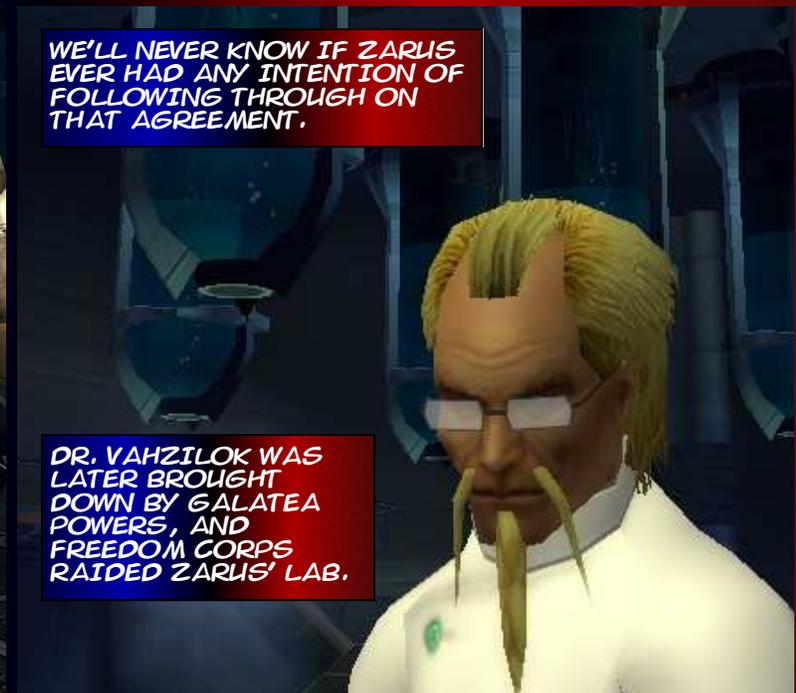


YOU'VE SEEN WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SUBJECT WE USE FOR THE MEMORY IMPRINTING PROCESS. IF WE IMPRINT YOUR MIND WITHOUT A BODY TO TRANSFER TO, YOU'LL STAY DEAD, AND THEN WHO WILL LEAD YOUR VAHZILOK MINIONS?



...
BE VERY CAREFUL, DOCTOR ZARUS.

YOU DO NOT WANT TO MAKE AN ENEMY OF ME.



WE'LL NEVER KNOW IF ZARUS EVER HAD ANY INTENTION OF FOLLOWING THROUGH ON THAT AGREEMENT.

DR. VAHZILOK WAS LATER BROUGHT DOWN BY GALATEA POWERS, AND FREEDOM CORPS RAIDED ZARUS' LAB.

I FIGURED THE DIRECT APPROACH WOULD...

WOULD...

SINCE THE DA'S OFFICE HAS ALL OF THE INFORMATION...

HOLY CR@P!

I'VE HEARD OF A TECHNOMANCER BEFORE...

BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE ACTUALLY SEEN ONE IN PERSON!

EXCUSE ME... SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE NAMED CADE...

AH! I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU WOULD FIND ME, OMEGA SHIFT.

I AM MR. CADE. I AM THE EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE FOR THE BUILDING. HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

WELL, IT SEEMS WEIRD TO HAVE A NIGHT SHIFT HERE.

WEIRD, MAYBE, BUT IT SHOULDN'T BE UNEXPECTED.

AFTER ALL, CRIME HAPPENS AT ALL TIMES OF THE DAY AND NIGHT.

PLUS, CERTAIN DEFENSE ATTORNEYS... AND A FEW REGISTERED HEROES... BELIEVE THAT BY SHOWING UP AT NIGHT THEY CAN GET UNLIMITED ACCESS TO OUR EVIDENCE, SOMETHING THAT I AM HERE TO PREVENT.

OH... WELL... THAT'S GOOD.

I'M HERE ABOUT THE EVIDENCE SURROUNDING CHIEF CLAYTON'S ATTACK.

OF COURSE YOU ARE, MISS SHIFT.

BY THE WAY, WHILE YOU'VE BEEN STANDING HERE, I'VE BEEN USING MY IMPLANTS TO VERIFY YOUR IDENTITY. I'M SURE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND GIVEN THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF EVIDENCE HANDLING.

I'LL TAKE YOU TO THE DA'S OFFICE WHERE YOU CAN OBSERVE AND TAKE NOTES ON ANY EVIDENCE WE HAVE ON THE CASE.

I WILL NOT ALLOW YOU TO TAKE SUCH EVIDENCE OUT, OF COURSE. AGAIN, WE MUST PRESERVE THE CHAIN OF CUSTODY.

BY THE WAY, YOURS IS THE FIFTH HERO GROUP TO MAKE SUCH A REQUEST ON THIS CASE. WITH ALL OF THESE HEROES, ONE WOULD HOPE THEY'D HAVE CAUGHT SOMEONE BY NOW.

YOU'D THINK SO, WOULDN'T YOU?

OR MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE THE LAST TIME THE DA'S OFFICE TOOK OVER A CASE, A HERO WAS FALSELY ACCUSED OF BEING AN ARACHNOS SPY.

AND THERE ARE A FEW THINGS ABOUT THIS CASE THAT SEEM FUNNY...

BY THE WAY, I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO MENTION THAT THE HERO THAT WAS FALSELY ACCUSED BEFORE IS A FRIEND AND FELLOW MEMBER OF THE GUARDIANS, SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND WHY I'D WANT TO MAKE SURE WE'RE NOT BEING RAILROADED AGAIN.

OF COURSE, MISS SHIFT.

IF YOU'LL FOLLOW ME...

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THIS THAT SEEMS... SUSPICIOUS.

THE GUARDIANS HAVE HAD AN ABRASIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DA'S OFFICE BECAUSE OF EDWARD VANCE. BUT THIS CADE PERSON SEEMS ALL-TOO EAGER TO HELP.

HAI!

Woosh

OOF!

POW!

I GUESS I SPOKE TOO SOON.



WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, CADE?



CALL IT... A META-TEST. ONE MORE WAY TO VERIFY YOU ARE WHO YOU CLAIM TO BE.



FWOOSH!



Freeze

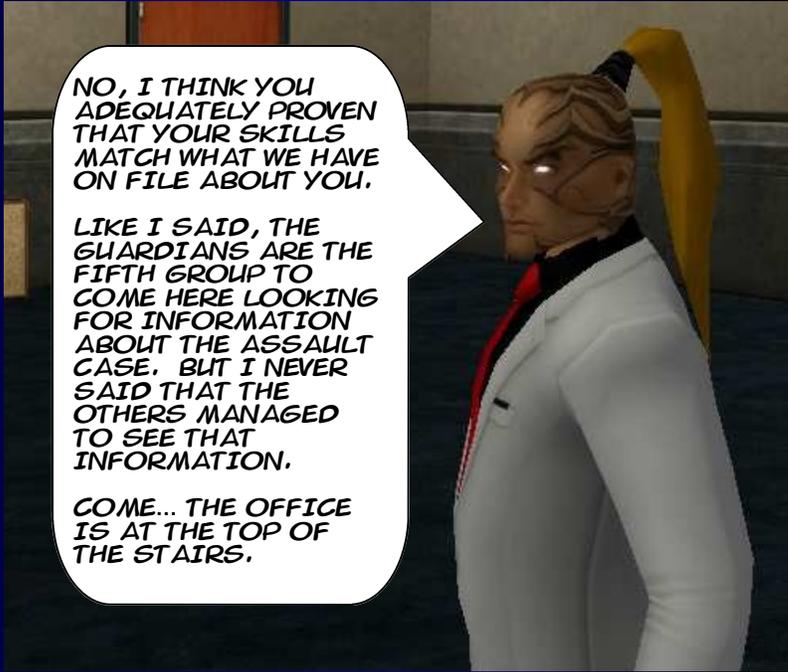


LYON POWERS MAY HAVE HER "ECO-SHOCK" METHOD...

BUT MY "FIRE AND ICE" ALWAYS SEEMS TO DO THE TRICK.



ANY OTHER "TESTS" YOU WANT TO THROW AT ME, MISTER CADE?



NO, I THINK YOU ADEQUATELY PROVEN THAT YOUR SKILLS MATCH WHAT WE HAVE ON FILE ABOUT YOU.

LIKE I SAID, THE GUARDIANS ARE THE FIFTH GROUP TO COME HERE LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ABOUT THE ASSAULT CASE. BUT I NEVER SAID THAT THE OTHERS MANAGED TO SEE THAT INFORMATION.

COME... THE OFFICE IS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS.



ALL OF THE EVIDENCE IS ON A DIGITAL DRIVE.

I CAN TAKE NOTES, BUT CADE'S RULES OF EVIDENCE SAYS I CAN'T EVEN COPY THE DATA MYSELF WITHOUT A COURT ORDER.

I KNOW MIDNIGHT X WOULD DO IT DIFFERENTLY, BUT THIS IS WHY I'M HERE AND HE'S NOT.

BESIDES, WE HAVE TO PLAY THIS ON BY-THE-BOOK. GALATEA'S SECRET IDENTITY IS AT STAKE. I CERTAINLY DON'T WANT HER ARRESTED FOR SOMETHING SHE DIDN'T DO.

BAD ENOUGH SHE USED HER "THIRD IDENTITY" TO BREAK INTO THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE TO GET THE INFORMATION NEEDED TO HELP CLEAR MIDNIGHT ARACHNIA.*



MISTER CADE, I'VE GOT A QUESTION... HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT THIS ATTACKER WAS THE SAME HOODED FIGURE THAT ATTACKED THE GREY POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE FEDERAL PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE?

ASIDE FROM THE HOOD AND CAPE, THEY APPEAR TO BE TWO SEPARATE WOMEN.

(*ISSUE #8*)

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ATTACKER IN THE GREY POLICE CASE MANAGED TO DELETE ALL OF THE VIDEO INFORMATION ABOUT HER APPEARANCE*, SO THE POLICE COULD ONLY GO ON EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS.



BUT SHE WASN'T AS BASHFUL HERE.



U.S. Department of Justice Security Video

(*ISSUE #1*)

OKAY, BUT WAIT... HERE SHE'S CLEARLY SHOWING AUGMENTED STRENGTH...



U.S. Department of Justice Security Video

AND HERE SHE'S USING SOME SORT OF ELECTRICAL MELEE, WHICH SHE OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T USE BEFORE.



Paragon City Police Department

SO MAYBE SHE GOT AN UPGRADE TO HER TECH-SUIT TO GO WITH HER COLOR CHANGE.

AND MAYBE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TWO SEPARATE PEOPLE.



IT TAKES MORE ENERGY TO SHOOT OUT THAT KIND OF VOLTAGE THAN TO AUGMENT ALREADY-EXISTING MUSCLES.

THAT KIND OF SKIN-TIGHT OUTFIT DOESN'T HAVE ROOM FOR A BATTERY.

SO WHAT'S CAUSING THE ELECTRICITY?



A HALF-HOUR LATER...

WELL THERE GOES MY USUAL TWO HOURS OF SLEEP...

BUT AT LEAST I PICKED UP SOME NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THE ATTACK.

THAT IS SOMETHING THAT I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT MYSELF.

I DO KNOW THAT IN THE CASE OF THE GREY POLICE ATTACK, A NAME WAS CONNECTED TO IT: KARA HAMILTON.

DDA VANCE WILL BE PAYING HER A VISIT IN THE MORNING.

WHILE CADE WAS TRYING TO CONVINC ME THE TWO HOODED WOMEN WERE THE SAME, I CHECKED THE LOGIN FILES FOR THE POLICE STATION AND FEDERAL OFFICE.

GALATEA'S "THIRD IDENTITY" USED AN ANONYMOUS BIO-CODE PROVIDED BY THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD.

THE WOMAN-IN-BLACK HAD A DIFFERENT CODE.

SOMETHING TO LOOK IN ON AFTER "APRIL" SHOWS UP AT WORK.

WENTWORTH'S FINE CONSIGNMENT - ATLAS PARK

UM, EXCUSE ME SIR, CAN I SEE YOU FOR A MINUTE?

OKAY...

LIBERTARIAN AVENGER

SIR, I'M GOING TO HAVE TO RESPECTFULLY ASK YOU TO NOT DO BUSINESS WITH US ANYMORE.

IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH MY ACCOUNT?

I KNOW I'M NOT A FREQUENT CLIENT, BUT MY ACCOUNT SHOULD STILL BE IN GOOD STANDING.

SIR, WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT YOU HAVE AN ESTABLISHED CONNECTION TO ALEX WENTWORTH AND THAT YOU ARE WORKING ON HIS BEHALF.

MISTER WENTWORTH IS OBLIGATED BY LEGAL AGREEMENT TO HAVE NO BUSINESS WITH THIS ESTABLISHMENT.



OH, I SEE...

SO IT'S GUILT BY ASSOCIATION?

I KNOW ALEX, SO I CAN'T DO BUSINESS HERE ANYMORE? IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?



SIR, I AM ONLY RELAYING WHAT I HAVE BEEN TOLD.

SOMEONE CALLED THE COMPANY HEADQUARTERS AND SAID THAT YOU WERE WORKING AS... *AHEM*... A "PROXY" TO ALEX WENTWORTH.

THE WENTWORTH FAMILY TAKES ITS LEGAL OBLIGATIONS VERY SERIOUSLY, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO THIS CONSIGNMENT BUSINESS.



AS IT STANDS RIGHT NOW, YOUR OUTSTANDING ITEMS AND THE UNCOLLECTED CREDIT YOU HAVE AMASSED HAVE BEEN PUT IN TRUST UNTIL THIS MATTER HAS BEEN RESOLVED.

IF YOU ARE WHO YOU CLAIM TO BE, YOU CAN RESOLVE THIS MATTER QUIETLY WITH THE ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT.

OTHERWISE, YOU ARE ASKED TO KINDLY AND RESPECTFULLY LEAVE THE PREMISES.

SIR... IT'S NOT PERSONAL...

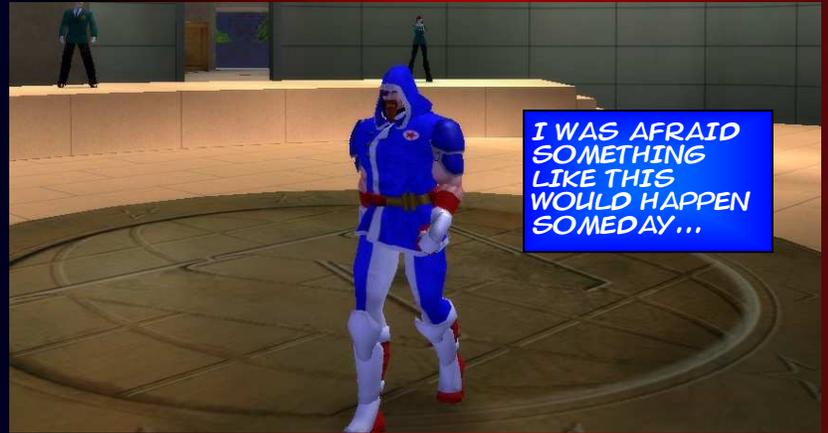
I'M A BIG FAN OF WHAT YOU DO...

BUT PLEASE...

YOU HAVE TO LEAVE.

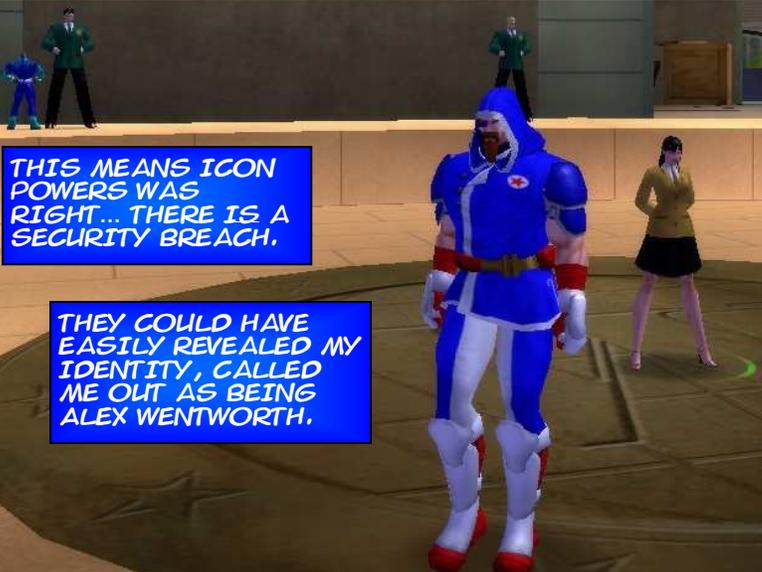


I WAS AFRAID SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN SOMEDAY...



THIS MEANS ICON POWERS WAS RIGHT... THERE IS A SECURITY BREACH.

THEY COULD HAVE EASILY REVEALED MY IDENTITY, CALLED ME OUT AS BEING ALEX WENTWORTH.



INSTEAD, THIS WAS ABOUT SENDING A MESSAGE.

THEY KNOW WHO WE ARE...

AND THEY CAN EXPOSE US WHENEVER THEY WISH.



ADVERTISEMENT

A BRICKSTOWN TO
TALOS ISLAND RETURN IS
FASTER THAN SYNAPSE

NEED TO GO SOMEWHERE AND GET BACK?

WE HAVE MORE TRAINS RUNNING AT THE WEEKEND
THAN WE'VE EVER HAD *

TALOS ISLAND RETURN \$12.00

GREEN LINE



*(STATISTICS ARE NOT FACTUAL)

THE INSULT THAT MADE A MAN OUT OF "MAC"



Hey, leave us alone!
He's the worst!



I'd smash ya', but your too puny! Not worth my time!



Sorry, Kinetic Kitten, I just can't beat him!
Don't worry, I only like tough guys anyway!



So, Serge, you say this Stefan Richter can make me an Incarnate?



Wow, he sure did!
And it only took 50 levels of my time!



Whatcha doin' back here?
Kickin' yer tail, ya' Crum Bum!



My HERO Mac!
You've got such a great 'BUILD'!

HERO OF THE BEACH!



Let Me PROVE I Can Make YOU A NEW MAN!

ARE you "fed up" with seeing 'Knuckles' walk off with all the best girls? Are you tired of feeling BARELY ALIVE? I know how you feel! I was once a 'Puny' weakling myself! I was so ashamed of my 98 lb. frame, I was scared to go outside!

The Secret of How I got My Build
Visiting a Gym took too long, and Inventions took much of my Infamy! I just visited 'Serge'!!! Now I have gotten the power of the Well Of Furies. You too can have this power!

My techniques may be shared with all who bow allegiance to Arachnos!

"Power Up" Build Armies Fast!

Through my patented regime, you too can control minions of great power. As an Incarnate Master-Mind in training you will have the power of the "Greek Gods"

Clip Coupon for My Patented 32-Page Illustrated Book

Mailing this coupon will be your first step into my legions we refer to literally as a 'City of Villains'. Mail coupon to: STEFAN RICHTER, Overcourt Drive, 115 E, Paragon City, RI

Stefan Richter, Overcourt Drive 115E
Paragon City, RI, USA

Dear Lord Recluse, please send my your book with info on:

(Check all that apply)

MasterMinding and Minions
Brushing ways of the world
Dominating all the surround me
Arachnos Sideshow
Corrupting Law Enforcement
Widow and Me - introspective
Stalking that Special Girl

Please send me a copy of the Built Guide for the section that I checked. I hereby pledge service to Arachnos for the rest of my life, and understand that I will spend 50 levels of my career serving Lord Recluse and Arachnos until I finally am free from service.

Name.....Age.....
Address.....
City & State..... Zip Code.....

Arachnos Corporation of the Etoile Islands, USA

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More comics and funny ads can be found at
www.KK-Comics.com
Home of the Evil Malibu Barbie Series!

LATER THAT AFTERNOON.

AND THAT IS THE LATEST IN THE SEARCH FOR THE MYSTERY ATTACKER.

REPORTING LIVE FROM POLICE HEADQUARTERS, I'M APRIL HERNANDEZ.



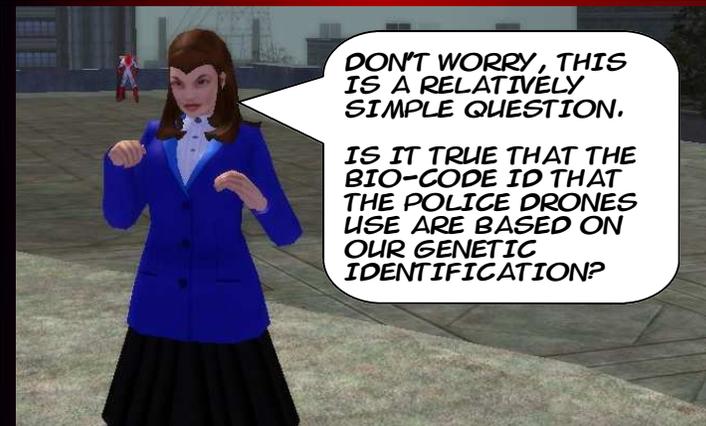
THANKS AGAIN FOR ALLOWING ME TO USE THIS SPOT FOR MY LIVE SHOT, BLUE STEEL. IT REALLY SETS THE STAGE.

LISTEN, CAN I ASK YOU A QUESTION OFF-THE-RECORD?

APRIL HERNANDEZ - KINGS ROW



I'M MORE THAN WILLING TO HELP OUT THE PRESS... WITHIN REASON, OF COURSE.



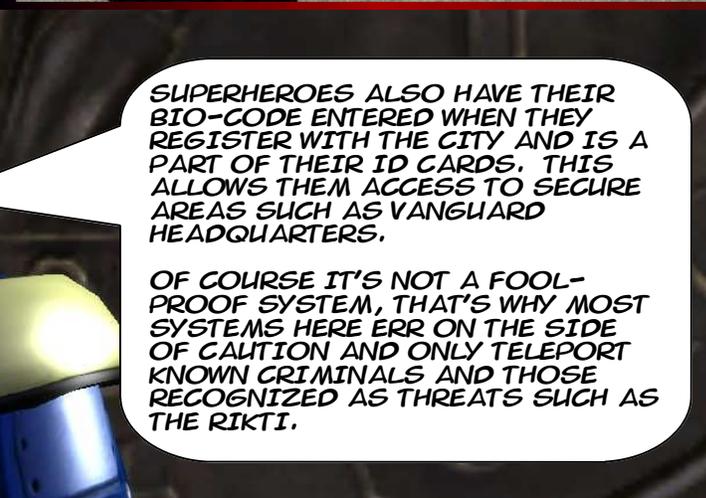
DON'T WORRY, THIS IS A RELATIVELY SIMPLE QUESTION.

IS IT TRUE THAT THE BIO-CODE ID THAT THE POLICE DRONES USE ARE BASED ON OUR GENETIC IDENTIFICATION?



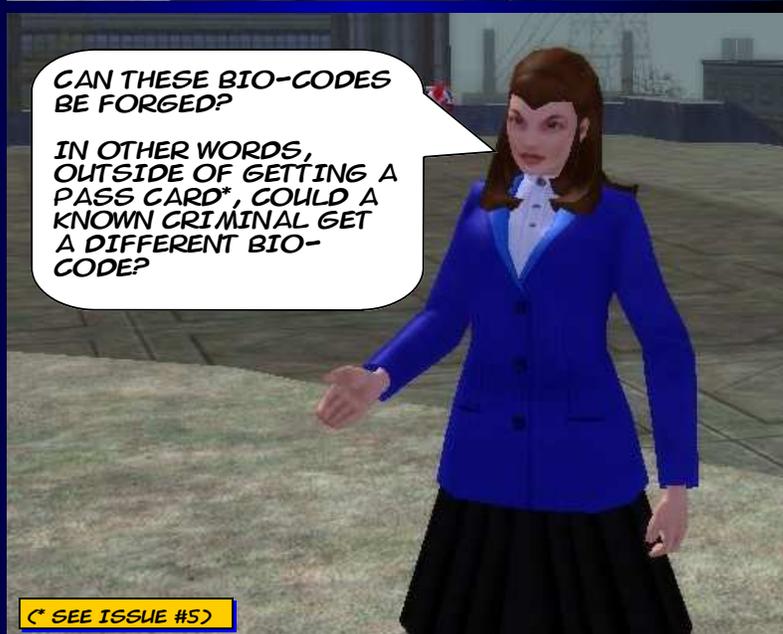
TO SOME EXTENT, YES.

WHEN CRIMINALS ARE ARRESTED FOR THE FIRST TIME, THEIR GENETIC INFORMATION IS SCANNED AND A BIO-CODE IS ISSUED. POLICE DRONES ARE THEN PROGRAMMED SO THAT IF A KNOWN CRIMINAL ENTERS THE RANGE OF THE DRONE, THEY WILL BE TELEPORTED TO JAIL.



SUPERHEROES ALSO HAVE THEIR BIO-CODE ENTERED WHEN THEY REGISTER WITH THE CITY AND IS A PART OF THEIR ID CARDS. THIS ALLOWS THEM ACCESS TO SECURE AREAS SUCH AS VANGUARD HEADQUARTERS.

OF COURSE IT'S NOT A FOOL-PROOF SYSTEM, THAT'S WHY MOST SYSTEMS HERE ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION AND ONLY TELEPORT KNOWN CRIMINALS AND THOSE RECOGNIZED AS THREATS SUCH AS THE RIKTI.



CAN THESE BIO-CODES BE FORGED?

IN OTHER WORDS, OUTSIDE OF GETTING A PASS CARD*, COULD A KNOWN CRIMINAL GET A DIFFERENT BIO-CODE?



I'VE HEARD IT BEING DONE.

BUT ONLY THE VANGUARD AND THE MIDNIGHT SQUAD HAVE THE MEANS AND THE AUTHORITY TO DO THAT.

(* SEE ISSUE #5)

THE SYSTEM IS PRETTY MUCH AUTOMATIC, SO UNLESS YOU KNOW HOW TO PROGRAM A BIO-CODE, THE SYSTEM JUST SCANS THE GENETIC INFORMATION OF THE PERSON.



WOW. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I NEEDED TO HEAR. THANKS.



NOW I KNOW WHERE TO GO TO NEXT TO IDENTIFY OUR MYSTERY ATTACKER.

I JUST HOPE THAT GALATEA TOOK MY ADVICE AND MADE HERSELF SCARCE TODAY SO VANCE WOULDN'T FIND HER.

ELSEWHERE...

I'M SORRY SERGE, I TOLD MRS. CARLISLE THAT I HAD TO TAKE AN EMERGENCY PERSONAL DAY.

I HAD TO TAKE FLASHER TO THE VET.



YES, FLASHER... MY CAT... YOU REMEMBER HER.

WHO? EDWARD VANCE? WHY WOULD THE DA'S OFFICE BE LOOKING FOR ME?



LISTEN, CAN YOU DO ME A FAVOR?

HAVE MISTER VANCE LEAVE A BUSINESS CARD WITH YOU. I'LL STOP BY AFTER I DROP FLASHER OFF AT HOME AND THEN I'LL CALL HIM TO SEE IF WE CAN GET THIS MATTER RESOLVED OKAY?

THANKS SERGE.



"WHEW!" THANK YOU OMEGA SHIFT FOR THE HEADS-UP!

NOW LET'S SEE WHAT GREY IS UP TO HERE.



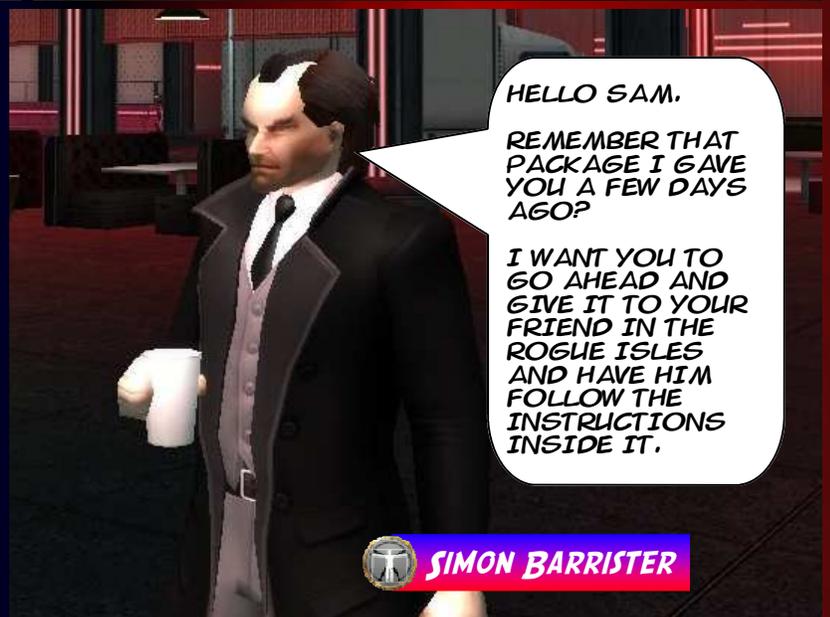
POCKET D NIGHTCLUB - LOWER RED SIDE BAR

MISTER BARRISTER! HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

HELLO SAM.

REMEMBER THAT PACKAGE I GAVE YOU A FEW DAYS AGO?

I WANT YOU TO GO AHEAD AND GIVE IT TO YOUR FRIEND IN THE ROGUE ISLES AND HAVE HIM FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS INSIDE IT.



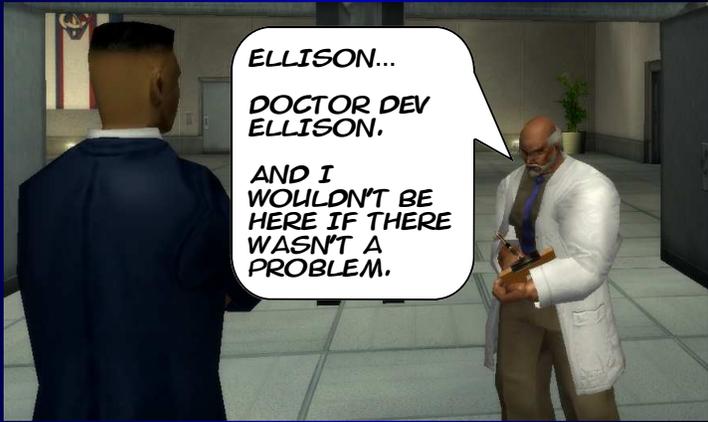
SIMON BARRISTER



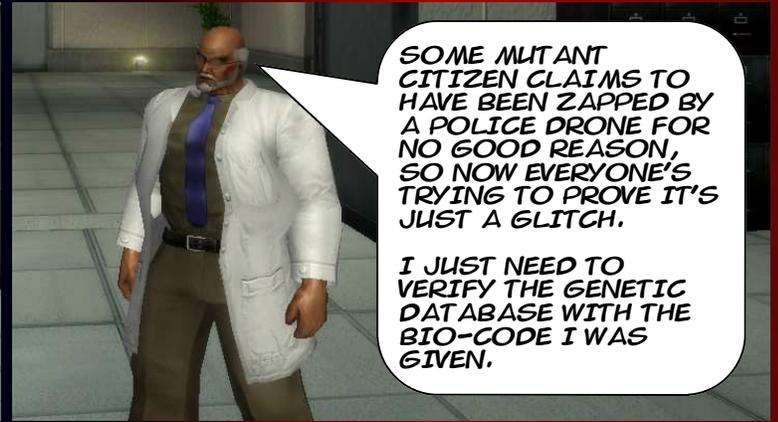
A BIO-CODE PROBLEM?

YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN, THERE IS NO PROBLEM WITH THE BIO-CODE SYSTEM, MISTER...?

PRINCE KIROS NANDELU



ELLISON...
DOCTOR DEV ELLISON.
AND I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF THERE WASN'T A PROBLEM.



SOME MUTANT CITIZEN CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN ZAPPED BY A POLICE DRONE FOR NO GOOD REASON, SO NOW EVERYONE'S TRYING TO PROVE IT'S JUST A GLITCH.

I JUST NEED TO VERIFY THE GENETIC DATABASE WITH THE BIO-CODE I WAS GIVEN.

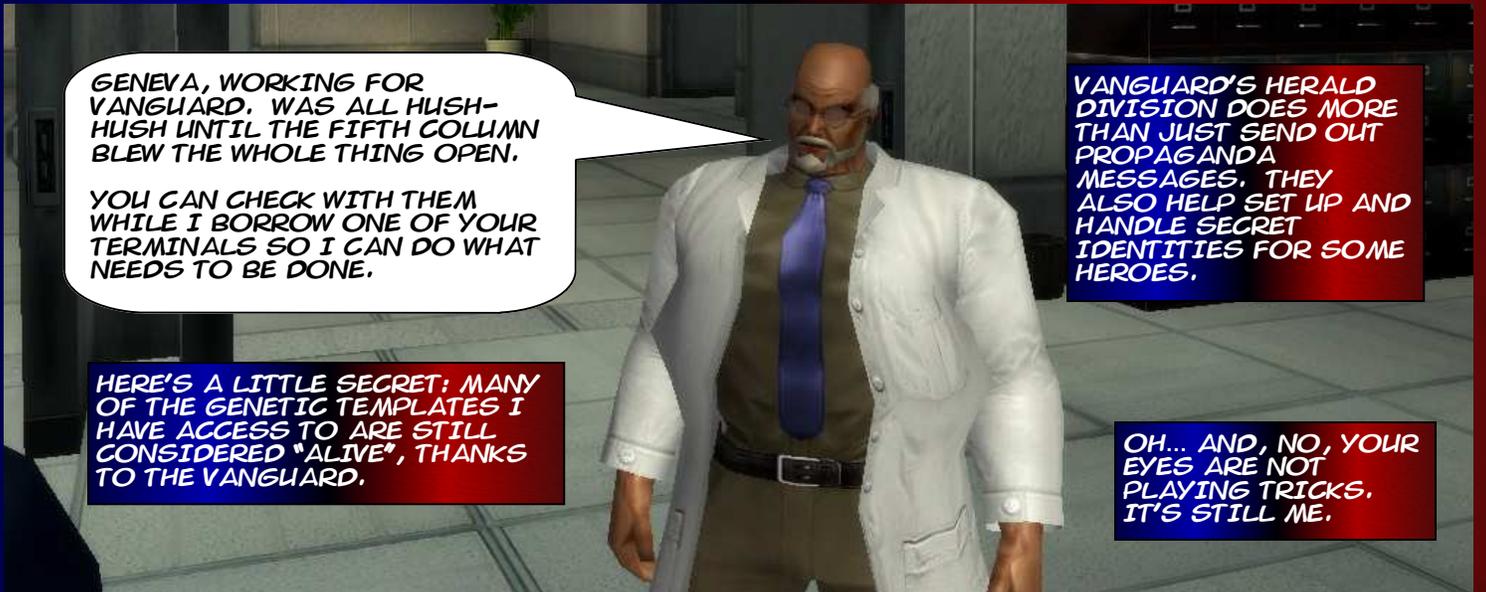


NO, NO, I UNDERSTAND...

AND IT IS NOT THAT I DO NOT KNOW WHO YOU ARE. EVERYONE HERE IN G.I.F.T. KNOWS THAT YOU ARE THE ONE THAT HELPED MAP OUT THE MUTANT GENOME.

IT IS JUST THAT NOBODY SAW OR HEARD FROM YOU IN OVER FIVE YEARS.

CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN ALL THIS TIME?



GENEVA, WORKING FOR VANGUARD. WAS ALL HUSH-HUSH UNTIL THE FIFTH COLUMN BLEW THE WHOLE THING OPEN.

YOU CAN CHECK WITH THEM WHILE I BORROW ONE OF YOUR TERMINALS SO I CAN DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

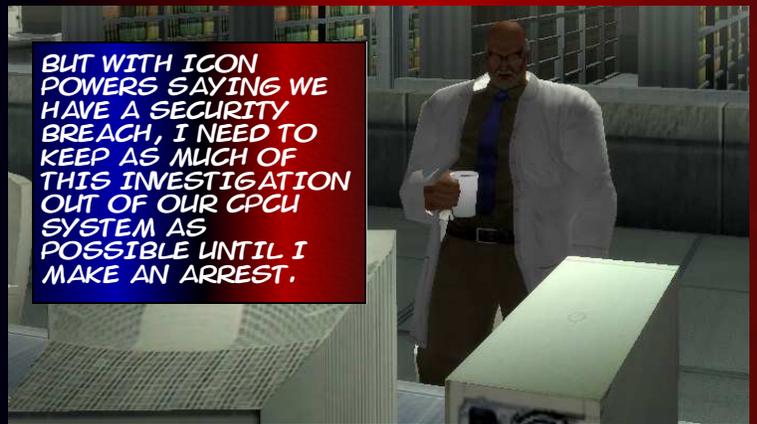
HERE'S A LITTLE SECRET: MANY OF THE GENETIC TEMPLATES I HAVE ACCESS TO ARE STILL CONSIDERED "ALIVE", THANKS TO THE VANGUARD.

VANGUARD'S HERALD DIVISION DOES MORE THAN JUST SEND OUT PROPAGANDA MESSAGES. THEY ALSO HELP SET UP AND HANDLE SECRET IDENTITIES FOR SOME HEROES.

OH... AND, NO, YOUR EYES ARE NOT PLAYING TRICKS. IT'S STILL ME.



NORMALLY I WOULD DO THIS AT THE GUARDIAN BASE...

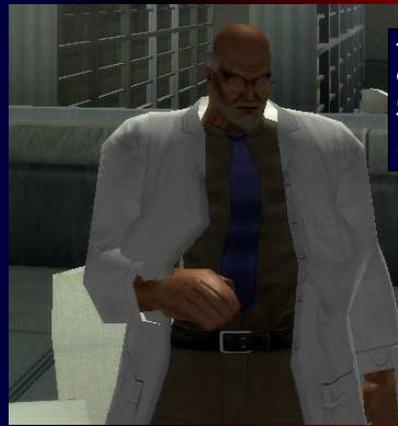


BUT WITH ICON POWERS SAYING WE HAVE A SECURITY BREACH, I NEED TO KEEP AS MUCH OF THIS INVESTIGATION OUT OF OUR CPCU SYSTEM AS POSSIBLE UNTIL I MAKE AN ARREST.

FREEDOM CORPS DATABASE

MATCH FOUND

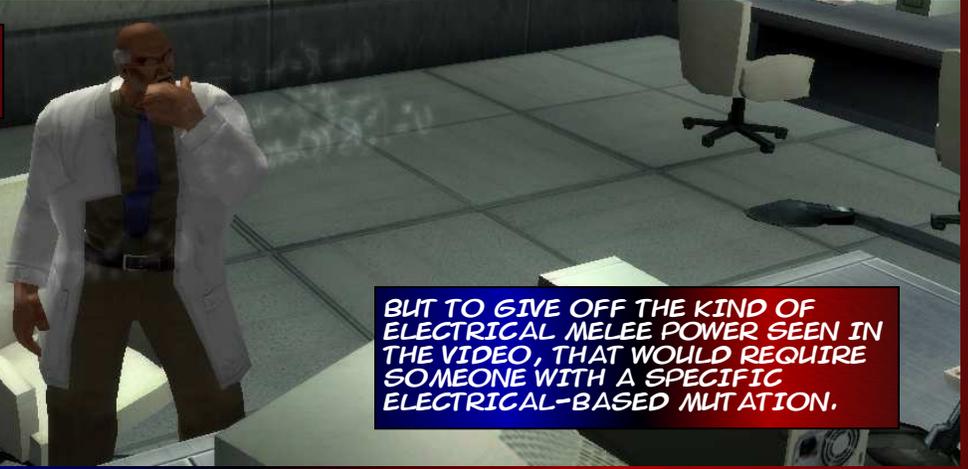
AS I SUSPECTED, THE BIO-CODE MATCHES A SCANNED GENETIC ID NOT YET IDENTIFIED.



THIS IS WHERE DEV ELLISON COMES IN. HE CAN DECIPHER THE GENETIC CODE THAT WAS SCANNED AND MAKE SENSE OF THE DATA.

SURE ENOUGH... THE MYSTERY ATTACKER IS A MUTANT. THAT RULES OUT GALATEA ALTOGETHER BECAUSE OF THE ORIGIN OF HER ABILITIES.

REMEMBER WHEN I ASKED CADE HOW THE ATTACKER COULD GENERATE ELECTRICITY?



PRESUMING THE SUIT WORKED JUST LIKE GALATEA'S "THIRD IDENTITY" TECH SUIT, IT WOULD OPERATE THROUGH NATURAL BIO-ELECTRICITY.

NORMALLY IT WOULD JUST AUGMENT ALREADY-EXISTING ABILITIES.

BUT TO GIVE OFF THE KIND OF ELECTRICAL MELEE POWER SEEN IN THE VIDEO, THAT WOULD REQUIRE SOMEONE WITH A SPECIFIC ELECTRICAL-BASED MUTATION.

AND HERE ARE ALL OF THE GENETIC MARKERS FOR THAT MUTATION.

AND THEN... WAIT...

I KNOW THIS NEXT GENETIC MARKER!

***I* DO! MAY SHIFT! NOT JUST DEV ELLISON!**

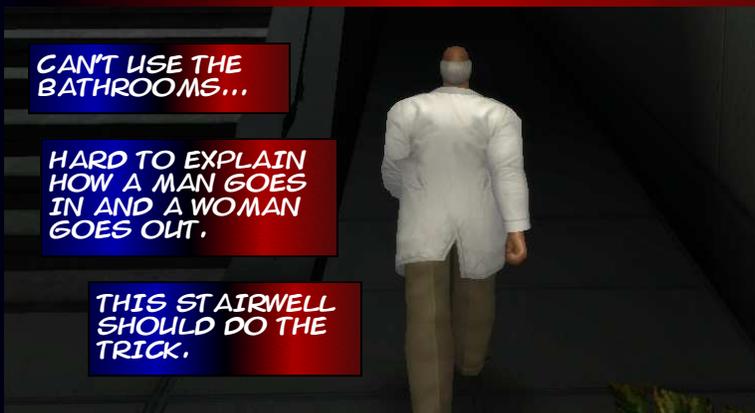
FIND WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, DOCTOR?

YES. YES I DID. I'M SORRY, I HAVE TO GO. I HAVE TO GET THIS INFORMATION TO THE POLICE.

REMAIN CALM. DON'T ATTRACT ATTENTION.



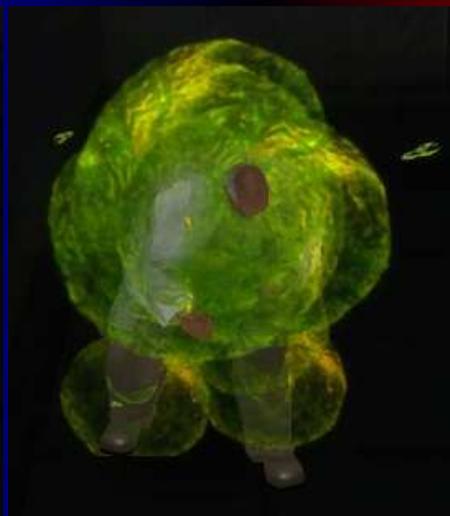
I JUST NEED SOMEPLACE SECLUDED TO GET OUT OF THIS TEMPLATE.



CAN'T USE THE BATHROOMS...

HARD TO EXPLAIN HOW A MAN GOES IN AND A WOMAN GOES OUT.

THIS STAIRWELL SHOULD DO THE TRICK.



HERE IT COMES...

"DOCTOR ZARUS, WHAT ARE YOU...?"

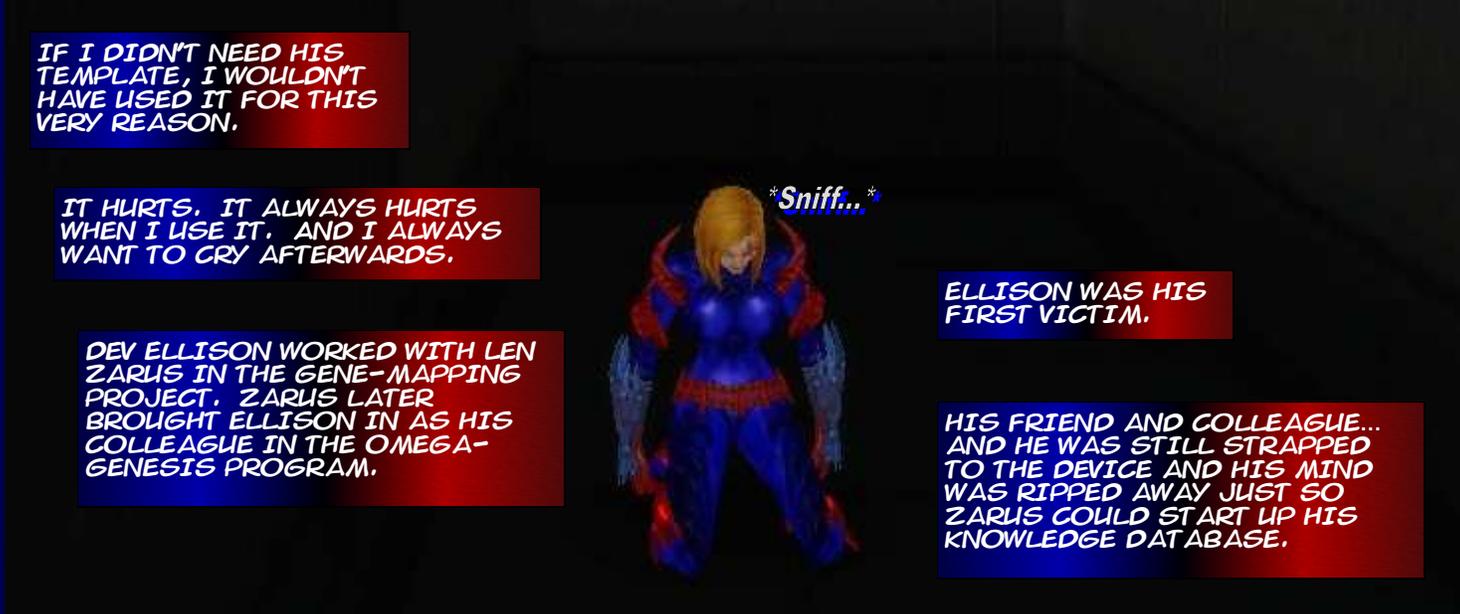
"DOCTOR, PLEASE DON'T! YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MACHINE WILL DO TO ME!"



"LEN! PLEASE! WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR YEARS! DON'T DO THIS TO ME!"

IT'S WORSE THAN BEFORE...

"PLEASE! NO, I BEG YOU! AS A HUMAN BEING, I BEG YOUUUUUUU...AAAAA!!!!!"



IF I DIDN'T NEED HIS TEMPLATE, I WOULDN'T HAVE USED IT FOR THIS VERY REASON.

IT HURTS. IT ALWAYS HURTS WHEN I USE IT. AND I ALWAYS WANT TO CRY AFTERWARDS.

Sniff...

DEV ELLISON WORKED WITH LEN ZARUS IN THE GENE-MAPPING PROJECT. ZARUS LATER BROUGHT ELLISON IN AS HIS COLLEAGUE IN THE OMEGA-GENESIS PROGRAM.

ELLISON WAS HIS FIRST VICTIM.

HIS FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE... AND HE WAS STILL STRAPPED TO THE DEVICE AND HIS MIND WAS RIPPED AWAY JUST SO ZARUS COULD START UP HIS KNOWLEDGE DATABASE.

BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD CRY OR THROW UP OVER THE MARKER I DISCOVERED.



THAT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING.



IT MEANS THERE'S ANOTHER "ARTIFICIAL" BEING LIKE ME.

I KNOW THAT GENETIC MARKER... MORE THAN ANYONE EXCEPT FOR ZARUS HIMSELF.

IT'S THE SAME MARKER THAT IS IN MY GENETIC CODE.

AND THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE POSSIBLE.

ZARUS IS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW HOW TO ARTIFICIALLY CREATE HUMANS BEINGS, AND HE IS SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD!



THE FREEDOM CORPS SAID HE WAS DEAD!

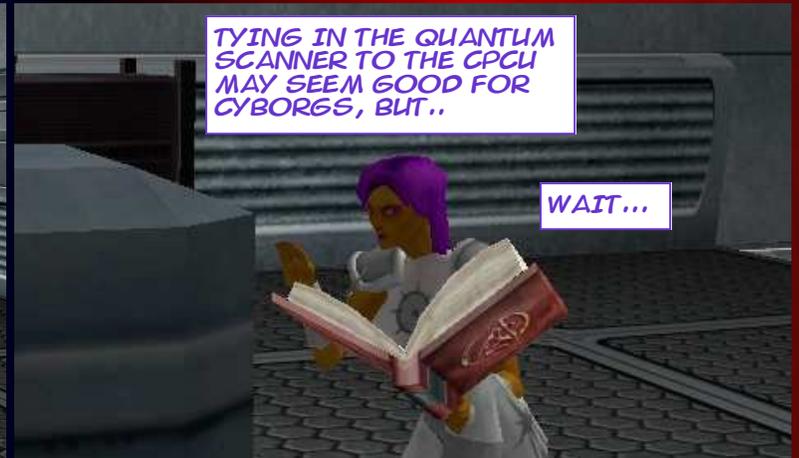
GUARDIANS BASE



I DON'T KNOW HOW THE GUARDIANS MANAGED TO KEEP THE CPCI SYSTEM WORKING WITH ALL OF THIS EXTRA TECH.

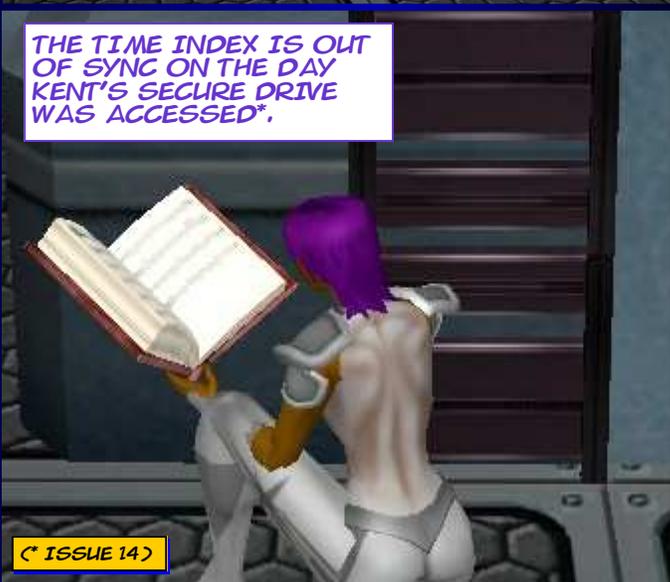
DAYBRIGHT

TYING IN THE QUANTUM SCANNER TO THE CPCI MAY SEEM GOOD FOR CYBORGS, BUT..



WAIT...

THE TIME INDEX IS OUT OF SYNC ON THE DAY KENT'S SECURE DRIVE WAS ACCESSED*.



I'D HAVE TO BACK-CHECK WITH THE LOGS, BUT ONLY ONE PERSON WAS ON DUTY WHEN THIS HAPPENED.



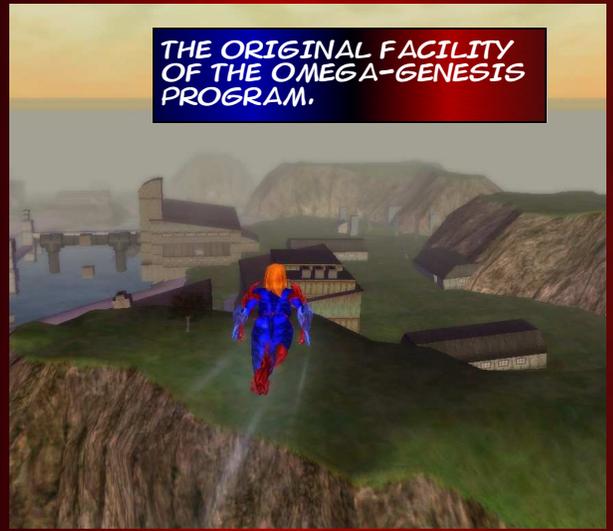
I THINK I KNOW WHO OUR SPY IS.

← ISSUE 14 →

THE ORIGINAL FACILITY OF THE OMEGA-GENESIS PROGRAM.

I DIDN'T WANT TO COME BACK HERE.

BUT IF THERE WAS ANY PROOF THAT ZARUS WAS STILL ALIVE, IT MIGHT BE AT THE LAST PLACE HE WAS SEEN.



I WAS "BORN" AFTER THE FREEDOM CORPS RAIDED THE LAB.

SOMEONE GET A MEDIC AND A BLANKET! THIS ONE IS ALIVE!

ZARUS TRIED TO USE US AS CANNON FODDER BEFORE WE WERE READY.

HE DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO OVERRIDE HIS OWN SAFETY FEATURES BEFORE THE EFF-CEE FORCES REACHED HIM.

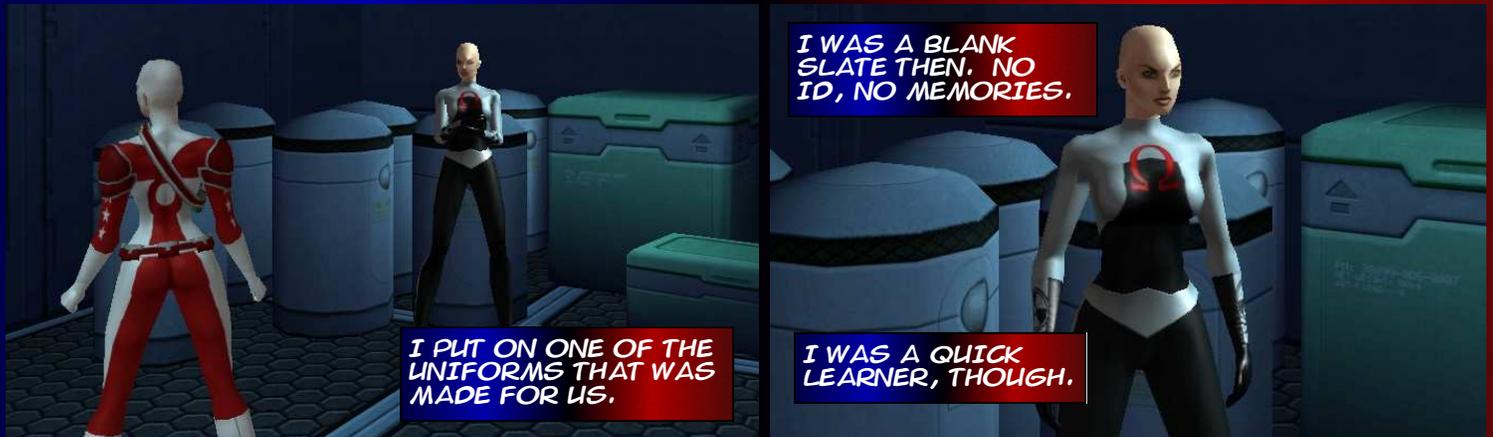
THEY ORIGINALLY THOUGHT I WAS ONE OF THE KIDNAPPED VICTIMS.



I WAS A BLANK SLATE THEN. NO ID, NO MEMORIES.

I PUT ON ONE OF THE UNIFORMS THAT WAS MADE FOR US.

I WAS A QUICK LEARNER, THOUGH.



I QUICKLY DISCOVERED I COULD "COPY" THE GENETIC TEMPLATE OF A PERSON I TOUCHED.

MY FIRST SKIN-TO-SKIN CONTACT WAS THE EFF-CEE LONGBOW AGENT THAT ORIGINALLY FOUND ME.

EVENTUALLY I DISCOVERED I WAS GIVEN ALL OF THE MEMORIES AND GENETIC TEMPLATES OF THE PEOPLE IN ZARUS' DATABASE.

I PHYSICALLY BECAME IDENTICAL TO HER. IT WAS UNNERVING FOR HER, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO BACK THEN TO FIX IT.

IT SEEMS MORBID, BUT VANGUARD DECIDED THAT MANY OF THOSE IDENTITIES WOULD BE BEST KEPT "ALIVE" THROUGH ME. IT ALLOWED ME TO DEVELOP MY OWN PERSONALITY AND MY OWN SENSE OF IDENTITY FROM THEM ALL.





THE COMPOUND IS STILL HERE. I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE DEMOLISHED BY NOW.



THERE'S A FOUL STENCH HERE... RANK... DEAD...

I KNOW THIS STENCH!



VAHZILOK!

NO DOUBT THE DOCTOR'S MINIONS ARE LOOKING FOR SOME SPARE PARTS.



FOOLISH CHILD! YOU AND YOUR HOODED FRIEND WILL NOT DENY US OUR POUND OF FLESH!

AAAH!

FWOOSH!



THE VAHZILOK... WILL... NOT BE... DENIED...

THEY'RE BARELY ALIVE. HELD ON BY ROTTING BRAINS AND STOLEN BODY PARTS.

JUST LIKE THEIR CREATOR.

MAYBE THE VAHZILOK BELIEVE THEY COULD SALVAGE SOMETHING OF ZARIS' WORK TO CREATE NEW BODIES.

OR MAYBE THEY WERE LOOKING FOR ANY REMAINS OF VICTIMS THAT WERE NOT CREMATED.



BUT THEN THAT "HOODED FRIEND" REFERENCE MAKES ME WONDER...

IF OUR MYSTERY ATTACKER IS WHAT I THINK SHE IS...

WOULD SHE KNOW THAT I WOULD COME HERE?



Gasp!

THERE, ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ROOM.

IT LOOKS LIKE THE ATTACKER.

BUT THE ARCING ELECTRICITY SUGGESTS SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH HER POWERS.

IT'S ABOUT TIME THAT YOU FOUND ME, "SISTER".

FOR A WHILE I WAS WORRIED THAT YOU MIGHT FORGET ABOUT THIS PLACE.

DEV ELLISON WOULD SAY SHE'S SHOWING SIGNS OF GENETIC BREAKDOWN.

SO IT'S TRUE THEN? YOU WERE ALSO "BORN" HERE?

SHE DOESN'T HAVE LONG BEFORE HER WHOLE BODY SHUTS DOWN.

HERE? OH, NO, "SISTER", I WAS NEVER "BORN" HERE. I WOULD HAVE BEEN PERFECT IF I WAS.

I WOULD HAVE BEEN JUST LIKE YOU IF I WAS "BORN" HERE.

IS... IS... HE... STILL ALIVE?

YOU MEAN OUR FATHER? GO AHEAD AND SAY IT!

IS... ZARUS... STILL ALIVE?

YOU'RE PATHETIC!

YOU CAN'T EVEN SAY OUR FATHER'S NAME, YET YOU FLAUNT ALL OF THE GIFTS HE BESTOWED UPON YOU!

GIFTS THAT I ONLY WISH HE COULD HAVE GIVEN TO ME.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

I HAVE ALL OF DR. ELLISON'S MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCE IN GENETIC RESEARCH. HE WORKED WITH ZARUS, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO FIX THE GENETIC ABNORMALITY THAT IS KILLING YOU.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DIE FOR ZARUS! YOU DON'T! HE'S ALREADY TAKEN FAR TOO MANY LIVES FOR YOU TO ADD TO IT.

PLEASE... LET ME HELP YOU!

LET ME TAKE YOU BACK TO PARAGON CITY.

I HAVE A FRIEND NAMED DOCTOR... HE KNOWS EVERYTHING ABOUT JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING. HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP SAVE YOU.

OH I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOUR "FRIENDS" IN THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN.

IN FACT OUR FATHER CREATED ME FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF BEING THE INSTRUMENT THAT WILL DESTROY THE GUARDIANS!

THE GUARDIANS BECAME FAMOUS BECAUSE OF GALATEA POWERS. IT'S ONLY FITTING THAT HER SO-CALLED "THIRD IDENTITY" WOULD BE THE ONE THAT TARNISHES THEIR NAME.

BUT NOT BEFORE I BECOME THE "OLDER SISTER"!

ZZZZZZZAP!

PLEASE... DON'T DO THIS...

OH, IT'S FAR TOO LATE FOR YOU TO "HELP" ME, "SISTER".

I KNOW I'M DYING.

I JUST WANT TO MAKE SURE WHEN I DO THAT I TAKE AT LEAST ONE OF THE GUARDIANS WITH ME!

FWOOSH!

I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU!

I'M NOT GIVING YOU A CHOICE!

I'M EITHER GOING TO DIE BY YOUR HAND, OR I'M GOING TO DIE AFTER I TAKE YOUR LIFE.

EITHER WAY, OUR FATHER'S WISHES WILL BE FULFILLED.

SHE'S CRAZY! SHE'S ABSOLUTELY CRAZY!

HOW CAN SHE STAND THERE AND PROFESS THAT ZARUS IS HER FATHER WHILE HE TELLS HER THESE THINGS?

I HAVE TO LIVE... SO I CAN CLEAR GALATEA'S NAME!

TEEEEEEE!!!

FWOOSHI!



HH... WELL-PLAYED, "SISTER"... THANK YOU... OR GRANTING ME... MY WISH.



Unable to use emergency medical teleport device. Subject is already in transit by another device.

SHE WOULDN'T BE SAVED BY THE MEDICAL DEVICE. IT WAS JUST REMOVING THE CORPSE.

ZARUS KNEW THAT SHE'D DIE. THAT'S WHY HE SENT HER TO KILL ME.

REMOVING THE EVIDENCE THAT SHE EXISTED.

THE PART OF ME THAT IS DEV ELLISON TELLS ME THAT MY "SISTER" WAS AWARE OF THE FACT THAT HER BODY WAS BREAKING DOWN.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU ARE, ZARUS... OR IF YOU WERE WATCHING US FROM ANY OF THESE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS THAT MAY STILL WORK, BUT I PROMISE YOU... I WILL FIND YOU!

IT MEANS THAT WHEREVER ZARUS IS, HE DOESN'T HAVE THE RESOURCES FOR A "PERFECT" ARTIFICIAL HUMAN.

AND YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES. I SWEAR IT!

I WOULD LATER FIND OUT THAT SOME PERIMETER CAMERAS OVER AT PORTAL CORPORATION SAW MY "SISTER" FLYING TOWARDS THIS ISLAND AT THE SAME TIME THAT "KARA HAMILTON" WAS SPEAKING WITH DDA VANCE. THAT CLEARED GALATEA'S SECRET IDENTITY.



I STILL HAD TO FILE A REPORT WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. EVERYTHING I DID HAD TO BE BY THE BOOK... OR AT LEAST RESEARCHABLE.

I DIDN'T WANT TO ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION, SO I CHOSE THE ONE GENETIC TEMPLATE TO HIDE BEHIND THAT DOESN'T CAUSE ME ANY PAIN... MY VERY FIRST ONE.

"OFFICIALLY", CHIEF CLAYTON WAS ASSAULTED BY A DEMENTED MUTANT FAN OF THE GUARDIANS THAT OBJECTED TO THE RECENT SUSPENSION OF CAPTAIN PARAGONNA.

I SAY "OFFICIALLY" BECAUSE THE PUBLIC STILL DOES NOT KNOW ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF ARTIFICIALLY-CREATED HUMAN BEINGS SUCH AS MYSELF AND MY "SISTER".

THAT WON'T SIT WELL WITH VANCE. HE LIKES THINGS OUT IN THE OPEN SO HE CAN POLITICIZE IT.

TOO BAD. HE CAN TAKE IT UP WITH FREEDOM CORPS AND VANGUARD.

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER REASON WHY I CHOSE THIS BODY...

IT'S BECAUSE IT IS BASED ON THE LONGBOW AGENT THAT I FIRST TOUCHED.

WHICH MEANS THE MOMENT I CAME HERE, THE SECURITY SYSTEM THINKS THAT I'M HER AND NOT ME.

AND THAT UNLOCKS A FEW DOORS THAT I COULDN'T OPEN AS OMEGA SHIFT.



PARAGON CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Welcome Longbow Agent Ann Stark

This interface can be access either through voice-print or keypad. Please speak or type the request in the search box below.

SEARCH PERSONNEL:
STEVIE WALKER-RODGERS.

IT'S TIME TO HELP OUT ANOTHER GUARDIAN.

MEANWHILE...

I HOPE THAT YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TELL ME THAT WE JUST WASTED A MILLION DOLLARS ON THE PROTOTYPE SUIT.

 **SHADOWBORN LORD**

QUITE THE CONTRARY, LORD GEDDY.

THE FAILSAFE TELEPORT WORKED QUITE WELL TO BRING THE BODY BACK HERE. THE TECH SUIT CAN NOW BE SAFELY REMOVED AND STUDIED WHILE I ANALYZE WHAT WENT WRONG WITH THE SUBJECT.

HMM...

DOESN'T IT BOTHER YOU THAT THIS WAS ONE OF YOUR CREATIONS?

ONE OF YOUR DAUGHTERS?

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, LORD GEDDY...

I MADE THE MISTAKE OF CALLING MY CREATIONS MY "CHILDREN" ONCE UPON A TIME.

THEN THE FREEDOM CORPS SHOWED UP AND MY "CHILDREN" WERE LOST TO ME.

EVEN THE ONLY ONE THAT ENDED UP SURVIVING THE BIRTHING PROCESS... OMEGA SHIFT... SCORNS MY VERY NAME.

NO, LORD GEDDY, UNTIL I CAN PERFECT THE PROCESS AGAIN AND PRODUCE LONG-TERM STABLE CREATIONS, I CANNOT IN ANY CONSCIENCE CALL THEM MY "CHILDREN".

BESIDES, YOU YOURSELF USE YOUR OWN SON AS A SPY FOR SHADOWBORN.*

DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, DOCTOR.

I HAD NO SAY OVER WHAT HAPPENED TO MY SON, BUT I DO INTEND TO SEE THE PEOPLE INVOLVED PAY FOR IT.

WE KNOW THE TECH-SUIT PROTOTYPE WORKS.

NOW ALL WE NEED IS A WEARER THAT IS STABLE ENOUGH TO USE THE SUIT TO DESTROY THE GUARDIANS.

ONE MORE THING...

UNLESS YOU WANT ME TO REGRET RESCUING YOU FROM FREEDOM CORPS AND HAVING YOU DECLARED "DEAD"...

YOU WILL NOT MENTION MY SON EVER AGAIN.

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FREEDOM CORPS - STEEL CANYON BRANCH



EXCUSE ME... I HOPE I'M AT THE RIGHT PLACE.

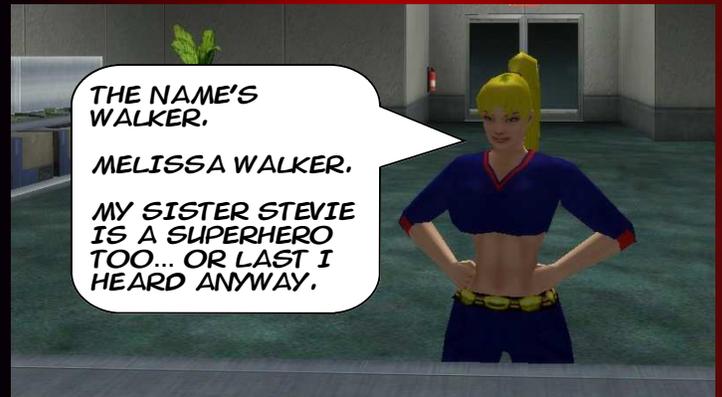
IS THERE WHERE WE CAN REGISTER TO BE A SUPERHERO?



ONE OF THE PLACES, YES.

WE PREFER CITY HALL OR OUR HEADQUARTERS IN GALAXY CITY, BUT WE CAN ALSO GET THE PROCESS STARTED HERE.

AND YOU ARE...?



THE NAME'S WALKER.

MELISSA WALKER.

MY SISTER STEVIE IS A SUPERHERO TOO... OR LAST I HEARD ANYWAY.



GUARDIANS BASE

SO... MIDNIGHT ARACHNIA SAID YOU HAD SOMETHING URGENT TO TELL ME?

PVP 20v
Punkit writes for Gods - Keep secret!
Too much stuff at CAD
Fortunas NOT dest

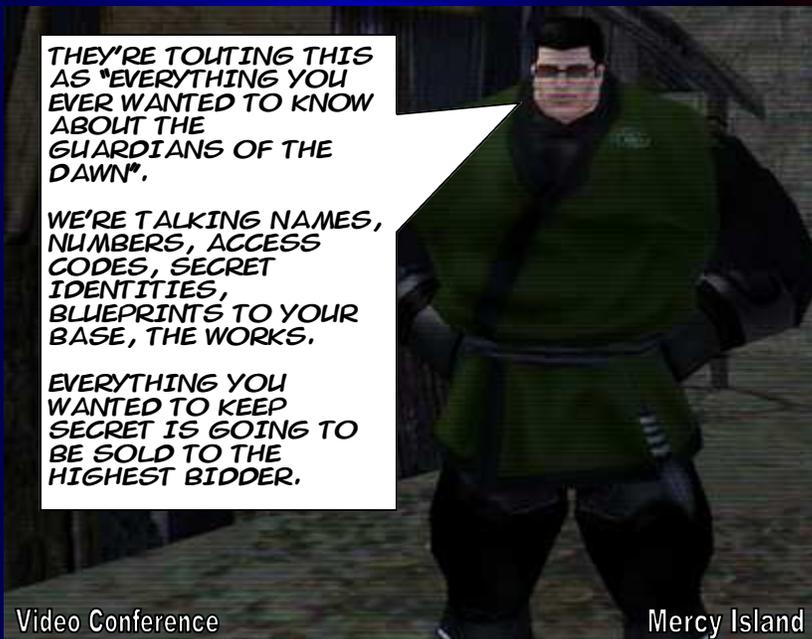


YEAH, MY SISTER SAYS I SHOULD TRUST YOU, SO HERE GOES...

BIG BUZZ HERE IN THE ROGUE ISLES IS THAT SOMEONE IS ABOUT TO PUT A DISK OUT ON THE BLACK MARKET INVOLVING THE GUARDIANS.

MATTHEW BURKE

Mercy Island



THEY'RE TOUTING THIS AS "EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE GUARDIANS OF THE DAWN".

WE'RE TALKING NAMES, NUMBERS, ACCESS CODES, SECRET IDENTITIES, BLUEPRINTS TO YOUR BASE, THE WORKS.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KEEP SECRET IS GOING TO BE SOLD TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.

Video Conference

Mercy Island



THEN I GUESS THAT THE GUARDIANS NEED TO PAY A VISIT TO THE CITY OF VILLAINS.

FAR FROM OVER!



The magic of the secret identity goes back a long, long way.

Writers and publishers used pen names to conceal themselves from scrutiny, especially since some writers and publishers held positions of authority and respectability.

For instance, the authors of the Federalist Papers, the articles that laid the foundation for the United States Constitution, originally published their works under the collective secret identity of “Publius”. Mary Shelly concealed the fact that she was a woman in order for people to read her works, including her literary masterpiece “Frankenstein”.

Fictional heroes who concealed their real identities became abundant around the end of the 19th century, often using historical references instead of more modern locations. The Scarlett Pimpernel was about a mysterious team of English aristocrats that fought to save their French counterparts from the “dreaded guillotine” during the years following the French Revolution. Zorro saved the oppressed masses in Mexico while concealing his Spaniard nobility. The Lone Ranger wore a mask to hide the fact that he was a former Texas Ranger that was left for dead.

In the 1930’s, masked adventurers began appearing in modern-day society. Borrowing from legendary stories in Greek Mythology, Victorian literature, and even romanticized figures such as Robin Hood and Don Quixote, writers and comic book creators came up with the concept of superheroes that saved the day while wearing a disguise so that people would not know who they really were.

The most common application of the “secret identity” was to have a masked adventurer hide the fact that he or she was a member of “the elite”. Millionaire playboys, corporate executives, social debutantes, they all came from wealth and put on disguises so they could appeal to the “common man”.

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster put a unique twist on secret identities when they came up with the most legendary superhero of them all: Superman. Unlike The Phantom, Zorro, or The Shadow, “Clark Kent” was the disguise for Superman instead of the other way around. Even more noted was that “Clark” was seen as an everyman, a mild-mannered hard-working middle-class citizen, hiding the fact that he was a super-powered alien. William Marston would do the same thing with his legendary female superhero, the buxom and patriotic Wonder Woman. Very rarely has this been replicated outside of these two instances, although “The Spectre” comes close, with Jim Corrigan pretending to be alive so he could hide the fact that he was really an avenging ghost.

Some heroes have no need for a secret identity. Jay Garrick, the original Flash, didn’t need a disguise because he moved so fast nobody could see him. Others, like the Fantastic Four, started out with public identities, so they really couldn’t have secret ones.

Continues on next page...

Others took the whole idea to the other extreme. For instance, the great secret of “The Phantom” is that there is a whole family dynasty of people named “Kit Walker” who put on the same costume and go under “The Phantom”, which supposedly explained why the legend would exist for four centuries. Four hundred years of identical fathers and sons all named “Kit Walker”? I’d rather go with the cloning idea.

In the City of Heroes MMO, one of the big fallacies about hero life is to believe that secret identities somehow no longer exist. Since the players know the real names to EVERYONE, good guys and bad, and since all heroes have to register with the government in order to operate, it is believed that somehow the concept of the secret identity has been neutralized.

In truth, the players know these things because they are still operating from behind the “Fourth Wall”. They themselves aren’t in Paragon City; their surrogates are.

So who is to say that the public knows that Marcus Cole is Statesman and that Justin Sinclair and his wife Shalice are really Manticore and Sister Psyche? And if identities really don’t matter, why do some heroes still wear masks?

The whole concept of a secret identity is to give the adventurer a chance to relax and not be putting themselves out there twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. It gives them a way to hide from the demands of the world. For no other reason it gives the hero or heroine a chance to be normal and live a normal life, even if it is fake, and even if it is for just a little while.

<http://GuardiansOfTheDawn.wordpress.com>

NEXT ISSUE...



The Guardians have to go back to the City of Villains to save their secrets.

Plus: What happens when Daybright confronts the Shadowborn spy?

And WHO IS “Melissa Walker”?



"There isn't a thought in this city
that I don't know about!"



CITY OF HEROES GOING ROGUE

goingrogue.cityofheroes.com

August 17, 2010

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