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T FOR TEENS

FUTURE'S GUARDIAN



ISSUE 17
2020



CHAMPIONS
ONLINE

PERFECT
WORLD

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From another time and from another world, Galatea Future arrived in the world of the Champions to do the one thing she tried so desperately to avoid before... to live.

It's not easy, though, when you're over a thousand years old and suddenly you're given a new life in more ways than one. Life is literally starting over again for her, and yet she is still doing what she does best: serving humanity as...

FUTURE'S GUARDIAN

"THE REAL 'REAL TRUTH'"

- A CHAMPIONS ONLINE STORY BY DAVID 2

ACCUSED OF BETRAYING THE YAVAPAI NATION IN THE NAME OF EXPLOITATION, JOHN BATTLE HAS STRUGGLED TO GET TO THE TRUTH BEHIND THE DAMNING ARTICLES IN THE "REAL TRUTH" WEBSITE. BUT NOW, WITH THE HELP OF ATTORNEY CANDACE SINCLAIR, THE ACTUAL TRUTH IS READY TO COME OUT.

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WASHINGTON D.C.

"SO WHAT'S UP?"

"WELL... RIGHT NOW TRYING TO GET A FINICKY TRAVEL CAT TO EAT HER FOOD BEFORE I GO ON PATROL."

"NO, I MEAN WHAT'S GOING ON WITH JOHN. WAIT... YOU'RE TRYING TO FEED FURBALL? I THOUGHT CANDACE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE DOING THAT!"

"SHE IS. OR RATHER SHE IS NOW. NO, I'M OVER AT RONIN'S LOFT TRYING TO GET MISS LADY TO EAT."

RONIN OMEGA'S LOFT, MILLENNIUM CITY, MI

CANDACE HAD TO TRAVEL TO ARIZONA FOR A WHILE, SO I ENDED UP WATCHING BOTH CATS.

BUT... SHE'S BACK NOW AND SHE SHOULD BE TAKING CARE OF THINGS OVER AT YOUR PLACE.



MISS LADY
RONIN'S TRAVEL CAT

DEE RISK
AKA: ST ARLETT

OOOOKAY.
WELL THE REASON WHY I CALLED WAS BECAUSE THE WHOLE MESS WITH JOHN AND THE YAVAPAI DEAL REACHED WASHINGTON. I HAVE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN ASKING ME ABOUT IT.

I'VE BEEN ANSWERING QUESTIONS FOR THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION OVER THE WHOLE MESS WITH THE MAYORAL ELECTION... AND NOW I HAVE HALF OF CONGRESS CALLING ME ABOUT THIS!



GALATEA FUTURE
OTHERWORLD GUARDIAN



WELL I WISH I HAD SOME ANSWERS FOR YOU, TAYA. JOHN AND CANDACE HAVE BEEN BUSY ON WHATEVER SHE DUG UP IN ARIZONA.



I IMAGINE IT'S BEEN FRUSTRATING FOR YOU. I MEAN, I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM THAT YOU JUST CAN'T PUNCH YOUR WAY OUT.



YOU MEAN WHEN YOU HAD THAT INTERNET BLOGGER HARASSING YOU? WHAT WAS HIS NAME? SOCKS? JOCKS?

VOX. VOX POPULII.*

(* ISSUE #3)



YEAH, I BARELY REMEMBER HIM. WOW, YOU REALLY HAVE A GREAT MEMORY.



NO, I'M GOOD. REALLY. IF I HEARD CANDACE RIGHT, THEY SHOULD BRING THIS WHOLE MESS TO A HEAD REAL SOON.



THAT'S GOOD. WELL... YOU WATCH YOUR BACK OVER THERE, DEE, AND I'LL BE HOME SOON.



OKAY. SEE YOU SOON. AND GIVE THOSE POLITICIANS HELL.

OKAY. AND GIVE CAN MY BEST.



COME ON, MISS LADY... CAN YOU AT LEAST TRY A LITTLE OF THE FOOD BEFORE I GO?

GRRMEOW?

RENAISSANCE CENTER, MILLENNIUM CITY, MI.

I PRESUME YOU ARE DEFENDER?

I AM. SOMETHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH?

C DEFENDER THE CHAMPIONS

MY NAME IS LUCAS THUNDERWOLF. I AM HERE ON BEHALF OF THE YAVAPAI TRIBE.

JOHN BATTLE IS ACCUSED OF BETRAYING THE YAVAPAI PEOPLE AND VIOLATING HIS SACRED BOND WITH THE LAND. I HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED TO BRING HIM TO THE ELDERS FOR TRIAL.

MEANWHILE... A FEW BLOCKS AWAY...

BIENOS DIAS*, PEDRO.

C KEIRA FYRE ELEMENTAL ARCHER

(*GOOD DAY*)

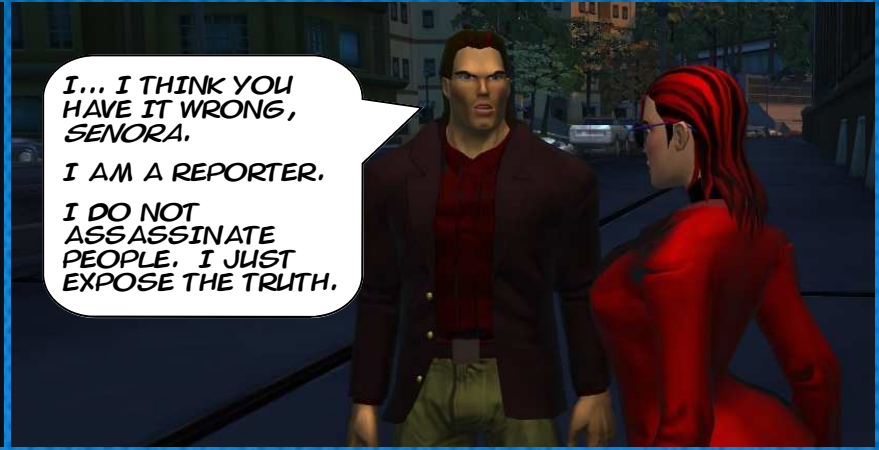
PERDON*, SENORA... DO I KNOW YOU?

ME? NO... I'M NOT SOMEONE YOU'D REMEMBER. I'M JUST A REALLY BIG FAN OF YOUR WORK.

FROM ONE PROFESSIONAL TO ANOTHER, I REALLY LOVE HOW YOU'RE ABLE TO REALLY BRING SOMEONE DOWN.

P PEDRO DUARTE INTERNATIONAL REPORTER

(*EXCUSE ME*)



WESTSIDE



I WAS TOLD YOU WANTED TO SEE ME?

MERCEDES REALE
WCOC REPORTER

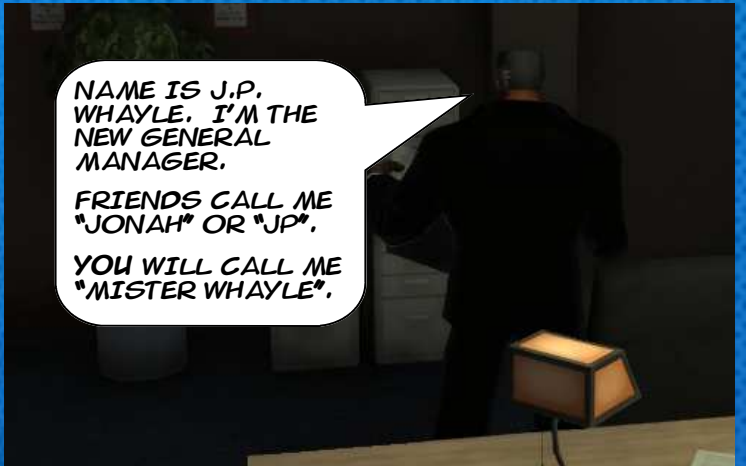


HEY! YOU'RE NOT--



NOPE. HE'S NOT HERE ANY MORE.
AND, YES, I AM THE ONE WHO ASKED FOR YOU.

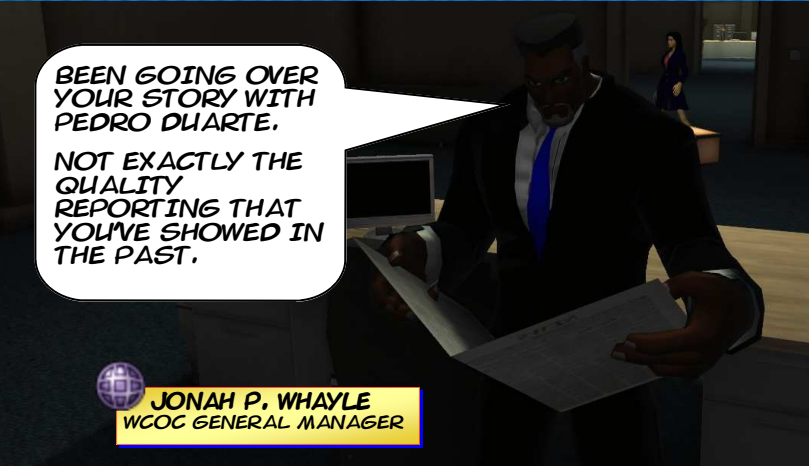
COME IN AND GRAB A CHAIR. WE HAVE SOME STUFF TO DISCUSS.



NAME IS J.P. WHAYLE. I'M THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER.

FRIENDS CALL ME "JONAH" OR "JP".

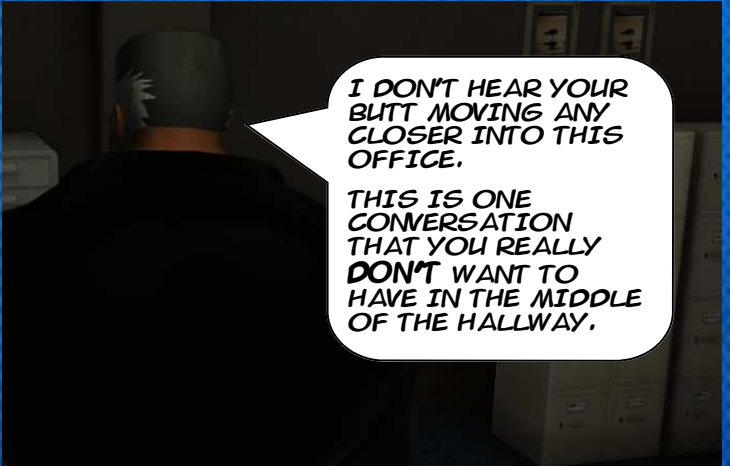
YOU WILL CALL ME "MISTER WHAYLE".



BEEN GOING OVER YOUR STORY WITH PEDRO DUARTE.

NOT EXACTLY THE QUALITY REPORTING THAT YOU'VE SHOWED IN THE PAST.

JONAH P. WHAYLE
WCOC GENERAL MANAGER



I DON'T HEAR YOUR BUTT MOVING ANY CLOSER INTO THIS OFFICE.

THIS IS ONE CONVERSATION THAT YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO HAVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HALLWAY.



I'LL START BY ASKING AN EASY QUESTION:

I PRESUME THAT YOU CROSS-VERIFIED YOUR INITIAL STORY. WHO WITH?



YES... YES I CROSS-VERIFIED THE STORY FIRST.

I FIRST GOT THE STORY FROM ERNIE... HE'S SORT OF AN "INTERNET SCROUNGER" WHO CAME ACROSS THE WEB ARTICLE.



AND YOUR SECOND SOURCE?



ROBERT ACORN FROM THE UNITED PRESS.



"ROBERT ACORN", YOU SAID?

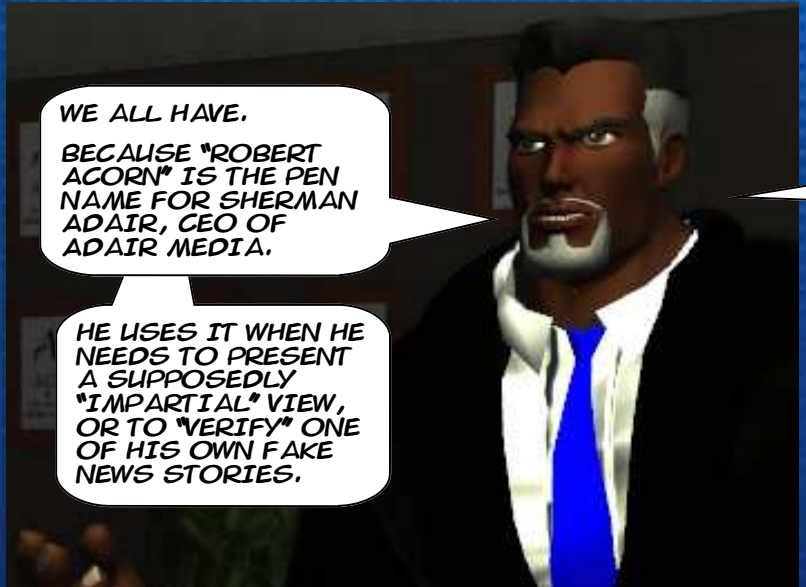
YES, WHY?



THEN WE HAVE A REAL PROBLEM ON OUR HANDS.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I'VE HEARD OF ROBERT ACORN BEFORE.



WE ALL HAVE. BECAUSE "ROBERT ACORN" IS THE PEN NAME FOR SHERMAN ADAIR, CEO OF ADAIR MEDIA.

HE USES IT WHEN HE NEEDS TO PRESENT A SUPPOSEDLY "IMPARTIAL" VIEW, OR TO "VERIFY" ONE OF HIS OWN FAKE NEWS STORIES.



IN OTHER WORDS... YOU GOT PLAYED BY OUR COMPETITION.

PROJECT MYCROFT

I TOLD DEFENDER THAT I WOULD RELAY HIS MESSAGE TO YOU AND THAT YOU WOULD CONTACT HIM ABOUT WHETHER YOU'D SURRENDER YOURSELF.

HOWEVER... I DON'T THINK HE WILL WAIT FOREVER.

AT SOME POINT HE WILL TAKE IT UPON HIMSELF TO BRING YOU IN.

MAJOR XAVIER CROSS
PROJECT MYCROFT

JOHN BATTLE'S LOFT

THAT'S OKAY, MAJOR.
WE'RE ABOUT READY TO OPEN THIS WHOLE THING UP.

I REMEMBER THUNDERWOLF... HE WAS A YOUNG MAN WHO SEEMED TO BE RATHER... INVESTED... IN THE DEAL FOR THE CULTURAL CENTER.

I THOUGHT IT WAS WEIRD HE WOULD BE THAT EXCITED.

JOHN BATTLE
LEGACY WARRIOR

SOUNDS LIKE HE HAD MORE THAN JUST A PASSING INTEREST.
WHAT I'VE FOUND DURING MY TRIP OVER THERE--

#BEEP-BEEP#

GANDACE SINCLAIR
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW

HOLD ON...

I'M GETTING A DATA PACKAGE FROM AN ASSOCIATE THAT I CALLED IN TO HELP.*

(* LAST ISSUE)

IT SEEMS THE F.B.I.* HAVE A FILE ON PEDRO DUARTE THAN MY ASSOCIATE WAS ABLE TO SHARE WITH US.

AND... IF I'M READING THIS RIGHT...

(* FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION)

... EVERYTHING WE KNEW ABOUT PEDRO DUARTE IS WRONG!

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH OUR OWN JULIE MORGAN, THUNDERWOLF SAID THAT THE TRIBAL ELDERS COULD REVOKE JOHN BATTLE'S POWERS THROUGH AN ANCIENT RITUAL SHOULD HE BE DEEMED GUILTY.



8 WCOG WCOG MID-MORNING NEWS - VICTORIA CROWNSTONE

WHILE HE DID NOT GO INTO DETAIL ABOUT HOW THIS WOULD TAKE PLACE, THUNDERWOLF DID SAY THAT THE MARSH FOUNDATION PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN BRINGING THE CASE UP WITH THE TRIBAL ELDERS.



8 WCOG WCOG MID-MORNING NEWS - VICTORIA CROWNSTONE

IT'S ALL C-COMING INTO PLACE... EXXXX-ACTLY AS I... P-P-PLANNED IT.
BY THE E-E-END OF THE D-D-DAY, THAT OVERHYPED K-KEN DOLL WILL BE GONE!



I W-W-WONDER WHERE MERCEDES IS.
VICTORIA IS TOO O-O-OLD FOR MY T-T-TASTES.

A RECENT POLL BY THE MARSH FOUNDATION SAYS THAT FIFTY-THREE PERCENT OF THE POPULACE BELIEVE BATTLE SHOULD SURRENDER HIMSELF AND FACE TRIBAL JUSTICE.



8 WCOG JOHN BATTLE - GULTY? LET US KNOW IN OUR FORUM!

WE ARE WAITING TO HEAR FROM JOHN BATTLE HIMSELF...
HOLD ON...



8 WCOG JOHN BATTLE - ACCUSED OF PRIVATEERING - DISCUSS NOW!

I'VE JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT OUR NEW GENERAL MANAGER WILL BE MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THIS STORY LATER TODAY.



8 WCOG WCOG MID-MORNING NEWS WITH VICTORIA CROWNSTONE

STAY TUNED TO WCOG FOR THE LATEST NEWS AS WE GET IT.



8 WCOG JOHN BATTLE - GULTY? LET US KNOW IN OUR FORUM!

IN THE COMMON AREA JUST OUTSIDE OF THE RENAISSANCE CENTER...



WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING ME?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

OH... HI! SMALL WORLD.

CAN YOU BELIEVE THE TIGERS? I SWEAR THEY DON'T EVEN WANT A SUPER BOWL RING ANYMORE.
OR ARE YOU MORE A FAN OF THE OTHER FOOTBALL?



NO GAMES, SIGNORA...
ARE YOU HERE TO KILL ME?



PLEASE! IF I WAS HERE TO DO THAT, YOU WOULDN'T EVEN SEE ME.



I'M JUST HERE TO MAKE SURE THAT YOU DON'T GO ANYWHERE JUST YET.
NOT UNTIL I GET THE WORD FROM MY BOSS.



OH, AND I ALSO KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU.
YOU KNOW... THE "REAL TRUTH"... ABOUT PEDRO DUARTE.



URNS OUT "PEDRO DUARTE" IS A FRAUD!
IT'S AN OPEN PEN NAME FOR ANYONE LOOKING FOR CREDIBILITY IN THE WORLD OF JOURNALISM WHILE STILL KEEPING ANONYMOUS.

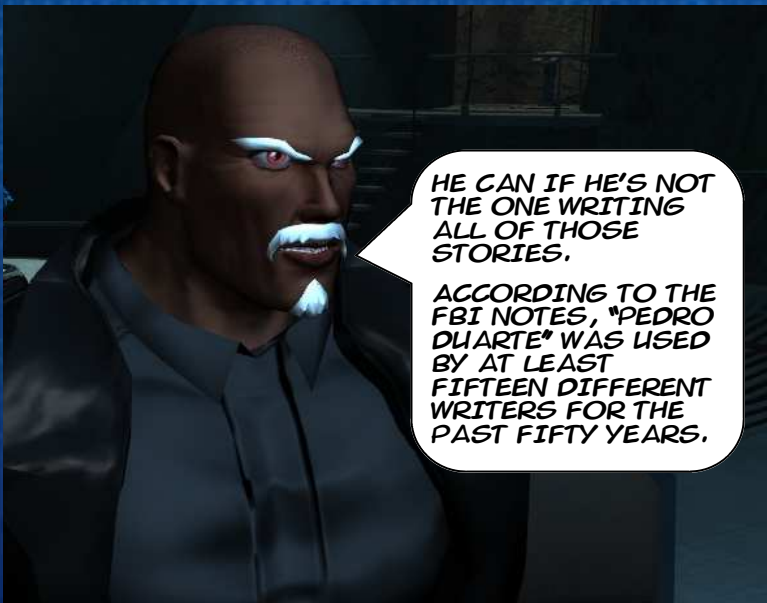
HIS NAME FIRST APPEARED IN 1978, EXPOSING THE BRUTAL OCCUPATION OF A SOUTH AMERICAN STRONGMAN WITH TIES TO THE TERRORIST GROUP VIPER.
HE WOULD SHOW UP AGAIN AND AGAIN, EXPOSING CORRUPTION IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS, BUT NEVER SHOWING HIS FACE UNTIL THE MID-90'S.



YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

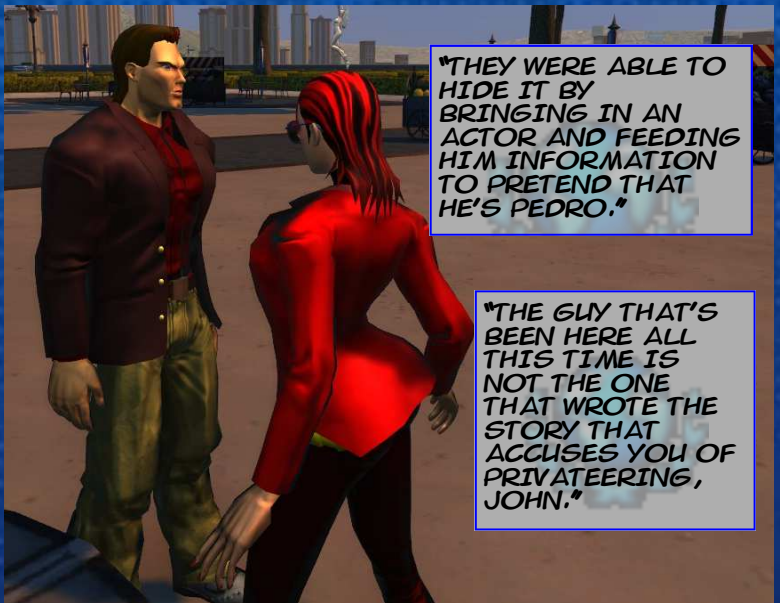
I WISH I WERE, COUNCILOR.

MAJOR, THE GUY ON TV DOESN'T EVEN LOOK LIKE HE'S IN HIS THIRTIES.
HOW THE HELL CAN HE BE RUNNING AROUND THE WORLD FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS?




HE CAN IF HE'S NOT THE ONE WRITING ALL OF THOSE STORIES.

ACCORDING TO THE FBI NOTES, "PEDRO DUARTE" WAS USED BY AT LEAST FIFTEEN DIFFERENT WRITERS FOR THE PAST FIFTY YEARS.



"THEY WERE ABLE TO HIDE IT BY BRINGING IN AN ACTOR AND FEEDING HIM INFORMATION TO PRETEND THAT HE'S PEDRO."


"THE GUY THAT'S BEEN HERE ALL THIS TIME IS NOT THE ONE THAT WROTE THE STORY THAT ACCUSES YOU OF PRIVATEERING, JOHN."



PEDRO IS... A PEN NAME?

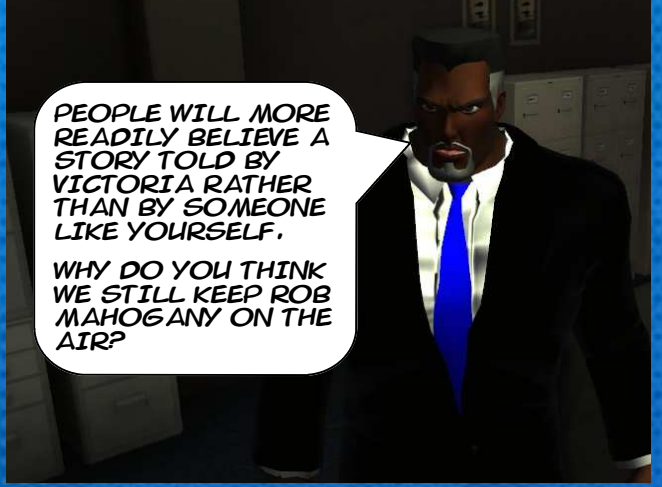
BUT... HE'S REAL! HE WAS JUST HERE IN THE STUDIO YESTERDAY!

I REMEMBER READING HIS ARTICLES WHEN I WAS A CHILD! I WANTED TO BECOME A REPORTER **BECAUSE** OF HIM! WHY? WHY WOULD SOMEONE EVEN DO THIS?



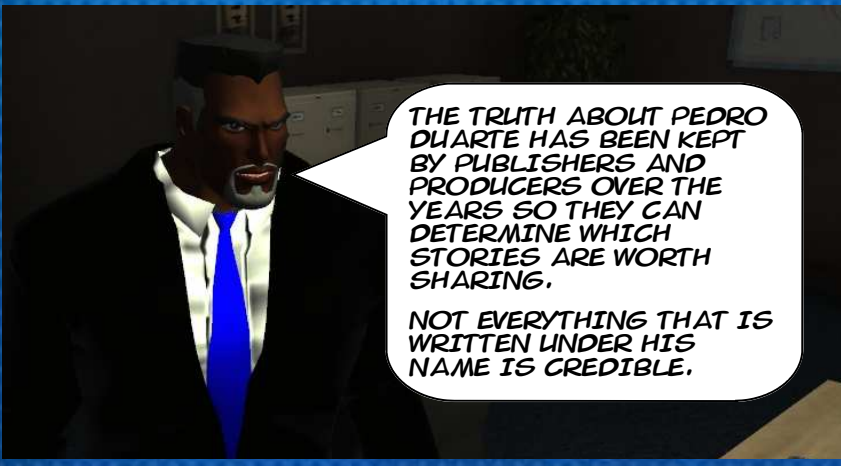
BECAUSE SOMETIMES A STORY NEEDS TO COME OUT, AND, IN THE WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN, IT SOMETIMES CAN ONLY BE TOLD BY SOMEONE THAT PEOPLE RESPECT.

OR AT LEAST SOMEONE THAT THEY RECOGNIZE.




PEOPLE WILL MORE READILY BELIEVE A STORY TOLD BY VICTORIA RATHER THAN BY SOMEONE LIKE YOURSELF.

WHY DO YOU THINK WE STILL KEEP ROB MAHOGANY ON THE AIR?



THE TRUTH ABOUT PEDRO DUARTE HAS BEEN KEPT BY PUBLISHERS AND PRODUCERS OVER THE YEARS SO THEY CAN DETERMINE WHICH STORIES ARE WORTH SHARING.

NOT EVERYTHING THAT IS WRITTEN UNDER HIS NAME IS CREDIBLE.



YOU MEAN... SOME OF THE STORIES...
...ARE LIES?



SOMETIMES THEY ARE.

SOMETIMES THEY ARE HALF-TRUTHS DESIGNED TO TEAR DOWN ONE SPECIAL INTEREST FOR THE BENEFIT OF ANOTHER.

MY PREDECESSOR DIDN'T REALIZE THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "REAL TRUTH" STORY UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.

HAD YOU RUN IT BY HIM FIRST, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STOP YOU FROM GETTING THIS STATION INVOLVED IN IT.

AND NOW... I HAVE TO FIX THIS.



SO WHAT'S YOUR REAL NAME?
THE NAME YOU WERE BORN WITH?



ANTONIO MORA,
AND I'M SPANISH,
NOT MEXICAN.
IT'S JUST THAT I'VE
BEEN "PEDRO" FOR SO
LONG, IT'S WHO I'VE
SEEN MYSELF AS.



WELL YOUR LITTLE
SURPRISE FITS IN
WITH WHAT I FOUND
IN ARIZONA.
YOU KNOW THAT
VIDEO OF CHIEF
CROW TALKING
ABOUT ALL THE
DAMAGE TO THE
TRIBE BY FRACKING?



IT'S FAKE.
IT'S ALL FAKE!



"I HAD IT
ANALYZED BY A
VIDEO EXPERT."



"CHIEF CROW WAS
JUST A COMPUTER-
GENERATED AVATAR."

"THE LATEST IN
DEEP-FAKE
TECHNOLOGY."



I ALSO MANAGED
TO GET THE TECHS
TO IDENTIFY WHERE
THE FAKE VIDEO
CAME FROM.

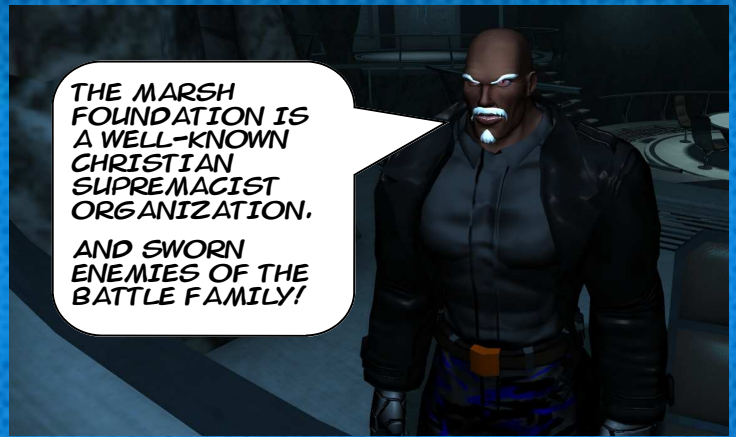


THEY'VE BEEN
MENTIONED ON
THE AIR A LOT
LATELY.
IT'S THE MARSH
FOUNDATION.



OF COURSE...

WHAT?



THE MARSH FOUNDATION IS A WELL-KNOWN CHRISTIAN SUPREMACIST ORGANIZATION. AND SWORN ENEMIES OF THE BATTLE FAMILY!



MY ANCESTORS STOPPED THE MARSH FAMILY FROM EXTERMINATING THE TRIBAL NATIONS IN THE 19TH CENTURY.

SINCE THEN, THEY'VE INSULTED THEMSELVES IN POLITICAL GROUPS AND THE MILITIAS.

AND NOW THEY'VE MOVED TO MEDIA MANIPULATION.

OKAY... SLANDERING YOU, THAT MAKES SENSE...



I CAN EVEN BUY THE ANGLE OF BRINGING IN ARGENT TO CON THE YAVAPAI INTO SELLING THE LAND.

BUT... KILLING SAM ARKIN AFTER ALL THE DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

NO...

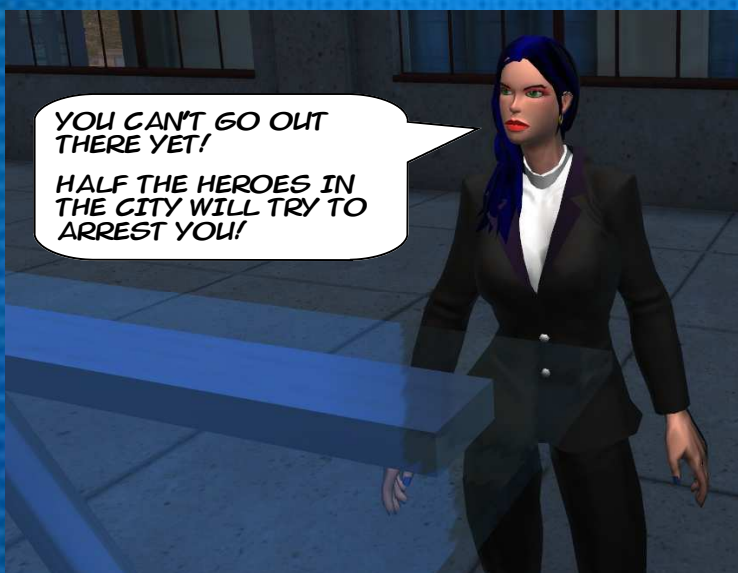


BUT... I DON'T THINK ARGENT OR THE MARSH FOUNDATION KILLED SAM. NOT IN THE WAY THAT THE MAJOR SAID THAT HE WAS KILLED. ARGENT WOULD HIRE A PRO TO DO THE JOB. SOMEONE WHO HACKS THEIR VICTIM BEFORE CRUSHING THEIR WINDPIPE IS NOT A PRO. AND THE MARSH FOUNDATION DOESN'T GO FOR KILLS LIKE THE MARSH FAMILY DID. IT'S SOMEONE... WITH SOMETHING TO PROVE.



WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

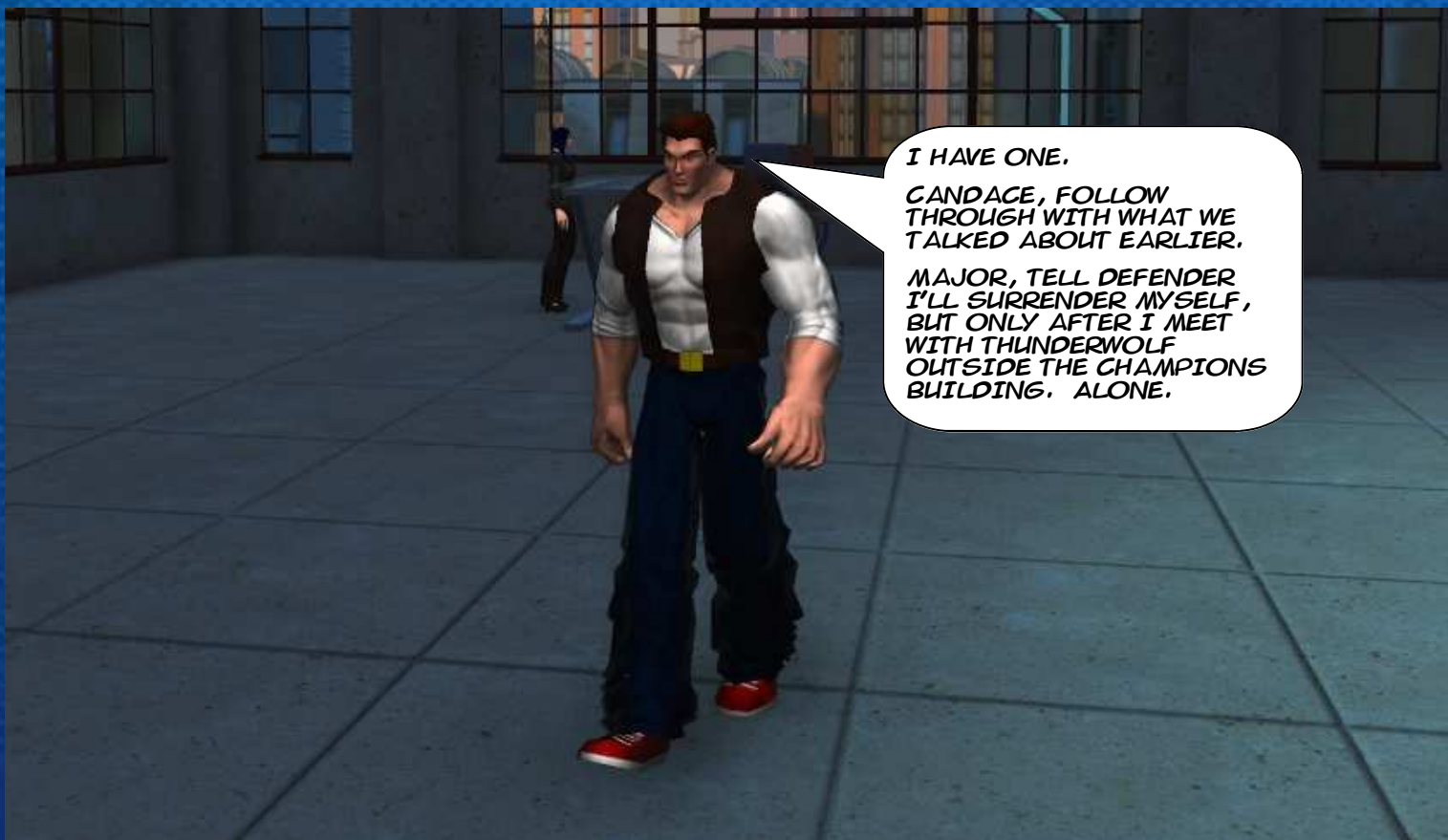
TO SUIT UP.
I KNOW WHO KILLED SAM ARKIN.



YOU CAN'T GO OUT THERE YET!
HALF THE HEROES IN THE CITY WILL TRY TO ARREST YOU!



LISTEN TO YOUR LAWYER, JOHN.
YOU NEED A PLAN!



I HAVE ONE.
CANDACE, FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT EARLIER.
MAJOR, TELL DEFENDER I'LL SURRENDER MYSELF, BUT ONLY AFTER I MEET WITH THUNDERWOLF OUTSIDE THE CHAMPIONS BUILDING. ALONE.

Insert Inside Cover Ad here

Insert Inside Cover Ad here



I'M ONLY GOING TO SAY THIS ONCE...



GO.
LEAVE YOUR EARBLID HERE.
LEAVE YOUR CELLPHONE HERE.
DON'T GO BACK TO YOUR HOTEL.
JUST GET OUT OF THE CITY.



I'M GOING TO WAIT TEN MINUTES AND THEN TELL MY BOSS THAT YOU MANAGED TO GIVE ME THE SLIP.
IF YOU'RE LUCKY, HE WON'T SEND ME TO TRY TO FIND YOU AGAIN.



WHY?
WHY DO THIS, SENORAP

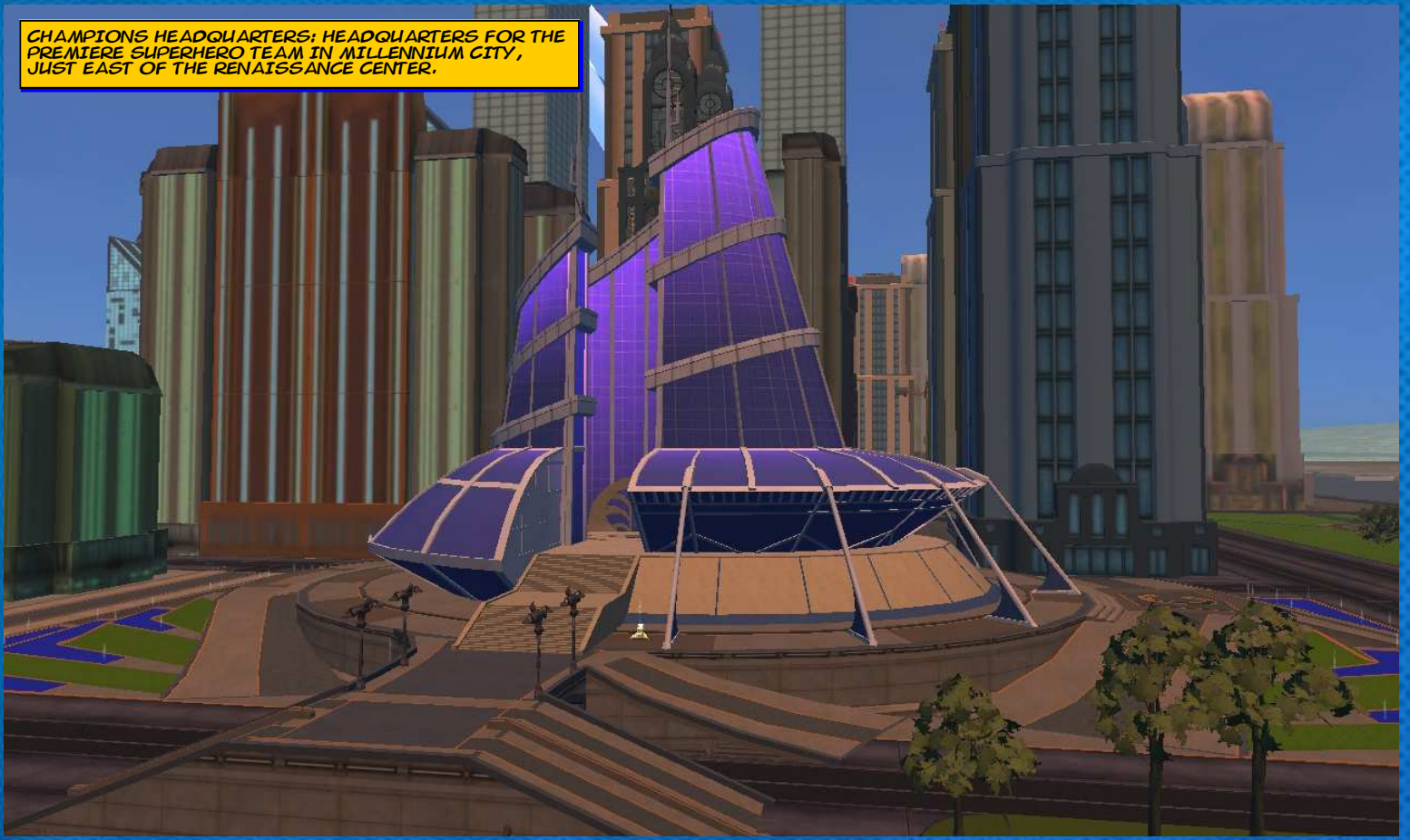


BECAUSE YOU WON'T LIKE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IF YOU STAY IN THIS CITY.

I'M GIVING YOU AN OUT. DON'T ASK ANY MORE QUESTIONS.
ADIOS, ANTONIO.



CHAMPIONS HEADQUARTERS; HEADQUARTERS FOR THE PREMIERE SUPERHERO TEAM IN MILLENNIUM CITY, JUST EAST OF THE RENAISSANCE CENTER.





WELL... I'M HERE.
ALONE.
AS YOU
REQUESTED.



GOOD TO SEE
YOU, LUCAS.
YOU'VE COME A
LONG WAY SINCE
I LAST SAW YOU.



THIS IS A WEIRD
LOCATION TO
SURRENDER
YOURSELF,
BATTLE.
SURROUNDED...
NO PLACE FOR
YOU TO FLEE.



I'M NOT PLANNING
ON RUNNING,
LUCAS.
I JUST WANTED
SOMEPLACE WHERE
THERE CAN BE NO
INTERFERENCE.




AND THIS CONTAINMENT FIELD
MAKE SURE THAT NEITHER OF
US WILL RUN UNTIL WE FINISH
WHAT WE'RE HERE TO DO.




BE HONEST, LUCAS.
YOU WEREN'T REALLY
PLANNING ON TAKING
ME TO THE YAVAPAI
ELDERS, WERE YOU?
WE BOTH KNOW THAT I
DIDN'T DO ANY OF THE
THINGS THAT WAS
SAID ABOUT ME.




OF COURSE YOU
DIDN'T.
BUT THAT'S HOW
ARGENT WANTS
IT TO LOOK.




WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED AT THE TRIBE, THERE WAS AN OLD MAN WHO COULD CARVE A LOG INTO A STATUE WITH TWO HATCHETS IN FIVE MINUTES.




MY FATHER... REDUCED TO DOING NOVELTY ACTS FOR A FEW BUCKS A DAY.




AND THEN HE PASSED THAT SKILL TO YOU.
AND YOU USED IT TO KILL SAM ARKIN.
WHY? WHY KILL HIM?



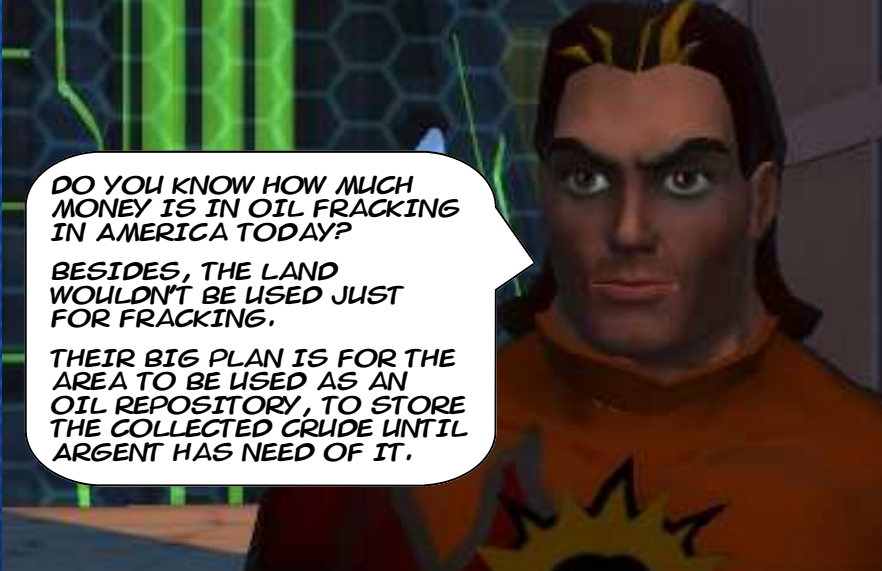
BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT ARGENT WANTED AS WELL.
ONE OF THEIR RECRUITERS PAID ME A VISIT IN THE TRIBAL CASINO WHERE I WAS WORKING SECURITY.




HE SAW WHAT I SAW.
THE CASINO WAS A DEAD-END GIMMICK THAT DEGRADED THE TRIBE AS A TOURIST TRAP.
HE SAW POTENTIAL IN ME.
HE OFFERED ME A PLACE WITH ARGENT IF I COULD HELP TURN THE WHOLE AREA OVER TO THEM.




FOR AN OIL SHALE FRACKING OPERATION THAT KILLS THE LAND AND THE TRIBE?




DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MONEY IS IN OIL FRACKING IN AMERICA TODAY?
BESIDES, THE LAND WOULDN'T BE USED JUST FOR FRACKING.
THEIR BIG PLAN IS FOR THE AREA TO BE USED AS AN OIL REPOSITORY, TO STORE THE COLLECTED CRUDE UNTIL ARGENT HAS NEED OF IT.



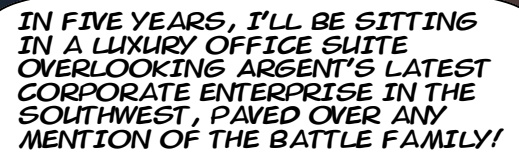
SO THIS WHOLE THING... THE FAKE STORY OF THE TRIBE BEING DEVASTATED... FRAMING ME... WAS TO DROP THE LAND VALUE SO ARGENT CAN BUY THE TRIBE CHEAP.




FRAMING YOU WAS THE ICING ON THE CAKE. AND ARKIN? KILLING HIM WAS MY FINAL AUDITION.



WHEN WE'RE DONE HERE, I'LL BE BRINGING YOUR LIFELESS BODY TO THE ELDERS AND CONVINCING THEM THAT THEY PLACED THEIR TRUST IN A FRAUD NAMED JOHN BATTLE.



IN FIVE YEARS, I'LL BE SITTING IN A LUXURY OFFICE SUITE OVERLOOKING ARGENT'S LATEST CORPORATE ENTERPRISE IN THE SOUTHWEST, PAVED OVER ANY MENTION OF THE BATTLE FAMILY!



KA-POW!





A FEW BLOCKS AWAY ALONG THE RIVERSIDE...



I'M AFRAID THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS.

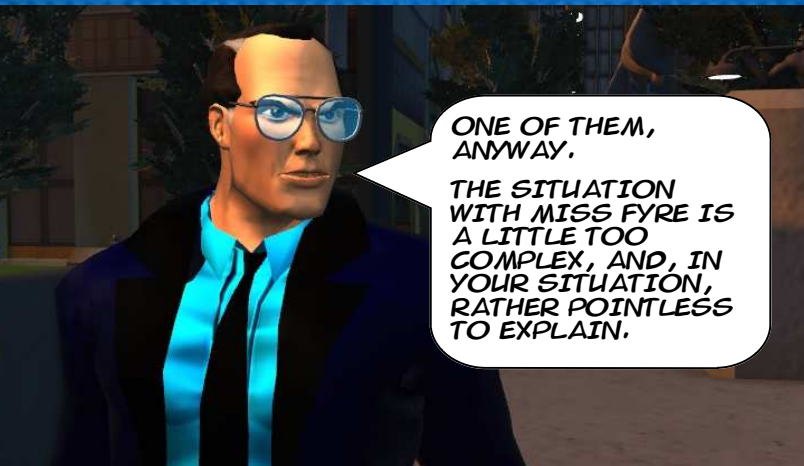


THE BOAT THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO PICK YOU UP AND TAKE YOU DOWNRIVER? WE'VE CALLED THEM OFF.



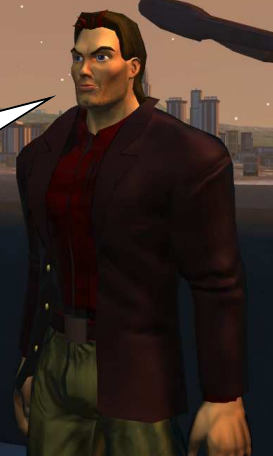
MIKE MESSENGER
X-TEND SERVICES

SO YOU'RE "THE BOSS"... THE ONE THE YOUNG LADY SAID SHE WAS WAITING TO HEAR FROM.



ONE OF THEM, ANYWAY. THE SITUATION WITH MISS FYRE IS A LITTLE TOO COMPLEX, AND, IN YOUR SITUATION, RATHER POINTLESS TO EXPLAIN.

SO... THIS IS IT? THIS IS HOW PEDRO DUARTE MEETS HIS END?



FOR "PEDRO"? OH, NO, "PEDRO" WILL BE BACK IN A FEW YEARS. THERE WILL ALWAYS A NEED FOR SOMEONE LIKE HIM IN OUR WORLD.

BUT I PROMISE YOU THIS, MISTER MORA: YOUR RELATIVES WILL FIND THEMSELVES WELL TAKEN CARE OF FOR THE SERVICE YOU PROVIDED OVER THE YEARS.

NOW... COME WITH ME PLEASE.





YOU... YOU SHOULD BE DEAD BY NOW!



YEAH... I'M ALL KINDS OF STUBBORN. JUST ASK DEFENDER.

I PROBABLY SHOULD MENTION THAT THE REASON WHY I PICKED THIS LOCATION FOR OUR LITTLE MEET-AND-BEAT IS BECAUSE OF WHAT IS ALL OVER THE OUTSIDE OF THIS BUILDING.

HIGH-DEFINITION SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS.



8K CAMERAS, HIGHLY-SENSITIVE MICROPHONES, THE WORKS.

AND IT'S ALL READY TO BROADCAST AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE.

LIVE



IN FACT, OUR FIGHT HAS BEEN STREAMING ON LIVE TV EVER SINCE I TURNED ON THE CONTAINMENT FIELD.

8 WCOB BREAKING NEWS - BATTLE VS THUNDERWOLF! - CHAMPIONS HEADQUAR

IT CAUGHT EVERYTHING! YOUR CONFESSION... YOU FRAMING ME... THE LAND SWINDLE FOR ARGENT... YOU'RE GUILTY AS SIN AND NOW EVERYONE KNOWS IT.

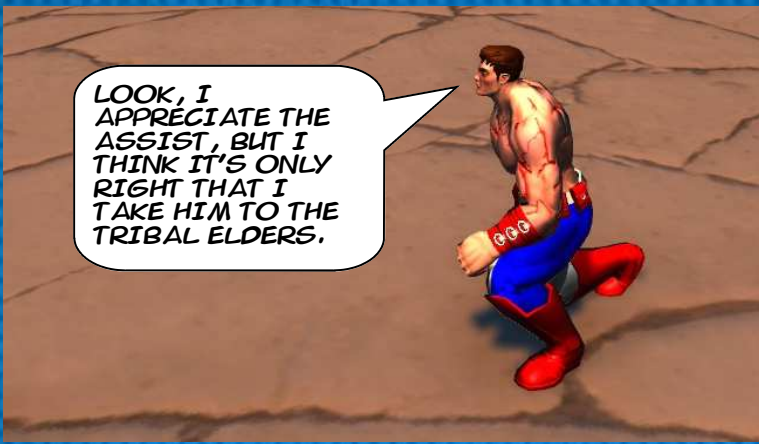


Y... YOU'RE DEAD!









LOOK, I APPRECIATE THE ASSIST, BUT I THINK IT'S ONLY RIGHT THAT I TAKE HIM TO THE TRIBAL ELDERS.



NO, YOU'RE CUT UP AND BLEEDING. YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION TO GO ANYWHERE BUT THE HOSPITAL.



AND, DESPITE YOUR LITTLE MELEE BEING ON LIVE TELEVISION, YOUR CREDENTIALS AS A HERO ARE STILL IN QUESTION OUTSIDE OF THE CITY RIGHT NOW.



SO DO US BOTH A FAVOR... TAKE THE WIN AND I'LL MAKE SURE THUNDERWOLF FACES JUSTICE.



GUESS... GUESS I DON'T HAVE TOO MUCH OF A CHOICE, DO I?



NO, YOU DON'T. LUCAS THUNDERWOLF, I'M MS. ARIZONA AND YOU ARE UNDER ARREST.

A FEW HOURS LATER...

AND WE'RE
LIVE IN
THREE...
TWO...

LIVE

GOOD EVENING
LADIES AND
GENTLEMEN.

MY NAME IS
JONAH P. WHALE,
WCOC'S NEW
GENERAL
MANAGER.

8 WCOC SPECIAL STATEMENT FROM WCOC GENERAL MANAGER

I HAVE ASKED TO CUT
INTO YOUR NORMAL
NEWS PROGRAM TO
ADDRESS A NEWS
STORY THAT HAS
BEEN ON THE AIR THE
PAST FEW DAYS.

THIS STATION,
ALONG WITH A FEW
OTHER FORMS OF
MEDIA, HAVE BEEN
REPORTING ON
ALLEGATIONS OF
FRAUD AND
PRIVATEERING
AGAINST JOHN
BATTLE, A HERO
WITH A LONG
FAMILY HISTORY
OF SERVICE.

ALLEGATIONS THAT
WERE MADE AGAINST
MISTER BATTLE AND
HIS WHOLE FAMILY...
... THAT TURNED OUT
TO BE COMPLETELY
BASELESS.


THIS STATION AIRED
A VIDEO REPORTEDLY
FROM CHIEF CROW OF
THE YAVAPAI NATION
TALKING ABOUT THE
DAMAGE CAUSED BY
A RECENT OIL
FRACKING FACILITY.
A VIDEO THAT WE HAVE
DISCOVERED IS FAKE.

FILE FOOTAGE

"IN AN AFFIDAVIT SUBMITTED
BY THE YAVAPAI NATION, THE
ARGENT FACILITY SHOWN IN
THE VIDEO WAS NOT FROM
THEIR TRIBAL LANDS IN
ARIZONA, BUT, IN FACT, WAS
IN NEVADA."

"WE HAVE ALSO DISCOVERED
THAT 'CHIEF CROW', SEEN IN
THE ACCUSATORIAL VIDEO,
WAS A COMPUTER-GENERATED
AVATAR; NOT A REAL PERSON."

8 WCOC FOOTAGE OF ARGENT OIL FRACKING IN VIDEO FAKE - BREAKING NEWS



IN A QUEST FOR A STORY, THIS STATION ENDED UP RELYING ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY QUESTIONABLE SOURCES, AND ON AN ACTOR PRETENDING TO BE A WORLD-RENOWN JOURNALIST.

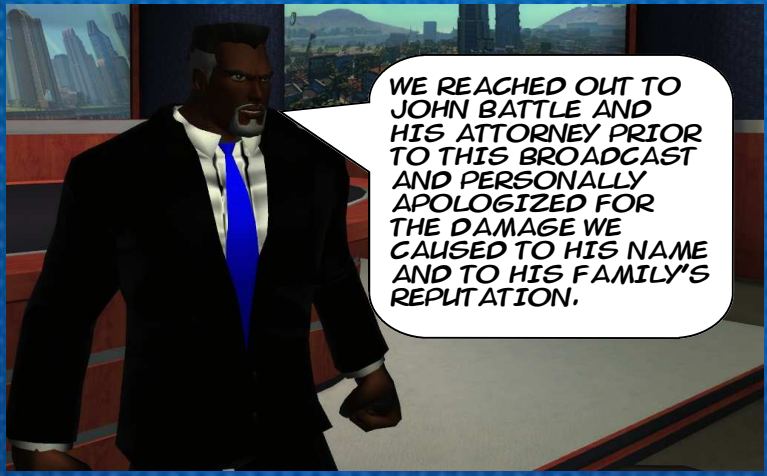
ONLY TODAY WAS IT MADE KNOWN TO US THAT THE PERSON YOU SAW IN THIS STUDIO WAS AN ACTOR WHO WAS HIRED TO PLAY PEDRO DUARTE.

HIRED TO RELAY INFORMATION FED TO HIM BY THE MARSH FOUNDATION, A RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST ORGANIZATION.

"AUTHORITIES ARE NOW SEARCHING FOR THIS ACTOR WHO CLAIMED TO BE PEDRO DUARTE, BUT IT IS BELIEVED HE HAS ALREADY FLED THE STATE."



"THE 'REAL TRUTH' WEBSITE WHERE THE ACCUSATORY INFORMATION WAS STORED HAS SINCE BEEN SHUT DOWN."



WE REACHED OUT TO JOHN BATTLE AND HIS ATTORNEY PRIOR TO THIS BROADCAST AND PERSONALLY APOLOGIZED FOR THE DAMAGE WE CAUSED TO HIS NAME AND TO HIS FAMILY'S REPUTATION.

"FOR HER PART IN THIS MATTER, MERCEDES REALE HAS BEEN PLACED ON LEAVE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. HOPEFULLY SHE WILL TAKE THIS TIME TO REEVALUATE HER ROLE AS A REPORTER."

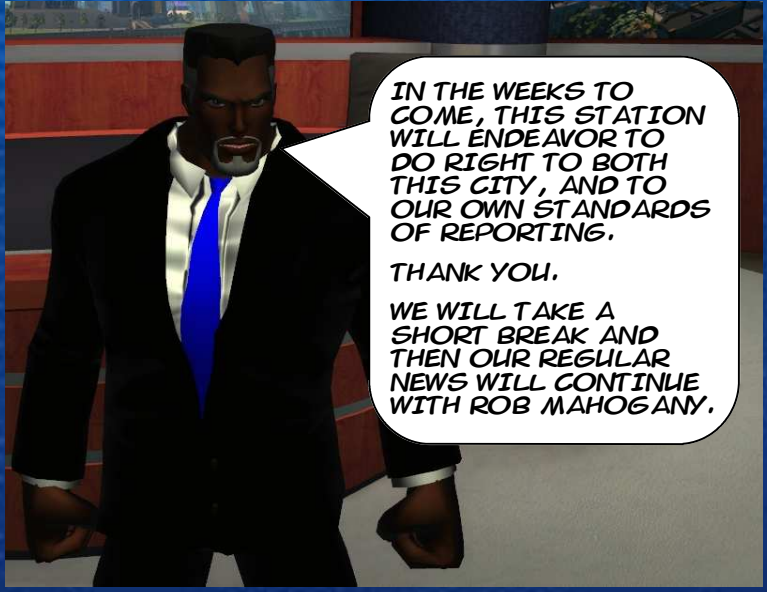


BUT WE DID MORE THAN JUST CAUSE HARM TO A HERO'S NAME AND REPUTATION.

WE ALSO DAMAGED OUR OWN CREDIBILITY.

YOU RELY ON US TO PROVIDE YOU THE NEWS, AND THAT THE NEWS WE PROVIDE IS HONEST AND ACCURATE.

THIS STATION HAS FAILED YOU ON BOTH COUNTS.



IN THE WEEKS TO COME, THIS STATION WILL ENDEAVOR TO DO RIGHT TO BOTH THIS CITY, AND TO OUR OWN STANDARDS OF REPORTING.

THANK YOU.

WE WILL TAKE A SHORT BREAK AND THEN OUR REGULAR NEWS WILL CONTINUE WITH ROB MAHOGANY.

ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY...

I-I-I AM... S-SORRY,
M-M-MISTER VAN C-
CLEEF.
I-I-I DON'T N-N-KNOW
WHERE I WENT WR-R-
ONG ON THIS.

YOU OVERPLAYED YOUR
HAND AND PUT TOO MUCH
EMPHASIS ON THE
MARSH FOUNDATION.
NOW THEY ARE
DISCREDITED, AND SO
IS PEDRO... FOR NOW.

B-B-BUT THE PROGRAM...
IT W-W-WORKS!
THEY C-C-COULD ONLY
TRA-TRACE IT TO THE M-
M-MARSH FOUNDATION.
N-NOT TO HERE.

YES. YOUR ABILITY TO HACK
INTO THE MEDIA AND PLANT
THE RIGHT INFORMATION
WITHOUT BEING DETECTED IS
USEFUL TO VARTECH.
WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE
USE OF IT AND OF YOUR
SERVICES IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

WE WILL BE
CONTACTING YOU
SOON FOR FUTURE
WORK, VOX POPULII.

V-VOX POPULII IS
DEAD, S-SIR.
HE D-D-DIED IN
THE H-H-HOSPITAL.
I WAS R-RE-
REBORN THANKS T-
T-TO YOU.

I-I'M BETTER.
S-SM-SMARTER.
VOXPOP 2.0

 VOXPOP 2.0
FORMERLY VOX POPULII

THE "POWERHOUSE", A SOCIAL AREA FOR HEROES... BUT CIVILIANS ARE ALSO WELCOMED.

POWER HOUSE THEATER

AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT YOUR GOON SQUAD.

THE POWERHOUSE FROWNS ON MY SECURITY DETAIL.

WELCOME BACK, JONAH. I SEE YOU'RE THE MAN OF THE HOUR.

SHERMAN ADAIR
CEO ADAIR MEDIA

NO THANKS TO YOU, "ROBERT". YOU ALMOST RUINED A HERO'S CAREER WITH YOUR LITTLE STUNT.

"MY" STUNT? OH, NO, NO, NO, JONAH, THAT'S ALL YOUR LITTLE CHICA'S MESS.

ALL I DID WAS CONFIRM THE STORY, JUST LIKE ANY OF US DO WITH A PEDRO DUARTE "EXPOSE".

AND IF YOU TRY TO CLAIM OTHERWISE ON AIR YOU'LL HAVE TWO SLANDER LAWSUITS ON YOUR HANDS.

OH, PERISH THE THOUGHT, SHERMAN.

IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I HAVE A COSTUME CONTEST TO GUEST JUDGE.

LET ME KNOW IF YOU NEED A HAND SOLVING THAT PROBLEM.

DAMN YOU ADAIR...

YOU KNOW, YOU REALLY SHOULD BE FOCUSING YOUR ATTENTION MORE ON HOW A GROUP LIKE THE MARSH FOUNDATION WAS ABLE TO GET THEIR GARBAGE THROUGH YOUR PRIZED NEWS DIVISION.

BEING THE "PROFESSIONAL" JOURNALISTS AND ALL THAT STUFF.

A FEW HOURS LATER AT THE TALLEST BUILDING IN THE CITY...



I'M SURPRISED TO FIND YOU UP HERE.

I WOULD THINK YOU'D BE OVER AT CLUB CAPRICE, CELEBRATING WITH YOUR GIRLFRIEND.



DEE AND I AGREED WHEN WE FIRST STARTED DATING THAT THE LESS I'M THERE, THE BETTER FOR HER AS "DJ RISQUE".

BESIDES, I'LL SEE HER AFTERWARDS.

YOU'RE NOT REALLY PLANNING ON MAKING THE LEAP AFTER ALL THE INJURIES YOU SUSTAINED TODAY, ARE YOU?



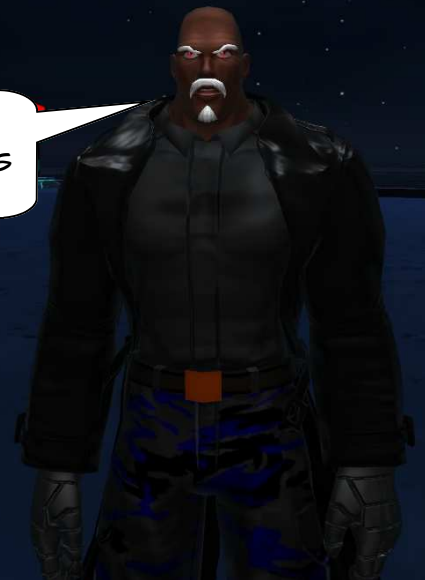
WHEN I WAS A CHILD, RIGHT AFTER MY POWERS FIRST MANIFESTED, I BROKE MY LEG LEAPING FROM THE ROOF OF MY HOME.

THE DOCTOR SET IT, AND THEN THE NEXT NIGHT, MY FATHER SENT ME BACK UP THERE AND HAD ME LEAP AGAIN. THIS TIME NOTHING WAS BROKEN, AND IT NEVER BROKE AGAIN.

I MAY HAVE A CHEST FULL OF STITCHES, MAJOR, BUT I STILL HEAL PRETTY FAST, AND MY LEAPING FROM THE TALLEST TOWER JUST REMINDS ME OF THAT.



YOU HAVE A WEIRD WAY OF SPENDING YOUR TIME.





WELL YOU KNOW ARGENT DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE FRAME-UP.

THEY'RE PUTTING THE BLAME ON THUNDERWOLF.

I'M SURE YOU'LL BE GETTING A PRETTY PENNY FROM WCOG AND THE MARSH FOUNDATION IN THE CIVIL COURTS.

ANY MONEY I GET FROM THOSE LAWSUITS GO TO CHARITY.

MY FAMILY HAVE CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS THAT WE RUN TO HELP THE NATIVE TRIBES.



SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR FRIEND WHO MADE THE ARREST?

MS. ARIZONA?




LET'S JUST SAY...

... I KNOW HER JUST ENOUGH TO BE TRUSTED.

WELL, I'M ABOUT READY TO DROP ON DOWN.

CARE TO FOLLOW?



ONE HELL OF A VIEW... I CAN SEE WHY YOU ENJOY COMING UP HERE.

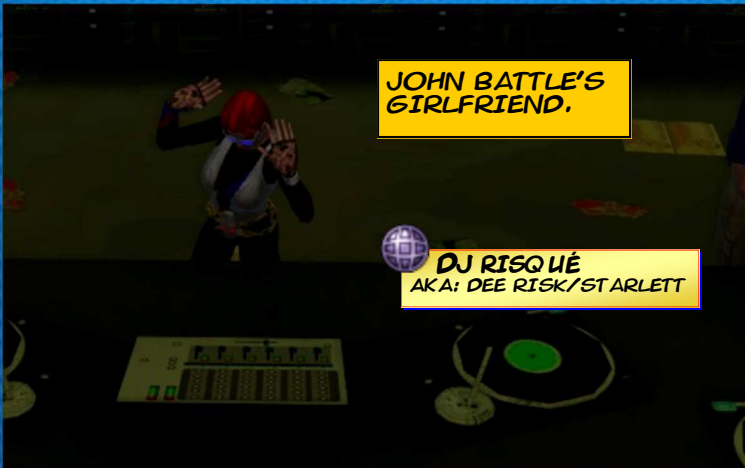
BUT... IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU...



I'LL GO DOWN THE SAME WAY I GOT UP.



SHE'S UP THERE...



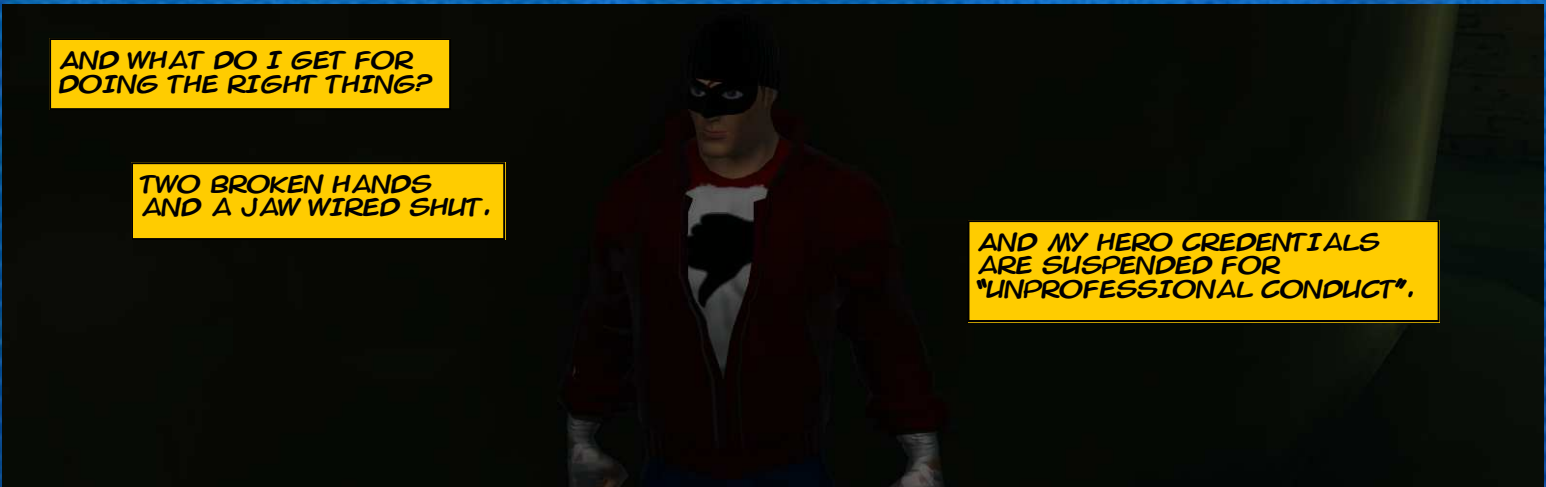
JOHN BATTLE'S GIRLFRIEND.

DJ RISQUÉ
AKA: DEE RISK/ST ARLETT



DANCING AWAY LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED WHILE HER BOYFRIEND GETS AWAY WITH HIS CRIMES.

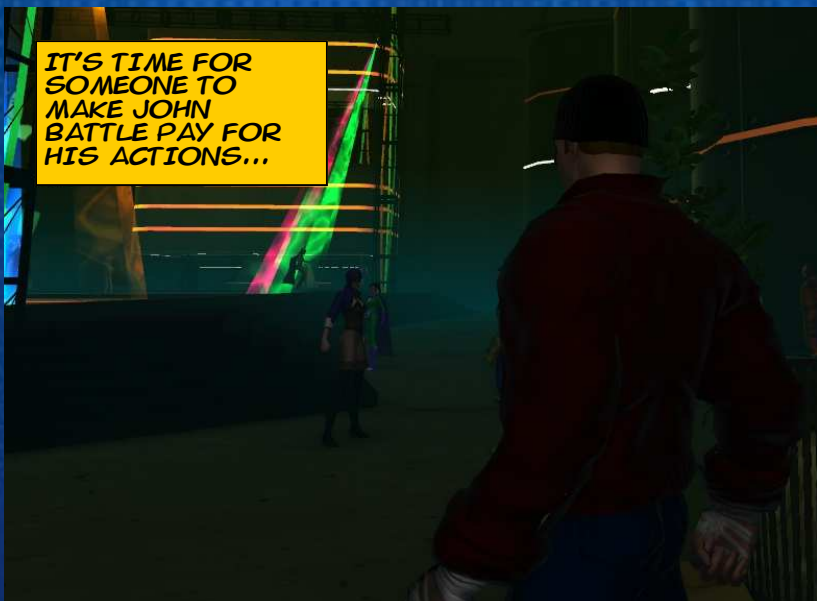
HOMETOWN HERO
STREET VIGILANTE



AND WHAT DO I GET FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING?

TWO BROKEN HANDS AND A JAW WIRED SHUT.

AND MY HERO CREDENTIALS ARE SUSPENDED FOR "UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT".



IT'S TIME FOR SOMEONE TO MAKE JOHN BATTLE PAY FOR HIS ACTIONS...



... AND I'LL START WITH HIS PRECIOUS GIRLFRIEND!

NEXT ISSUE:
BACK TO BASICS

GUARDIAN WORDS

Words of wisdom from writer and creator David 2.

“Title Here”

Whatever you want to discuss

Continues on next page...

[HTTP://BATTLE ROCK COMICS.WORDPRESS.COM](http://battlerockcomics.wordpress.com)

NEXT ISSUE...



**GALATEA FUTURE IS
BACK IN MILLENNIUM CITY.**

**AND WE GO BACK TO
BASICS.**



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