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# 8-BALLER



ISSUE #1  
"ALTERNATE"

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# ALTERNATE

WHAT IF I'D DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY?  
WOULD THINGS END UP THE SAME?

I GREW UP HERE, THE SLUMS OF  
KINGS ROW. BIG FAMILY, SMALL HOUSE.  
I WAS THE EIGHTH OF NINE KIDS. WITH  
A DRUNK FOR A FATHER, THAT BEAT OUR  
MOTHER TO THE EDGE OF DEATH, WE  
LEARNED QUICK TO LOOK OUT FOR  
OURSELVES. NOBODY ELSE WAS.  
MOSTLY, I WAS LOOKING OUT FOR  
JADEN. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE  
YOUNGER THAN ME.

WE WERE ALWAYS TOGETHER. A TEAM.

GROWING UP ON THE STREETS. IT  
WASN'T LONG BEFORE WE FOUND  
THE HELLIONS. THEY GAVE US FOOD,  
SHELTER, MONEY AND BEST OF ALL,  
THEY GAVE US FAMILY.

BUT JADEN WASN'T AS BIG AS I WAS.  
HE WASN'T AS STRONG.  
I TOLD HIM NOT TO WORRY.  
I TOLD HIM IT WOULD BE OK.

WHAT IF I'D DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY?

STORY: TODD COWDEN  
FONTS: BLAMBOT  
GAME: CITY OF HEROES  
SOFTWARE:  
COMIC BOOK CREATOR  
COH DEMO EDITOR  
FRAPS  
ADOBE PHOTOSHOP  
SPECIAL THANKS:  
KATIE AND CONNOR  
BALSHOR  
THE DEAD MAN'S HAND  
DEMO GUIDE

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP

SUP?

'BALLER, WE'VE GOT A SITUATION  
IN YOUR AREA REGARDING THE SKULLS.  
I'M UPLOADING A WAYPOINT TO  
YOUR GPS NOW.

DON'T NEED A  
GPS. JUST TELL  
ME WHERE IT IS.

IT'S A WAREHOUSE ON THE  
CORNER OF LAKEWOOD DR. AND  
WALLACE DR., TWO BLOCKS  
FROM THE...

I'M ON IT.

BEEP.

THE HELLIONS TOLD ME HE WAS  
WEAK. "TOO MUCH OF A GOOD  
STREAK.", THEY SAID.  
"IF HE GOES, I GO.", I TOLD THEM.  
THEY DIDN'T LIKE THAT ANSWER, AND  
THEY PLANNED ON CHANGING IT.

I TOLD HIM NOT TO WORRY.  
I TOLD HIM IT WOULD BE OK.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.



WHAT NOW?!

SORRY, WE HAD RECEPTION PROBLEMS BEFORE I COULD TELL YOU TO WAIT AT THE DOOR FOR MICHAEL ANGELO.

YOU TELL THE BLIND BOYSCOUT TO STAY PUT. I GOT THIS ONE.

HEY EVE, TELL OUR THINK TANK THAT HE'S LATE.

I GOT THIS MIKE. IT'S MY HOOD.



WOW, YOU'RE IN A GOOD MOOD.

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT. WE'LL BOTH GO INSIDE AND I'LL JUST WATCH.



WATCH... FUNNY.

JUST STAY OUT OF MY HEAD TONIGHT.

SORRY BIG GUY, BEING IN YOUR HEAD IS THE ONLY WAY I GET AROUND\*.

AFTER YOU.

\*NOTE: MICHAEL ANGELO IS BLIND BUT LINKS INTO OTHER PEOPLES THOUGHTS TO SEE WHAT THEY SEE, THROUGH THEIR EYES.



BY THE WAY, IN CASE YOU MISSED IT, WE'RE HERE TO RETURN SOME HIGH TECH PROTOTYPE WEAPONRY BACK TO LONGBOW.

SO TRY NOT TO SMASH UP EVERYTHING .

I'LL TRY TO KEEP THAT IN MIND.



SCUMBALL IN THE SIDE POCKET.

IT WAS TWO YEARS AGO TONIGHT. THE HELLIONS NEEDED TO GET JADEN OUT OF THE WAY, AND THEY WANTED ME AS A LIFETIME MEMBER. THEY FIGURED BY GETTING THE SKULLS TO TAKE OUT JADEN THEY COULD DO BOTH.



THEY SENT JADEN OFF TO DELIVER A HUGE SUPERDYNE SCORE, AND THEY TOLD THE SKULLS EXACTLY WHERE IT WAS GOING DOWN.



THEY HADN'T FIGURED ON ME OVERHEARING THEIR PLAN.

JADEN WAS ALREADY AT THE WAREHOUSE BY THE TIME I ARRIVED. I WAS SO FILLED WITH RAGE I TORE THROUGH THE SKULLS LIKE THEY WERE TINY RAG DOLLS.



KERRAKA!!



AAAAGGH!!

BODIES WERE FLYING. I HAD TO GET TO JADEN.



BUT I WASN'T FAST ENOUGH. I GOT THERE JUST IN TIME TO SEE HIM RIDDLED WITH BULLETS AND DROP TO HIS KNEES.

EVERYTHING WAS SOAKED IN RED. IT WOULDN'T STOP.

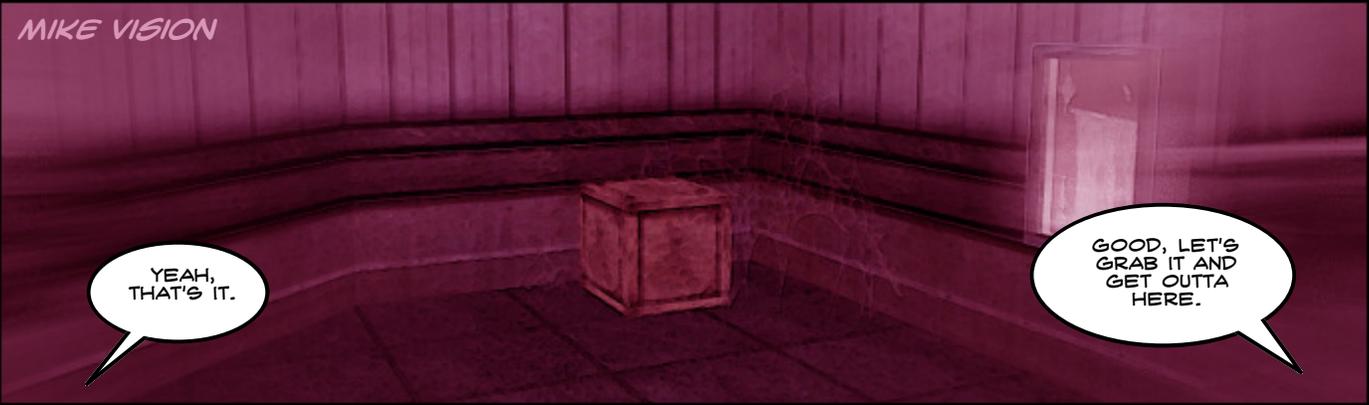
B, LOOK BACK TO YOUR LEFT, I THINK I SAW A WEAPONS CRATE.



WHOMP!

WHY DID HE HAVE TO DIE!

NOTHING WOULD BE 'OK' AGAIN.



MIKE VISION

YEAH, THAT'S IT.

GOOD, LET'S GRAB IT AND GET OUTTA HERE.

EVE, WE'VE GOT THE WEAPONS.

GOOD WE'LL NEED THEM. WE JUST GOT A **PRIORITY ONE** MESSAGE FROM STATESMAN. ALL HEROES ARE TO REPORT TO ATLAS PARK A.S.A.P.!

FREEDOM FACTION HQ

**PRIORITY ONE?!**  
WHAT'S UP?

DIMENSIONAL PORTALS ARE POPPING UP ALL OVER ATLAS.

ARACHNOS TROOPS ARE POURING OUT! HURRY!

WE'RE ON OUR WAY!

IPO AND I WILL MEET YOU THERE.

HEY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO SNOOP BUT IT'S HARD NOT TO WHEN YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS IS YELLING.

I TOLD YOU. **STAY OUT OF MY HEAD.**

SORRY MAN, I JUST NEVER KNEW...

DROP IT. I'LL CATCH YOU IN ATLAS.

ATLAS PARK DEFENSES ARE ACTIVATED. THE PILL BOXES AND HEAVIES ARE DEPLOYED.

FREEDOM FACTION GATHERS IN ATLAS PARK WHILE ARACHNOS ATTACK SHIPS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION FLY OVERHEAD.

THE SUN RISES, BATHING THE CITY IN ORANGE AND RED.

WHO SCHEDULES A MAJOR OFFENSIVE AT THIS TIME OF THE DAY?!

I MEAN SERIOUSLY. IF YOU'RE GONNA BEND SPACE AND TIME, DO IT AT A DECENT HOUR.

OK TEAM, STATESMAN HAS ASSIGNED US TO SECTOR 4. OUR MISSION IS SIMPLE. PROTECT ATLAS PARK. CLOSE ANY PORTALS WE FIND, AND ESCORT ANY UNWANTED GUESTS OUT.

AND WITH THAT, THE TEAM GETS TO WORK.

THE TIDES WERE TURNING FOR GOOD UNTIL A NEW GROUP OF VILLAINS APPEARED LED BY A VERY FAMILIAR FACE.

HOLY @\$@#! SBALLER?!

IT'S SBRAWLER SLICK.

AND WE WERE JUST LEAVING.

SBALLER WASN'T FIXED ON HIS ALTER EGO.

HE WAS LOCKED ON THE THUG BY HIS SIDE.

HE COULDN'T MOVE. HE COULDN'T BREATHE.

ONLY ONE THOUGHT RAN THROUGH HIS HEAD.

JADEN.

WHO IN THE HECK IS THAT?

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

YET THERE HE STOOD, RIGHT NEXT MY MIRROR IMAGE.

JADEN WAS ALIVE.

I THEORIZE THIS IS SBALLER FROM THE INVADING DIMENSION.

ALTERNATE DIMENSION SBALLER? GREAT.

SO, HOW COME HE'S ON THEIR SIDE?!

CREW, INTRODUCE YOURSELVES TO THE SPANDEX SQUAD.

I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THIS IS A STATE-OF-THE-ART KEVLAR, LYCRA BLEND.

IT'S EVEN MACHINE WASHABLE.

BUT NOT QUITE BULLETPROOF.

SUDDENLY, A PORTAL OPENS NEARBY.

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

EVEN THE BULLETS FLYING BY WEREN'T ENOUGH TO WAKE SBALLER FROM THE SHOCK OF SEEING JADEN.

OUR RIDE'S HERE BOYS.

UNTIL EVE PREPARED TO FIRE ON HIM.

**JAAAADEN!**

LET'S BAIL!

THANKS DAWG. I OWE YOU ONE.

SBRAWLER AND JADEN ESCAPE THROUGH THE PORTAL.

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING!?

BRINGING HIM BACK?!!

EVERYONE BACK TO HQ. NOW!

SORRY ABOUT EVE.

BUT I'VE GOT TO SAVE HIM.

WHO'S SIDE ARE YOU ON!?

I'M BRINGING HIM BACK.

HE DOESN'T BELONG HERE!

WHAT IF I'D DONE THINGS DIFFERENTLY?

TO BE CONTINUED...