



THE WEB

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JAN '10

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SECOND FEATURE

The Hangman





I'VE NEVER REALLY BEEN A TEAM PLAYER. I HOGGED THE BALL, I CUT IN LINE, I LOOKED OUT FOR NUMBER ONE.

THAT TENDS TO PISS PEOPLE OFF. SO I WASN'T SURPRISED TO SEE BATGIRL, WHEN THE STARS CLEARED...



HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

I'VE BEEN TAILING YOU FOR DAYS. YOUR SECURITY HAS WEAKNESSES IN SECTORS 4, 5 AND 8. JUST SO YOU KNOW.



SPINNING THE FUTURE PART 3

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JOHN RAYMOND WAS BORN RICH AND SPOILED BUT SPURNED BY HIS FATHER WHO ADMIRER HIS SELFLESS BROTHER INSTEAD. WHEN JOHN'S INFLECTION LED TO HIS BROTHER'S DEATH, JOHN DETERMINED TO BECOME THE MAN HIS FATHER HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT OF HIS BROTHER AS. SEEKING TO REDEEM HIMSELF AS THE HIGH-TECH HERO KNOWN ONLY AS...

THE WEB

THANKS,
BATGIRL.

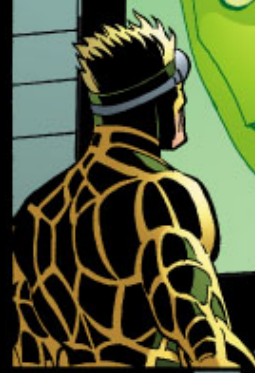
HELLO,
MR. WEB. MY
NAME IS ORACLE.
YOU NEED TO
CEASE AND DESIST
IMMEDIATELY.

I'VE ACTIVATED
A FAIRLY LETHAL
COMPUTER VIRUS. IF
YOU TOUCH ANOTHER KEY,
YOUR ENTIRE COMPUTER
NETWORK WILL SELF-
DESTRUCT.

...ALL RIGHT. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, CREEPY GREEN FACE?

WE HAVE RECEIVED HUNDREDS OF REPORTS THAT CITIZENS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED MILITARY-GRADE SUPER-SUITS AND ARE USING THE SUPER-POWERS PROVIDED BY THESE SUITS TO EXACT VIGILANTE JUSTICE AROUND THE WORLD.

THEY ARE CALLING THEMSELVES **WEB HOSTS** AND SAY THAT THEY ARE FIGHTING CRIME ON YOUR BEHALF.



SO?



SO--YOUR WEB HOSTS ARE WREAKING HAVOC ON COMMUNITIES AROUND THE GLOBE, NOT TO MENTION UPSETTING THE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN NATIONS.

SAYS WHO?

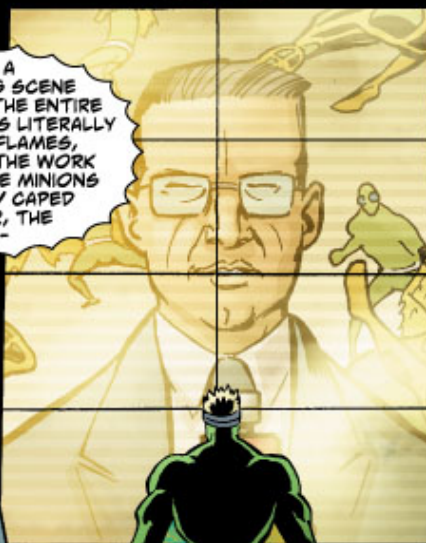
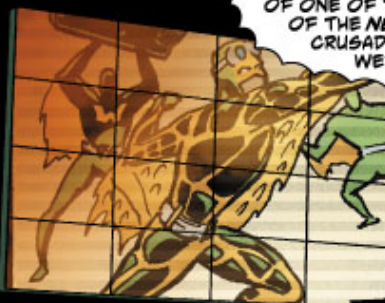
THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.

I THINK YOU'RE EXAGGERATING.

ANOTHER SIGHTING OF A SO-CALLED **WEB HOST** WAS SPOTTED ATTACKING A **KOBRA** STRONGHOLD IN AFGHANISTAN TODAY--

--IT'S A FRIGHTENING SCENE HERE, CAROL, THE ENTIRE OIL REFINERY HAS LITERALLY GONE UP IN FLAMES, REPORTEDLY THE WORK OF ONE OF THE MINIONS OF THE NEW CAPED CRUSADER, THE **WEB**--

--SUPERHERO OR SUPER-MENACE? FISHERMEN WERE TREATED TO A SURPRISE TODAY WHEN A MAN IDENTIFYING HIMSELF ONLY AS A "WEB HOST" ATTACKED A FISHING VESSEL, ACCUSING THE FISHERS OF ILLEGALLY POACHING WHALES--





THERE IS A THIN LINE BETWEEN ANARCHY AND JUSTICE, MR. WEB. YOU NEED TO LEAVE CRIME FIGHTING TO THE PROFESSIONALS.



IN SHORT, GO HOME, DUDE. IT'S A MESS OUT THERE, AND YOU GUYS ARE WORSE THAN THE CRIMINALS.



I'M NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT THE WEB HOSTS DO. THEY ARE INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS LICENSING MY TECHNOLOGY. THAT'S IT.

I DON'T CARE WHAT ARRANGEMENT YOU MADE WITH THEM--THEY THINK THEY ARE WORKING FOR YOU. YOU SENT THEM OUT THERE WITH NO TRAINING.

EACH SUIT COMES WITH AN INSTRUCTION MANUAL AND FREE TECH SUPPORT FOR 120 DAYS.



I DON'T THINK YOU'RE UNDERSTANDING ME.

I UNDERSTAND YOU PERFECTLY, ORACLE. YOU AND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE INTEND TO STRONG-ARM ME INTO SHUTTING DOWN MY START-UP. THAT'S UNDERSTANDABLE--IT'S NO SECRET THAT THE JUSTICE LEAGUE HAS STEADILY GROWN SLOW AND COMPLACENT OVER THE LAST DECADE.

MY INTERNAL ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT THE WEB, INC. AND ITS LICENSED SUBSIDIARIES WILL OUTPACE AND OUTPERFORM THE JUSTICE LEAGUE INSIDE OF THREE YEARS.



THE JUSTICE LEAGUE IS NOT A BUSINESS--

OF COURSE IT IS. YOU HAVE A BRAND. YOU PROVIDE A SERVICE. YOU HAVE CUSTOMERS. AND LIKE ANY CORPORATION, YOU'RE SCARED BY THE COMPETITION.

CAN I HIT HIM AGAIN?



IF YOU DON'T PULL BACK YOUR WEB HOSTS, PEOPLE ARE GOING TO GET HURT.

ON THE CONTRARY, I CARE A GREAT DEAL. THAT IS WHY I EMPOWERED THE WEB HOSTS TO BEGIN WITH. WHO GAVE THE JUSTICE LEAGUE THE AUTHORITY TO DECIDE WHAT CRIME TO FIGHT AND WHAT CRIME TO IGNORE?

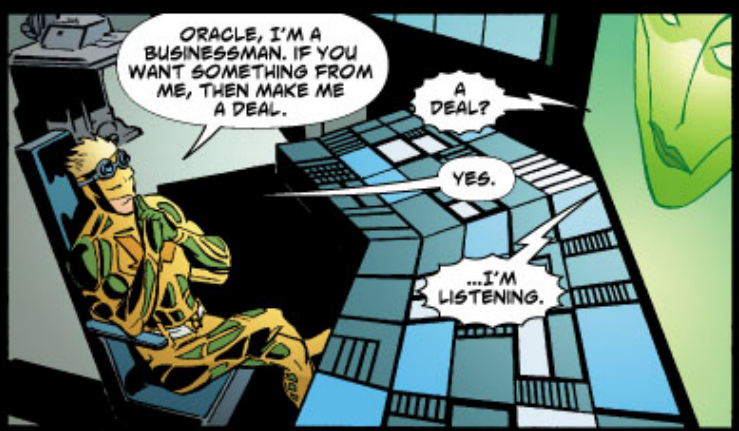
LAST TIME I CHECKED, YOUR MEMBERS WERE NOT ELECTED OFFICIALS.

AGAIN-- NOT MY PROBLEM.

WE CAN ARGUE ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY SOME OTHER TIME, MR. WEB. RIGHT NOW-- THERE IS A FIRE TO PUT OUT. LITERALLY.



DON'T YOU CARE AT ALL ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING OUT THERE IN YOUR NAME?



ORACLE, I'M A BUSINESSMAN. IF YOU WANT SOMETHING FROM ME, THEN MAKE ME A DEAL.

A DEAL?

YES.

...I'M LISTENING.



I WANT TO FIND A CRIMINAL NAMED DR. ARCHER. DO YOU HAVE ANY TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR ARSENAL THAT WILL HELP ME?



I HAVE SOME CUTTING EDGE SOFTWARE THAT WILL OVERHAUL YOUR SYSTEM. IT WILL GIVE YOU EYES AROUND THE GLOBE AND ACCESS TO MILLIONS OF ENCRYPTED DATABASES. I'M SURE IT CAN HELP YOU FIND ONE MAN.

AND IN RETURN?

YOU BRING THE WEB HOSTS UNDER SOME SORT OF ORGANIZATIONAL UMBRELLA AND AGREE TO COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS WITH THOSE OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE SO WE STAY OUT OF EACH OTHER'S WAY.



I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.

UM...O, DO YOU MIND IF I TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE?

EXCUSE US, MR. WEB...



ARE YOU NUTS? WHY ARE YOU ROLLING OVER FOR THIS BLOWHARD?



WE DON'T HAVE THE TIME TO FIGHT THIS GUY AND HIS 101 WANNABES. I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM SOFTWARE IMPLANTED WITH SPYWARE SO WE CAN KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.

I'M GOING ON RECORD THAT I THINK THIS IS A HUGE MISTAKE.

NOTED.



OKAY, MR. WEB. DO WE HAVE A DEAL?

DEAL.

BATGIRL WILL HELP YOU INSTALL THE SOFTWARE ONCE YOU SHOW YOU CAN GET YOUR WEB HOSTS UNDER CONTROL. I'LL BE IN TOUCH.



HERE'S A NUMBER. CALL ME WHEN YOU GET THE SOFTWARE.



THANKS, CUTIE.

I WAS THINKING MAYBE WE COULD GRAB SOME BREAKFAST...



EW! DREAM ON, DUDE. YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY FATHER!



TELLING THE JUSTICE LEAGUE WHERE TO STICK IT? GOOD. WATCHING BATGIRL STORM OFF...?

PRICELESS.

GET MY PEOPLE
IN LINE. EASIER
SAID THAN DONE.

ORACLE WAS RIGHT--I'D REALLY LET THE
GENIE OUT OF THE BOTTLE. I'D DELEGATED
THE VETTING PROCESS TO NICKLEBAKER
SECURITY SYSTEMS WHO GAVE OUT SUITS
TO A CROSS-SECTION OF EX-MILITARY,
RADICALS AND EVERYDAY JOES WITH AN
AX TO GRIND NOW DRUNK WITH POWER.

I GUESS I
COULD FILE
THIS WHOLE
WEB HOST
PROGRAM UNDER
"SEEMED LIKE
A GOOD IDEA
AT THE TIME."

SO, AGAINST MY BETTER
JUDGMENT I CALLED
THE FIRST EVER
CORPORATE RETREAT
OF THE WEB, INC.

HELLO
my name is
THE WEB

THANK YOU
ALL FOR COMING
TO THE FIRST ANNUAL
MEETING OF THE WEB, INC.
IT'S EXCITING TO SEE ALL
THOSE FRESH, ALBEIT
MASKED, FACES OUT
THERE.

WE ARE
GOING TO
MAKE HISTORY,
YOU AND I,
TOGETHER.

BUT FIRST,
A FEW OPERATIONAL
GUIDELINES. IF YOU CAN
ALL PLEASE TURN TO
PAGE TWO IN YOUR
PACKETS.

I SHOULD
HAVE KNOWN
I WAS GOING
TO GET
TROUBLE
FROM THE GUY
WITH THE
MOUSTACHE
AND THE
PAUNCH.

EXCUSE ME, BUT
I WAS UNDER THE
IMPRESSION
THAT WE WERE
"LICENSING" YOUR
TECHNOLOGY. THE
AD SAID--"BE YOUR
OWN SUPERHERO."
IT DIDN'T SAY
ANYTHING ABOUT
FOLLOWING ANY
GUIDELINES.

YOU GUYS ARE "FRANCHISE"
OF THE CORE BRAND, THE WEB. AS
"FRANCHISEES" YOU CAN USE THE
SUIT TO FIGHT CRIME, BUT NEED
TO OPERATE UNDER A SET OF
PRESCRIBED GUIDELINES. WE WILL
BE WORKING WITH OUR
CORPORATE PARTNER, THE
JUSTICE LEAGUE--

THE JUSTICE
LEAGUE--THEY'RE
NOTHING BUT A BUNCH
OF LIBERAL ELITIST
CRONIES--

YEAH!

SAN FRANCISCO.
2 AM.

I DIDN'T KNOW
IT YET, BUT IT
BEGAN WITH
OSAMU TANABE.

OSAMU WAS
A SLAVE.

THE MEN HE WORKED FOR DURING
THE DAY BROUGHT HIM TO THE
UNITED STATES FOR WHAT THEY
CALLED "A GREAT OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE LOTS OF MONEY."

THE ONLY WAY OSAMU SAW
TO GET OUT FROM THE
CONTROL OF THESE MEN WAS
TO TAKE A SECOND JOB, A
SECRET JOB HE TOILED AT
EVERY SINGLE NIGHT, ALWAYS
AFRAID THAT THE MEN WHO
BROUGHT HIM TO AMERICA
WOULD FIND OUT.

NOW, EXHAUSTED,
HE STOOD UNDER
THE SCANT PROTECTION
OF AN OVERHANGING
LEDGE. FOR TWENTY
MINUTES THE RAIN POURED
DOWN WITH SUCH VOLUME
THAT TO OSAMU IT SEEMED
AS IF HE WAS STANDING
UNDER AN ENORMOUS
WATERFALL.

THEY EVEN "ALLOWED"
HIM TO WORK OFF HIS
TRANSPORTATION DEBT
TO THEM OUT OF THE
WAGES HE'D EARN.

THIS SEEMED GENEROUS
UNTIL OSAMU LEARNED
OF THE HIDDEN COSTS.
HIS "EMPLOYERS" CHARGED
HIM RENT ON THE SMALL
APARTMENT HE SHARED WITH
FOURTEEN OTHER MEN IN
THE SAME PREDICAMENT,
AS WELL AS FOR FOOD,
A UNIFORM, AND FALSIFIED
WORKING PAPERS.

THEN HE
NOTICED
ANOTHER
SOUND
BEHIND
THE
WATERFALL
SOUND.

ONCE ALL OF THIS WAS
PAID FOR OUT OF HIS
INADEQUATE WAGES,
THERE WAS NO MONEY
TO PAY EVEN THE
HIGH INTEREST ON THE
TRANSPORTATION FEE.



HIS LAST MOMENTS WERE SPENT WATCHING AS THE WATER ON THE GROUND WAS DRAWN ALONG THE STREET TO THE ENORMOUS THING WAITING THERE.

LIKE THE OCEAN BEING PULLED AWAY FROM THE SHORE BY THE TIDE, OR TO FEED A TSUNAMI.

THE ROAR OF THE SEA.

THEN HE RAN.

HE RAN FOR HIS LIFE.

IN 1884, DR. ROBERT DICKERING MADE A DEAL THAT SPARED HIM FROM THE NOOSE. SINCE THAT TIME, HE HAS LIVED A DIVIDED LIFE. BY DAY, HE SAVES LIVES AS A TRAUMA SURGEON. BY NIGHT, HE SAVES THE INNOCENT AND CONDEMNS THE GUILTY AS THE SUPERNATURAL AVENGER—

THE ROAR OF THE SEA

HELLBOY

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GOOD MORNING, DR. DICKERING.

'MORNING, SACHIKO. HEY, MALCOLM. THAT WAS SOME STORM LAST NIGHT, HUH?

THAT'S THE ONLY REASON IT'S SO QUIET AROUND HERE THIS MORNING. IT KEPT EVERYONE INDOORS.

NOT EVERYONE. THE EMTS BROUGHT A GUY IN AROUND FIVE WHO, GET THIS, DROWNED LAST NIGHT.

DROWNED? WAS HE ASLEEP ON THE GROUND?

NOT FROM WHAT I HEARD.