

FIVE-LEAF CLOVER

RAVENSGATE: THE FOUNDRY, ISSUE #38

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WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED SINCE LAST ISSUE:

Over the past nine months, The Foundry has been kept busy doing high-profile photo-op drug busts for COMETPRO liaison and DEA policy wonk Victor Rodriguez. They still don't trust him, and neither does COMETPRO MIB Antonio Marcoli. Before being reassigned to Area 51, Marcoli changed the classification of The Foundry's secret identities so that Rodriguez could not access them with his clearance level.

In November 2002, voters went to the polls to elect the next Mayor of Ravensgate, and to revise the city charter. The city charter revision would eliminate general-election runoffs in future election years, and it would shrink the Assembly down from 31 seats to eleven. In the mayoral race, the top three finishers—Salome Throckmorton-d'Aubaine (32%), Phil Snow (27%) and Oroville Ketchum (22%)—out of a 13-candidate field had to face off again in a January runoff. The January 2003 runoff proved to be just that, as a flood reduced voter turnout. Salome Throckmorton-d'Aubaine won the runoff, held under the new city charter, with only 41% of the vote, but opponents Snow (39%) and Ketchum (20%) filed suit to invalidate the election. Prior to the runoff election, the Municipal Assembly declared the Mayor's Office vacant and Assembly Chair Mihaly Cieznik ran the city from the intended mayoral inaugural date of January 2 until a judge threw out the lawsuit on March 3, allowing Salome to take office.

In the Congressional races for the Ravensgate area, voters re-elected Hellman Jessup and David Gavriel—but barely. Jessup won his 22nd term with his lowest percentage ever (31%) out of a field of seven candidates, while Gavriel's 37% was enough to fend off eight challengers and earn his fourth trip to Washington. It was a sharp wake-up call for two Jean-Pierre d'Aubaine candidates who were virtually unopposed in May.

Also during the intervening months, the Ravensgate Crime Commission has kept a very low profile while The Foundry helps the Checkerheads keep order in Ravensgate. Mounting opposition to the pending war in Iraq has spilled out onto the city streets, and the spread-thin Checkerheads begin to display their frayed nerves on national television—and in protesters' faces.

SUMMARY FOR THIS ISSUE:

The Foundry acts as a calming influence; whenever they appear, the Checkerheads fall back and crowds of protesters disperse. If any physical intervention is required of The Foundry, it is to keep protesters from trampling each other and to protect businesses from being burned and looted.

On a routine patrol of the Mid-North Area, Velocity and Energon notice that Aurora Gate is very quiet—and perhaps the Legba organization's presence has something to do with that. Velocity uses this observation to show Energon the power Legba wields—the power of fear. A distress call from Mid-North Precinct interrupts the lesson, and the two heroes rush to respond.

They discover a golem attacking Mid-North Precinct and an adjacent building—and note that Jack Nash's car is parked a couple of blocks away. The adjacent building has

collapsed. When Velocity and Energon confront the golem, they are attacked by Herr Doktor, Rakshasa and her pet tiger Tony, Snakegirl, and a squad of mercenaries. After a pitched battle, in which Shadowstrike joins to help Energon and Velocity, they defeat the villains and catch up on the latest developments in Jack's world.

Jack is on spring break from Linfield. The last time The Foundry saw him, it was at a Packwood College home game in October where freshman fourth-string quarterback Jack threw for a series during Linfield's 105-0 victory. During their socializing, Velocity and Energon learn that Jack will be home for dinner—and that Dominic "The Chef" Spanno will be a dinner guest of the Nashes.

Unknown to Jack, the two heroes slip some bugs into Jack's laundry and are thus privy to the dinner conversation later that evening. The Foundry reviews audio and video of a very mundane conversation, and they are convinced the body language John Nash and Dominic Spanno display is some type of code to throw off wire-tappers. If only they knew the code cipher...

The data collected points to two conclusions: Jack has no clue how his father brings home the dough, considering how Jack began investigating the local money trail the previous year, and his parents are keeping The Foundry's identities secret from the RCC in order to have some possible leverage—either against The Foundry, the RCC, or both.