

Editorial & Opinions

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Who really protects the public, anyway?

Times are strange when gadflies like Oroville Ketchum begin to make sense. Think about it: Ravensgate has 14 publicly active superheroes—twice that of Los Angeles and three more than in New York—yet our crime rate is skyrocketing. Homicides have quintupled, assaults have tripled and robberies have doubled.

Will this be the legacy of Superintendent of Public Safety, and GOP mayoral nominee, Philip Snow? Snow has taken the fiscal conservative approach in times of recession—he's forced layoffs of one-third of his workforce. Granted, he had to crush a few bad apples, but did he have to clear-cut an entire orchard? He took the Enron and Arthur Anderson approach, and it's biting him in the posterior in the crime stats. So what if some rank-and-file fell prey to metahuman mind control—does that make them too tainted to ever wear a badge again?

The *Journal* and its publisher, to borrow from Will Shakespeare, suffered the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune for asking this question about Snow after some of his own men tried to assassinate him: If he's not safe in this town, are *you*?

Mayor Salome Throckmorton-d'Aubaine is my only daughter, yes, but she is stubbornly independent. She steadfastly refuses to fire Phil Snow because of his support for her hard line against striking police officers.

And what of The Foundry? Any long-time 'Gater can tell you countless urban legends about dark doings and sinister conspiracies. One almost wonders why The Foundry is so camera-shy as it assumes the mantle of the departing Team Hyperion. Why are they hiding behind COMETPRO sanction and refusing to cooperate with local authorities? Do they really want to lend credence to the unsubstantiated rumors circulating about their involvement with the Ravensgate Crime Commission, itself just an urban myth?

Speaking of urban myths, why is Antonio Marcoli, COMETPRO Region IX Special Agent In Charge, so intent on chasing them? The Crime Commission hasn't existed since the 1920s—if it ever did—and the sabotage of his elite agents' powered armor speaks volumes about his priorities and leadership. How is it that a computer virus invaded those suits, anyway? Just *who is* minding the store down at the Federal Building, anyway?

Marcoli has invoked "national security" instead of answering the tough questions regarding his own compromised security, what The Foundry discovered down in the Old Underground, and whether The Foundry or whoever they fought came out on top. Why is it that every time a Fed invokes "national security," there are multiple intelligence and/or policy failures being concealed?

Then there's the matter of Vic Charlton, former KRGO and *Journal* op-ed polemicist. Now known as Victor Charlton, he's a freelancer and faculty at a private prep school—and now proof of the old adage, "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." He called me minutes before all hell broke loose down on Main Street, ostensibly to gloat about having scooped me on a potential story.

Someone had to have overheard him getting the scoop or gloating, because they attacked as soon as COMETPRO was on the scene. Loose lips sank ships in World War II, but they carry far more devastating consequences in these times of high-tech terrorism. Normally, I'd support the Oregon Shield Law—except in this case, it is shielding a terrorist collaborator. For his own sake, Charlton damn well better reveal his source so that it can be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Three people are striving to get to the bottom of this. Our two Congressmen, old Hellman Jessup and young Dave Gavriel, are bringing an emergency session of the House Infrastructure Protection Subcommittee to Ravensgate. They will investigate the failure of the COMETPRO powered armor suits, among other things. And Mayor Throckmorton-d'Aubaine is empaneling a City Assembly committee to investigate any municipal security failures.

The mayor and Rep. Gavriel are the keynote speakers at a rally this Saturday. The Not In Our Town rally at the Ravensgate Totem will raise awareness of personal security measures, and raise funds for repairs to the 43 buildings damaged in the cyberterror attack. For every person at the rally, and for every dollar raised, *The Journal* will match with a dollar of its own. It has become painfully clear that only we can protect ourselves.