



PROJECT: PATRON

3

REVENGE AND RESURRECTION

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HEY, DIANA.
IT'S ME,
MORO.

I KNOW I MISSED A
CHECK-IN. BUT THINGS
AT PROJECT PATRON
HAVE BEEN...

WELCOME
BACK. I'M BROWNE
STEVENSSON.

WE'VE GOT
THE SON OF '76,
LONGTIME CRITIC OF
THE PATRON. AFTER HIS
HIGHLY PUBLIC CRASH
AND UNEXPLAINED
DISAPPEARANCE...

...SON OF '76,
SHOULD WE HAVE
LISTENED TO YOUR
FEARS ABOUT THE
PATRON'S DISTANCE
FROM THE
SUPER-SERVICE
COMMUNITY?



CNA
NEWS

SON OF '76 SPEAKS OUT

LONGTIME HERO GOES BAD?

INVESTIGATION OPENED INTO MISSING SPACE FORCE SURPLUS

CNA

6:09 AM PT

DO I
EVEN HAVE
TO SAY IT,
BROWNE?

THE PATRON
HAS ALWAYS
ACTED LIKE HE'S
ABOVE THE REST OF
US, BLINKING OFF TO
SOME UNTRACEABLE
FORTRESS WITH
SOMETHING TO
HIDE.

WHY IS HE
DODGING
ACCOUNTABILITY
FOR DESTROYING A
MICHIGAN TOWN? IF
THE PATRON CARES
SO MUCH...
WHERE IS
HE?

...COMPLEX.

KONE'S BEEN GONE
A WEEK. HE DIED IN
THE PATRON'S
PILOT CAPSULE...

...SO NONE
OF US ARE
EXACTLY
JUMPING
TO GET
INSIDE.



SO...

...WE'VE TRIED
NOT TALKING ABOUT IT.
I KNOW I'M **NEW**, I KNOW
WE'RE **WORKING** HIS
CASE...

...BUT
MAYBE LAST
WEEK SHOULDN'T
BE THE **LAST**
WE SAY ABOUT
COMMANDER
KONE.

EVERYBODY'S
GOT TO HAVE A
STORY, RIGHT?



I'LL NEVER
FORGET THE
FIRST TIME I
SAW HIM GO IN
ON A BOWL,
LENA.

NO MATTER
THE CASE, KONE
DIDN'T NEED THE
DETAILS. HE LEFT
THOSE TO
ME.

"THE MISSION
ISN'T BREAKFAST." HE
WASN'T HERE TO ENJOY
THE TASTE. MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED WAS
HIS **ONLY** GOAL.

HE
TRUSTED ME TO
GET US TO MISSION
ACCOMPLISHED, TRUSTED
MY KNOWLEDGE,
INTUITION, AND MY
EXPERIENCE.

KONE
DIDN'T HAVE TO
MICROMANAGE. HE
BELIEVED IN EVERY
PART OF THE TEAM
HE'D BUILT.



KONE RAN THIS TEAM
LIKE MONEYBALL...
AND IT **WORKED**.

HE
GOT THE
MOST OUT
OF US. NOW WE
NEED TO DO
THE SAME.

EVERYONE
HERE COULD USE
THAT THOUGHT, LENA.
SHOULD WE BRING
IN THE **TECHS**?





MEANWHILE,
THE WORLD
THINKS THE
PATRON'S
ABANDONED
THEM.

THE
FIRST THING
I'D TELL YOU
ABOUT CONRAD
KONE IS...

...HE
LOVED
THIS
CRAP.

FLAVORLESS SHIT MADE UP
OF EGG WHITES, AVOCADO OIL,
PSYLLIUM HUSK AND OATS.
EVERYTHING YOU NEED...
AND NO TIME
WASTED.

YEAH,
I MEAN,
CONRAD
WAS...

...YOU THREE,
YOU'VE GOT THE
WORDS...ALWAYS HAD
THE WORDS. ME, I
WAS NEVER THAT
COMPLICATED.

I
JOBBED OUT
OF EVERYTHING I
EVER DID...BUT CONRAD
SAW THE POTENTIAL.
HE...REALLY **SAW** ME.

TRY AGAIN,
KID...THE **GRIMES**
EQUATION. THE MORE
PEOPLE KNOW A SECRET,
THE FASTER IT
GETS OUT.

THE
U.N. HAS OVERSIGHT
BUT DOESN'T KNOW OUR
LOCATION. THE TECHS
ARE BASE MODEL
REPLOIDS.

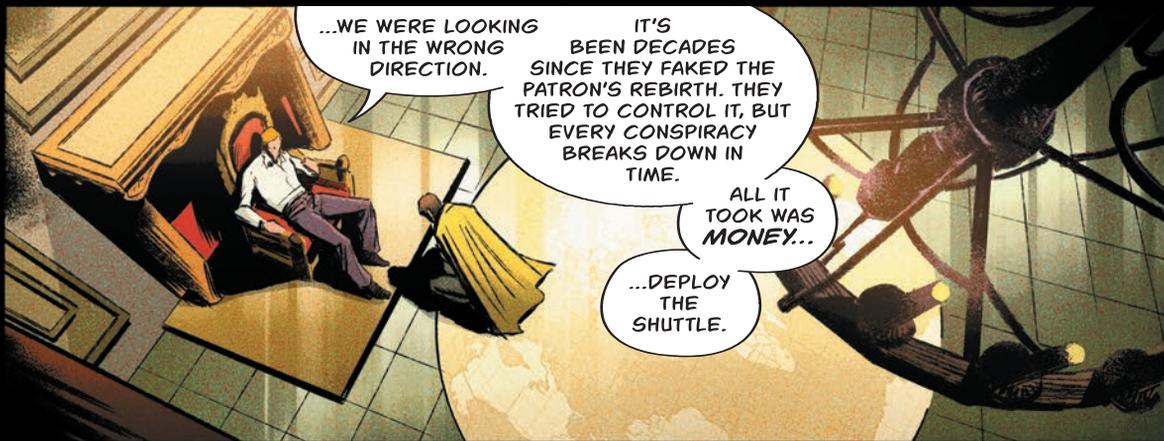
WE'RE THE
ONLY LIVING PEOPLE
HERE. BEST WAY TO
PROTECT A LIE?



"BE THE **ONLY**
ONE TO KNOW IT."

YOU'VE
FOUND IT,
FATHER?

OF
COURSE. ALL
THESE YEARS
SEARCHING DEEP
BENEATH THE
EARTH...



...WE WERE LOOKING
IN THE WRONG
DIRECTION.

IT'S
BEEN DECADES
SINCE THEY FAKED THE
PATRON'S REBIRTH. THEY
TRIED TO CONTROL IT, BUT
EVERY CONSPIRACY
BREAKS DOWN IN
TIME.

ALL IT
TOOK WAS
MONEY...

...DEPLOY
THE
SHUTTLE.



UMPF...

PATIENCE AND
PAYMENT BROUGHT
ME MY GREATEST
FOE'S TRUTH.

THE LEVERAGE FOR
THAT TRUTH CAME
COSTLY. BUT WITH
ONLY A SLIGHT ASTRAL
INTERVENTION, A TOOL
LONG-DEAD...
WILL LIVE.



AND AS
FOR THE
PATRON'S
SECRET. I'VE
KEPT IT,
YES...

...YOU
DON'T BURN
EVERY ASSET
RIGHT AWAY.
YOU WAIT...

"...UNTIL IT'LL
YIELD THE
GREATEST
RETURN."

**DAMN
IT!**

THERE
HAS TO
BE SOME-
THING.

YOU WERE
SURE OF IT,
KONE. YOU KNEW
IT WAS MAMMON, IN
YOUR GUT. I WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE
THE **BRAINS**,
BUT...

...THIS
ISN'T A BREAK-
THROUGH. IT'S A
MESS. YOU'RE
DEAD, AND I'M
HERE...

...PICKING
UP THE
PIECES.

THE
BUFFERS
REFORMAT THE
PATRON'S
EXTRA-SENSES
FOR **SAFE**
CONSUMPTION
BY A HUMAN
MIND.

THE TECHS
CHECKED THE
OUTPUT REACHING
YOU, KONE. BUT
WHAT DID THEY
LOOK LIKE
BEFORE?

LAB? DISPLAY **RAW**
SENSORY OUTPUT FROM
THE **CASINO JOB**. RUN
IT AS **BINARY**, DON'T
WANT TO BLOW MY
EYES OUT.

THE
AUDIO AND
VISUAL...IT WAS
ENCODED BEYOND
HUMAN PERCEPTION
LEVELS. WHEN THE
BUFFERS HIT, SOME
OF THE DATA BECAME
INVISIBLE.

A **TROJAN**
IDEA. YOU DIDN'T
KNOW WHAT YOU
WERE **REALLY**
LOOKING AT,
KONE. YOU...

BUT
WHAT **WERE**
YOU LOOKING
AT?