



STRANGE FREQUENCIES

**Opinions and Editorial
by David Branstetter**

Hero Central 8-9

Hero Central Universe is an epic multicharacter multistory comic that seeks to blend several different genres into one compelling package. Being a new reader I couldn't help but to be lost and I must admit that I had a hard time understanding the story. I think that the lack of context for new scenes and the lack of establishing shots helped to contribute to this problem. It's apparent that Jason Bullock is excited about his creation and wants others to share his vision. Somewhere along the way the awesome story he's envisioned isn't quite translating to paper. Don't get me wrong, there are plenty of bright spots in the book. For instance as the book moves along Jason begins to adopt more of a grid pattern to his pages. This makes the story flow better and it makes it easier to understand what happens next. There was a particular page that caught my attention. It's when Maris embraces Tony after he was acquitted for murder. That scene was really touching and it felt very natural. The combination of the close up in panel 4 and the open shot of the embrace worked really well. There's a panel a few pages

later where Maris says "I hate Dogs". Her perfect piercing eyes communicates just the right amount of intensity for the scene.

I'm also kind of intrigued with this whole Reinfeld/Dracula subplot. I don't really understand how that story can fit into the modern setting. I'm also not sure if this is following the books story or if it's moving forward into uncharted territory.

One thing that really took me out of the story for HCU: Confidential was the shot for shot remake of X-Force #4. Instead of focusing on the story I kept thinking... I've seen this before. The first clue was the Spider-man like character called Shutterbug. I was really impressed by his design. Just retro enough to remind me of Spider-Man but different enough to be it's own thing. Even with those similarities I'd really like to see more of Shutterbug. I think he has a great look and an interesting concept. Just imagine how a character whose main gimmick is taking pictures and how that would effect people in our social media drenched world. Keep up

the good work and as always I'm looking forward to the next issue.

Valiant Effort #4

It seems this time in Valiant Efforts #4 Street Fury story takes the lead. In an interesting introduction, a new Shadow Stalker takes over the family job of being a superhero. It appears that the suit give's it wearer certain abilities that makes Shadow Stalker one tough guy. When the characters aren't collecting bounty on drug dealers they're worried about the spiritual life of their new team mates.

I definitely connected with the Golden Protector in issue 3 and was disappointed that after gracing such amazing cover that he wasn't the star attraction to the issue. I will say that his appearance in this issue was more satisfying than the Street Fury story. I liked how the story was more focused and pretty plot heavy on one character. I think this made the action a little easier to follow. However it wouldn't be a Valiant Efforts comic without the obligatory spiritual conflict. The worship scene on the second to last page was a little out of place. I think it would be more interesting if he's having a conversation with himself while the battle is going on. I think that would add a little more conflict to the story. If we feel that the character is struggling (either with spiritual depression or with a physical

nemesis) we'll be able to relate to him more.

The whole point of these books are to find something (like superhero comics) in common with folks who don't necessarily have a spiritual life. I say these books could use a little more spiritual conflict and less physical conflict. I'd really like to see the characters struggle with their dual roles, that being a superhero and a believer in God. Those responsibilities should weight heavily on their minds. There seems to be a gleeful rush for these characters to kick some tail. I can't relate to that because it borders too much on wish fulfillment and fantasy. Yes comics are about escapism but they must also draw us in with situations that we all experience. Superman is not interesting because of the things he can do, it's the things that can not do that makes him an interesting character.

Well I don't want to overstay my welcome. It's good to see another issue of Valiant Efforts out. Comics by their very nature are not an easy thing to do and to have another one come out mere months from the previous issue it's a good sign of things to come.

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