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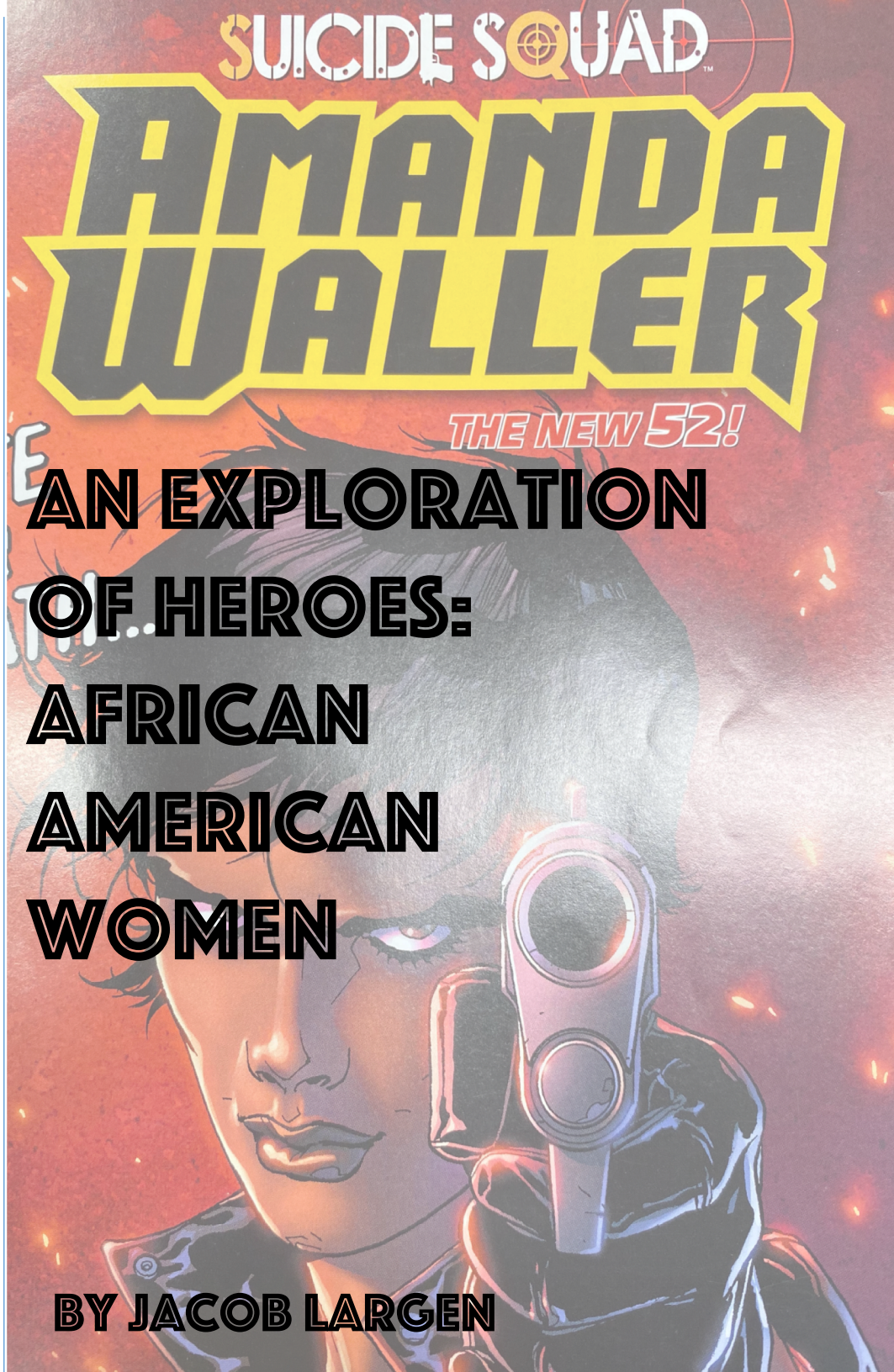
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EDITORIAL STATEMENT

IN MODERN ACADEMIA SURROUNDING COMIC CULTURE, "'TRADITIONAL'" COMIC BOOKS ARE OFTEN LAUDED AS "WHITE MALE POWER FANTASIES," AND WHEN LOOKING AT CHARACTERS SUCH AS BATMAN, SUPERMAN, THOR, ETC. THAT OBSERVATION SEEMS MORE THAN LIKELY. THIS TREND IN POPULAR COMICS TOUCHES ON A FAR MORE SUBSTANTIAL AND UNFORTUNATE PATTERN WITHIN COMICS, AND THAT IS THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN WITHIN COMIC BOOKS, SPECIFICALLY AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN. THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE UNDERREPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN WITHIN COMICS DEPRIVES AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN OF PRIVILEGES THAT THE WHITE COMMUNITY ENJOYS, NAMELY THE ABILITY TO LOOK UP TO SOMETHING OR SOMEONE. AS A KID, I ALWAYS DRESSED AS BATMAN FOR HALLOWEEN. I HAD BACKPACKS FULL OF BATMAN TOYS, AND EVERY CINEMATIC ITERATION OF THE CAPED CRUSADER ON DVD. I COULD FIND MYSELF IN HIM AND IT MADE ME WANT TO BE BETTER FOR IT. BATMAN MADE ME BELIEVE THAT EVEN / COULD BE A HERO. IT WASN'T UNTIL I BEGAN TO STUDY THE REPRESENTATION, OR LACK THEREOF, OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN WITHIN COMICS AND SUPER HERO NARRATIVES THAT I NOTICED THE TRAGIC INJUSTICE THAT THE FEMALE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAS BEEN FACING SINCE THE CONCEPTION OF POPULAR MEDIA. AS A SYSTEMATICALLY DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITY, AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN *DESERVE* SOMETHING HOPEFUL THAT THEY CAN LOOK TO, NOT JUST AS A MEANS OF ESCAPISM, BUT AS A BEACON OF HOPE. THE WHITE COMMUNITY, IN GENERAL, IS NOT FACING SYSTEMATIC PROBLEMS THAT ARE DAUNTING TO CONSIDER. THE ODDS ARE NOT AGAINST US (THE WHITE COMMUNITY) IN ANY SENSE OF THE PHRASE, YET WE ARE SUBJECTED TO COUNTLESS BEACONS OF HOPE THAT WE CAN IDENTITY WITH WITHOUT HAVING TO IMAGINE A DIFFERENT SKIN COLOR OR A DIFFERENT CULTURAL UPBRINGING. THIS ZINE IS CONCERNED WITH THE REPRESENTATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN WITHIN SUPER HERO NARRATIVES AND ATTEMPTS TO HIGHLIGHT THE INTRINSIC POWER OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN. THIS ZINE ALSO SEEKS TO EXPLORE THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT OF FEMALE AFRICAN AMERICAN HEROES WITHIN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY.

TESTIMONY



A PRIMARY EXAMPLE OF THE IMPACT THAT COMICS CAN HAVE ON PEOPLE CAN BE FOUND IN YANICK RICE-LAMB'S TESTIMONY ON THE INFLUENCE OF COMIC STRIPS ON HER OCCUPATIONAL DECISION.

YANICK RICE-LAMB, WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF POPULAR CULTURE AND MEDIA ON HER OCCUPATION, REFERENCED THE COMIC STRIP "'BRENDA STARR," A FEMALE CAUCASIAN CHARACTER WHO IS A REPORTER.

THOUGH "'BRENDA STARR" IS NOT AN AFRICAN AMERICAN CHARACTER, RICE-LAMB RECOUNTS THE COMIC'S ABILITY TO INCITE AN INTEREST IN JOURNALISM. AS RICE-LAMB GOT OLDER, SHE CONTINUED TO RESEARCH JOURNALISM AND LATER FOUND EXAMPLES OF AFRICAN AMERICANS WITHIN HER DESIRED FIELD, WHICH GAVE HER HOPE THAT SHE COULD DO IT.

CLOSING EDITORIAL NOTE

THERE IS AN UNSPEAKABLE AMOUNT OF SIGNIFICANCE RESIDING WITHIN THE FABRIC OF ALL OF THESE CHARACTERS, AND THE INFORMATION AND CONTEXT GLEANED THROUGH OUR BRIEF EXPLORATION DOES NOT EVEN SCRATCH THE SURFACE. EACH OF THESE CHARACTERS EMBODIES THE STRENGTH OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN, AND THEY WORK TO HYDRATE THE DRIED AND CRACKED PLATFORM THAT IS SUPER HERO NARRATIVES. IN A GENRE THAT DOMINATED BY WHITE MALES, THESE WOMEN GIVE THE WORLD COLOR, LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY.

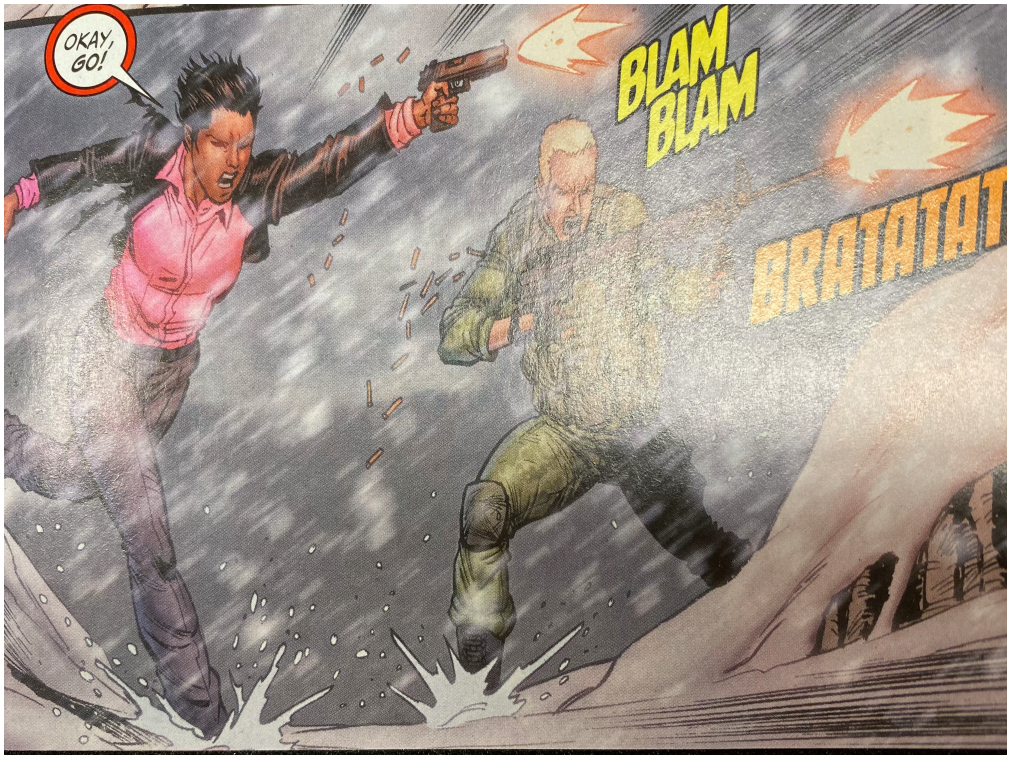
THAT BEING SAID, THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE CHARACTERS EXISTS WITHIN THEIR IMPACT ON THE FEMALE AFRICAN AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHIC. A LACK OF REPRESENTATION, SUCH AS THAT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN COMICS, BREEDS MISUNDERSTANDING AND CULTURAL NAIVETY. IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE WORK THAT THESE, AND A HANDFUL OF OTHER, CHARACTERS ARE DOING THAT SOCIETY CAN EVER HOPE TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE UNIQUE IDENTITY OF EACH CULTURE AND GENDER.

MORE THAN THE NECESSITY OF OUTSIDER UNDERSTANDING, THESE CHARACTERS FUNCTION AS BEACONS OF HOPE AND SOLIDIFY THE IDEA, WITHIN THE MINDS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN, THAT THEY ARE NOT ALONE IN THEIR STRUGGLES. THE TYPOLOGIES REPRESENTED IN THIS WORK CEMENT AN UNDER EXAMINED TRUTH, THE WORLD IS NOT JUST PROTECTED BY WHITE MALES, EVERYONE IS A HERO AND *YOU* CAN BE TOO, NO MATTER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

AMANDA WALLER



AMANDA WALLER IS A WIDOW WHO MADE IT OUT OF CHICAGO'S CABRINI-GREEN HOUSING PROJECTS. WALLER LOST ONE OF HER DAUGHTERS, A SON, AND HER HUSBAND TO MURDER. WALLER, BEING WELL VERSED IN POLITICAL SCIENCE, BECAME A CONGRESSIONAL AIDE FOR THE UNITED STATES. DURING HER TIME AS A CONGRESSIONAL AIDE, WALLER LEARNED ABOUT THE PREVIOUS ITERATIONS OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD. AFTER CLOSELY STUDYING THEM, WALLER PROPOSED THE CONCEPT FOR THE THIRD VARIANT OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD. HER PROPOSAL CAME TO LIFE, AND SHE WAS PLACED IN CHARGE OF THE NEW SUICIDE SQUAD.



ONE OF THE MOST NOTABLE ASPECTS OF AMANDA WALLER'S CHARACTER IS HER INDEPENDENCE AND STEADFAST RESOLVE, TWO ATTRIBUTES THAT WERE FAR FROM ABUNDANT IN COMIC REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN. OUTSIDE OF HER GENDER, AMANDA WALLER IS A STRONG AND RESOLUTE BLACK WOMEN WHO ESCAPED ONE OF THE WORST EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. SHE MAKES HER OWN DECISIONS AND DICTATES HER FATE.

BUT HOW DO THESE ATTRIBUTES MINGLE WITH WALLER'S ROLES AS A WELL EDUCATED GOVERNMENT AGENT AND LEADER OF THE SUICIDE SQUAD? MORE THAN THAT, HOW DOES WALLER'S BACKGROUND, RACE, AND GENDER DIFFERENTIATE HER FROM THE TYPICAL HERO TYPOLOGY.

THE LINK



THE LINK BETWEEN ALL OF THESE CHARACTERS IS DEEPLY ROOTED AND EXISTS ON BOTH THE SURFACE, AND THE INTERIORITY OF THE CHARACTERS. EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE CHARACTERS THAT WE HAVE EXPLORED ARE STRONG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN WHO HAVE PERSEVERED THROUGH HARDSHIPS, DEFIED SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS, OR REIMAGINED THE AMERICAN HERO. WHETHER IT IS SUCCESS WITHIN A MALE DOMINATED OCCUPATION OR BALANCING MATERNITY WITH A MORE THAN EXTREME OCCUPATION, EACH OF THESE CHARACTERS HAVE OBJECTIVELY SUCCEEDED. HOWEVER, THE MOST CRUCIAL LINK OF ALL IS THAT THEY COLLECTIVELY ADDRESS AN UNDERREPRESENTED DEMOGRAPHIC WITHIN AMERICAN SOCIETY, AND THEY DO IT IN A WAY THAT IS HOPEFUL, TASTEFUL, AND NECESSARY.

A MUCH MORE DOMESTIC AND "EARTHLY" CONFLICT WITHIN MOON GIRL'S NARRATIVE IS THE SOCIAL PRESSURE THAT SHE DEALS WITH AS A RESULT OF HER INTELLECTUALISM. MORE SPECIFICALLY, THE INTERACTION BETWEEN HER RACE, GENDER, AND INTELLECT.

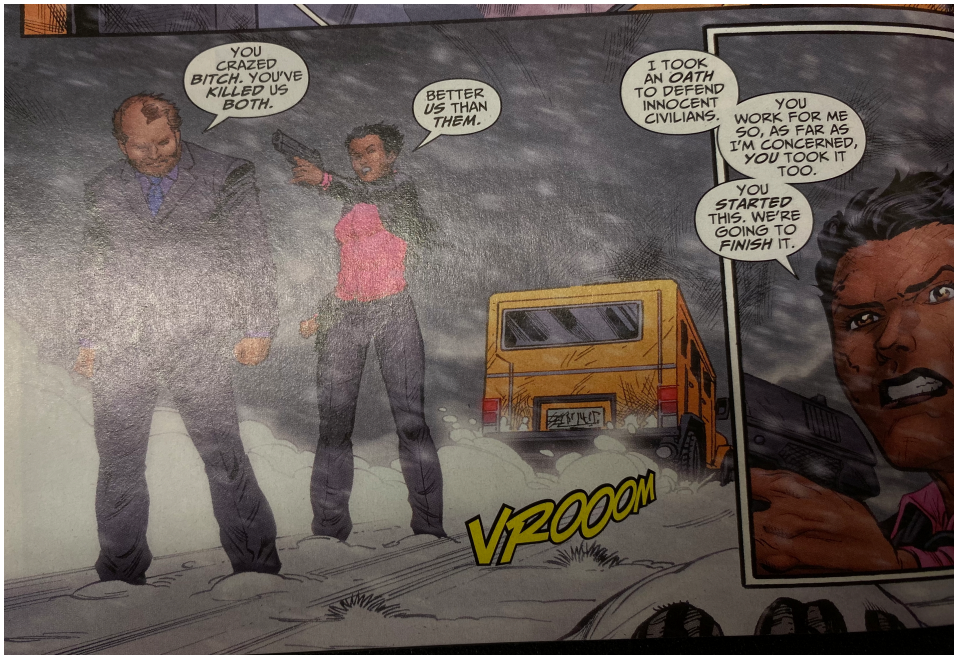
LUNELLA LAFAYETTE IS BULLIED BECAUSE OF HER SMARTS, WHICH IS AN UNFORTUNATE COMMONALITY SHARED WITH MANY YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUNG WOMEN OF COLOR. HOWEVER, LUNELLA DOES NOT LET THIS DETER HER FROM UNABASHEDLY EXHIBITING HER INTELLECT. IN FACT, LUNELLA EMBRACES THE SOCIAL PRESSURE AND SCRUTINY AND MAKES IT A PART OF HER IDENTITY, GOING SO FAR AS TO NAME HERSELF MOON GIRL, AN OFFENSIVE NICKNAME GIVEN TO HER BY SCHOOL BULLIES. LUNELLA LAFAYETTE EXUDES THE SENTIMENT THAT IT *IS* OKAY TO BE A YOUNG, INDEPENDENT AND INTELLIGENT AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRL.



AMANDA WALLER'S GENDER CARRIES A MYRIAD OF IMPLICATIONS, BUT IT'S NOT JUST THE FACT THAT *SHE IS* A WOMEN, BUT RATHER WHAT SHE DOES *AS A WOMEN* THAT HOLDS THE MOST WEIGHT.

BY COUNTERACTING THE "TRADITIONAL" CHARACTERIZATIONS OF WOMEN, ESPECIALLY AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN, WALLER EMBODIES THE ASPIRATIONS OF A HISTORICALLY DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITY.

SHEENA C. HOWARD TOUCHES ON THIS IDEA IN HER WORK *BLACK COMICS POLITICS OF RACE AND REPRESENTATION*. ESSENTIALLY, HOWARD EXPLAINS HOW STRONG AND SUCCESSFUL AFRICAN AMERICAN COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS CAN PROVIDE A MEANS OF ESCAPISM FROM A LESS THAN EQUAL REALITY. AMANDA WALLER FULFILLS THIS FUNCTION FOR WOMEN, SPECIFICALLY AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN.





OUTSIDE OF HER RACE AND GENDER, AMANDA WALLER'S CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHIC UPBRINGING PROVIDE AN ADDITIONAL LAYER THAT PERSONALLY ADDRESSES AN ENTIRE SOCIETY.

BY POSITING WALLER AS NOT ONLY AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMAN, BUT ONE THAT LIVED IN CHICAGO'S ROUGHEST HOUSING PROJECTS AND ESCAPED, HER CHARACTER INVITES THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN THAT ARE IN HER SAME SITUATION TO FIND RELIEF. AS STATED BY COREY COPELAND IN HIS ARTICLE "'BLACK ON PURPOSE: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BLACK SUPERHEROES,'" SEEING CHARACTERS, SUCH AS WALLER, CAN "'SPARK THE IMAGINATION OF A BLACK CHILD: GIVING THEM SOMETHING POSITIVE TO EMULATE'" (COPELAND).



AS MENTIONED, MOON GIRL EXISTS WITHIN, ARGUABLY, THE MOST "'EXTRATERRESTRIAL'" NARRATIVE. WITH THAT, COMES MORE EXISTENTIAL THREATS TO HUMANITY AND A MORE COMPLEX NARRATIVE STRUCTURE. IN ORDER TO *BE* MOON GIRL, LUNELLA LAFAYETTE HAS TO HAVE A LARGER UNDERSTANDING OF THE COSMOS AT LARGE, AND ALL OF THIS SIGNIFICANCE IS PLACED ON A YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRL.

THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS OBSERVATION LIES IN THE FACT THAT MOON GIRL, ALMOST WITHOUT FAIL, CAN HANDLE ALL OF THIS PRESSURE, AND SHE DOES IT WITH CHILD-LIKE JOVIALITY THAT ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM A YOUNG AND INTELLIGENT GIRL. IT'S ONE THING TO PLACE A YOUNG AFRICAN AMERICAN GIRL IN A POSITION OF POWER, BUT IT IS ANOTHER TO PRESENT THEM AS SUCCESSFUL IN SAID ROLE, AND THAT'S WHAT MOON GIRL DOES.

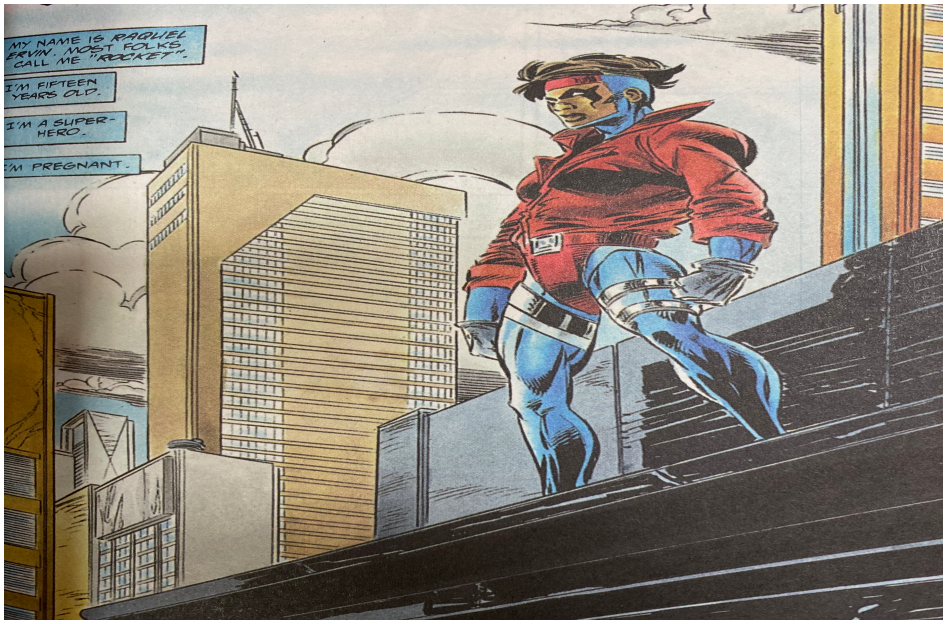


ARGUABLY THE MOST DIFFERENT FROM THE OTHER CHARACTERS THAT WE HAVE EXPLORED, LUNELLA "'MOON GIRL" LAFAYETTE IS THE ULTIMATE "'BRAINY YOUNG BLACK GIRL,'" AND HER WIT, STRENGTH, AND UNENDING CHARISMA EXHIBIT THAT ARCHETYPE BEAUTIFULLY.

ASIDE FROM AGE, ANOTHER WAY THAT LUNELLA DIFFERS FROM THE PREVIOUS CHARACTERS IS THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL NATURE OF HER NARRATIVE AND THE NARRATIVE SURROUNDING HER. THE MOST THEMATICALLY "'OUT THERE" CONCEPT IS ASCRIBED TO A LITTLE GIRL, AND THE WAY THAT SHE DEALS WITH THAT IS WHERE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HER CHARACTER LIES.

MORE DOMESTICALLY, THE CHARACTER OF MOON GIRL OFFERS THE READER INSIGHT INTO THE SOCIAL PRESSURE PUT ON YOUNG AND INTELLIGENT AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN.

ROCKET



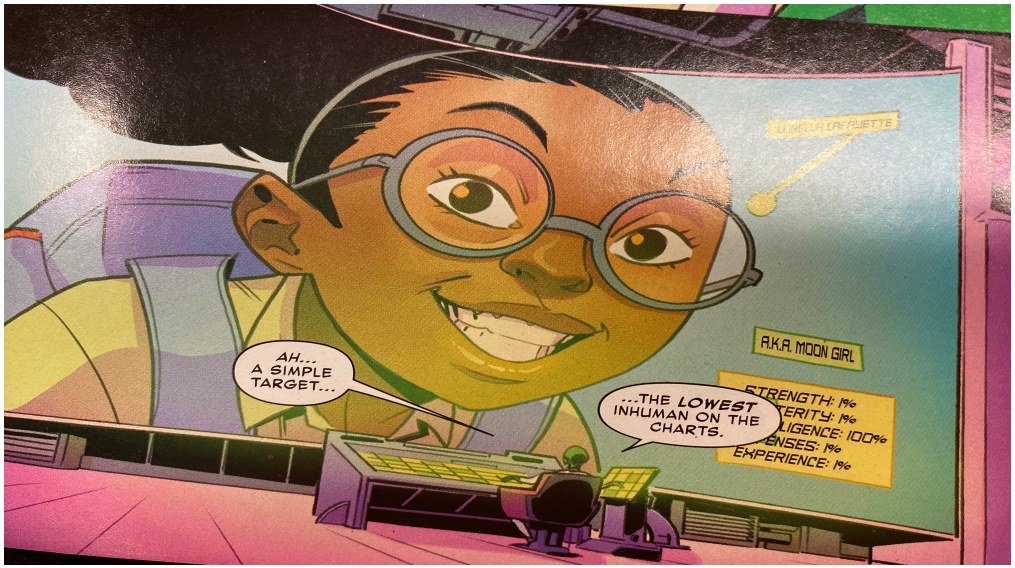
RAQUEL ERVIN, ROCKET, WAS BORN IN A POOR CRIME RIDDEN NEIGHBORHOOD IN DAKOTA CALLED PARIS ISLAND. ERVIN WANTED TO BE A WRITER, ADMIRING TONI MORRISON AND OTHER SIMILAR ARTISTS. AFTER MEETING AUGUSTUS FREEMAN IV, AN INTERACTION THAT OCCURRED WHILE ERVIN AND HER FRIENDS WERE ATTEMPTING TO ROB HIS HOME, RAQUEL'S LIFE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY. SHE LEARNED THAT FREEMAN WAS ACTUALLY A STRANDED ALIEN, AND SHE URGED HIM TO BECOME A SUPERHERO WITH HER AS HIS SIDEKICK. FROM THIS DAY FOREWORD, SHE WOULD BE ROCKET AND FREEMAN WOULD BECOME ICON. SHORTLY AFTER STARTING HER ADVENTURES WITH ICON, SHE LEARNED THAT SHE WAS PREGNANT. THIS WOULD GO ON TO BECOME A NOTABLE ASPECT OF HER PERSONA.



MUCH LIKE AMANDA WALLER, RAQUEL "'ROCKET"' ERVIN WAS BORN IN AN IMPOVERISHED AND CRIME RIDDEN NEIGHBORHOOD, AUTOMATICALLY ALIGNING ESTABLISHING CULTURAL FAMILIARITY WITH AN IMPORTANT GROUP OF READERS. ROCKET EMBODIES STRENGTH AND INSPIRED AUGUSTUS FREEMAN IV TO BECOME THE SUPERHERO KNOWN AS ICON.

AN INTERESTING AND UNIQUE ELEMENT OF CHARACTERIZATION REGARDING ROCKET IS THAT SHE'S PREGNANT. THOUGH THIS CAN BE READ ON THE SURFACE AS SIMPLY A FACET OF ROCKET'S CHARACTER, IT HOLDS A NOTABLE AMOUNT OF GRAVITY WHEN READ FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS, SOMETHING WE'LL EXPLORE LATER.

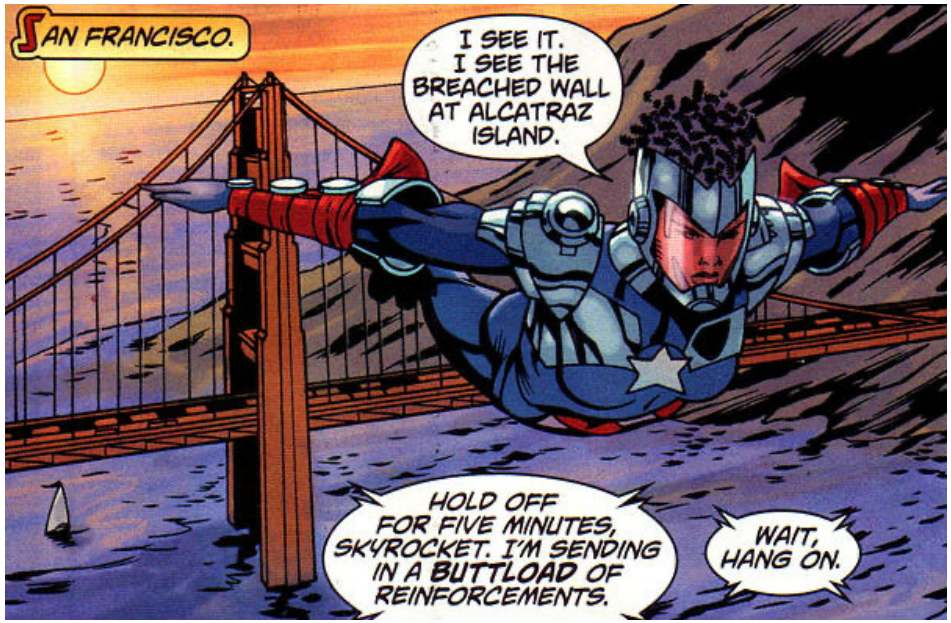
MOON GIRL



LUNELLA LAFAYETTE IS AN ASTOUNDINGLY INTELLIGENT YOUNG GIRL WHO HAS A PASSION FOR INVENTING. UNFORTUNATELY, HER OVERWHELMING INTELLIGENCE MADE HER THE TARGET OF COUNTLESS SCHOOL BULLIES. LUNELLA WAS NICKNAMED "'MOON GIRL" AS AN INSULT. IN A PLACE CALLED THE SAVAGE LAND, MOON BOY AND DEVIL DINOSAUR BATTLED TO RECLAIM SOMETHING CALLED THE NIGHTSTONE, BUT THE BATTLE WASN'T AN EASY ONE, AND MOON BOY DIED. MOON BOY'S LAST WISH AS FOR DEVIL DINOSAUR TO RECLAIM THE NIGHTSTONE . DEVIL DINOSAUR FOLLOWED THE KILLERS THROUGH A PORTAL THEY CREATED AND ENDED UP IN NEW YORK CITY, WHERE HE THEN DISCOVERED THAT LUNELLA HAD ACQUIRED THE NIGHTSTONE. LUNELLA'S GENES FUSED WITH THE NIGHTSTONE, AND THUS BECAME MOON GIRL AND DEVIL DINOSAUR.

THOUGH SKYROCKET'S IMAGERY IS BLATANT AND EXCITING, THE ACTUAL NARRATIVE OF LT. CELIA FORRESTAL IS WORKING JUST AS WELL TO PROVIDE A MORE DIRECT COMMENTARY ON THE HARDSHIPS AND INJUSTICES FACED BY AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN.

BEFORE BECOMING SKYROCKET, FORRESTAL FACED HARDSHIPS WITHIN THE U.S. NAVY DUE TO HER RACE AND GENDER, AND THIS SERVES AS AN ALLEGORY FOR WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS WITHIN REALITY. FORRESTAL'S INEQUITY WITHIN THE NAVY DROVE HER TO CONSIDER A DIFFERENT CAREER PATH, LEADING HER TO BECOME SKYROCKET. THIS FUNCTIONS AS THE ULTIMATE EXHIBITION OF HER WORTH AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, REINFORCES THE SELF-WORTH AND QUALIFICATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN. WHEN TREATED LIKE SHE WAS LESS THAN HER PEERS DUE TO HER RACE AND GENDER, SHE BECAME MORE THAN THEY COULD EVER BE.





ROCKET'S MATERNITY IS USED AT TIMES TO PLAYFULLY JEST AT SOME OF THE STEREOTYPES ASSOCIATED WITH PREGNANT WOMEN (AS SHOWN IN SIDE PANEL), BUT THE DECISION TO DEPICT ROCKET AS A PREGNANT WOMAN IS WILDLY IMPORTANT.

WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SOCIETY ARE STILL BATTLING WITH THE EXTERNAL COERCION INTO A) HAVING A FAMILY OR B) HAVING A CAREER, A DECISION THAT CLEARLY DOESN'T HAVE TO MADE. WOMEN ARE CONTENDING WITH THE AFOREMENTIONED SOCIAL PRESSURE WHILE WORKING "REGULAR" JOBS, BUT ROCKET IS FIGHTING CRIME WHILE CARRYING A CHILD. THE CHARACTER OF ROCKET SERVES AS THE ULTIMATE "IF SHE CAN DO IT, SO CAN I" SO TO SPEAK. AGAIN, WE SEE A COMIC BOOK CHARACTER EMBODYING A HOPEFUL AND EQUAL FUTURE IN WHICH WOMEN ARE WHO THEY ARE WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION, SATISFYING FAMILIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL GOALS.

However, the fictional universe that Rocket exists in has not deviated too far from reality, and the image at the bottom of the page exemplifies that sentiment perfectly.

In one of the most blatant commentaries on the hardships that women face, particularly in regards to the conflict between family and occupation, we see Icon attempting to dissuade Rocket from being a hero due to her pregnancy. Language such as "When your mother was pregnant with you" creates a comparison between what is perceived as "correct," and this is weighed against what Rocket is doing, positing her decision as "incorrect." Poetically, Rocket responds with the only response that is called for in this situation . . . "Yeah, so?"





Arguably the most blatant commentary on social progression and equality, Lt. Celia "Skyrocket" Forrestal is, in a sense, the female Captain America. The social implications surrounding the character of Skyrocket are, almost, expressed more directly through the iconography and imagery of her character.

Exhibited more clearly in the previous picture, Skyrocket's costume is essentially the American flag. Skyrocket is an African American woman fighting crime *as* America itself, an extremely compelling concept. By making the aesthetic of the most compelling symbol in the U.S. her own, the character of Skyrocket is working to answer the question "Who, or what, is an American."

SKYROCKET



SKYROCKET'S REAL NAME IS LT. CELIA FORRESTAL. PRIOR TO BECOMING SKYROCKET, FORRESTAL WAS A HIGHLY REGARDED LIEUTENANT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY, BUT HER PROGRESSION WITHIN THE NAVY WAS CONTINUOUSLY HALTED BY BOTH HER RACE AND GENDER. FORRESTAL'S PARENTS WERE THE CREATORS OF A COMPANY CALLED ARGO TECHNOLOGIES, AND PRODUCED A DEVICE KNOWN AS THE ARGO HARNESS. THIS HARNESS COULD CONVERT, REDIRECT, AND ABSORB ENERGY, BUT ITS EXISTENCE DREW THE ATTENTION OF A TERRORIST GROUP CALLED SCORPIO. IN AN ATTEMPTED ATTACK ON THE COMPANY'S LAB, SCORPIO KILLED CELIA'S PARENTS WITH A BOMB, BUT CELIA SURVIVED THE EXPLOSION BECAUSE SHE WAS WEARING THE ARGO HARNESS. AFTER CAPTURING SOME MEMBERS OF THE TERRORIST GROUP USING THE ARGO HARNESS, CELIA FORRESTAL MADE THE DECISION TO FIGHT CRIME AS SKYROCKET.

CECILIA REYES



CECILIA REYES IS A MUTANT WHO EVENTUALLY BECAME A PART OF THE X-MEN. PRIOR TO ACCEPTING HER SUPERHERO IDENTITY, REYES WAS A DOCTOR, A DECISION INSPIRED BY HER FATHER'S MURDER, WHICH SHE WITNESSED. ONCE THE X-MEN LEARNED ABOUT REYES' MUTANT ABILITIES, THEY APPROACHED HER IN THE HOPE THAT SHE WOULD JOIN THEIR RANKS. INITIALLY, REYES REFUSED TO BECOME PART OF THE X-MEN, BUT AFTER BEING TARGETED BY A GOVERNMENT DRIVEN ANTI-MUTANT OPERATION, SHE DECIDED THAT SHE WOULD BE SAFER AS A PART OF THE MUTANT HERO GROUP.



CECILIA REYES EXHIBITS A NUMBER OF CHARACTERISTICS THAT ESTABLISH HER AS A STRONG AND HOPEFUL CHARACTER. AS MENTIONED, REYES WAS A DOCTOR BEFORE JOINING THE X-MEN, A DECISION PROMPTED BY HER FATHER'S DEATH, WHICH SHE WITNESSED. THE PERSEVERANCE EXHIBITED BY REYES IN REGARDS TO THE PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED TRAGEDY CARRIES A NUMBER OF IMPLICATIONS PERTINENT TO ADVERSITY. REYES' CAREER ALSO WORKS TO SOLIDIFY THE NOTION THAT BLACK COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS CAN EMBODY THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT THEY REPRESENT (HOWARD).
IT IS EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO USE SOMETHING AS OBJECTIVELY AWFUL AS LOSING A FAMILY MEMBER TO MURDER AS MOTIVATION. HOWEVER, IT IS A MESSAGE THAT IS SELDOM EXPRESSED TO THE COMMUNITIES THAT NEED IT THE MOST. MANY DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES ARE SUBJECTED TO MURDER AND VIOLENCE. WHEN TAKING THIS FACT INTO CONSIDERATION, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN EMPOWERING HERSELF THROUGH TRAGEDY BECOMES EVIDENT.

ANOTHER PERTINENT FACET OF CECILIA REYES' CHARACTER IS HER INITIAL TREPIDATION REGARDING JOINING THE X-MEN. A DECISION LIKE THIS EXHIBITS INDEPENDENCE, BUT MORE THAN THAT, IT IS A COMMENTARY ON SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE NOTION THAT ONE HAS EVERYTHING THAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.

THOUGH THIS MESSAGE IS VALUABLE TO EVERY COMMUNITY, IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT WHEN EXPRESSED TO A SYSTEMATICALLY AND HISTORICALLY DEGRADED POPULATION SUCH AS THAT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN. THE NECESSITY TO EXPRESS THE AFOREMENTIONED SENTIMENTS IN A WAY THAT IS HEROIC AND ADMIRABLE IS DIRE, AND CECILIA REYES EMBODIES SELF-SUFFICIENCY, PERSEVERANCE, AND FORTITUDE.

