

# Clans Meet Radiman

## Henry Radiman Meets With Unaffiliated Clans

*Historic meeting brings Council of Truth closer to the people*

*November 15<sup>th</sup> 29475 - TAG field reporter Jay Neigek*



Yesterday's summit was an historic meeting that could not have come at a better time.

Three weeks ago, Omni-Tek offered an unconditional amnesty to all clan citizens. This unprecedented move took weary citizens by surprise and placed an immense amount of pressure on the Council of Truth to issue a statement. Weeks went by with little official

reaction, other than the occasional public relations statement by PR Director Gelsa Samarind. Factions began to renounce Council affiliation, the most prominent being Commander Portman's Red Freedom, which defected following a peace rally mishap at Omni HQ. Following this split, other clans began to question their ties with the Council of Truth, an organization with little public representation.

This changed with yesterday's summit, the success of which lies squarely in the corner of Henry Radiman. A veteran speaker and politician, Radiman represented the Council of Truth in a meeting with over 45 of the most prominent unaffiliated clan leaders. The eloquent Radiman addressed the leaders' concerns about holding together the fragile alliance in the northern territories. A great deal of information was exchanged, and Mr. Radiman promised to take the concerns to the next gathering of the Council of Truth which is scheduled to take place in a few days' time. The Council will make a decision about how to officially respond to the amnesty, and whether or not to enter into negotiations with Omni-Tek. Indeed, this meeting represents a new era of cooperation among the forces opposed to the Omni-Tek occupation of Rubi-Ka. What will come of this meeting is still unknown; the Council will probably take some time to make a decision regarding the amnesty. But it now has the opinions of the general public.

At the conclusion of the last meeting, Radiman approached the delegates and addressed a concern from

Aristophanes, the leader of Clan Revolution. Aristophanes pointed out that "We are fighting for our freedoms", and stepped back to await the answer from Radiman. After a slight pause, Radiman gave his answer; "I think we already won the fight for freedom. And now we must use our freedom to forge peace." Indeed Mr. Radiman, you must forge peace. Because without it, the freedom earned by so many fallen warriors will be for nothing Henry Radiman.

## Peace in a Bottle

*A TAG Editorial*

So now we have to deal with the Council of Truth and Omni-Tek getting all friendly and informal on us. There's nothing to put the gag-reflex into action quicker than the image of Philip Ross and Henry Radiman with the smiles and the handshakes, the "good to see you, Henry" and the "same to you, Phil, how's the wife and kids?", and the arms joined-in-joyful-celebration shtick. There's something powerfully homoerotic about those two ancient geezers having a tête-à-tête in Omni-1; an antiquated representation of a chummy male-dominated political system which, when it comes down to it, is remarkably analogous on either side of the fence: For the Council of Truth and Omni-Tek both, it's mostly about *image*.

TAG isn't against peace. Don't misunderstand me. We welcome peace with open arms. We don't want to see another war tearing Rubi-Ka apart at the fragile seams. The last few years of relative quiet have been the most productive and constructive in memory.

But still, there's something disconcerting and almost disturbing about witnessing the slow and inevitable process of détente that we're now witnessing – like the first act of a play that you know will, eventually, turn into a bloody tragedy. You feel as though someone's being led to the slaughterhouse, but it's not really clear who, or how – it's an uncertain certainty.

We're not in the business of scandals or disasters, as some keep suggesting. We don't hope for the worst so that we can write up a sensationalist report and cash in on the traffic. We have families. We have homes. We have jobs that would be in jeopardy were one side to rule unchecked on Rubi-Ka. We depend on political stability through equal but opposite ideologies in constant dialogue. We would, in fact, benefit greatly from improved political relations and a restructured governing body on Rubi-Ka.

And if this truly is it: if this truly is the beginning of something lasting and solid, the foundation for a bipartisan Rubi-Ka government, TAG will be first in line to offer our

support. But we'll also be first in line to criticize Radiman and Ross if they appear to playing a more dangerous game; one of political camaraderie, I-rub-your-back-if-you-rub-mine (inside or outside the closet), a game of false fronts and big grins. A game of peace.

Because if it is a game, it's one where every player is a loser. Our history is a bloody one. We hope, wish, and pray for peace. But we don't want peace to come with a price tag none of us can afford. We don't want the ancient gentlemen to sell us down the river in political shenanigans concealed by press releases and pretty speeches. And we don't want a world where Radiman and Ross are the very best of chums, because that's not what freedom, liberty, and politics is all about.

*Ramos Kawamoto*  
*Editor-in-Chief*

## Misguided Loyalties

*Just Between Us - Interviews by Gayle Parker*

Things are certainly changing on Rubi-Ka. The Council of Truth and Omni-Tek in peace talks? Ross and Radiman meeting in person? What happened to the good old days of vengeance and bloodshed? Our little sector of the galaxy was so much more interesting when guns were blazing constantly and citizens were indiscriminately killing one another. Wasn't it?

Okay, sarcasm off. I just have one thing to say – it's about bloody time! I was starting to think that murder and mayhem was the order of the day for Rubi-Ka. I concluded that notum not only gave us the ability to perform miracles, it also apparently killed our sense of reason. What other explanation could there be for this prolonged and incredibly tiresome conflict? And have you heard what both sides have to say?

'This is our land and we have every right to be here!'

'Oh yeah, well we have a legal contract!'

'Stuff your contract! We won't budge!'

'You're in violation of policy! Did you read the fine print?'

'You're taking away our rights!'

Wah, wah, wah! Are these really soldiers? They sound like my kid sister's friends. Personally, I think this conflict has become more about power politics and less about a fight for an individual's rights. And this edition's interviewee seems to agree. In order to protect their identity, I have agreed to refer to my guest as "Blue Eyes."

**Gayle Parker:** Why have you decided to come forward and provide TAG with copies of these incredibly interesting documents, Blue Eyes?

**Blue Eyes:** I'm tired of the fighting, Gayle. I've been at it a long time. It's senseless at this point. And several of the leaders on both sides care more about securing their own positions of power than for the soldiers who die under their command.

**G.P.:** It sounds like you've witnessed the fighting firsthand.

**B.E.:** Too much of it, yes.

**G.P.:** Let's take a look at this first document. Can you give us some information on its source?

**B.E.:** This was a Grid transmission that was intercepted by both clan and OT intelligence agents. It was sent just prior to the assassination attempt on Henry Radiman.

Targeting means acquired. Target  
acquisition 0800. 29475 Nov 27  
Commence operation Dust Devil  
Field Out

**G.P.:** And the second message on this document?

**B.E.:** It was sent just after Radiman's decoy had been killed.

Target acquired and neutralized  
Operation Dust Devil complete.  
Commence Operation Dust Storm  
Field Out

**G.P.:** Who sent these transmissions, Blue Eyes?

**B.E.:** Former Council of Truth officer, Commander Portman.

**G.P.:** The same Portman who formed Red Freedom?

**B.E.:** Yes.

**G.P.:** I do love conspiracies. Let's take a look at this second document.

### Intercepted coded Red Freedom Grid transmissions

17:10: Portman: The Escort will enter the city here  
(static)

17:10: Redruum: ok  
(static)

17:10: Portman: And walk this way

*(static)*  
17:11: Portman: *When it reaches this point, I will have an Omni agent distract some of the security detachment*  
*(static)*  
17:12: Portman: *You will be up on that ledge*  
*(static)*  
17:12: Redruum: *up here?*  
*(static)*  
17:12: Portman: *When Radiman reaches this point... you will terminate him*  
*(static)*  
17:12: Portman: *Yes*  
*(static)*  
17:13: Portman: *Stay out of view until they round the corner*  
*(static)*  
17:13: Portman: *Aim well*  
*(Break)*  
19:17: Portman: *The plan is in place... We will eliminate Radiman tomorrow.*  
19:18: Unknown: *Good... you have served us well.*  
19:18: Portman: *(static) ...Dust... I will contact you tomorrow.*  
19:18: Unknown: *Do that.*  
*(End)*

**G.P.:** Where did you get this transmission?

**B.E.:** Clan intelligence had reasons to suspect that Portman might be affiliated with other extremist clans. They have had her under constant surveillance. This transmission was also intercepted by Omni-InternOps. The two organizations had been sharing intelligence on the matter in an effort to insure Henry Radiman's safety. In fact, it was Omni-InternOps that suggested using a decoy to lure any conspirators out into the open.

**G.P.:** A former member of the Council of Truth orchestrating the assassination of Henry Radiman?

**B.E.:** Apparently.

**G.P.:** Any speculations as to why someone with such a long and distinguished career in service to the Council would seek to have her former boss killed? Surely there has to be more to it than a simple disagreement over Radiman's stance on the Amnesty?

**B.E.:** It is the belief of clan intelligence that Portman is secretly working for another group, and that she formed Red Freedom to cover her affiliation with that faction.

**G.P.:** Any ideas who this other faction might be? She refers to someone in the transmission by the codename of 'Dust.'

**B.E.:** I can't comment any further on that matter, Gayle. It is being investigated by both sides, however.

**G.P.:** I appreciate you speaking out like this, Blue Eyes. I think many of our readers would agree that the pursuit of peace is never a wasted effort.

**B.E.:** I hope they're right.

Would it be a stretch to say that hope is shared by most of us? I'll let you decide.  
It'll be just between us.

*-Gayle Parker*

## **There's Dust in the Air**

*Just Between Us - Interviews by Gayle Parker*

There have been a lot of intercepted transmissions lately, have you noticed? Omni has snatched a few from the airways, Council intelligence a few more – indeed these little buggers seem to be sneaking around all over the Grid. What's the one thing these electronic whispers have in common? The abundance of the codeword "Dust."

What could it mean? Does this codeword refer to an individual? We've checked with our sources on both sides and none of them seem to have anyone on file that goes by that codename. Could it refer to an organization? Again, our sources turned up zilpo. Well, except for one. A rather unusual source, to be sure, but by all accounts a rather reliable one. Fortunately for us, he also happens to be this edition's interviewee.

Very little is known about the fascinating creature known by the locals as "Professor Van Horn". I had to travel out to the Wastelands to get this interview, as the "Professor" feels a bit uncomfortable within the confines of an office building. Heck, I don't even know if he'd fit in our office building. You see, the Professor is an albino Rhinoman. Van Horn hardly ever comes into the cities, preferring to spend his time collecting odd bits of hardware and his most precious commodity, information. Despite his imposing size and a voice that makes my chest tremble, I found the Professor to be incredibly affable.

**Gayle Parker:** Thanks for taking this time to talk to us, Professor. Or do you prefer to be called Van Horn?

**Professor Van Horn:** Either will do. If you sat under my pavilion, you'd be much more

comfortable.

**G.P.:** Thanks, that's very kind. Whew! Those suns sure can be harsh out here.

**P.V.H.:** You city folk get used to climate control. Makes you soft.

**G.P.:** I gotta agree with that, Professor. So, we were led to believe you had some information about this individual or group going by the codename of "Dust."

**P.V.H.:** I have heard that name used on more than one occasion, yes.

**G.P.:** In what context?

**P.V.H.:** Traders peddling their goods out in the Wastelands near the Outzone have referred to someone they conduct business with as "Dusters."

**G.P.:** Do you know who they mean?

**P.V.H.:** Not exactly, but I've seen vehicles traveling late at night to and from the borders of the Wastelands. I've never gotten close enough to make any faces out. The one glimpse I caught seemed to be of a soldier in some sort of desert gear. A filter mask covered the face.

**G.P.:** Was it a man or a woman?

**P.V.H.:** It was hard to tell. All of you seem small to me. I'd say it was male, from the way it carried itself.

**G.P.:** Didn't you tell me before we started this interview that you believed anyone talking about this group could possibly endanger their lives?

**P.V.H.:** Yes.

**G.P.:** So why are you talking to us now?

**P.V.H.:** Because you promised me a fully equipped digital recording unit if I did the interview.

**G.P.:** Well, yes, and you'll get one. But aren't you afraid? Is a recording unit worth risking your life?

**P.V.H.:** I don't think the Dusters would come after me.

**G.P.:** Why not?

**P.V.H.:** I believe they want Rubi-Ka to know who they are. I think they're preparing to announce themselves anyway.

**G.P.:** Do you know how?

**P.V.H.:** No. But I think it will make a definite impact.

**G.P.:** Are these Dusters affiliated with either the clans or Omni?

**P.V.H.:** I don't know. Could be.

**G.P.:** The codename "Dust" was used in a secret communiqué intercepted by Omni InterOps. It had been sent by Commander Portman, who formed Red Freedom. Do you think Portman is a Duster? She seemed to be communicating the specifics of an assassination attempt on Henry Radiman, leader of the Council of Truth.

**P.V.H.:** I don't know the specifics of Portman's associations. However, it wouldn't surprise me.

**G.P.:** Do you have information on Portman, Professor?

**P.V.H.:** Our deal was for information about the Dusters. If you want other information, we'll have to negotiate a new deal.

**G.P.:** I can throw in two remote cameras with top-of-the-line sensory A.I.?

**P.V.H.:** Done. Portman has been after revenge since the death of her husband in an Omni prison. She has no loyalties except to that cause. I believe that she has been helping the Dusters prepare for their "coming-out" ceremony.

**G.P.:** Ceremony? That seems an odd way to put it, Professor.

**P.V.H.:** You humans love ceremonies. Ritual defines your lives.

**G.P.:** An interesting notion, but unfortunately one that we don't have time to explore. One more question, Professor.

**P.V.H.:** All right.

**G.P.:** How do you get all your information?

**P.V.H.:** I don't think you have access to enough hardware to negotiate a price for that answer.

**G.P.:** Fair enough.

Well, one thing is certain, the good Professor knows a heck of a lot more than he's leading on. But, TAG will respect his boundaries because we'd like to use his

services again and because our access to hardware is indeed limited.

But please keep that...just between us.

-Gayle Parker

## The Quiet before the Storm?

*A TAG Editorial*

It's been eerily calm on Rubi-Ka these past few weeks. Minor incidents aside, we have yet to see anything remotely approaching the terrorist actions in Omni-1 on December 19th of last year. And we have yet to hear the official word on what actually transpired when an apartment complex was leveled to the ground, killing more than 150 citizens. The Omni-Tek Corporation is mum; the Council of Truth has been remarkably non-vocal; and the Dust Brigade, if they were indeed responsible for these terrorist acts, have been unexpectedly restrained. Terrorists who terrorize by doing nothing: who'd have ever imagined?

Still, though, I cannot and will not believe that things, behind the scenes, are as quiet as they appear to be. Certainly the Council and Omni-Tek are at this very moment looking into fresh reports of hostile activities in areas bordering the Outzone, and cooperating in the ongoing investigation of the bombsite in Omni-1. Clearly, Omni-Tek's central administration has involved itself in their Rubi-Ka operations; their PR department will not appreciate the marked drop in new colonist sign-ups caused by Rubi-Ka's safety rating, which is now almost as low as it was five years ago, after the end of the war. And, obviously, if the Dust Brigade survived the war and have returned to wreak havoc on Omni-Tek employees everywhere, they're simply biding their time and waiting for OT's defense-condition to drop back to a safe "one" before unleashing the next horror.

It may sound fatalistic, but the fact is that no world is ever at complete peace with itself. There will always be strife and conflict. This is particularly true for Rubi-Ka, where we've had three civil wars in less than three hundred years. And as long as Rubi-Ka remains a corporate-run colony, the conflict will continue, as will the overhanging probability of another civil war.

So the current quiet, no matter how much we welcome the idea of it, is just creepy rather than comforting: like the still air and muted sounds preceding a storm, we keep looking up at the sky, expecting dark clouds.

When the storm finally breaks, we will of course miss the quiet. But in a way, whatever happens, it'll be a relief,

because there's no way reality will be as bad as what we've imagined in our worst nightmares.

Right?

## Dust to Dust?

*A TAG Editorial*

You know that feeling you get just before a major magnetic storm breaks out, that itchy, tingly feeling all over your skin, that metallic taste in your mouth? That's what I'm feeling right now, like a bad storm's coming. And I can't explain quite why that is.

You see, there's dust in the air.

Most of us still remember October 7. 29466 – Black October – when the atrocities of war were brought home in a *big* way. Clan, Omni, or neutral, you couldn't help but be shocked by the casualties, even though the numbers were relatively insignificant in comparison with the pan-galactic death toll of the Corporate Wars. But this wasn't Earth, or Mars, or Omni Prime – this was home; torn by war, true, but this world, unlike the rest of the galaxy, was supposed to make *sense*. The Omnis killed the clanners, the clanners hit back at the Omnis, and the neutrals were caught in the middle. This was the Way of Things. People died, most were insured, the battle continued. Black October changed all of that.

Strangely enough, Black October could also have brought us one step closer to peace, but only because this planet was tired of war, tired of fighting. Four years later, the Tir Accord was signed, and we settled down gratefully into a semblance of normality. But this is no longer the case. More and more people – most of them new colonists – hunger for blood, cry out for vengeance, thirst for conflict. In such a fragile and volatile environment, another Black October could tear this world apart at the seams.

There's dust in the air. "Dust" is on the airways. Code-words and conspiracies, plots and assassinations – it's like the first act of a flick where you know the second act will bring death and destruction. I can't back my feelings up with facts and figures; like I said, this is like that intangible sense of *menace* that you get when this planet decides to throw us a curveball. In this case, the threat may not be a natural one...but all the more deadly for it.

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