

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CHRONICLES: BOOK 2

BINA'S PLANT



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LETTERS
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DEDICATION:

Rebecca: This book would never have happened without my partner-in- crime Charlie La Greca. I dedicate this work to the hope that we start building a more sustainable world for my daughter, Naomi Florence, for the children of New York City and for children everywhere.

Charlie: Enough thanks cannot be given to Rebecca Bratspies for her care and vision to create a work of this sort that serves as a bridge to a better understanding of environmental justice. I'm so grateful for her trust, patience, and belief in my abilities and it has been a joy to create these stories with her. This second book is dedicated to all of those brave souls and organizations who live their days protecting our planet. Whether it be civil protests, marches, sit ins, walk outs, working to change policies, teaching, planting trees, harvesting seeds, creating art, music, poems, stories, essays; anything that will nurture and protect our very fragile ecosystem. I'm constantly learning and forever inspired by their efforts and love for our earth and each other.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:


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BINA'S PLANT



IT WAS MY FIRST TIME RETURNING TO FORESTVILLE SINCE LAST SUMMER. I COULDN'T WAIT TO SEE ALL MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

BUT I HAD **NO** IDEA WHAT I WAS COMING BACK TO.

FORESTVILLE WAS UNDER THREAT AGAIN.

ANOTHER ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT, AND THIS TIME IT WAS **ALREADY** HERE...

...CHOKING US OUT **ONE BY ONE.**





LOOKS LIKE OUR FELLA NEEDS A LITTLE LOVE, EH?



MAYAH!
PAYING US A VISIT, HUH?

SUMMER BREAK.
TROOP'S TAKING ME AROUND.



THIS AIR IS STRANGLING OUR PARK.

YEAH, WE'RE WORKING HARD TO CARE FOR IT, BUT WHILE YOU WERE AWAY **ADVANCED ENERGY** REALLY RAMPED UP OPERATIONS.

MORE PEOPLE, WITH MORE COMPUTERS, AND MORE LIGHTS...



MORE OUTPUT... I GET IT. PHEW...

PROBLEM IS THE POWER PLANT HAS BEEN HERE FOR DECADES.

BEFORE I WAS BORN.



ACTUALLY BEFORE THE **CLEAN AIR ACT**, SO IT HAS ALMOST NO AIR POLLUTION CONTROLS.



AND **TWO YEARS** AGO WHEN YOU LEFT FOR COLLEGE, **ADVANCED ENERGY** PROPOSED TO EXPAND EVEN MORE.

I THINK TROOP EMAILED ME ABOUT THE HEARING BUT...

...I WAS SO BUSY WITH SCHOOL...



I WAS TRYING TO GET THE WORD OUT BUT THEY CAUGHT US ON OUR HEELS.

WE DID MANAGE TO GET A SMALL CREW THERE.



I GAVE THEM AN EARFUL!

EACH OF US GOT TWO MINUTES.

I COULD HAVE USED A HUNDRED!



AND GET THIS...

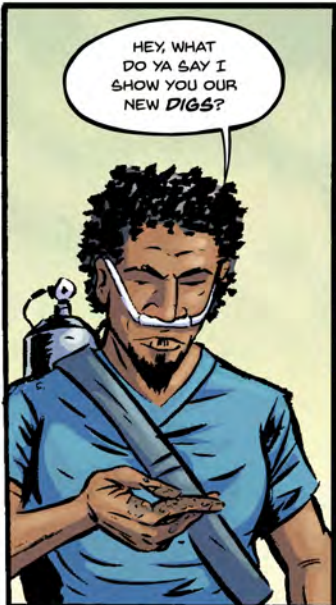
THE NEXT DAY **ADVANCED ENERGY** FILED THEIR EXPANSION APPLICATION.



LIKE THAT!

SO MUCH FOR ACTUALLY LISTENING TO US.

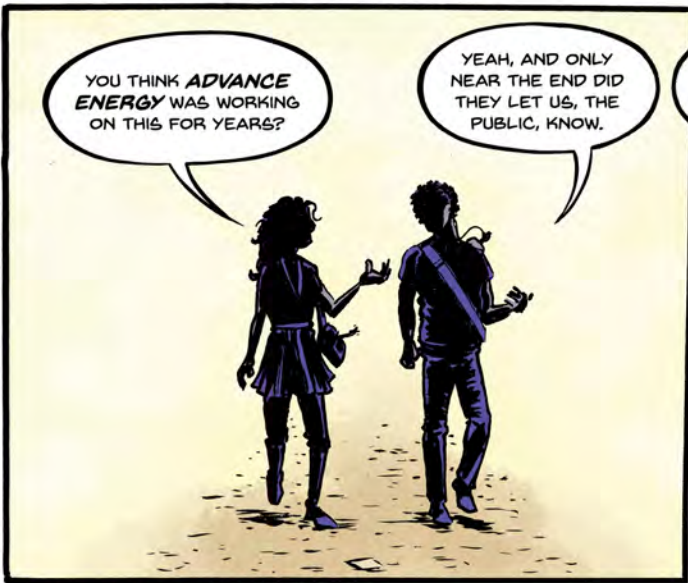
DANG...



HEY, WHAT DO YA SAY I SHOW YOU OUR NEW DIGGS?



WHAT? AND GET OUT OF THIS CHEST BURNING FOG?



YOU THINK **ADVANCE ENERGY** WAS WORKING ON THIS FOR YEARS?

YEAH, AND ONLY NEAR THE END DID THEY LET US, THE PUBLIC, KNOW.



THIS GAVE US ONLY A SMALL WINDOW TO PARTICIPATE.



AND NOW THERE WILL BE A HEARING ON THE EXPANSION?



THAT'S RIGHT! SOUNDS LIKE YOUR EDUCATION IS PAYING OFF. BY THE WAY...

NOTICE HOW QUIET IT IS? PEOPLE TEND TO STAY INSIDE NOW CUZ THE AIR IS SO BAD.

CREEPLY! ...SO, WHERE ARE WE NOW IN THE PROCESS?



S.A.F.E.
Social Activism for our Environment

WELL... TECHNICALLY... WE'RE **HOME**...
HA HA

AFTER YOU MILADY!



I LOVE IT!

YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN BUSY.



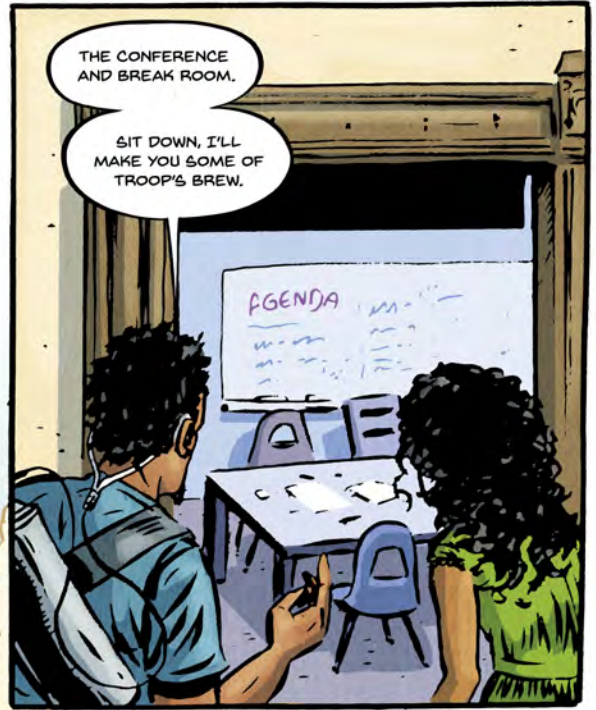
RECEPTION AREA.

MY DESK.

I'M NOW THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER.

YOU REALLY HAVE ORGANIZED.

THIS PLACE IS GREAT!



THE CONFERENCE AND BREAK ROOM.

SIT DOWN, I'LL MAKE YOU SOME OF TROOP'S BREW.



TING!

GLUP GLUP GLUP



DIDJA SEE OUR NEW WEBSITE?

PING



PING

OH MAN...

IT'S THIS GUY, "EL SALVADOR".

IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS HE'S BEEN SOCIAL NETWORKING UP A STORM ABOUT ADVANCED ENERGY. HE'S GOT THE COMMUNITY BUZZING, TWO THOUSAND FOLLOWERS, AND GROWING.

CHECK IT.



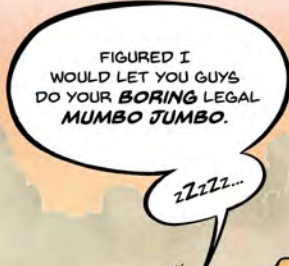
WOW... THAT'S WEIRD. HIS NAME... IT'S AWFULLY CLOSE TO MY COUSIN SALVADOR.

YEAH, IT IS KINDA STRANGE. IT'S SPANISH FOR "THE SAVIOR".

YA THINK HE'S HARMFUL?

HOPEFULLY NOT.

THERE'S MORE TO PEOPLE THAN THEIR AVATARS.





SO...WE HAVE THE LICENSING HEARING COMING UP?

RIGHT. IT'S OUR **LAST CHANCE** TO TURN THE TIDE ON THIS.



BUT WE ONLY HAVE **TWO WEEKS**.

WE **NEED** A STRATEGY.



WELL, THE AIR IS ALREADY CRAZY BAD.



WE **BOTH** KNOW THAT.



BUT WE **HAVE** TO CONVINCE THEM.

REMEMBER WHAT WE DID AGAINST **GREEN SOLUTIONS** YEARS AGO?

WE GATHERED **STATS, TESTIMONIALS... AND PROOF.**

'XACTLY



SO WHAT HAPPENS ONCE WE GET ALL OF OUR FINDINGS?

WELL, THE **LICENSING BOARD** APPROVED OUR REQUEST TO **INTERVENE**.

SO WE'RE **PARTIES**. JUST LIKE **ADVANCED ENERGY**. THEY'RE EVEN PROVIDING US WITH AN **EXPERT** TO HELP US MAKE OUR CASE.

WE NEED TO GET READY FOR A **TRIAL TYPE** HEARING.



HOW LONG IS YOUR BREAK?

'TIL SEPTEMBER.

GOOD, CUZ WE **NEED** YOU.

AND YOU, TOO!



IT WAS ONE THING WHEN HE WAS TAUNTING THEM ONLINE.



YEAH, BUT THIS IS ACTUALLY POKING THE BEAST.



...AND LOOKS TO BE HEADING IN A BAD DIRECTION.

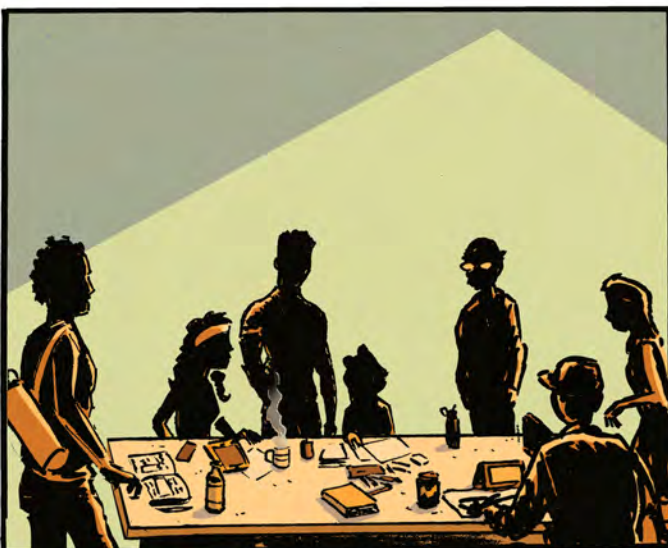
IT SURE GOT ATTENTION.

JUST AS LONG AS HE'S NOT ATTRIBUTED TO US.

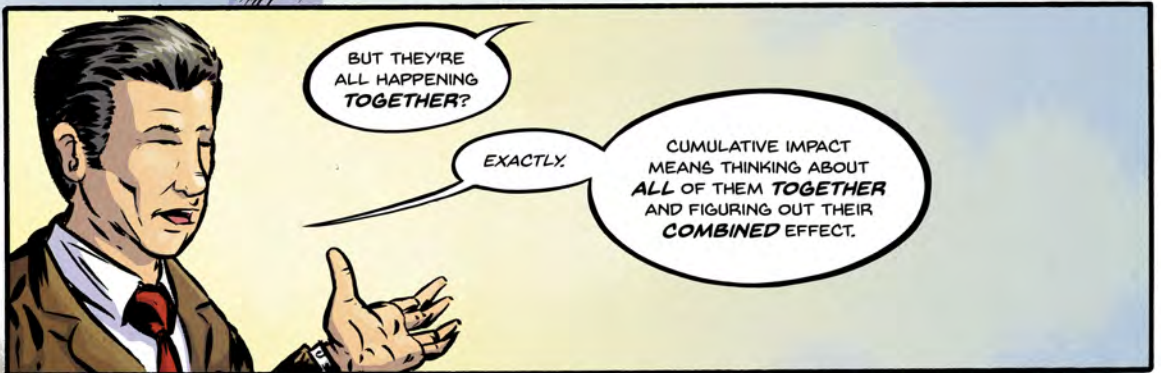
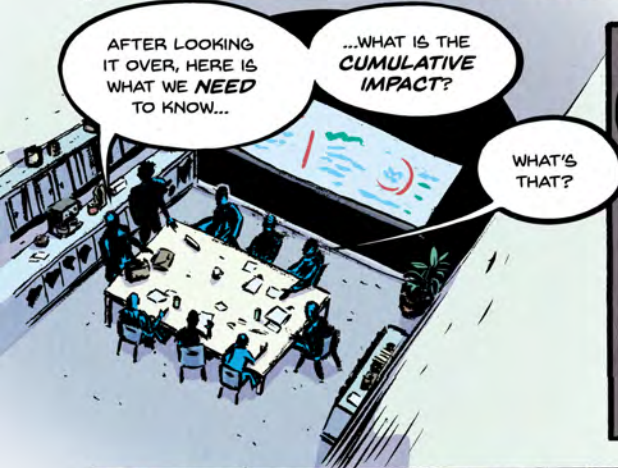
IT'S AWESOME! THIS GUYS IS DOING SOMETHING NOT JUST TALKING, TALKING, TALKING...

IT'S EERIE. HIS NAME...

... IT'S SO CLOSE TO SALVADOR.



WELL... LET'S GET STARTED.



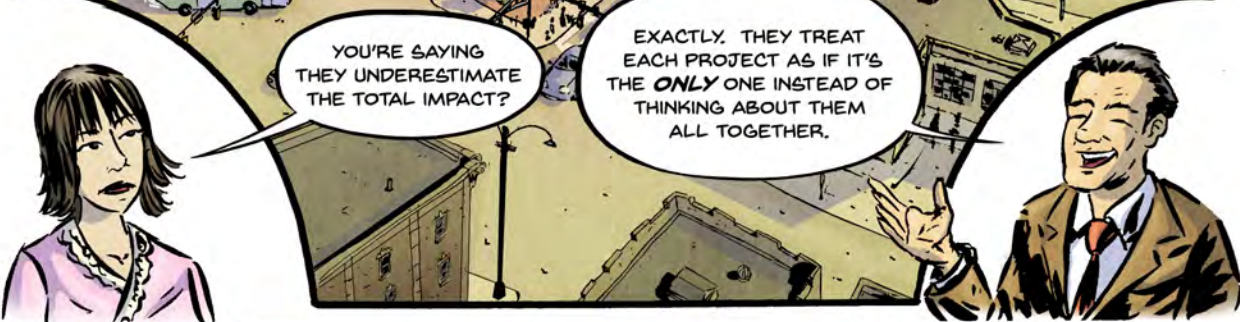


...THEY ALL AFFECT THE SAME AIR, THE SAME WATER.

RIGHT! YOUR TOWN COULD HAVE GOOD **CLEAN** AIR. THEN A NEW PLANT COMES IN, AND ANOTHER PLANT WANTS TO EXPAND.



AND THE BUS DEPOT WANTS TO ADD EXTRA BUSES.



YOU'RE SAYING THEY UNDERESTIMATE THE TOTAL IMPACT?

EXACTLY. THEY TREAT EACH PROJECT AS IF IT'S THE **ONLY** ONE INSTEAD OF THINKING ABOUT THEM ALL TOGETHER.



SO, WE NEED TO DOCUMENT THE CURRENT AIR QUALITY.



AND THE PREDICTED IMPACT OF **EVERY-THING** BEING BUILT.

WELL, WE KNOW FOR A FACT GAMES ARE BEING CANCELED.

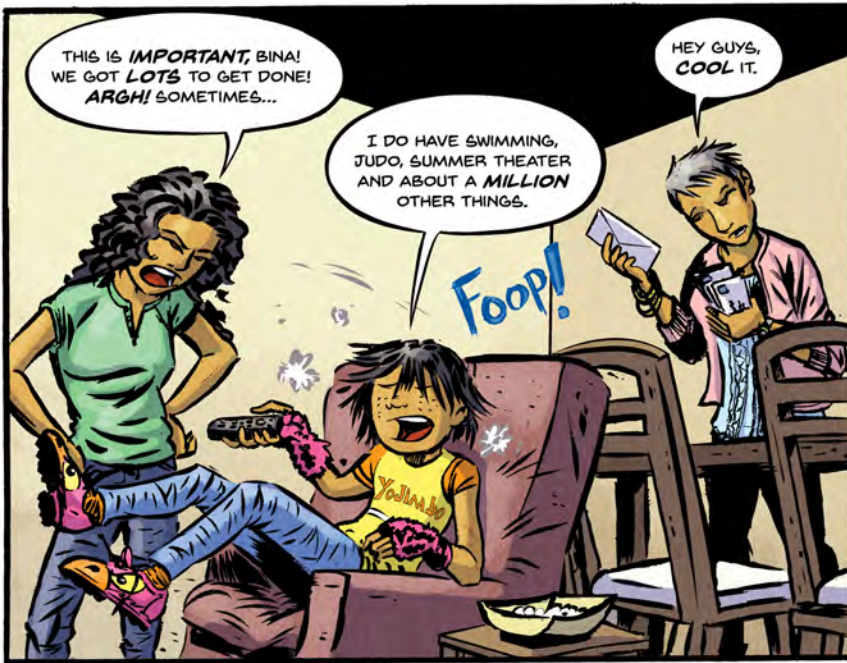


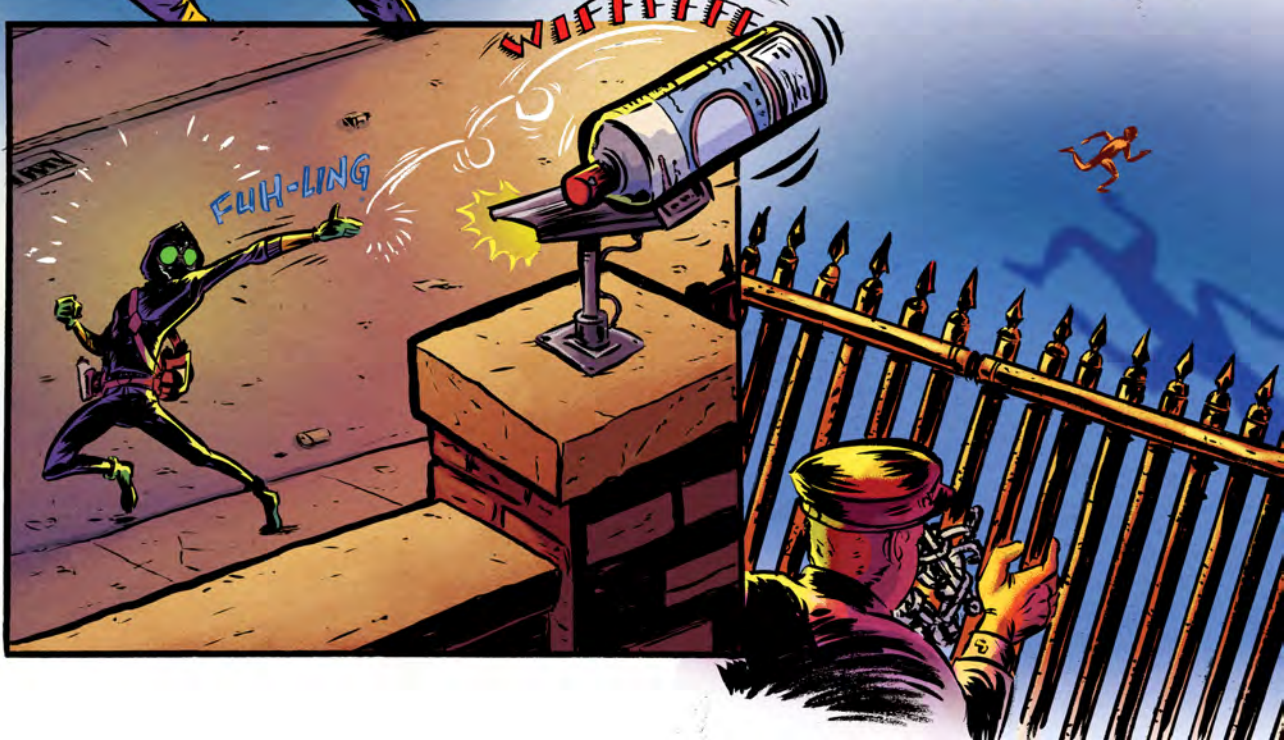
AND HOW MANY DAYS HAS THERE BEEN NO RECESS AT OUR SCHOOLS?



WE CAN ALSO USE THE STATS WE COLLECTED FROM OUR **LAST FIGHT**, SUCH AS TRAFFIC, AND OTHER STUFF.

GREAT! LET'S KEEP GOING.



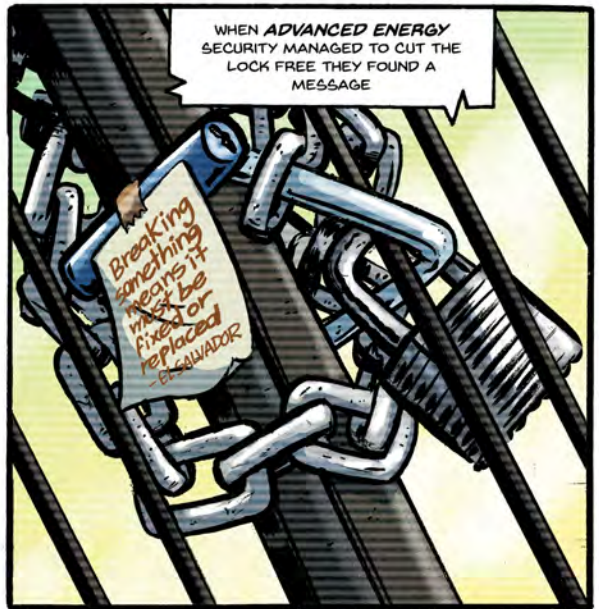




TONIGHT! THE MYSTERY OF **EL SALVADOR** CONTINUES...CAUGHT ON FILM LOCKING THE FRONT GATE OF **ADVANCED ENERGY**.

LIVE

BREAKING NEWS
MYSTERIOUS VANDAL STRIKES AGAIN



WHEN **ADVANCED ENERGY** SECURITY MANAGED TO CUT THE LOCK FREE THEY FOUND A MESSAGE

Breaking something means it must be fixed or replaced. EL SALVADOR



DONALD WASTLER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER FROM **ADVANCED ENERGY** HAD THIS TO SAY.

THIS ACT OF VANDALISM COSTS **ADVANCED ENERGY** HOURS OF HEADACHE.

WE DON'T KNOW WHO THIS **EL SALVADOR** PERSON IS, BUT WE WILL **NOT** TOLERATE CRIMINAL ACTS.



HA!

THAT'S AWESOME!

BINA!



CRIMINAL ACTS? HE PUT A LOCK ON THE GATE...

BIG WHOOP!

YOU ARE SUCH A **JERK**.

MAYBE YOU **SHOULDN'T** COME TO THE HEARING TOMORROW.



WHATEVER...

SHOULDN'T YOU BE LEAVING FOR COLLEGE SOON ANYWAY?



THE HEARING.



SO DO YOU GUYS HAVE REPRESENTATION?

YEAH, I CHECKED IN ALREADY.

I'M OUR REPRESENTATION.

CAN YOU DO THAT?



YEAH, I USED TO BE A **LAWYER**, BUT WITH MY HEALTH I HAD TO STEP AWAY.

WOW!



WE HAVEN'T REALLY NEEDED IT AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL, BUT THIS HEARING CALLS FOR DUSTING OFF THE DEGREE.



TROOP! HOW ARE YOU DOING?

I'M WELL, THANKS.

SHALL WE GO IN?



GOOD AFTERNOON. **ADVANCED ENERGY**, YOU MAY BEGIN.

YOUR HONOR WE CALL **PHILIP KWON**, THE ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER WHO CONDUCTED THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ON BEHALF OF **ADVANCED ENERGY**.

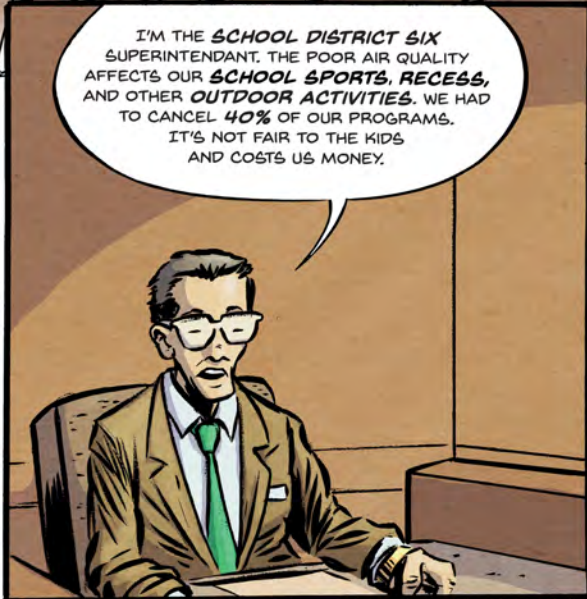
AFTER MR. KWON'S TESTIMONY.





OK GUYS, YOU ARE UP NEXT.

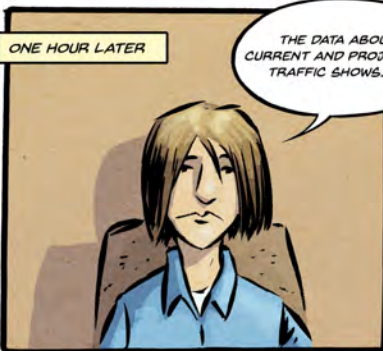
JUST PRESENT WHAT WE WENT OVER, OK?



I'M THE **SCHOOL DISTRICT SIX** SUPERINTENDANT. THE POOR AIR QUALITY AFFECTS OUR **SCHOOL SPORTS, RECESS,** AND OTHER **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES.** WE HAD TO CANCEL **40%** OF OUR PROGRAMS. IT'S NOT FAIR TO THE KIDS AND COSTS US MONEY.



I'M REPRESENTING **MERCY HOSPITAL.** ASTHMA ADMISSIONS HAVE BEEN SKYROCKETING. WE DON'T HAVE **ENOUGH** BEDS. THIS BOARD SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR WAYS TO **DECREASE** EMISSIONS, NOT **INCREASE** THEM.



ONE HOUR LATER

THE DATA ABOUT CURRENT AND PROJECTED TRAFFIC SHOWS.....



LOCAL BUSINESSES ARE ALREADY NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THE POLLUTION AND THIS EXPANSION WILL.....



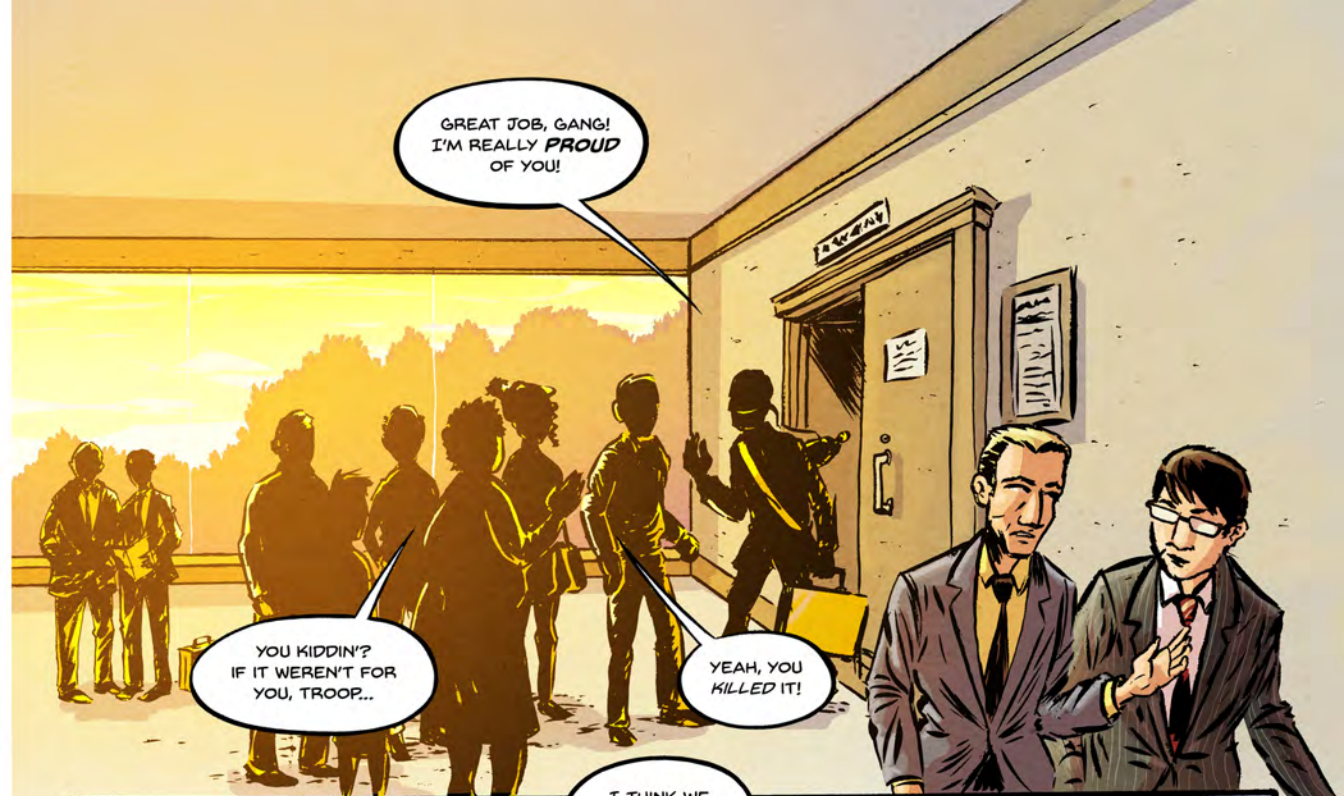
THE COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE HAS ALREADY BEEN HARMED.....



THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR TIME. WE WILL TAKE THIS MATTER UNDER ADVISEMENT.



THE BOARD WILL HAVE A DECISION SHORTLY.



GREAT JOB, GANG!
I'M REALLY **PROUD**
OF YOU!

YOU KIDDIN'?
IF IT WEREN'T FOR
YOU, TROOP...

YEAH, YOU
KILLED IT!



I THINK WE
DID **REALLY**
WELL.

THAT WAS
AMAZING.

NOW WE
SIT TIGHT AND
WAIT.



I HAVE TO GET
GOING, GUYS. I WANNA
SHARE THE NEWS WITH
BINA AND MY
MOM!



HHMMM...



IS THAT...?



WAIT!



STOP,
YOU LITTLE
CRETIN!





...ME.

BINA!
I'M...
I'M EL
SALVADOR.

I CAN'T BELIEVE
IT. WERE YOU ACTUALLY
GOING TO **VANDALIZE**
PROPERTY?



WHAT
IF YOU WERE
CAUGHT?
IT'S JUST PAINT.
ROSA PARKS BROKE
THE LAW FOR WHAT SHE
BELIEVED IN.

PUT IN
JAIL?



CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE
MAY BE A TOOL BUT IT'S
ONLY **PART** OF THE BATTLE.
PAINT WILL WASH
AWAY.

BUT **COMMUNITY**
BONDS CAN'T BE
WASHED AWAY, AND
NEITHER CAN
THE **LAW.**



...DON'T DO THIS.
YOU'RE **BETTER**
THAN THIS. ...MY
LITTLE BEAN...?

SNIFF
SNIFF



THAT'S MY
SIS.

DAYS LATER...

THANKS FOR COMING OUT TODAY, GUYS.

THE RULING CAME IN, AND IT'S PRETTY GOOD.



THE DECISION IS IN OUR FAVOR BECAUSE **ADVANCED ENERGY** DIDN'T CONSIDER THE CUMULATIVE IMPACTS.



SO THEY HAVE TO SHUT THE PLANT DOWN?

NO, IT'S **NOT** OVER. **ADVANCED ENERGY** DIDN'T DO AN ADEQUATE STUDY BUT...



...THEY CAN START OVER AND STILL MIGHT **ULTIMATELY** GET WHAT THEY WANT.



WAIT... THEY COULD **STILL** WIN?

MAYBE. BUT **WE** NOW HAVE TIME ON OUR SIDE.





THEY DIDN'T PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO US BEFORE, BUT NOW THEY WILL.

THIS MIGHT EVEN BRING THEM TO THE TABLE.

NICE!

AND GIVE US THE LEVERAGE WE NEED.



LATER...

LET'S STAY A STEP AHEAD AND KEEP PLANNING FOR A NEGOTIATION.



HOLD UP A SEC, BEAN.

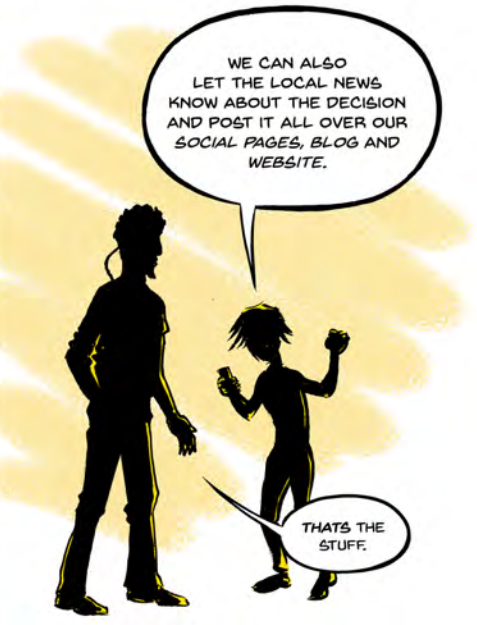


I HEAR **EL SALVADOR** RETIRED BUT WE COULD SURE USE YOUR HELP, ESPECIALLY THOSE TECH SKILLS OF YOURS.

REALLY?

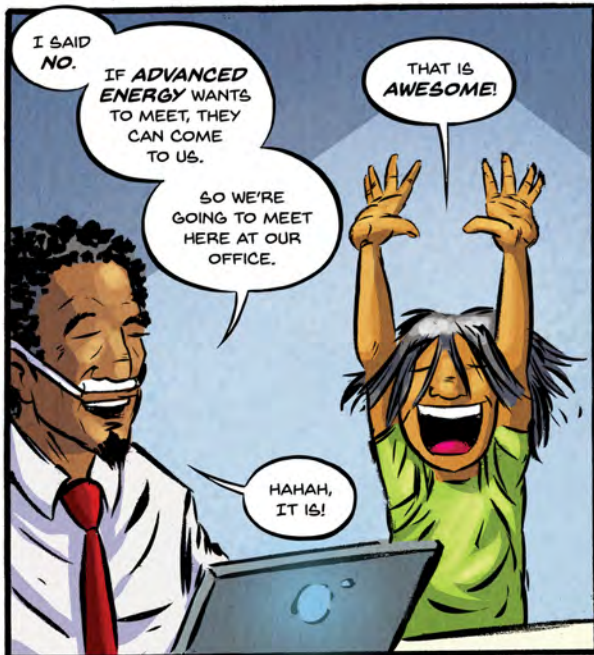


THAT'S EASY! WE CAN RUN A SOCIAL NETWORKING CAMPAIGN FOR LIKE \$5 A DAY AND REACH **THOUSANDS** OF PEOPLE.



WE CAN ALSO LET THE LOCAL NEWS KNOW ABOUT THE DECISION AND POST IT ALL OVER OUR **SOCIAL PAGES, BLOG AND WEBSITE.**

THAT'S THE STUFF.





SHORTLY...

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US. YOU ASKED FOR THIS MEETING, SO WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?



WELL, WE'RE COMMITTED TO FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE ENERGY NEEDS OF FORESTVILLE.

OBVIOUSLY, WITH REGARD TO THE EXPANSION WE ARE NOW BACK AT THE INFORMATION GATHERING STAGE.



WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE IF WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT. I SUSPECT WE ACTUALLY HAVE QUITE A BIT OF COMMON GROUND.



SO WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

WELL, HERE IS WHAT WE'RE THINKING...



HOUR TWO...



HOUR FIVE...



HOUR EIGHT...





TONIGHT: A **BIG** WIN FOR THE COMMUNITY AS **S.A.F.E.** ORGANIZERS AND **ADVANCED ENERGY** CAME TO AN AGREEMENT.

BREAKING NEWS



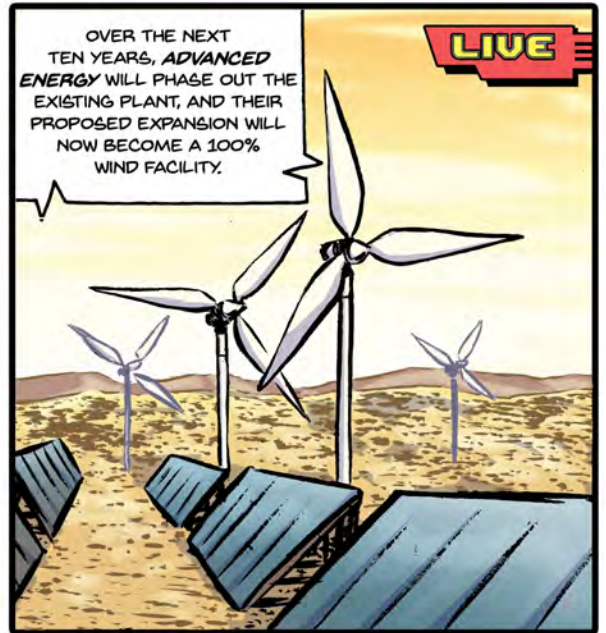
AFTER TOUGH NEGOTIATION THE TWO PARTIES LAID OUT A DETAILED PLAN IN WHICH **ADVANCED ENERGY** AGREED TO-

BREAKING NEWS



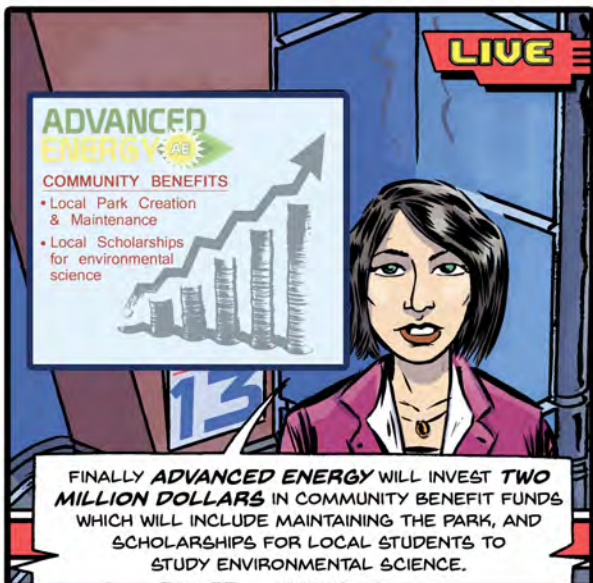
-IMMEDIATELY SWITCH TO LESS POLLUTING FUEL TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND REDUCE POLLUTION.

LIVE



OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, **ADVANCED ENERGY** WILL PHASE OUT THE EXISTING PLANT, AND THEIR PROPOSED EXPANSION WILL NOW BECOME A 100% WIND FACILITY.

LIVE



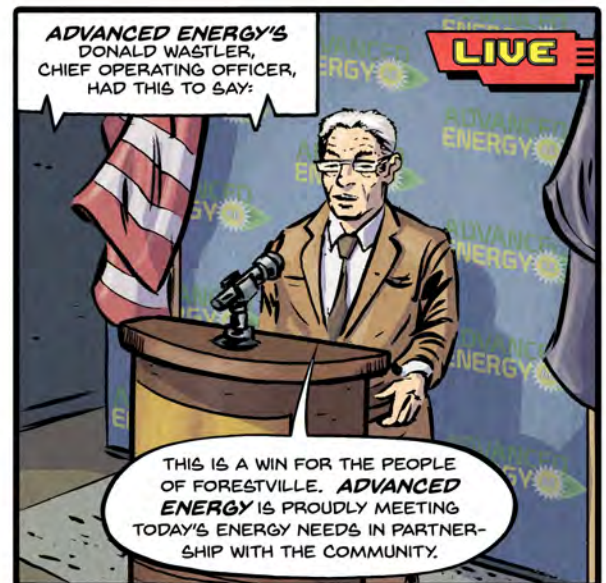
ADVANCED ENERGY

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Local Park Creation & Maintenance
- Local Scholarships for environmental science

LIVE

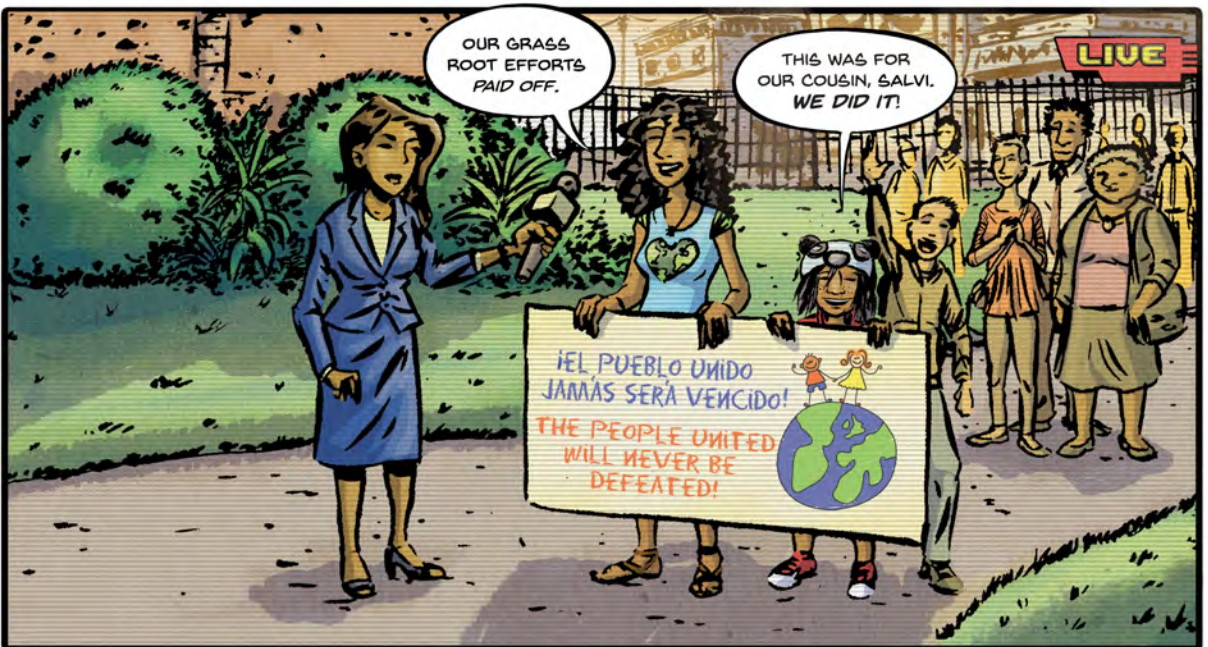
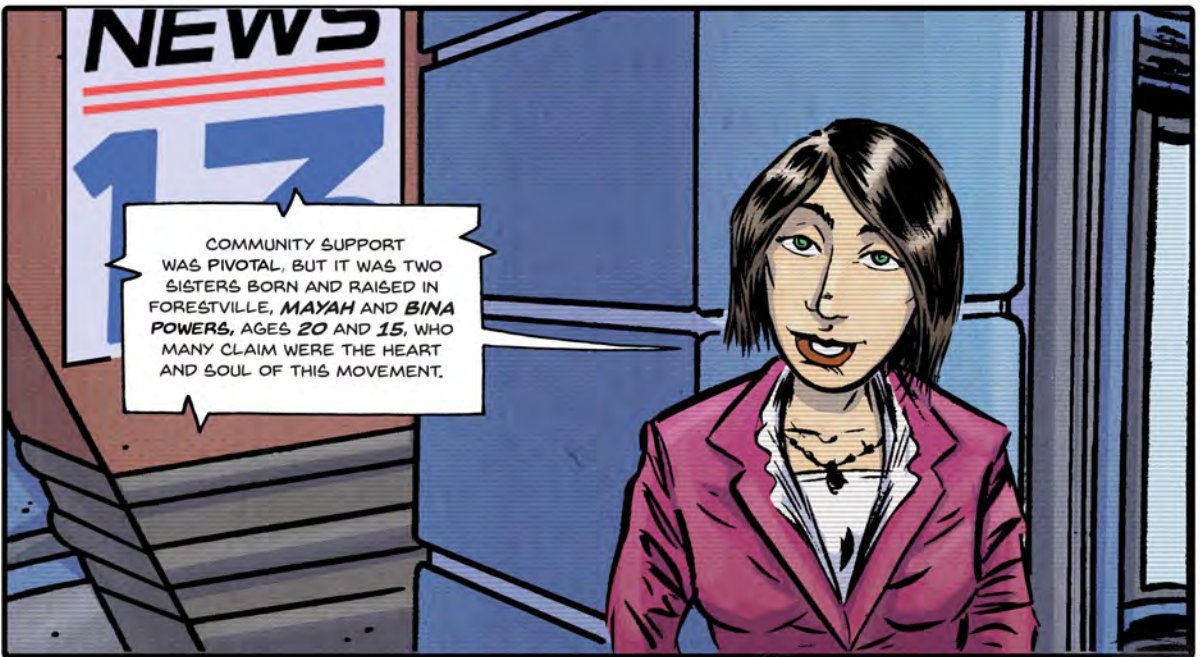
FINALLY **ADVANCED ENERGY** WILL INVEST **TWO MILLION DOLLARS** IN COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUNDS WHICH WILL INCLUDE MAINTAINING THE PARK, AND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR LOCAL STUDENTS TO STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE.



ADVANCED ENERGY'S DONALD WASTLER, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, HAD THIS TO SAY:

LIVE

THIS IS A WIN FOR THE PEOPLE OF FORESTVILLE. **ADVANCED ENERGY** IS PROUDLY MEETING TODAY'S ENERGY NEEDS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY.





I KNEW I WOULD FIND YOU HERE.



TROOP AND I GOT YOUR FAVORITE, VEGGIES AND SOFRITO.



YA KNOW, HE WOULD BE SO HAPPY RIGHT NOW.

I KNOW.

NOT TO MENTION DANG PROUD OF YOU GUYS.



HE WASN'T JUST OUR COUSIN, MAYAH. HE WAS MY BEST FRIEND SINCE YOU LEFT.

I KNOW. YOU DID ALL OF THIS FOR HIM.



WELL...

...HE CERTAINLY WOULDN'T WANT US TO MOPE, SO I BROUGHT A LITTLE SOMETHING.



SO... YOU READY TO GO BACK TO COLLEGE?



NO!

BUBBI
POP



...YES.
A PART OF ME
KNOWS I HAVE
TO GO BACK.



I HAVE A LOT MORE TO LEARN ABOUT **PROTECTING**
THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE **PEOPLE**. THERE IS **SO**
MUCH THAT NEEDS DOING.



WHAT'D YOU
DO WITH MY
SISTER? SHE'S
TALKING
CRAZY!!

WELL, ONE
THING'S FOR
SURE. YOU BOTH
DID A **GREAT**
JOB.



WE COULDN'T
HAVE DONE IT
WITHOUT YOU.

SO
WHAT
NOW?

KEEP OUR
EYES OPEN.
THIS WAS
A GOOD WIN,
BUT THE NEXT
CHALLENGE
IS ALREADY
COMING,
I'M SURE.

GEEZ, DOES
IT **EVER**
STOP?



NO, IT **DOESN'T**.
AND CLIMATE
CHANGE IS GONNA
MAKE **PROTECTING**
OUR ENVIRONMENT
EVEN **HARDER**.



BRING IT,
I'M READY!

HYAHHHHH



AND BEAN, I PROMISE,
I'M GONNA COME BACK
MORE OFTEN OR MAYBE
EVEN HAVE YOU COME
VISIT ME!



HE CAN
AND WILL.

THAT WOULD BE
THE BEST. I WISH SALVI
COULD JOIN US.

A TOAST TO
SALVI. WE MISS
YOU.



TO SALVADOR!

SALVADOR 'Salvi' POWERS
IN LOVING MEMORY
15
The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

THE
END



THANK YOU FOR READING.
www.CenterForUrbanEnvironmentalReform.org

LEARN MORE ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice means the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Fair treatment means that no person or group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental impacts resulting from industry, development, and commerce.


Meaningful involvement means that potentially affected communities have an opportunity to participate in making the decision, and that their contribution can influence the outcome.

PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

(Below are the first three of seventeen principles as written by the Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental leadership.)

- 1) Environmental Justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.
- 2) Environmental Justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- 3) Environmental Justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.

<http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>



More Info: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/>



About the CUNY Center for Urban Environmental Reform (CUER)

CUER seeks new opportunities for citizen participation and citizen empowerment in environmental decision-making. Too often poor and minority communities are allocated more than their share of environmentally-polluting activities while having access to fewer environmental amenities (like trees and parks). The process of environmental decision-making is often confusing: with complex timelines and arcane rules. Communities often find themselves struggling to participate. I founded CUER to help level the playing field.

CUER's mission is to revitalize participatory environmental democracy. Environmental decisions are about fundamental equality in a political community. Yet too often, an emphasis on private choices obscures the justice component of these decisions. CUER helps communities develop advocacy strategies responsive to the roles that power, access to information, and inequality play in shaping environmental outcomes. By facilitating an important social dialogue about the acceptability of environmental risks and the need for their equitable distribution, CUER helps build environmental citizenship.



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