

An interview with Cecil and that's a rare thing.

[The Hammers] [9] [Interview] [9616]

Rev 3.2 (Last updated on Jan 12, 2020)

Prerequisite stories

All previous stories in this arc, especially those mentioned below have more weight.

[The Hammers arc] [1] [The ENN incident] [9600]

[The Hammers arc] [2] [Everything101] [9600]

[The Hammers arc] [5] [Edith] [9607]

[The Hammers arc] [6] [Asylum] [9613]

Kisia and Cecil were walking on a street in Fallen Crater. It was a rare occasion that Cecil wore a business attire; a crimson robe would have been too noticeable.

“A ruler should sometimes attempt to see how his people are doing from their point of view,” He stated as they left his library, AKA the imperial HQ, by foot. Taking a public transport, they arrived in downtown where the streets were packed with people.

High rise structures clouded the sky and the area was densely crowded from top to bottom. It was also Sunday. All shops were open and seemed well stocked. Cecil had always pushed for small businesses to thrive while leaving big corporations with little to no benefits.

He nodded along as he observed the area.

“Very good,” He remarked. “Most seem content.”

At one point, they ran into a small protest. There was a group of three people holding a banner that said, “Visual lab designs, scams!” It wasn’t attracting a lot of attentions but there were few dozens of people gathered at the banner.

“Interesting,” Cecil remarked indifferently as he casually walked by the protest.

Once they returned, Cecil ordered Kisia to pull out every information about the company. Visual lab designs was a private company.

“As of now, the company owns 198 patents. The company started off as an investment firm. At one point, they started to purchase patents and they’ve made huge credit over suing others for patent infringements. Their patents are very confusing and it isn’t all black and white. They’ve won and lost many cases but their aim appears to be settlements.”

She quickly added, “They do have a court session in a week.”

A judge was replaced with Cecil himself in a court case. It was a patent lawsuit. A company called "Visual lab designs" was suing a few companies all together for patent infringements.

In the day's court, Visual lab designs was suing against a small business owner who was found using their patent.

The claimant and their layers were surprised that Cecil was acting as a judge, but they continued regardless. They presented their case professionally with indisputable evidences.

Cecil read through documents. It was well done and as professional as it could have gotten.

"Defendant," Cecil spoke calmly with an indifferent glance. "Your words?"

The defendant was accompanied by one lawyer. They didn't have many documents to present. The defendant's lawyer stated that he attempted to work out a deal with the respondent. However, the respondent demanded an absurd royalty fee, which was 70% of profit every season. The deal was broken and this lawsuit was generated in the end.

It would seem that the claimant would win this case. In fact, Visual lab designs had a long history of winning their lawsuits. While they did have a fair amount of loses, none of them were damaging. Their wins, however, drew huge sums of settlements every time.

While Cecil was making a verdict, he unexpectedly summoned Kisia who had brought a disk. The lawyers of the plaintiff demanded what was going on.

By laws, any extraterritorial materials in a closed court session were not permitted unless agreed upon by both parties.

"I am the law," Cecil declared bluntly in a response to the lawyers.

He took a good quarter an hour reading up the extraterritorial documents.

"Claimant," Cecil called out. "I have a question for you."

The lawyers from Visual lab designs were not content about where the court session was going.

"Your company has 198 patents registered. All of them were purchased. Has your company actually manufactured any products based on patents you have?"

The plaintiff discussed with his lawyers briefly before responding.

"I would like not answer that, your honor," The plaintiff said.

Cecil sneered and said to him firmly. "Answer or die."

"All due respects, sir," The plaintiff's lawyer raised his voice. "This court session is regarding a lawsuit that has nothing to do at all with what you are asking."

"It has everything to do with your lawsuit," Cecil responded. "As far as I can see, your company exists only to sue others. If I am wrong, prove me wrong."

"We are merely protecting our intellectual properties."

"Then why do you sue only successful products?"

The lawyer acted as if he took a blow on his chest. He remained silent.

Cecil continued, "You've sued more than six hundred times over a hundred years. All of the lawsuits share a pattern. It is that Visual lab designs always sues a successful product that may have your patent. Your company waits until such products are profitable. And, because your patents are so confusing, you stand a fair chance to gain something."

The plaintiff's lawyer talked back fiercely. "There is absolutely nothing wrong about our actions. We are merely protecting our intellectual properties."

"Indeed," Cecil replied promptly, "You are protecting your intellectual properties. However, when you start to abuse the system, you should have seen this coming, especially when I rule." He exclaimed right after, "Guards! Shoot that lawyer!"

There were four armed guards in the court room. They were positioned in each corner. A guard who was closest to the lawyer did not hesitate to aim and shot at the lawyer's head. The guard's plasma pistol screamed as it discharged a shot of plasma particle which hit the lawyer's head and exploded on spot. Thankfully, it was a closed court and there was no attendance in the back seats where it was covered with boiling blood.

Cecil glanced over the dead lawyer, whose upper head was exploded, briefly before his cold stare moved onto the plaintiff. "Claimant, I have no intention to let you out of here alive. Any last words?" He asked surprisingly gently.

Staring at his dead lawyer who was still pouring blood out of what was left of his head, the claimant demanded. "May I ask what crimes we've committed?"

"You and your company are delaying technological advancements. Your company holds exclusive rights to diverse amount of patents. If your company has been reasonable with your intellectual properties, I would have not bothered you. However, you chose to abuse the system."

Cecil signaled a guard nearby and the claimant was shot to death. The defendant was peeing on his pants, and his lawyer was pale. Both were unable to speak any further and had absolutely no idea what to do at this point. They merely came in today in order to make a settlement.

"I have no intention to harm the defendant. This court is dismissed."

Since it was a closed court session, there were no public eyes. However, the outcome was eventually leaked to public shortly after. Although there were some criticisms, overall reaction was positive. Visual lab designs was notorious for their practices.

However, the worst was yet to come. Ten minutes after the court session, a group of armed men stormed Visual lab designs company building in Fallen Crater. Low-end workers were spared. However, high profile members, such as members of board of directors, were shot to death.

The company was dissolved immediately and their intellectual properties were transferred to Venus government. The intellectual properties became royalty free subsequently.

“The reactions are better than I expected,” Kisia remarked in Gair’s office. “You’d think they might put up a protest or two. They didn’t.”

“If they did, they’d be killed anyway,” Kaper added.

As per Cecil’s order, Kisia and Kasper were keeping keen eyes on public reactions after the court session. His order was simple in concept; watch the public and kill anyone who attempt to entice the populace.

Gair did not agree with Cecil’s methods most of time. However, he knew he was completely powerless to oppose him. As much as he was the vice President, he was a puppet as long as Cecil was in power.

It wasn’t that Gair was opposing Cecil however. He wasn’t feeling defiant, either. He had known Cecil for hundreds of years and he knew that his methods worked almost always despite of how ruthless they may have been. It was just that his methods weren’t his cup of tea.

Cecil was handling another court session the other day. This time, it was a public court session. Reporters and journalist from VNN were present therefore.

Normally, it was a low profile civil court session that wouldn’t have drawn any attention, but as soon as it was announced that Cecil was taking over, journalists flocked in.

It was a civil case where a tenant refused to pay his landlord. It appeared to be a simple and small case. However, the tenant was notorious for not paying his landlords and drag on his tenancy until he was evicted by law. Sometimes, the legal progress would take a full season (3 months) and the tenant would stay for basically free while his eviction was being processed.

Civil laws weren't strong enough to force him to pay. Other than ordering him to pay, civil laws had no further enforcement. The tenant who showed up a defendant in this session has been avoiding garnishment by never having an empty bank account and also by never getting a job where he was required to link up a bank account. He had always taken cash cards for his wages.

The court guest area in the chamber was crowded. Many experts expected today's session to be a bloody mess. VNN also voiced that they expected someone would wound up dead. They weren't too horribly wrong to have made such assumptions because, whenever Cecil was involved, end results had been bloody.

The plaintiff, who was the landlord of a complex unit, entered the court room with his lawyer. Defendant followed a moment later with his lawyer.

As Cecil began the session, he asked plaintiff to present his case which was accomplished by his lawyer.

"So," Cecil concluded what the lawyer stated, "The tenant doesn't pay and uses the housing laws to jump from a place to another and in the end he doesn't get to pay a dime."

Defendant's lawyer objected. "Your honor, that is not the case. The defendant has perfectly legitimate reason for his past deeds."

"Very well," Cecil replied as he turned his attention to the defendant. "State your case."

The defendant's lawyer stated that defendant was abused by his landlords when he could not make his payment in time. He listed some landlords who even shut down electricity to his unit because of that. He stated that some even cut water supply as well. He presented his evidence.

"I see where you stand. However, it all began from him, did it not?"

The defendant's lawyer couldn't quite understand him. "Pardon, sir?"

"It all began because he didn't pay, did it not?"

"True, your honor. However, his basic rights as a human being should have been complied. Cutting electricity and even water supply was going too far and such landlords were in violation of basic human rights."

"Why did he not pay then? It would have solved all those troubles," Cecil responded.

"My client had no credit at the moment."

"For a full season?"

"Correct, your honor."

Cecil made a pause. He looked at the defendant for a moment before he talked again. It was very uneasy silence. Some guests thought Cecil might end this case by just killing the defendant at this point.

“Defendant’s lawyer, I will give you one choice to back out. Back out now and you shall not meet an unfortunate end,” Cecil declared.

The defendant’s frowned and immediately spoke up. “Sir, I have done nothing wrong! They cut water and power!” to which Cecil responded,

“Too bad that you didn’t pay.”

“I signed a lease contract! They had no right to cut power and water!”

The defendant was becoming desperate. He heard about the court case where Cecil killed a plaintiff and his lawyer. But he thought he had a case. Of course, he had indeed. He had always evaded the laws quite well so far.

“I read your thoughts despite of you attempting to shield it,” Cecil responded bluntly, “You had money all along. You simply abused the laws to save some credits and gave painful times for landlords. In fact, you enjoyed the moments you tortured your landlords.”

He then spoke to his lawyer. “I am giving you ten seconds to walk out of here. If you do walk out in 10 seconds, I will not harm you and no charges will be pressed against you. This is literally your chance to walk out clean.” He added quickly, “And I doubt anyone would blame you for walking out in this case.”

The lawyer didn't bother picking up any of his files or briefcase and simply ran out of the court room. Journalists from VNN attempted to get a hold of him as he left the court room.

"Hey, get the fuck back here!" The defendant shouted.

"Guards!" Cecil exclaimed and that was the last of the defendant as he was shot four times in his head.

Or so they thought. The defendant was apparently a class B ESP and shielded himself from the shots.

"I have done nothing wrong!" The defendant bellowed as he attempted to teleport out. His body faded for a second before coming back on as if nothing happened. "The hell?" He exclaimed.

Cecil stood up slowly from the judge's chair and grabbed air at which point the defendant started to choke. The defendant attempted to free himself but he simply choked to death.

The defendant didn't stand a chance.

Few hours after the court session, Edith from VNN requested a meeting with Kisia at her favorite café.

"You want to interview Cecil?!" Kisia almost spit her tea when she heard what Edith had to say.

“I do understand this is a big favor to ask.” Kisia stopped her and she explained, “No, you don’t understand. This is not about asking for a favor. You will be risking your life.”

Ever since airing Averno’s adventure programme, Edith had been doing well. Her rank within VNN had gained substantial rise and she was no longer just a rookie employee. Still, she was far from being even considered for News 9 anchor job. Additionally, she hadn’t had a clear role ever since her last project. She had been gathering news materials in and out of Venus as a journalist and that was it. She needed a big break and felt that interviewing Cecil after the two court incidents could draw big viewer ratings.

Edith wasn’t wrong in her assessment that interviewing Cecil would be a big thing. In fact, no one had ever interviewed Cecil so far. No one dared.

“I do know what I am asking,” Edith pressed on, “I do know I am risking my life. I also risked my life when I was smuggling the video record from the first Earthian-Venusian War.”

Still, Kisia was clearly reluctant. She explained, “I played a part in your success the last time. But I cannot play any role if you dare interviewing Cecil. You ask a wrong question and the next thing may be your head rolling on the floor. He is completely unpredictable and extremely dangerous person to deal with. There is a reason why no one asked to interview Cecil.”

Regardless, Edith was adamant that she wanted an exclusive interview with Cecil.

Kisia eventually informed Cecil regarding Edith's request.

"Isn't she from the ENN incident?" was what Cecil said after hearing the request.

"Yes, sir."

They weren't at the library this time. They were in an office within the library where Cecil was apparently looking up court cases.

"From no one to someone who could interview the Crimson wizard...," Cecil stated with a slow and low tone. "That is quite an accomplishment."

Kisia remained quiet. She had no intention of asking Cecil to go easy on her. Bias was something she loathed.

"Very well, I shall accept the request. Tell her to name the place and date. I shall be there."

Kisia gritted silently. She hoped that Cecil would reject.

Cecil was handling another court session the other day. It was again a public court session. Reporters and journalist from VNN were present therefore. Edith was also present this time as well. In fact, she was to interview Cecil right after this court session.

Cecil sighed deeply as he read through documents. "Let me get this straight. Respondent, you are suing a delivery company for not being able to deliver on time."

"Yes, your honor."

The respondent was dressed in casual clothes. His hair was disheveled. It appeared he hadn't shaved for days. He was accompanied by a freelancer lawyer who was nervous because Cecil was present.

"On this document, you state that the delivery was late by two hours. Meanwhile, the document provided by the delivery company states that the delivery was late by just ten minutes," Cecil stated indifferently, "Which one of you is telling the truth?"

"I've stated what I believed to be truth," The respondent's said, ignoring his own lawyer.

The defendant's lawyer made a statement in response. "Our record was based on an internal clock in a delivery vehicle that made the delivery, your honor."

"Defendant, you admit that the delivery was late then?"

"Yes, we admit that the delivery was late."

"The document does not say whether you provide a guarantee on delivery times," Cecil asked, "Do you provide such?"

"We do provide limited guarantees on delivery times. However, it depends on which delivery method a customer chooses. For the respondent's delivery class, we do provide a refund for delivery fee if we fail to meet our standards." The defendant added quickly. "We've offered the respondent a refund. He has refused."

"Respondent, any words?" Cecil asked.

The respondent growled as if he was becoming irritated. "They failed to deliver my shipment on time, and due to their incompetence, I was greatly penalized."

The respondent's lawyer was shaking his head because he was ignored. There was few seconds of silence before Cecil spoke.

"What does that have to do with this lawsuit? The defendant has provided with a Terms of Service document. You've chosen an economic delivery method which provides a guarantee of delivery fee refund should they fail to meet their standard. You've been offered such a refund. However, you denied."

"Yes, I've denied because they have to pay for more than that!"

The defendant's lawyer spoke, "Your honor, for the record, we did provide him with our ToS documents."

"You are a scam, admit it!" The respondent shouted in response, pointing at them in progress. His lawyer looked shocked to see his client acting such a way and glanced nervously at Cecil.

Sighing, Cecil ordered court guards to shoot down the respondent but spared his lawyer.

"Quit wasting resources," Cecil said to a bleeding corpse which was the respondent a moment ago.

These cases resulted cancellation of various existing lawsuits. Ten million existing lawsuits were reduced to one million. This was also when Kisia realized what Cecil was trying to do. Excessive court session was one of factors of a bloated system.

Dante, a member of the Hammers as well as the mayor of Fallen Crater, attempted to cut down on excessive usage of court system without much success and had basically given up at this point. Cecil's involvement and the subsequent results meant that his method worked once again at a price of few lives.

Edith, looking nervous, cleared her throat when she sat down with Cecil in an outdoor café. It was the same café Kisia used often. The area had been evacuated and was guarded by Vakha and Devon. She didn't blindly choose the café for the interview. It was her indirect way of telling Cecil that she knew the Hammers.

On a wooden table, made of real wood, there were two cups of water. Edith was forced to take a dip into her cup because her throat was getting dry.

Cecil casually looked up and down at Edith. She had long curly blond hair with blue eyes. Her skin seemed to be fine which was his main concern. After all, most of her skin had to be regenerated in a capsule.

"Edith, yes?"

It was Cecil who spoke first. Startling, she responded promptly, "Y, yes, sir. I am Edith from VNN. It is an honor to interview you, sir."

“Let’s get to the topic, shall we? I haven’t got all day.”

Nodding repeatedly, Edith cleared her throat once again. She was with a single camera man who was equipped with a shoulder camera with motion tracking. As soon as she signaled, the man activated his camera installed on his shoulder.

Putting a professional smile on, she began.

“Hello, this is Edith from VNN. This is an exclusive interview with Cecil.” The camera on the man’s shoulder moved sideways to Cecil.

“Greetings.” Cecil made a simple response. Then the focus moved back to Edith.

“I am sure none of you saw this coming,” She said with glee. “An interview with Cecil! Yep, I am sure no one saw this coming. Now...”

The camera man took few steps backwards which prompted his camera on his shoulder to focus out, thus letting the two appear on the same screen.

“Your recent court appearances,” She started. “What was your intention?”

“My first objective was to root out abusers. The first case was Visual lab designs who abused the system. The second and third cases were also abusers but different kind of abusers.”

“They did not do anything illegal though, yes?”

“Strictly speaking, no, they did not do anything illegal on paper. However, in our era, laws set in a stone such as written laws, are too easily abused. Clever ones will find loopholes and will gladly abuse the system. This is where ‘I am the laws’ comes in.”

Edith didn't expect Cecil to actually explain. Therefore, she was a little shocked to have been given a thorough explanation.

She responded, "Sir, please excuse me if I sound rude, but if you are the laws, and the laws keep on altering itself as you see fit, how would we know whether we are crossing the line?"

"If one has common sense and regular standards of moral values, one will know whether one is about the cross the line or not. If one lacks both or either, then the one deserves to die."

"Isn't that too extreme, not to mention vague though?"

"If you are too soft, people will take advantage of you. When you are a ruler of a planet, you must be ruthless to a point of being a dictator, and being vague is the point. The laws are too clear that people can find loophole and feel safe about it. Vague laws will make abusers think twice."

She nodded along and moved onto a next subject which was related to the first.

"You said 'my first objective'. Does that mean you have a second objective?"

"My second objective was to reduce unnecessary court cases. People were opening up cases as if it was nothing, thus wasting city resources. There were ten million cases before I stepped in. Now it is down to one million."

"Perhaps they had reasons to open their cases, sir."

"The three cases I've dealt with, do you think they were absolutely necessary?"

The first one may have been, but the second and third were not."

Edith nodded along. She wasn't going to argue and moved onto her next question.

"Do you value life?"

Devon was close enough to hear the interview clearly and her ears twitched at the question.

"I do," Cecil answered promptly. "But not blindly."

"Would you like to elaborate?"

"I do not value lives of those who cling onto random luck, such as those who spend excessive money on lotteries. In other words, I favor hard working people with clear goals. I also do not value lives of those who fail to see where they stand."

"What do you mean by failing to see where they stand? Would you like to elaborate?"

"If I say I am going to kill you if you protest, comply. I am in a position to be able to kill you. Know where you stand and act accordingly. I give you a warning and you shall heed unless it is death you wish to welcome."

Edith gulped unintentionally. Nodding along, she moved onto her next question.

"I see, thank you, sir. Do you have a motto of some sort?"

Cecil replied promptly, "My way or the highway."

Both Edith and Devon found his motto very fitting to what he had spoken so far.

“Do you have any words for us?”

“Not really. You do what you do and I shall do what I do which is killing you. Good luck evading me, citizens.” Then Cecil stood up at once and vanished on spot.

“Eh...” Edith was speechless for a second because she had more questions but seeing she didn’t really have a choice, she accepted the outcome easily. Nevertheless, the job was done.

“This concludes the interview. Thank you for watching. This is Edith from VNN.”

Seeing that Cecil had left, Vakha dashed away at once while Devon stayed. In fact, she walked into the café and then sat down on where Cecil sat before.

“Eh, excuse me?” Seeing one of the guards enter the café and sitting down where Cecil sat, Edith inquired Devon. “Ma’am, who are you?”

“I am just a guard,” She answered stoically and then crossed her legs as well as arms. “Hmph,” She let out.

Not really understanding what was going on, Edith carefully inquired again, “Are you mad at me? Did I do something to you?”

“I am not mad at you. I am just ... mad at someone else.”

Edith wasn’t a journalist for kicks. She quickly caught on that she had a history with Cecil. Silently signaling her camera men to keep on recording, she inquired Devon.

“May I ask your name?”

“I cannot tell you. It’s a top secret actually.”

It wasn’t exactly top secret, but her identity was best left unrevealed for the time being. She was former President Gvew’s daughter after all.

“May I ask why you are mad at Cecil?” Edith guessed.

And Devon answered casually, “He killed my father. That’s why.”

“Oh! I am so sorry that I asked.”

“Nah, you were doing your job.”

“Then you must loathe Cecil.”

Sighing, Devon gazed into air. “Not really, I guess. He had his reasons and, like or not, my father deserved it, I guess in the end...”

It had been three years ever since she came to Venus. Over the years, she eventually came to terms on her own that her father’s death was fitting. If he did survive, it would have been messy, really really messy. This was something she was told by Cecil as well. At first, she refused to accept it however.

Meanwhile, Edith did sense a story from her but seeing she was refusing to expose her name made her realize that it wasn’t the right time.

Signaling her camera man to stop filming, she stood up and walked away with her crew.

Fin