

Among supervillains, Wells may be unique in the way he actively straddles the line as ally and enemy. Other wolves in sheep's clothing lend superficial help to the hero, all the while plotting their downfall. Wells genuinely wants to advance Barry's strength and stature as the Flash, even as behind the scenes, he's acting completely contrary to everything Barry loves and stands for. That genuineness is deadly; it allows Wells to look Barry in the eye and claim with total conviction that he's on his side. That's the only explanation for why, after all the sketchiness related to Wells this episode, Barry can still reaffirm his faith in the man who [Spoiler alert!] turns out to be the Reverse Flash after all.* That's not the big secret about Wells that comes out here, mind you. Schapker-Eikmeier save that little secret for another day, when the Barry-Wells relationship is ready to be severed for good. But even the fact that Wells not only knew about the potential destructiveness of the particle accelerator, but coerced the person who alerted him into silence, should be a red flag that Wells can be callously self-interested. Going public with his wrongdoing is undeniably admirable, but it's a bit of a stretch that one admission can make things right with all three of his young partners and lead to no further consequences. You'd think someone would pitch that maybe he should be charged for something. But even Joe, who earlier in the episode goes as far as to suggest to Barry that Wells is up to no good, is charmed by Wells' move, and if Joe doesn't make a bigger deal about it, no one else will. No one, that is, except Hartley Rathaway (a.k.a. Pied Piper), the aforementioned silenced individual. His insufferable douchieness is an overwhelming part of his character and makes him easy for everyone to hate. But take a hard look at his backstory and it's clear he's perhaps the most sympathetic of the villains who've appeared on this show thus far. Outcasted by his parents after he came out to them (a detail the episode treats briefly and gracefully), he naturally came to see Wells as mentor and father figure (possibly romantic crush as well, given the extent of his possessiveness) both. Yet Wells was the one who shut down the noblest thing he probably did in his entire life, threatening to throw him out in the process. And oh, yeah, he suffers chronic piercing pain as a result of the particle accelerator now. Given all that, his vendetta against Wells seems a touch more righteous, no? But everybody seems to blithely ignore all these factors, content to loathe Rathaway with a passion, Cisco and Caitlin especially. True, they have ample reason to overlook their former coworker's tragic side, a combination of disgust (Cisco: "He was mostly a jerk, but every once in a while, he could also be a dick.") and jealousy (Caitlin: "He was always your favorite."). You'd think that'd give them more of a stake in the episode, but funnily enough, they end up in the same positions they were when Rathaway, instead of Barry, was Wells' "guy": respected supporting players, but nevertheless supporting players. That sure beats where Iris is at, though. At least Eddie's helping Joe with his investigation into Wells, which is actually substantial. Even getting promoted to journalist for the Central City Picture News doesn't help Iris become a more crucial part of the show's machinery. At best, it gives her a tiresomely cliché sub-plot of struggling to impress the veteran ace reporter Mason Bridge, which she manages to do by a single softball question during Wells' press conference. I mean, really? Asking if he's planning to rebuild the particle accelerator? How about asking about restitution for all the victims of his gross negligence? Or whether he believed at the time if scientific advancement outweighs the risk to human life? Or if he could comment on the relationship between the particle accelerator explosion and the recent sightings of super-humans? While I'm not thrilled that the show stuck to the overdone journalist career path for Iris, that press conference is a big opportunity for her to prove her worth, and she blows it by asking a leading question he can easily answer with a lie. Some Musings:* Despite demonstrations of super-speed, we see that he's struggling to hold onto it.- I wonder if

Rathaway will share any more details with his comic book counterpart. Is reformation in store for him? A relationship with CCPD's Singh? The post The Flash: The Sound and The Fury appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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