

SCENE REPORT:
Head north, feet southwest, bent at the knees, arms folded across stomach. NO ID.

Victim appears to have been led into the alley and forced to kneel. One clean bullet hole through the heart. Execution style.

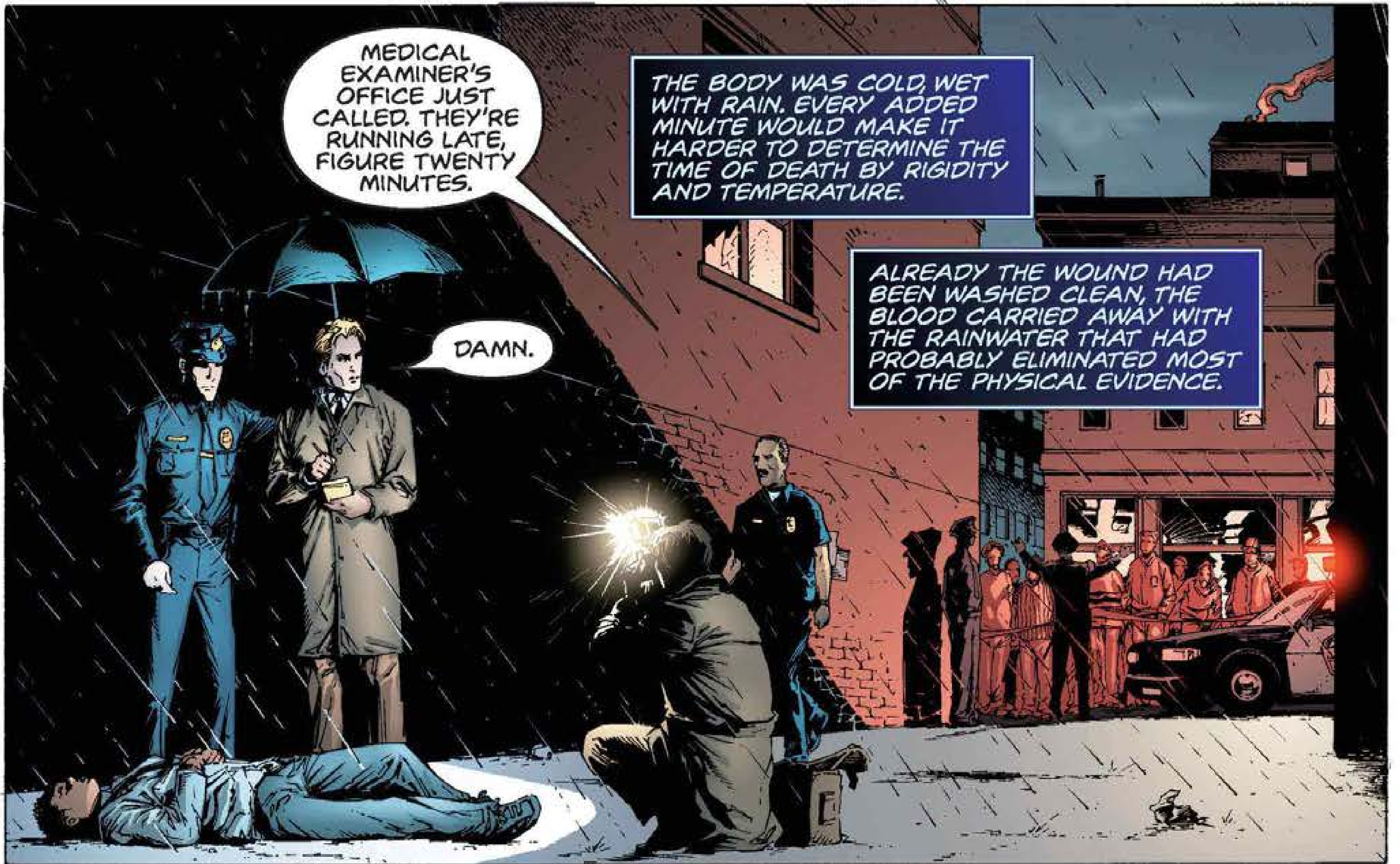
Possibilities:
gang-killing,
drug deal gone bad, extortion.

Male black, 20-25 years,
5'8", brown eyes.

HIS EYES WERE OPEN, STARING UP AT THE SKY. THERE WAS NO PAIN IN THEM, ONLY A LOOK SOMEWHERE BETWEEN CONFUSION AND WONDER. RAIN FELL ON THE OPEN EYES AND POOLED THERE.

FOR SOME REASON, THAT BOTHERED ME MORE THAN THE BLOOD. EYES WERE SUPPOSED TO BLINK WHEN YOU SPLASHED WATER IN THEM. THESE DIDN'T.

LIEUTENANT GREY?

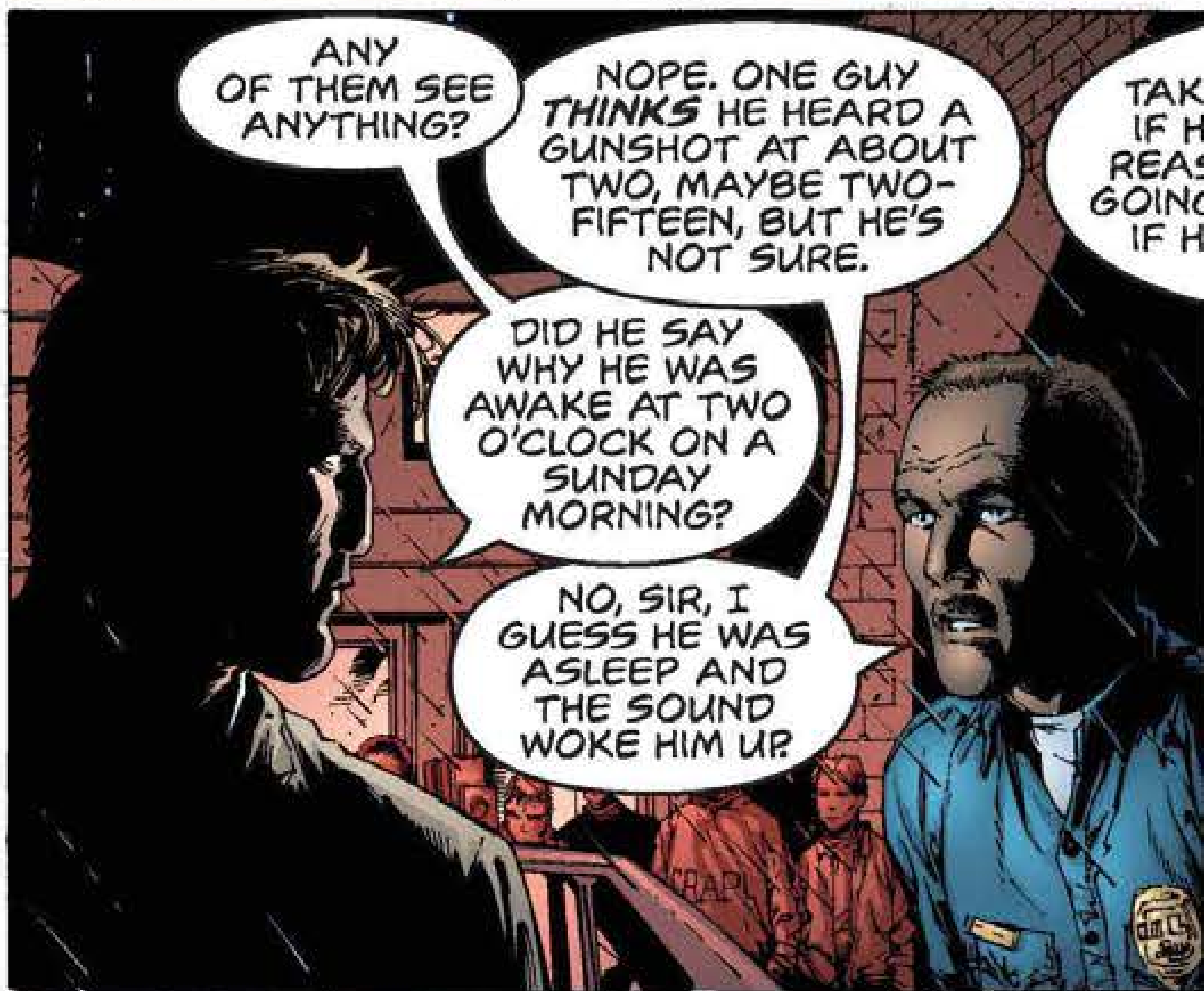


MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE JUST CALLED. THEY'RE RUNNING LATE, FIGURE TWENTY MINUTES.

THE BODY WAS COLD, WET WITH RAIN. EVERY ADDED MINUTE WOULD MAKE IT HARDER TO DETERMINE THE TIME OF DEATH BY RIGIDITY AND TEMPERATURE.

ALREADY THE WOUND HAD BEEN WASHED CLEAN, THE BLOOD CARRIED AWAY WITH THE RAINWATER THAT HAD PROBABLY ELIMINATED MOST OF THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE.

DAMN.



ANY OF THEM SEE ANYTHING?

NOPE. ONE GUY THINKS HE HEARD A GUNSHOT AT ABOUT TWO, MAYBE TWO-FIFTEEN, BUT HE'S NOT SURE.

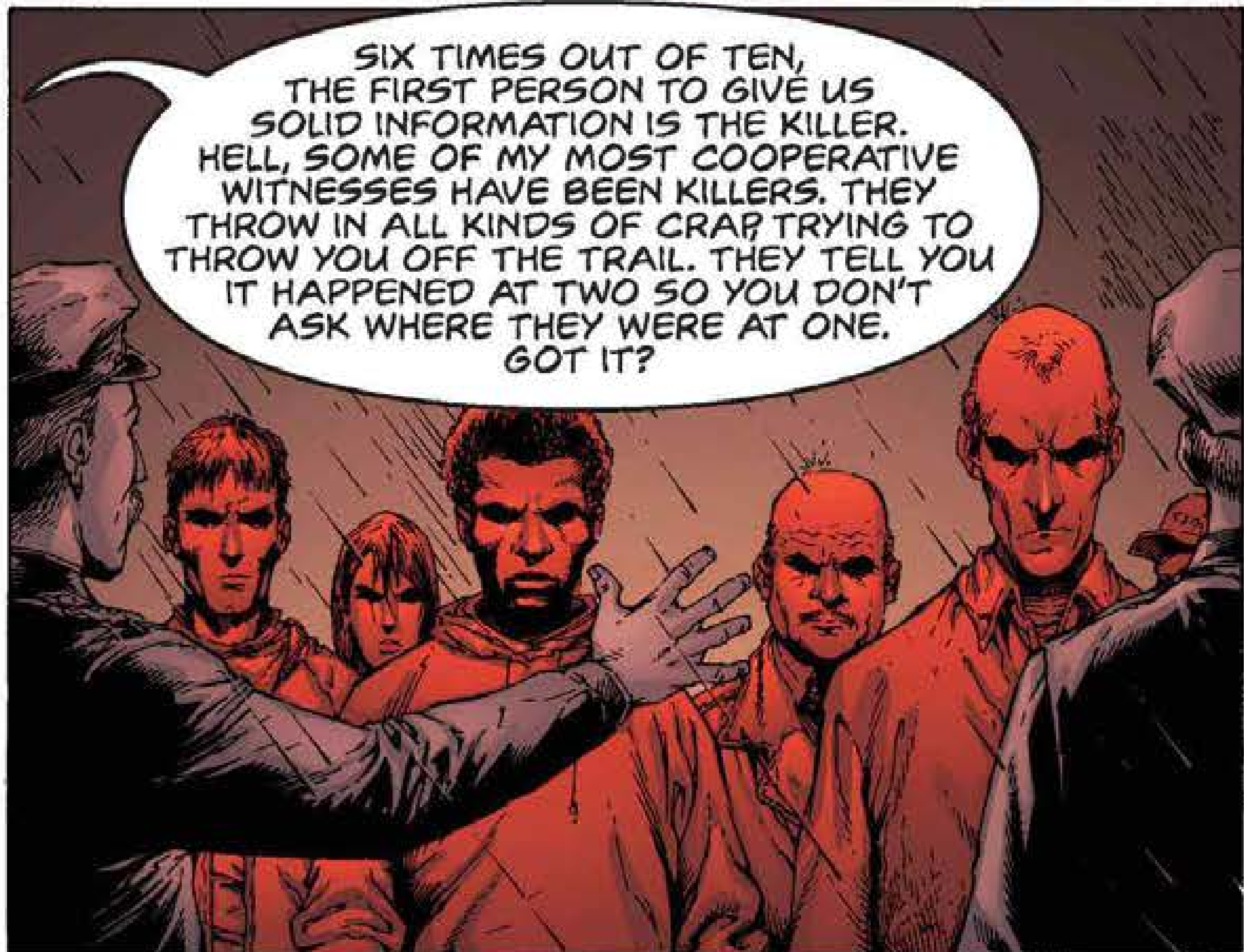
DID HE SAY WHY HE WAS AWAKE AT TWO O'CLOCK ON A SUNDAY MORNING?

NO, SIR, I GUESS HE WAS ASLEEP AND THE SOUND WOKE HIM UP



STOP GUESSING AND TAKE HIM IN FOR QUESTIONING. IF HE WAS ASLEEP I WANT TO REASSURE HIM THAT WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAG HIM AS A WITNESS. IF HE WAS AWAKE, I WANT TO KNOW WHY.

I DON'T--



SIX TIMES OUT OF TEN, THE FIRST PERSON TO GIVE US SOLID INFORMATION IS THE KILLER. HELL, SOME OF MY MOST COOPERATIVE WITNESSES HAVE BEEN KILLERS. THEY THROW IN ALL KINDS OF CRAP TRYING TO THROW YOU OFF THE TRAIL. THEY TELL YOU IT HAPPENED AT TWO SO YOU DON'T ASK WHERE THEY WERE AT ONE. GOT IT?



YES, SIR, LIEUTENANT. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.

AS USUAL, I BURN EVERY INCH OF THE SCENE INTO MY BRAIN. I'LL NEED TO SEE IT IN MY MIND'S EYE A WEEK OR A MONTH OR A YEAR FROM NOW, ASSUMING IT EVER COMES TO COURT. BUT I ALWAYS LEAVE FEELING I'VE MISSED SOMETHING OBVIOUS.



BUT THEM...THEY DON'T MISS A THING. IT'S JUST ANOTHER SHOW TO THEM.

JUST ANOTHER GODDAMNED SHOW.



I MOVE DOWN THE STREET TO GET A FEELING FOR THE AREA. FIGURING WHICH WAY THE VICTIM CAME MIGHT TELL ME WHO BROUGHT HIM HERE.



THEN I SEE THE FLASHLIGHT. ON. OFF. ON. GREAT. SPY STUFF ALL OF A SUDDEN.



COULD BE SOMEBODY WITH INFORMATION.

AND IT COULD BE FIVE GUYS WAITING TO BLOW MY BRAINS ALL OVER THE STREET. I DECIDE TO CHANCE IT.



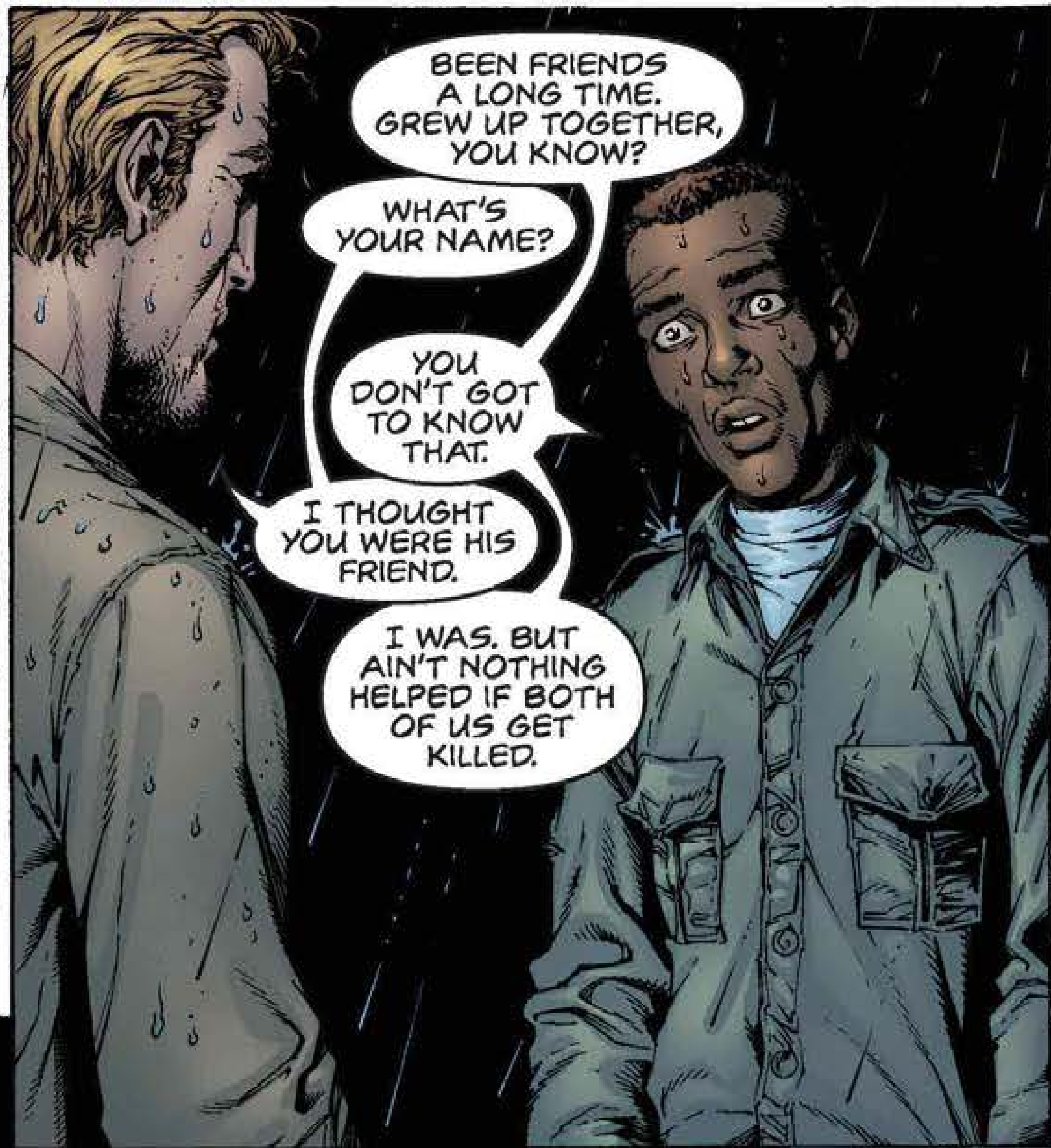


WHAT'S UP?

YOU THE COP CHECKING OUT WHO SMOKED TOBY?

TOBY AT LEAST NOW I'VE GOT A NAME.

YEAH. YOU A FRIEND OF HIS?



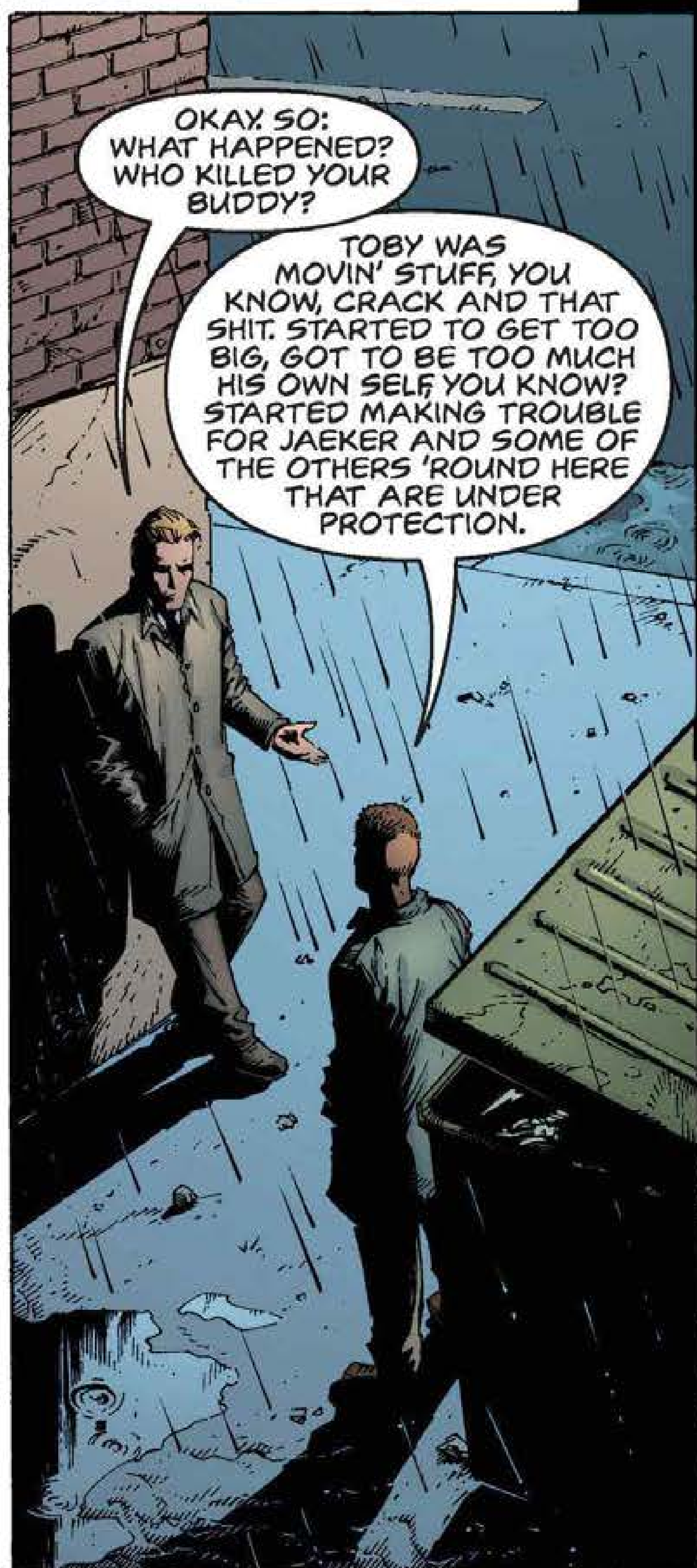
BEEN FRIENDS A LONG TIME. GREW UP TOGETHER, YOU KNOW?

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

YOU DON'T GOT TO KNOW THAT.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE HIS FRIEND.

I WAS, BUT AIN'T NOTHING HELPED IF BOTH OF US GET KILLED.

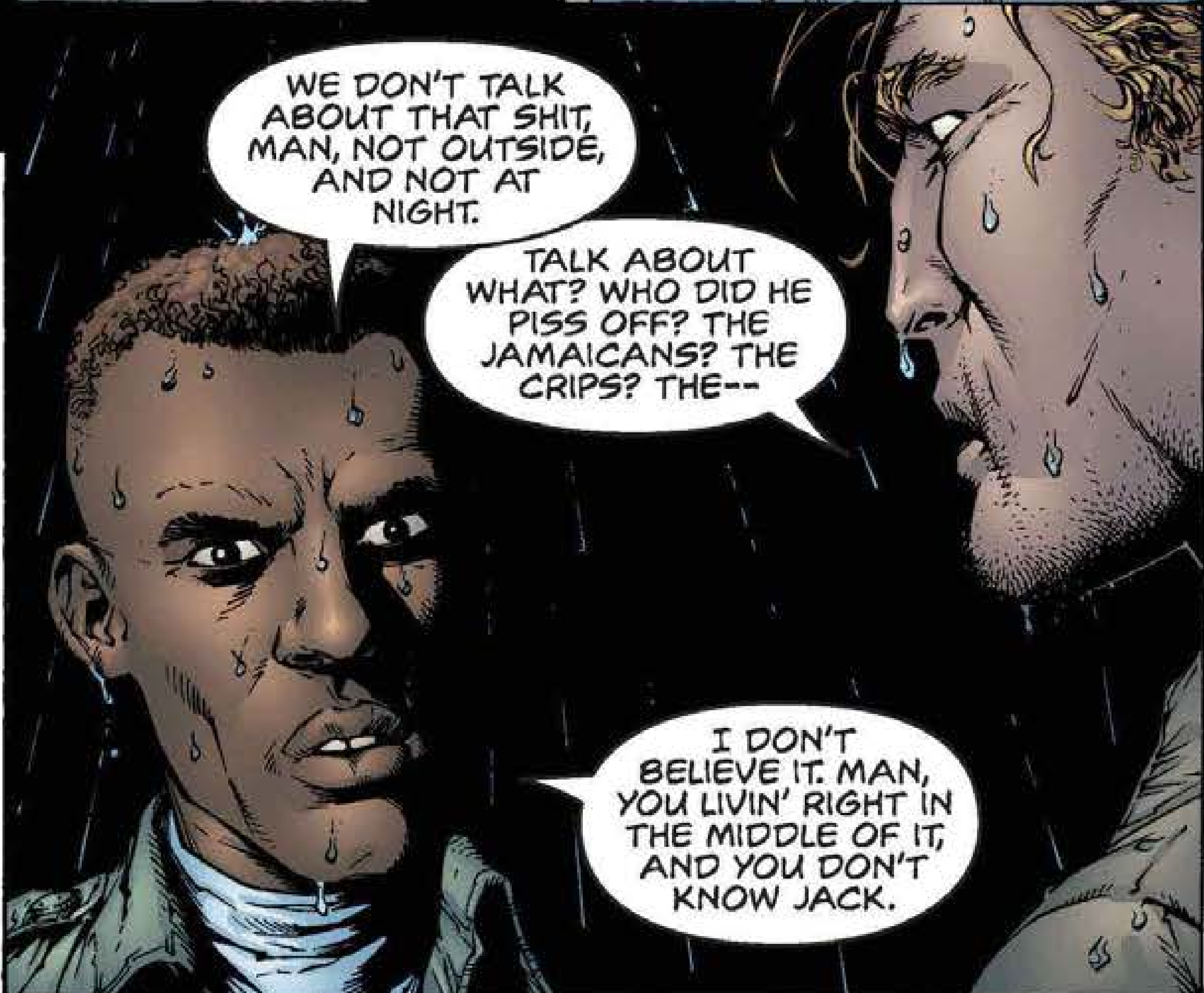


OKAY. SO: WHAT HAPPENED? WHO KILLED YOUR BUDDY?

TOBY WAS MOVIN' STUFF, YOU KNOW, CRACK AND THAT SHIT. STARTED TO GET TOO BIG, GOT TO BE TOO MUCH HIS OWN SELF, YOU KNOW? STARTED MAKING TROUBLE FOR JAEKER AND SOME OF THE OTHERS 'ROUND HERE THAT ARE UNDER PROTECTION.



WHOSE PROTECTION?



WE DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT SHIT, MAN, NOT OUTSIDE, AND NOT AT NIGHT.

TALK ABOUT WHAT? WHO DID HE PISS OFF? THE JAMAICANS? THE CRIPS? THE--

I DON'T BELIEVE IT, MAN, YOU LIVIN' RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT, AND YOU DON'T KNOW JACK.



THEN WHY DON'T YOU EXPLAIN IT TO ME? YOU CALLED ME, REMEMBER? NOW IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT, BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE STANDING AROUND GETTING MY BUTT COLD, MY HEAD WET AND MY CHAIN YANKED. WHO OFFED YOUR BUDDY?

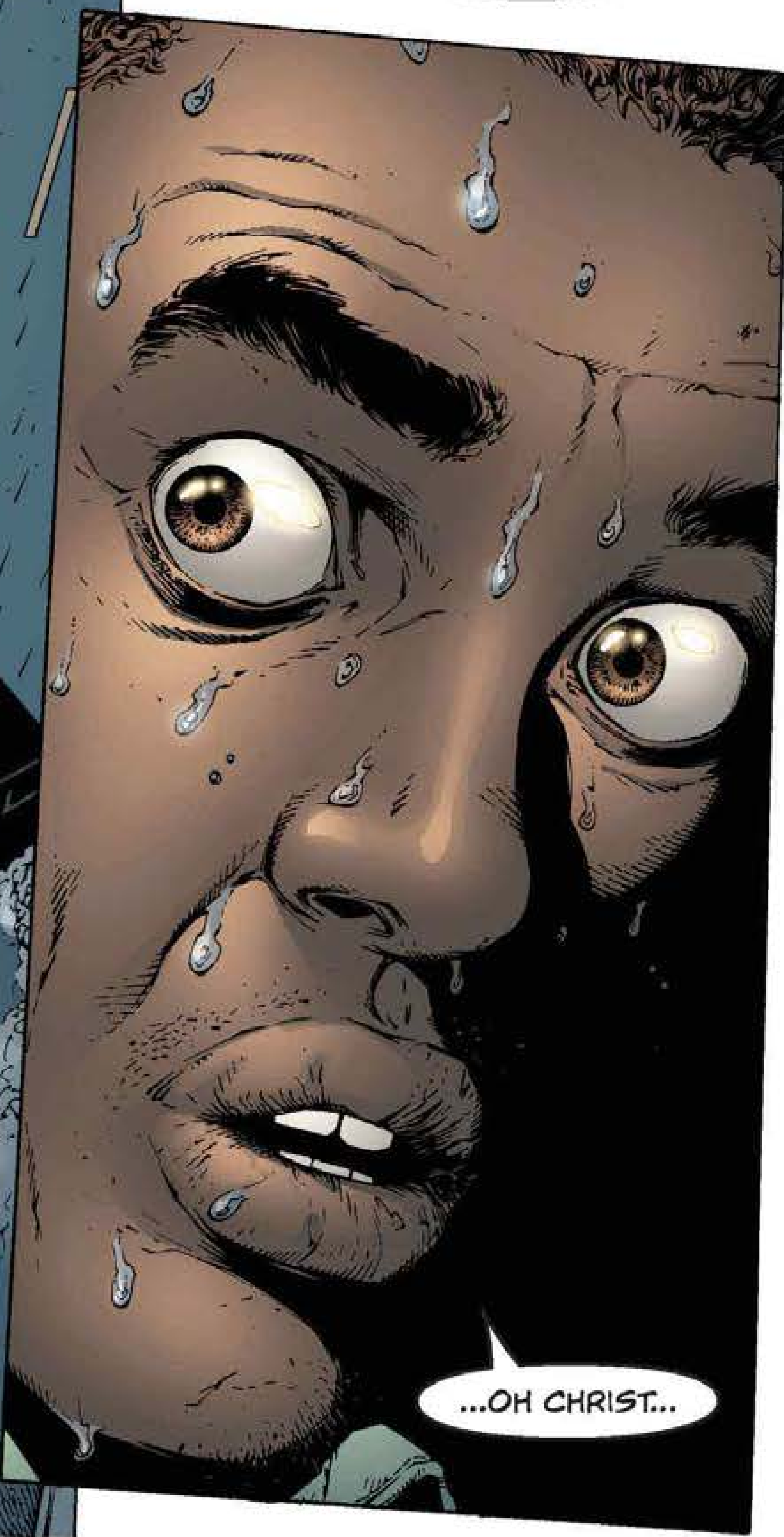


THE MEN.
COPS?
NO, NOT THE MAN, THE MEN.

AIN'T GOT NO OTHER NAME. DON'T NEED NO OTHER NAME. FOLKS AROUND HERE KNOW WHO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY SOMEBODY'S BEEN TOUCHED BY THE MEN.



WELL, I DON'T. SO WHY DON'T WE GO SOMEPLACE WARM WHERE WE CAN TALK ABOUT THIS AND--



...OH CHRIST...