

9



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CIVIL WAR™

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WEEKS

MARTIN

WATSON



IT WAS THE INTERVIEW
EVERYONE WANTED: THE
KIND OF OPPORTUNITY
THAT COMES JUST ONCE IN
A JOURNALISTIC LIFETIME.

THIS WAS THE MAN
HIMSELF--CAPTAIN AMERICA--
SYMBOLICALLY, PERHAPS
THE GREATEST AMERICAN
PATRIOT SINCE GEORGE
WASHINGTON...AND I HAD
HIM ALL TO MYSELF.

EMBEDDED

PAUL
JENKINS
WRITER

RAMON
BACHS
PENCILER

JOHN
LUCAS
INKER

LAURA
MARTIN
COLORIST


VC'S RANDY
GENTILE
LETTERER

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I KNOW A HUNDRED
JOURNALISTS WHO WOULD
HAVE GIVEN THEIR RIGHT
ARM TO BE ME AT THIS
MOMENT. HERE WAS THE
VERY PERSONIFICATION
OF THE AMERICAN WAY
GONE ROGUE, TELLING HIS
STORY FOR THE FIRST TIME.

AND WITHIN TWELVE
SECONDS I KNEW
WHERE THAT STORY
WAS GOING.



...SO WHAT'S THE MESSAGE
YOU'RE TRYING TO CONVEY,
SIR? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO
TURN YOU AGAINST THE
VERY PEOPLE YOU'VE
ALWAYS BEEN ALLIED
WITH?

I DIDN'T TURN
AGAINST THEM. I ASKED
FOR TIME TO REVIEW THIS
INSANE POLICY--I ASKED THEM TO
EXTEND THE DEADLINE SO THAT
CALMER HEADS COULD PREVAIL--
AND THEY TURNED ME DOWN.



THIS IS NO LONGER
THE COUNTRY I VOWED
TO DEFEND, MISS FLOYD.
WE'RE BECOMING SWATHES
OF RED AND BLUE ON
AN ELECTION-NIGHT MAP.

WELCOME
TO THE DIVIDED
STATES OF AMERICA.




NEVER THOUGHT I'D SAY THIS
TO SOMEONE OF YOUR STATURE, SIR...
BUT HAVEN'T WE ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT
RED STATES AND BLUE? ISN'T BEING UGLY
AMERICANS PART OF WHAT MAKES US
SO INTERESTING TO THE REST OF
THE WORLD?

AND AREN'T YOU DUTY-BOUND
TO DEFEND THE RULE OF LAW, EVEN IF IT MEANS
DEFENDING SOMETHING YOU DON'T PERSONALLY AGREE
WITH? BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE MEANS CIVIL WAR--



WAR IS
ANYTHING BUT
CIVIL, MISS FLOYD.
IT'S THE LAST RESORT
OF THE DESPERATE...
AND YET HERE WE ARE.

FOR SIXTY-ODD
YEARS, MY GOVERNMENT
LOOKED TO ME TO
DEFEND FREEDOM. I DON'T
WANT TO BELIEVE I WAS
DEFENDING A DICTATORSHIP.




"BELIEVE ME, I'VE SEEN WHAT
HAPPENS WHEN AN INSANE
IDEA GETS OUT OF HAND.

"THE LAST TIME, IT TORE EUROPE
TO PIECES. THE WORLD STOOD
AT THE BRINK BECAUSE ONE MAN
DECIDED TO PRESS THE IDEA OF
ARYAN SUPREMACY INTO SERVICE.

"WE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WE
WERE GETTING INTO THEN.
WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE
GLORIOUS TO DEFEND OUR
NOTIONS AGAINST THEIRS.

"WE MERELY WASTED
THE POTENTIAL OF A
MILLION YOUNG MEN."



JUST ONE BAD IDEA,
MISS FLOYD.

THINK OF
ALL THE DAMAGE
THAT CAN DO.





SIR, YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO SPARE ME THE COMPARISONS TO NAZI GERMANY BECAUSE I'M NOT BUYING IT.

SINCE YOU WERE THERE, YOU PROBABLY REMEMBER THAT MOST OF THE GERMAN FORCES WERE WEHRMACHT--REGULAR ARMY GUYS WHO SIMPLY FOUGHT AN' DIED FOR THEIR COUNTRY.

IN OTHER WORDS, PATRIOTS FIGHTING FOR THE WRONG CAUSE.



THAT'S MY POINT EXACTLY, MISS FLOYD. I'M NOT SURE I UNDERSTAND WHERE YOU'RE GOING WITH THIS--

WAR IS NEVER ABOUT WHO'S RIGHT, SIR--IT'S ABOUT WHO'S LEFT. AND THAT PERSON USUALLY WRITES THE HISTORY.



YOU'RE BEING SIMPLISTIC--

YOU KNOW, I THOUGHT THERE'D BE A STORY HERE, BUT ALL I'M GETTING IS HOW YOU'RE A TRUE PATRIOT AND HOW THE OTHERS COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE.



CAP PROMISED ME FIFTEEN MINUTES. I TOOK FIVE, AND LEFT EARLY FOR MY DATE AT NINE...

...FEELING PRETTY HACKED OFF, AND WITH NO PARTICULAR STORY TO WRITE. COULDN'T WORK OUT WHY.

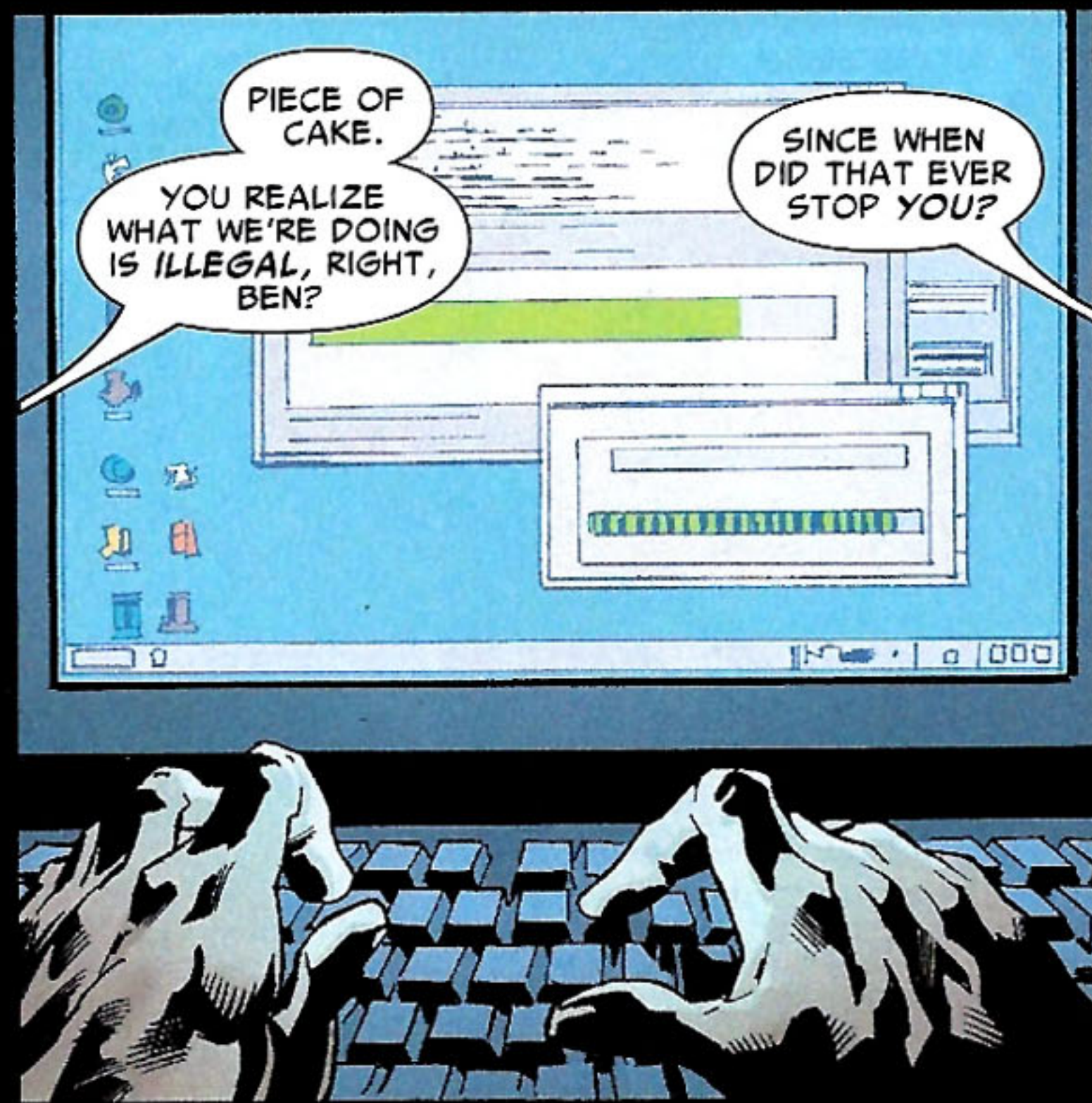
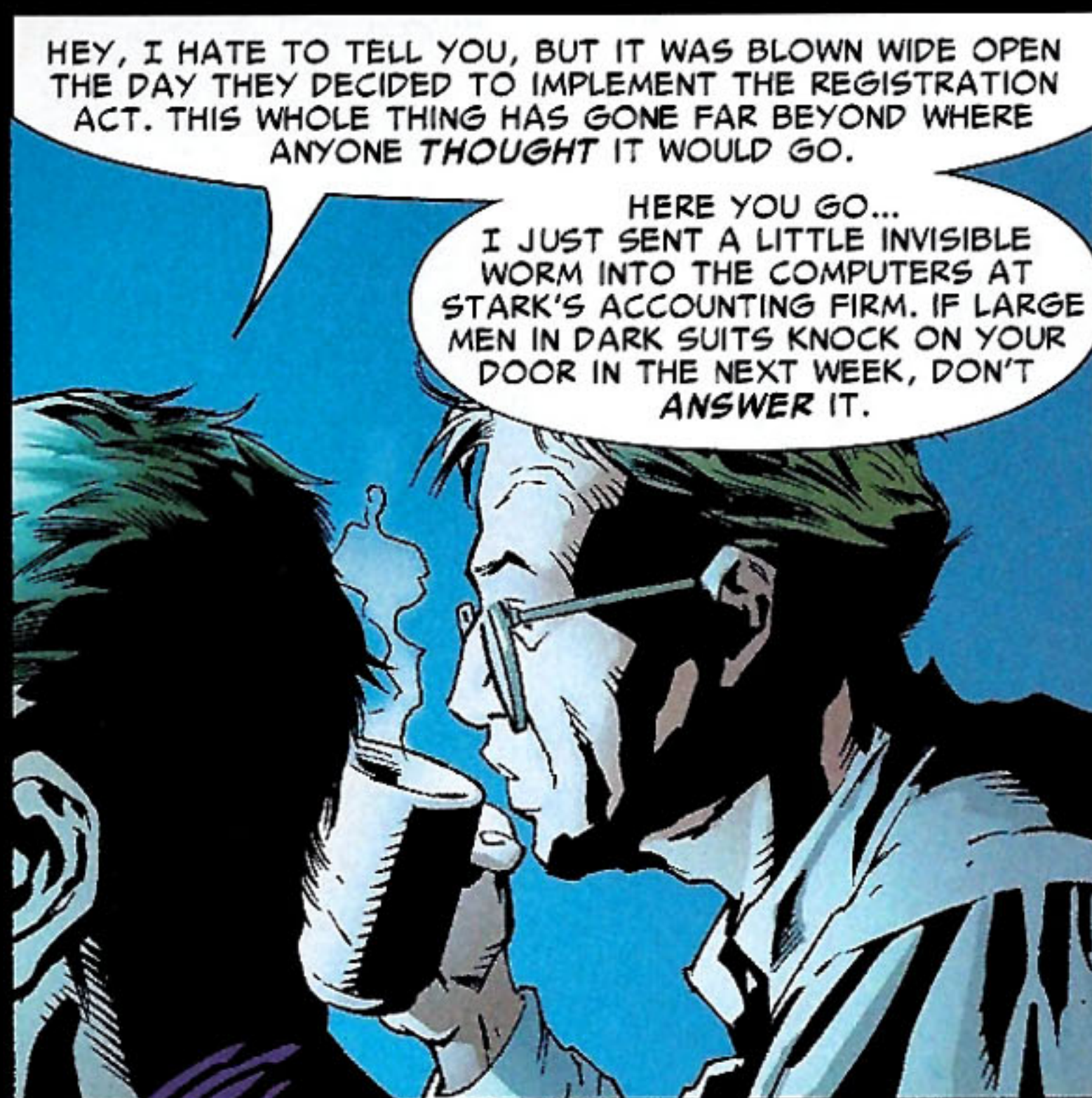


MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE HE SOUNDED LIKE ME A FEW WEEKS AGO: STUBBORN, CERTAIN HE WAS RIGHT...



...YET SUPREMELY MISGUIDED.

THE HOME OF BEN URICH.

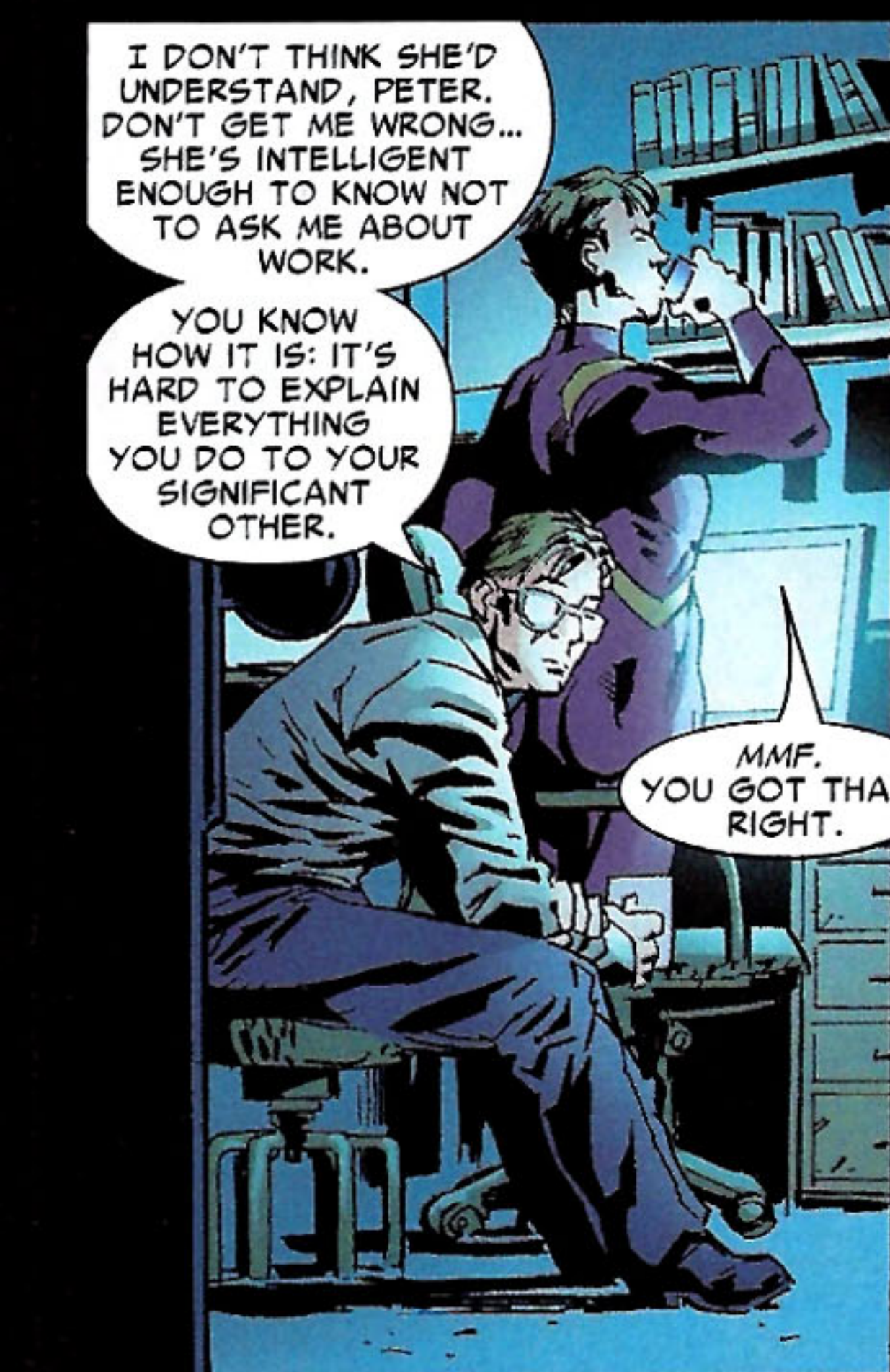




IT'S GONNA TAKE A COUPLE OF MINUTES. WE JUST PULL UP THEIR REVENUE REPORTS AND MATCH THEM TO A TIMELINE. THAT'LL TELL US IF THEIR STOCK'S TIED TO EVENTS ONLY STARK WOULD KNOW ABOUT.

'CAUSE THAT WOULD BE THE VERY DEFINITION OF INSIDER TRADING.

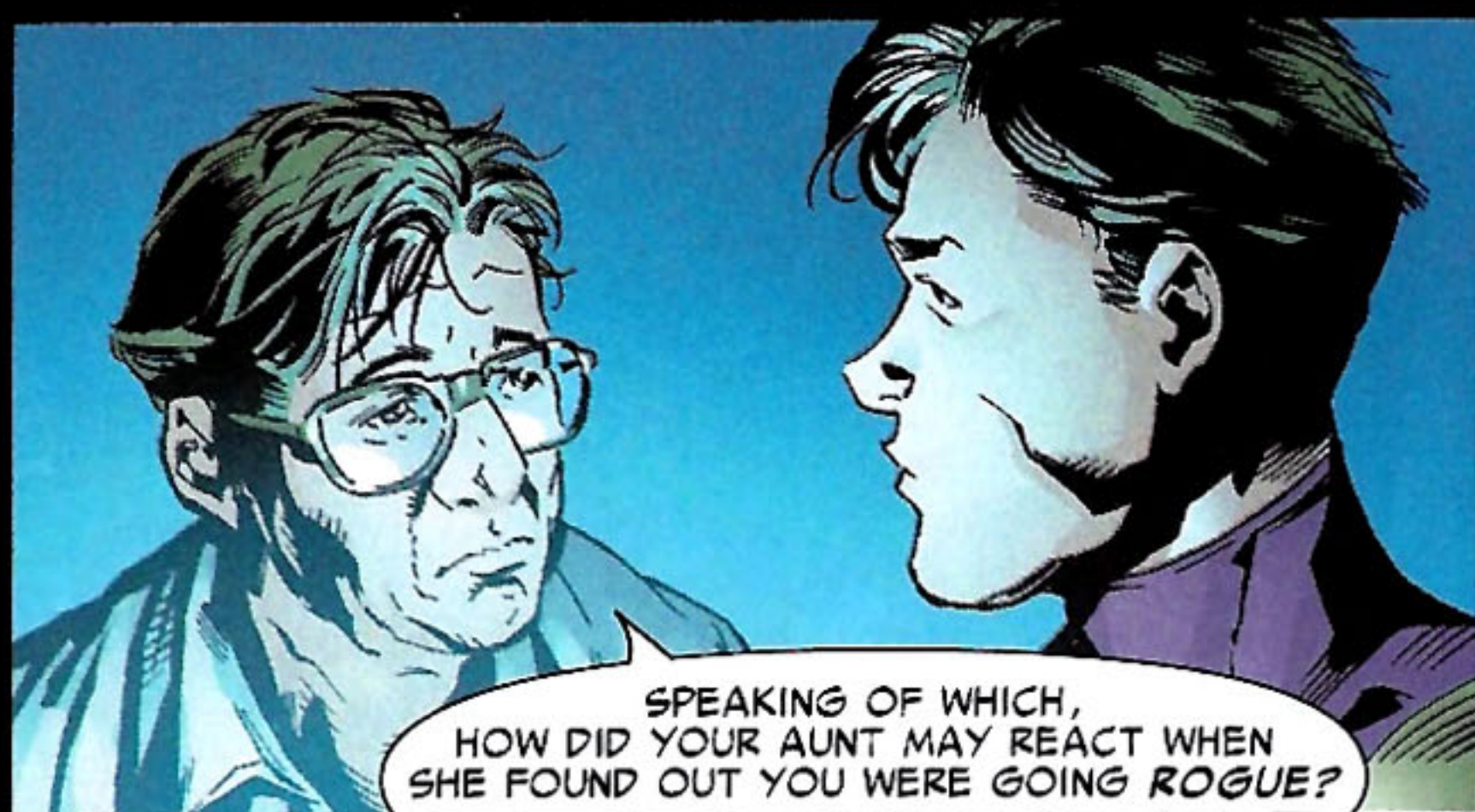
BY THE WAY, DOES YOUR WIFE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING AT NIGHT ON HER COMPUTER?



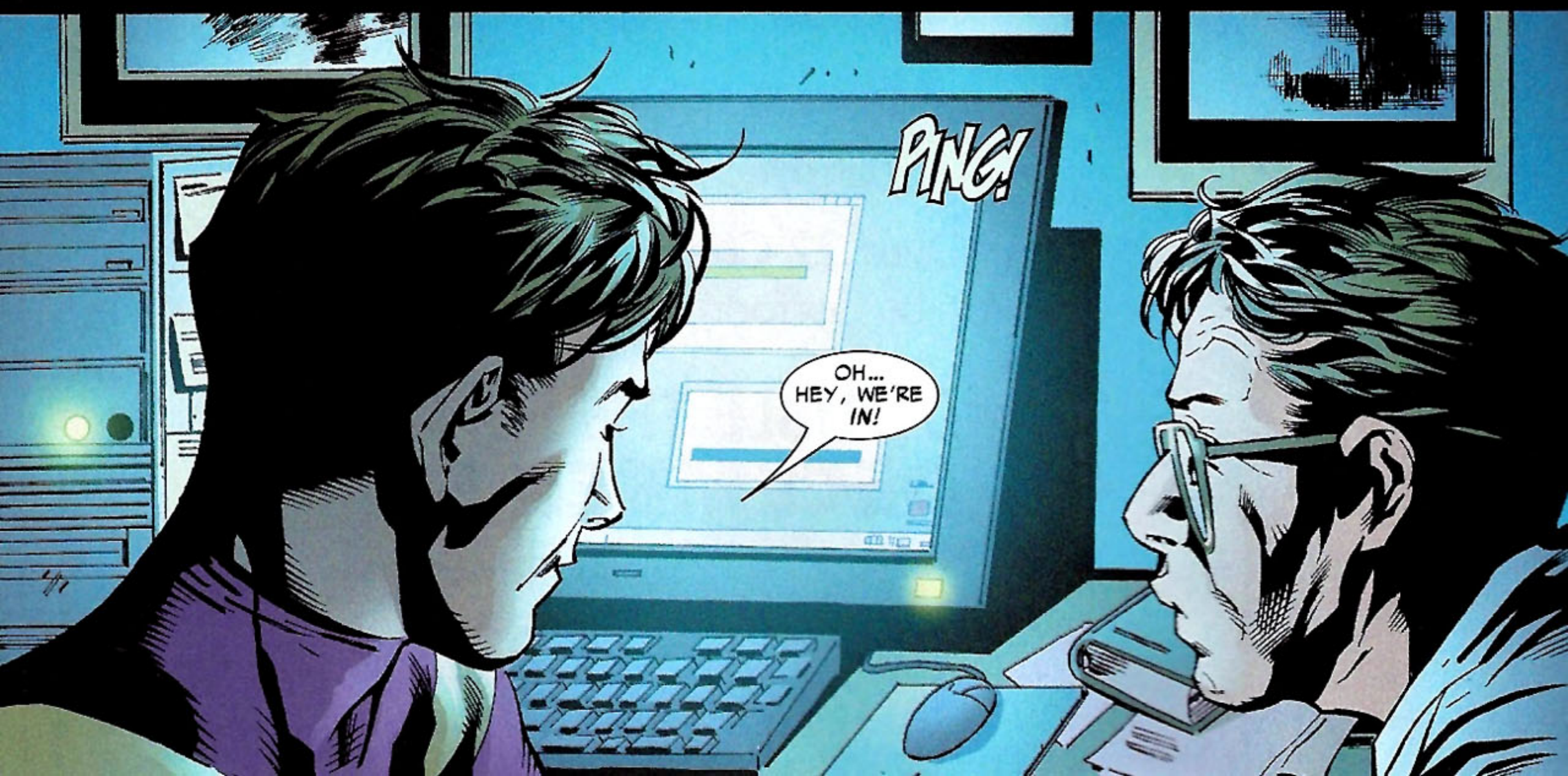
I DON'T THINK SHE'D UNDERSTAND, PETER. DON'T GET ME WRONG... SHE'S INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO KNOW NOT TO ASK ME ABOUT WORK.

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS: IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING YOU DO TO YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER.

MMF. YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

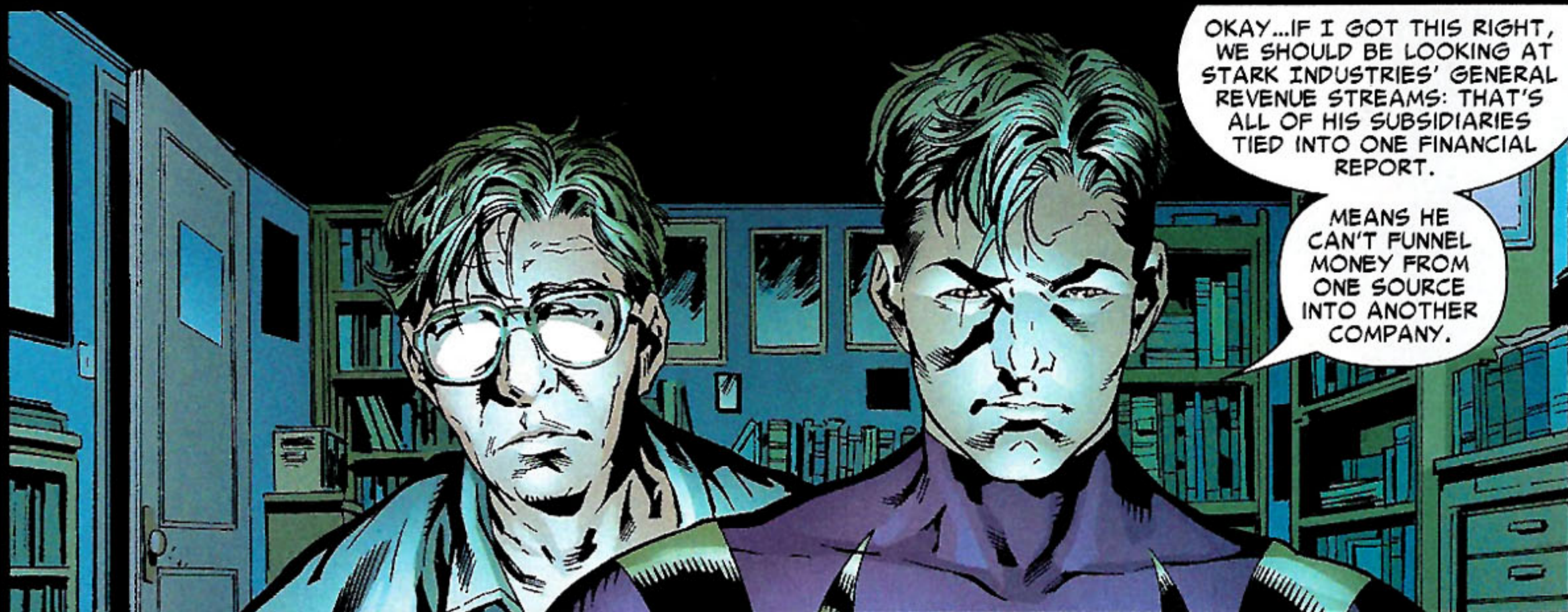


SPEAKING OF WHICH, HOW DID YOUR AUNT MAY REACT WHEN SHE FOUND OUT YOU WERE GOING ROGUE?



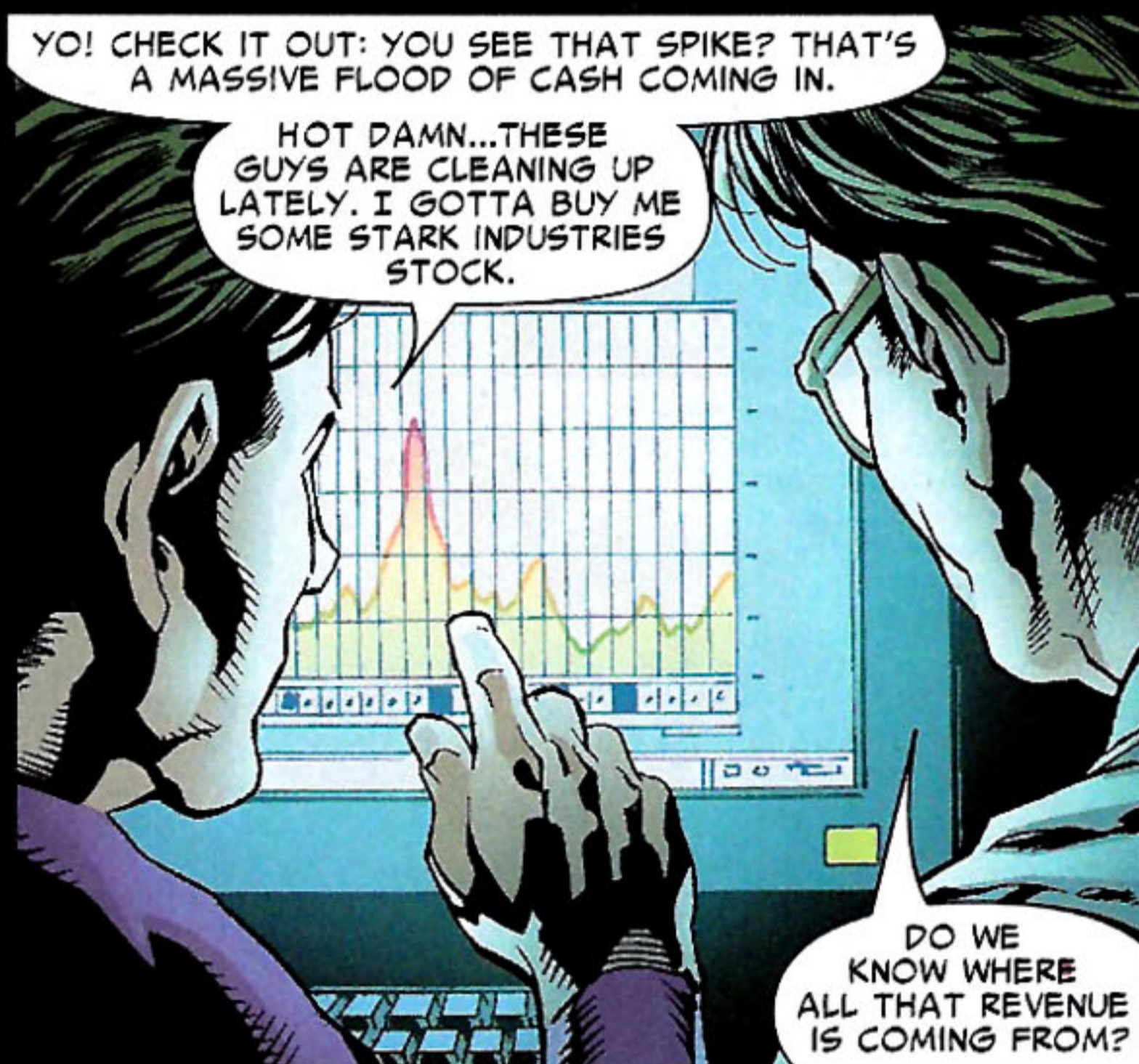
PING!

OH... HEY, WE'RE IN!



OKAY...IF I GOT THIS RIGHT, WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT STARK INDUSTRIES' GENERAL REVENUE STREAMS: THAT'S ALL OF HIS SUBSIDIARIES TIED INTO ONE FINANCIAL REPORT.

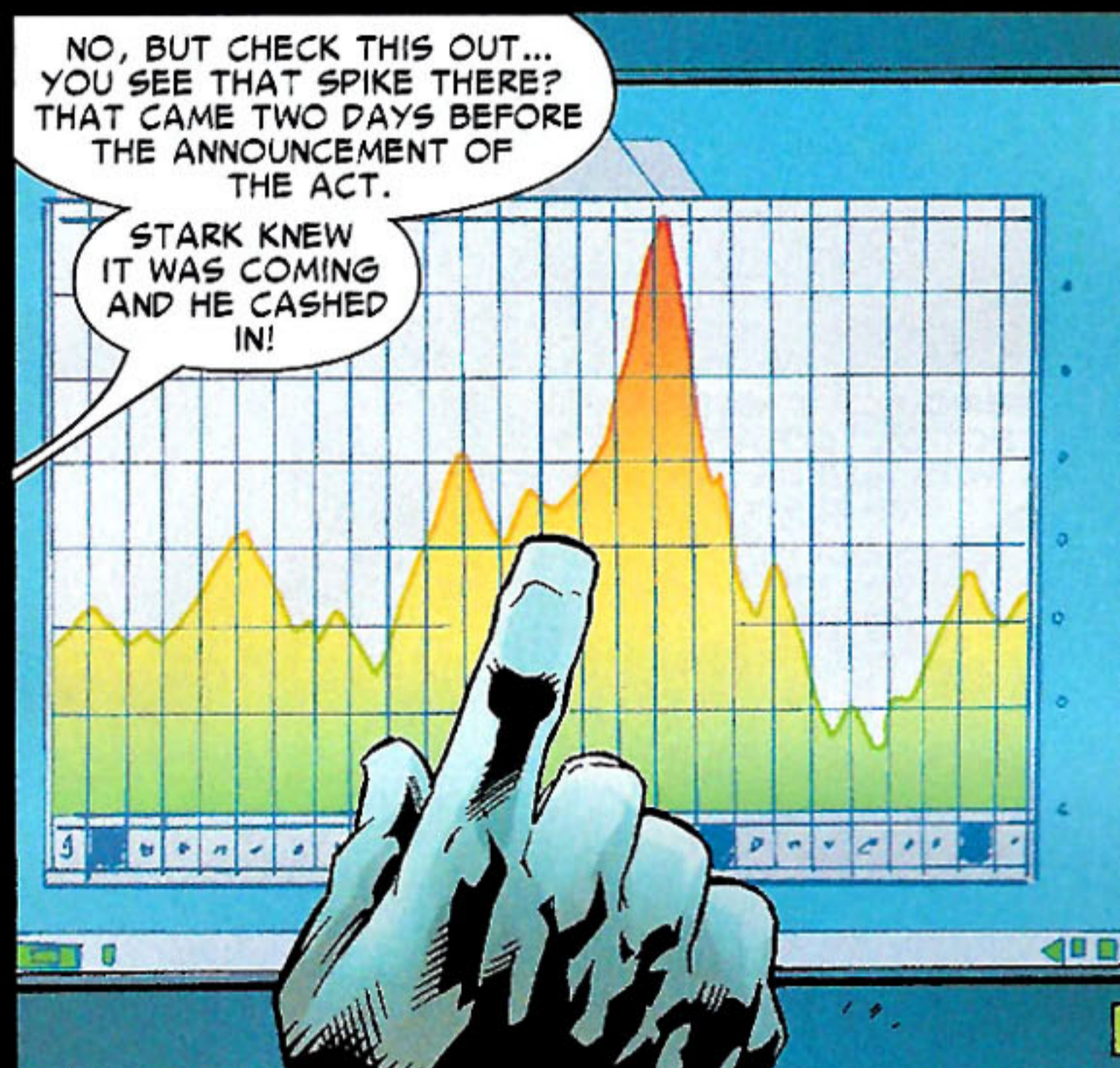
MEANS HE CAN'T FUNNEL MONEY FROM ONE SOURCE INTO ANOTHER COMPANY.



YO! CHECK IT OUT: YOU SEE THAT SPIKE? THAT'S A MASSIVE FLOOD OF CASH COMING IN.

HOT DAMN...THESE GUYS ARE CLEANING UP LATELY. I GOTTA BUY ME SOME STARK INDUSTRIES STOCK.

DO WE KNOW WHERE ALL THAT REVENUE IS COMING FROM?



NO, BUT CHECK THIS OUT... YOU SEE THAT SPIKE THERE? THAT CAME TWO DAYS BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ACT.

STARK KNEW IT WAS COMING AND HE CASHED IN!



I DON'T GET IT, PETER. TONY STARK WAS NEVER THAT WAY. HE'S JUST NOT THE KIND TO PLAY WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES FOR PERSONAL GAIN--IT GOES AGAINST EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT THE MAN.



I USED TO BELIEVE THAT, BEN.

THEN AGAIN, THAT WAS BEFORE HE PLAYED WITH MY LIFE.

MANHATTAN.

...A LOT OF
WHAT WE DO IN
COSTUME DIVISION IS
PRETTY MUNDANE. A TON
OF PAPERWORK AN'
STUFF.

MMH. YOU
KNOW, DANNY,
I NEVER HAD
DINNER WITH A
DETECTIVE
BEFORE.

SERIOUSLY?



WHERE I COME FROM, SALLY, THE
GUY PAYS FOR DINNER. CALL
ME OLD-FASHIONED.

OKAY.
"YOU'RE OLD-
FASHIONED."

SORRY.

DON'T
BE. IT'S
CUTE.

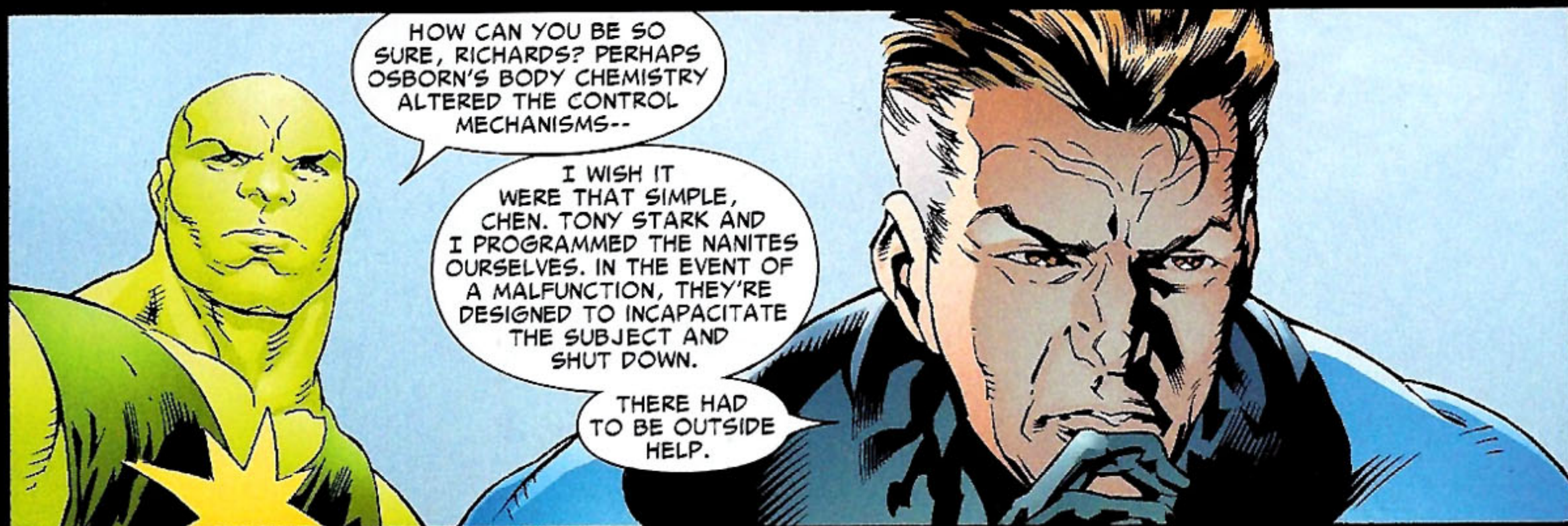






SOMEONE GOT TO OSBORN AND REPROGRAMMED THE NANITES IN HIS BLOODSTREAM.

I'M CONVINCED NOW MORE THAN EVER.



HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE, RICHARDS? PERHAPS OSBORN'S BODY CHEMISTRY ALTERED THE CONTROL MECHANISMS--

I WISH IT WERE THAT SIMPLE, CHEN. TONY STARK AND I PROGRAMMED THE NANITES OURSELVES. IN THE EVENT OF A MALFUNCTION, THEY'RE DESIGNED TO INCAPACITATE THE SUBJECT AND SHUT DOWN.

THERE HAD TO BE OUTSIDE HELP.



REED! MORE BAD NEWS--OUR EMISSARY TO ATLANTIS RECEIVED A TWO-WORD RESPONSE THAT ROUGHLY TRANSLATES AS "GO AWAY!"

WE'VE PICKED UP MOVEMENT OFF THE ATLANTIC COAST FROM VIRGINIA DOWN TO FLORIDA. AND THE PENTAGON'S SAYING THEY'VE LOST ONE OF THEIR NUCLEAR SUBS.



JUST ONE FANATIC: THAT'S ALL IT TAKES.

BECAUSE OF OSBORN, OUR CIVIL WAR IS ABOUT TO SPILL OVER ITS BORDERS.

CHEN...YOUR WORK WITH ME ON THE NEGATIVE ZONE PRISON WAS INDISPENSABLE. I THINK I CAN TRUST YOU. I WANT YOU TO FIND OUT FROM CLOC WHO'S HAD ACCESS TO THE NANITE PROGRAMMING IN THE LAST MONTH OR SO.

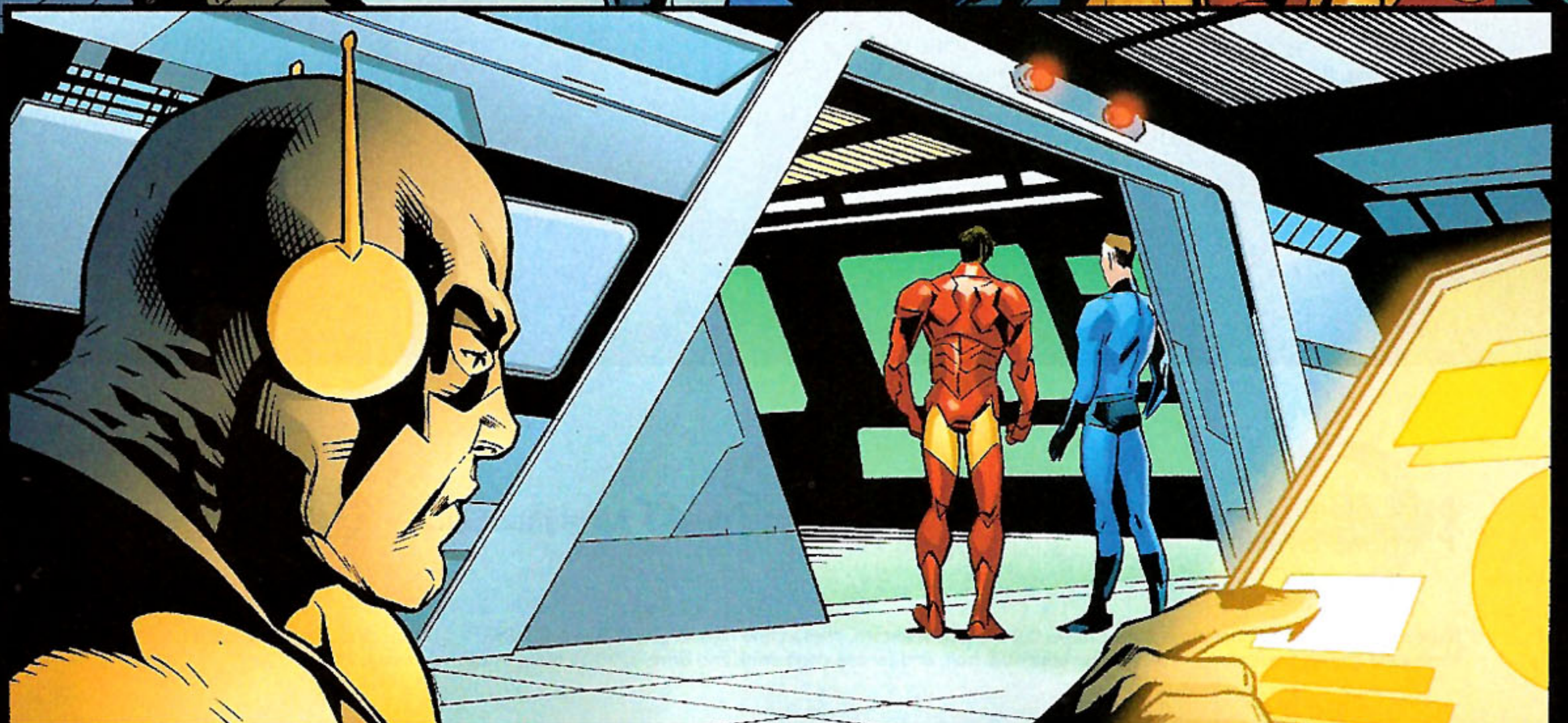
NO ONE IS ABOVE SUSPICION. NOT EVEN THE SENTRY. NOT EVEN ME.

IT DOESN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO SEE WE HAVE A TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST--

REED...I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU. IN PRIVATE.

TONY, I HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

I CAN'T SAY ANY MORE OUT HERE. JUST TRUST ME, WE NEED TO TALK.





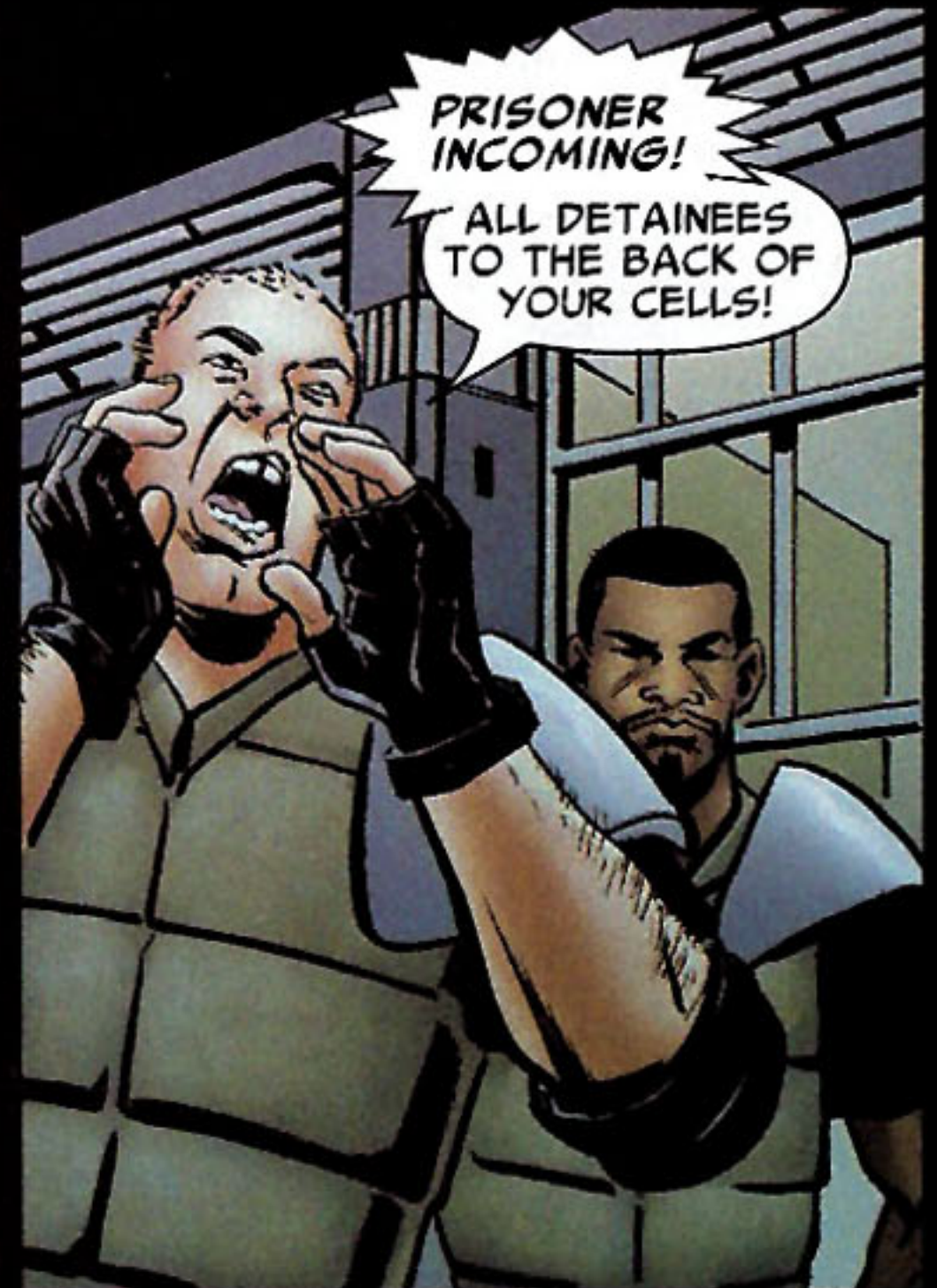
THE RAFT: MAXIMUM SECURITY FACILITY FOR POWERED CRIMINALS. CELL BLOCK X-- VIOLENT OFFENDERS WING.

"...TAKES 'EM TWENTY SECONDS TO CLOSE THE GATES EVERY TIME THEY OPEN. WE COULD BE OUT IN TEN. THERE'S ONLY FIVE GUARDS BEYOND THE CENTRAL GATE."

"ONLY FIVE? WHOSE DUMB IDEA WAS THAT?"

"ADAMANTIUM. THEY THINK THE GATES ARE IMPENETRABLE BUT THERE'S TOO MUCH RELIANCE ON DESIGN. IT'S A MISTAKE."

"IT WILL BE."



THE ACCUSED PART NINE

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STEVE LIEBER
ARTIST

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COLORIST

VC'S RANDY GENTILE
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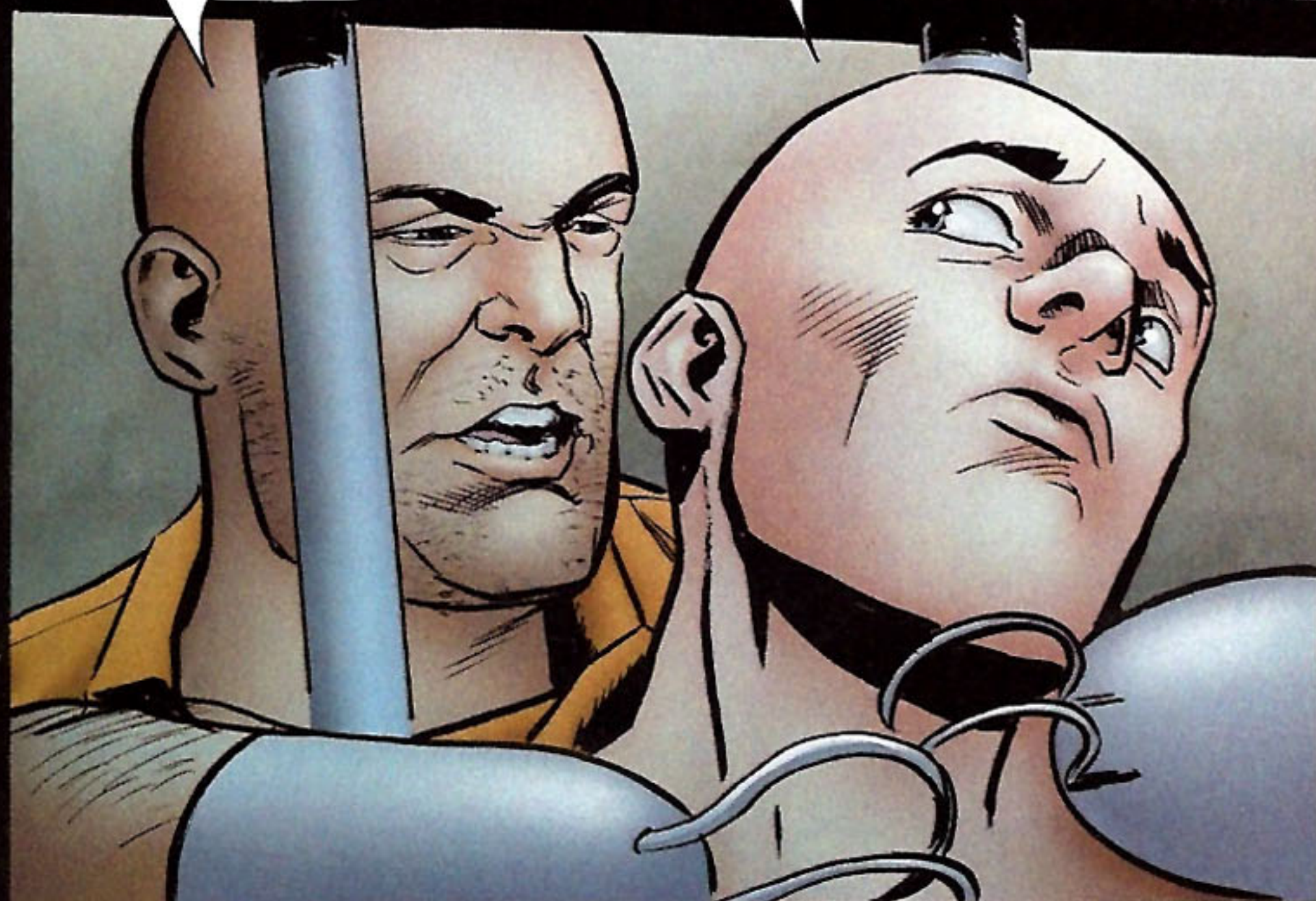
DAN BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER





NICE ACTING JOB, BALDWIN. MY FAVORITE PART WAS WHEN YOU PRETENDED TO SOIL YOUR PANTS WITH FEAR.

YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, RAZOR FIST. I'M NO PART OF THIS.



I GOT ME ONE CHANCE FOR FREEDOM, ROBBIE-BOY. NOW YOU C'N COOPERATE AND DIE QUICKLY, OR YOU CAN STRUGGLE AND DIE IN PAIN.

EITHER WAY, YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE. MAKES NO ODDS TO ME.



WHAT THE...ARE THESE IDIOTS STUPIDER THAN THEY LOOK? THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF THOSE CELLS, HOSTAGE OR NO HOSTAGE.



LISTEN TO ME, BALDWIN: WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE AND YOU'RE LEADING THE WAY. ANYONE ASKS, IT WAS ALL YOUR IDEA. YOU'RE ALREADY HERE FOR LIFE, SO JUST YOU BE A GOOD HUMAN TARGET AN' I MIGHT LET YOU LIVE.

YOU'LL NEVER GET PAST THE CENTRAL DOORS, MORON.



I WILL IF SOMEONE OPENS THEM.

TOWER THREE: WE HAVE AN ATTEMPTED BREAKOUT IN PROGRESS! ALL DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS IN PLACE AND OPERATING NORMALLY--ALERTING WATCHTOWER CONTROL RIGHT NOW!

ARE THEY REALLY THAT DUMB? THEY'VE GOT NOWHERE TO GO.

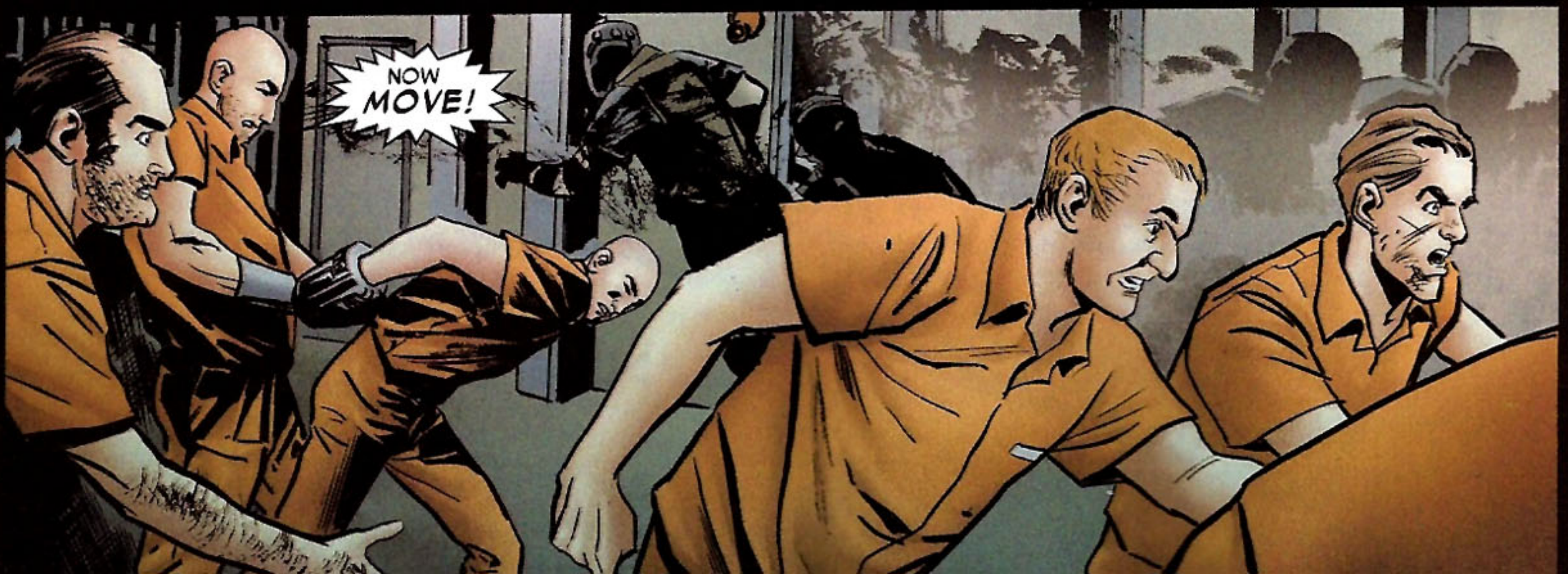
NEVER STOPPED 'EM BEFORE--



HA! HEHH...BOY, ARE YOU THE BEST THEY COULD DO? TEN BILLION DOLLARS OF SECURITY SYSTEMS, OPERATED BY MONKEYS?



KLW







DELTA,
THIS IS AJAX:
GOT ONE UP HERE
IN THE CONTROL
ROOM.

IT'S JUSTINE
HAMMER--THE CRIMSON
COWL! SHE MUST HAVE
FOUND A WAY TO TELEPORT
UP! SHE'S OUT LIKE
A LIGHT. OVER.

COPY THAT,
AJAX.

THEY'RE ALL
OUT--EVERY SINGLE
ONE OF THEM. THE ENTIRE
BUILDING IS FRIED. GOT THE
GRIM REAPER HERE...CAN'T
EVEN RECOGNIZE SOME
OF THEM.



WHAT ON
EARTH...?



THIS IS RAZOR FIST--
SURVEILLANCE HAD
HIM AS ONE OF THE
RINGLEADERS.

HOW DID
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS
HAPPEN?

SIR! OVER
HERE!



DANG.



BEEN DOING
A LOT OF
THINKING.

ABOUT THE
REGISTRATION
ACT. I'VE COME
TO A DECISION.

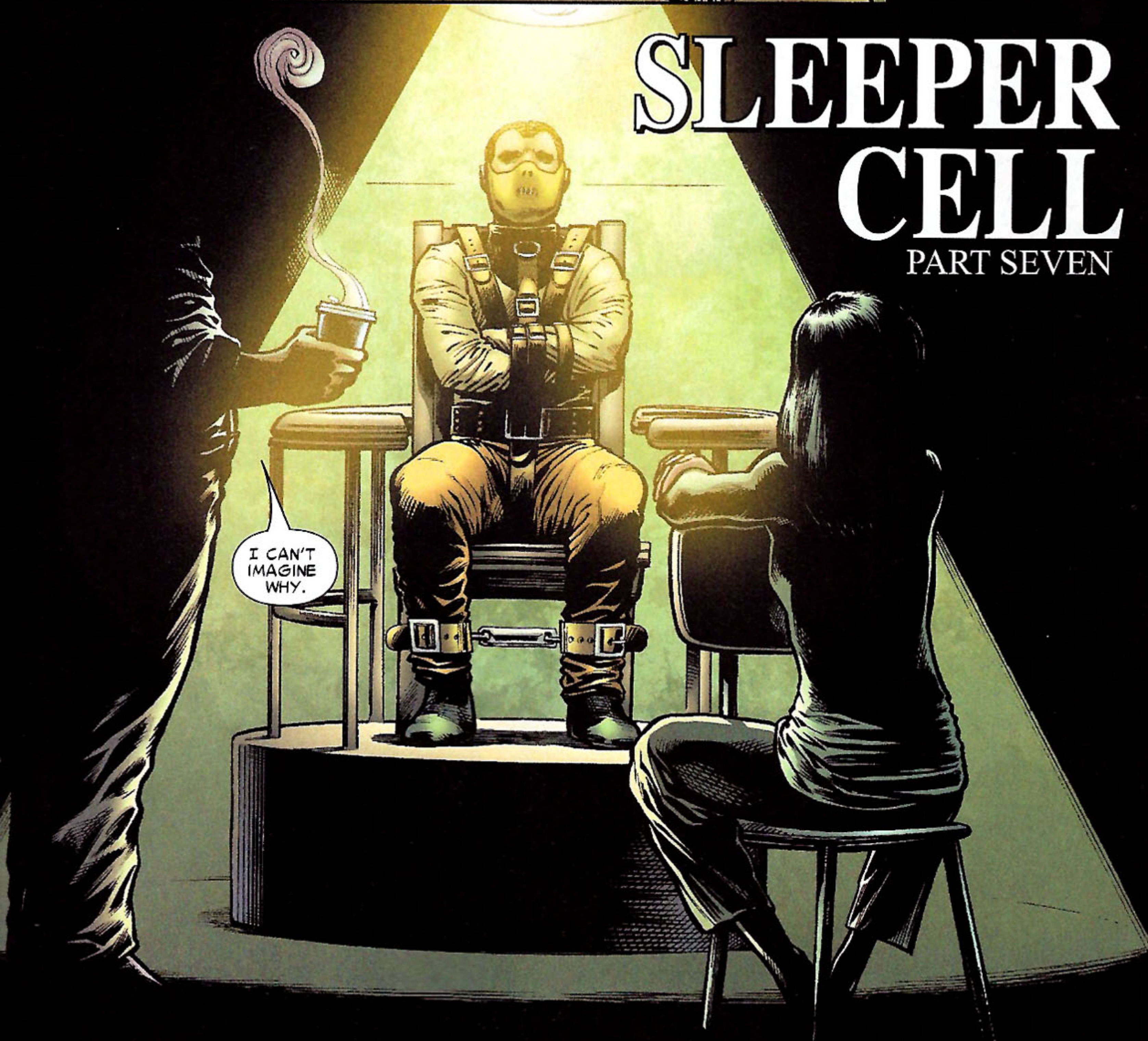
WHERE DO
I *SIGN*?

TO BE CONCLUDED...



SLEEPER CELL

PART SEVEN



PAUL
JENKINS
WRITER

LEE
WEEKS
BREAKDOWNS

NELSON
FINISHES

VC'S RANDY
GENTILE
LETTERS

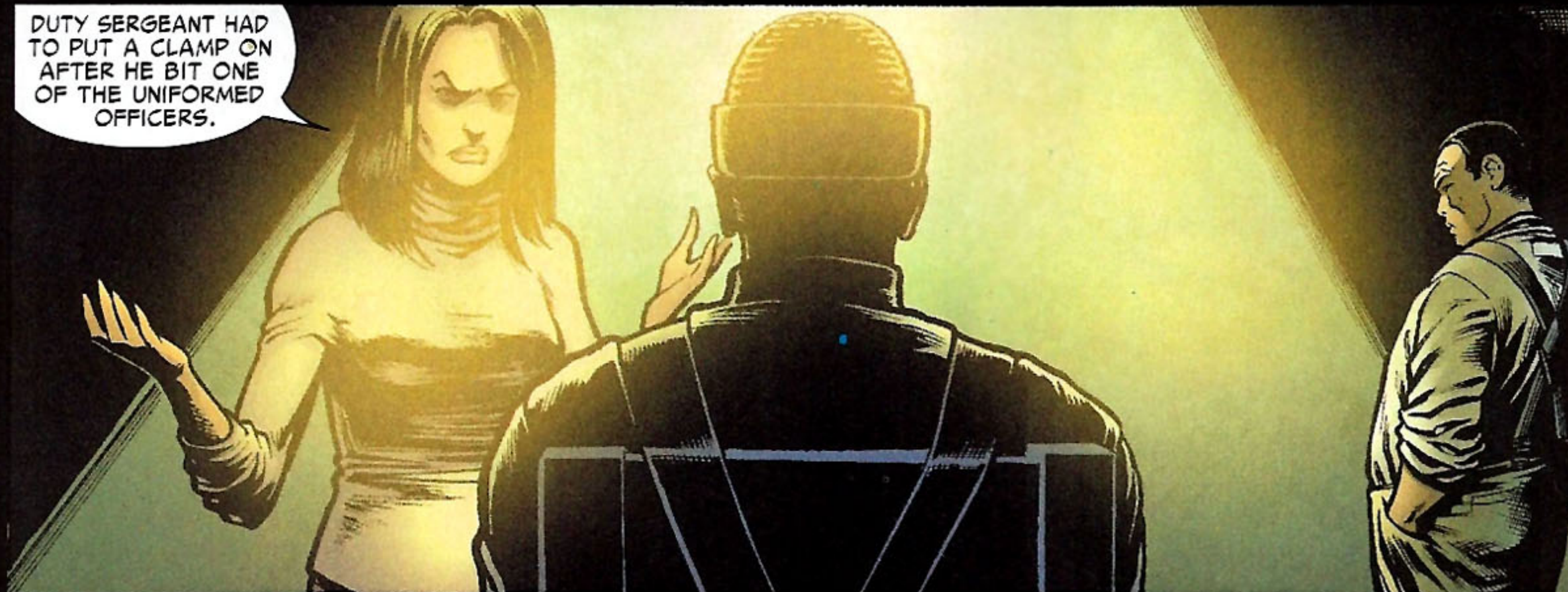
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BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

DUTY SERGEANT HAD TO PUT A CLAMP ON AFTER HE BIT ONE OF THE UNIFORMED OFFICERS.



ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MISTER OSBORN? YOU TRIED TO TAKE A BITE OUT OF CRIME--



WE GOT A LITTLE JURISDICTIONAL SNAFU: STRICTLY SPEAKING, YOU BELONG TO US AS PART OF AN ONGOING HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION.



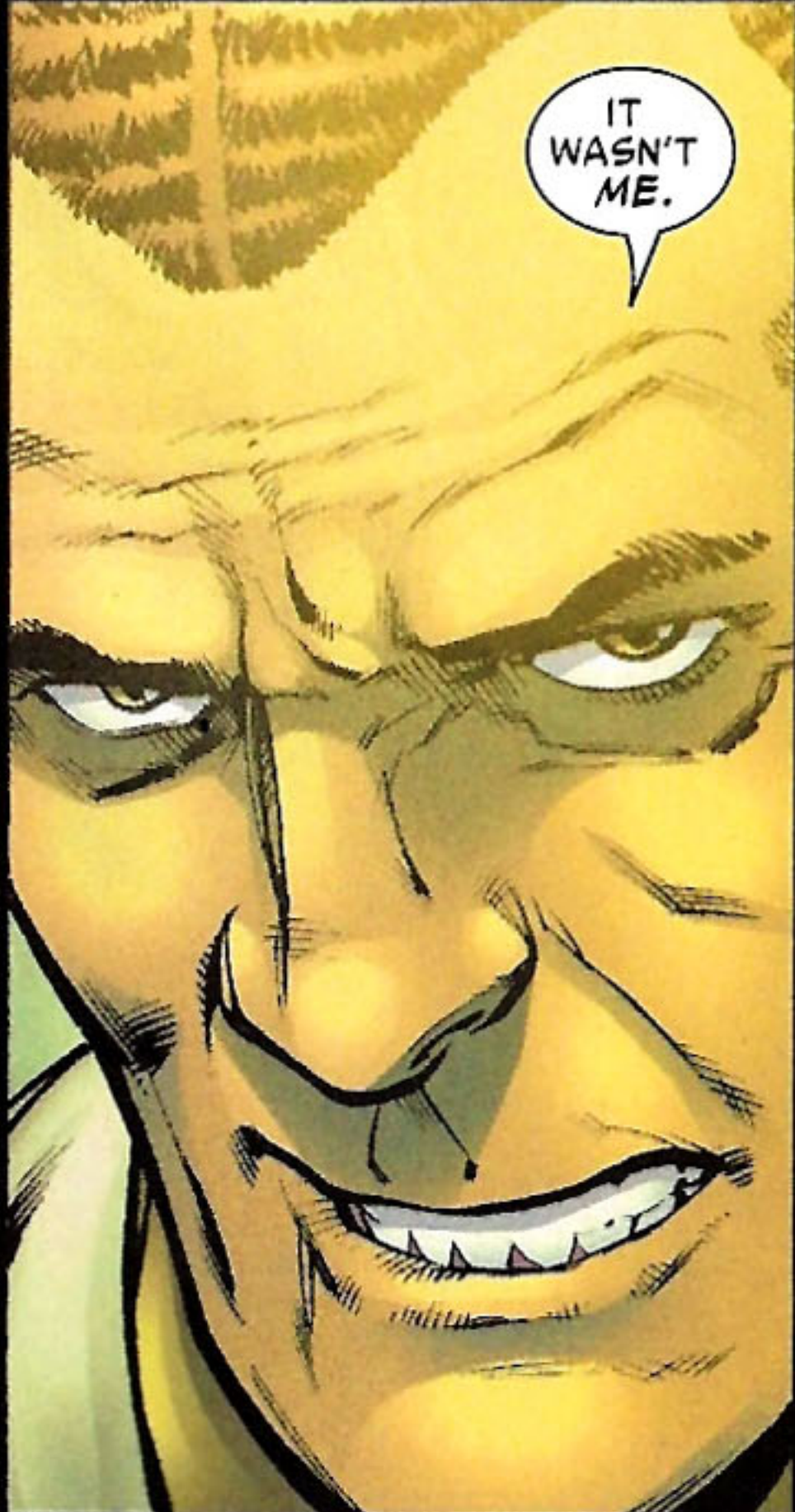
MEANTIME, THE F.B.I., THE C.I.A., S.H.I.E.L.D. AND THE MAYOR'S OFFICE ARE FIGHTING EACH OTHER TO GET TO YOU. I FIGURE WE'VE GOT JUST A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE HEAVIES ARRIVE.



NOW, I DON'T IMAGINE THOSE S.H.I.E.L.D. SPOOKS ARE GONNA BE AS NICE TO YOU AS WE ARE. SO IF YOU EVER FELT LIKE YOU WANTED TO GET THE TRUTH OFF YOUR CHEST, NOW'S THE TIME.



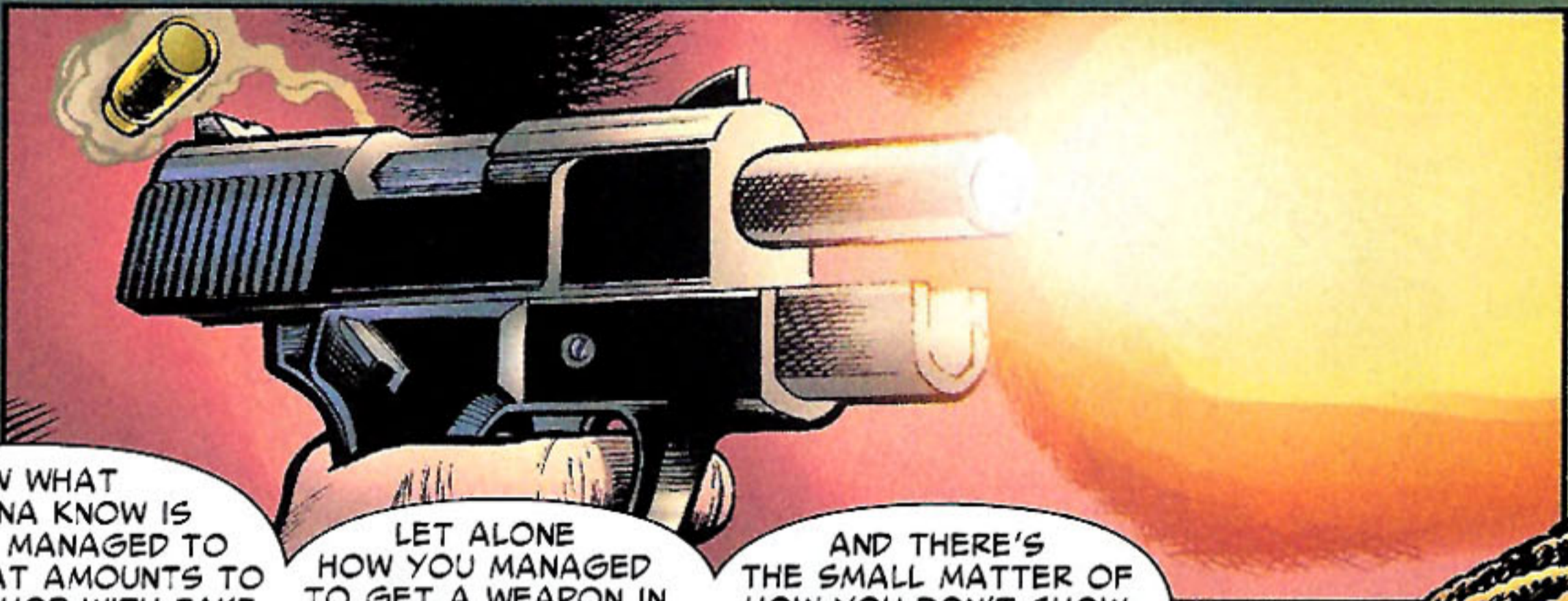
IT WASN'T ME.





SO YOU KEEP SAYING,
MISTER OSBORN.

PROBLEM IS,
AS MUCH AS I WANT
TO BELIEVE YOU, THERE
IS THE SMALL MATTER
OF, LIKE, HALF A BILLION
WITNESSES WHO WATCHED
YOU PULL THE TRIGGER
LIVE ON NATIONAL
TV.



NOW WHAT
WE WANNA KNOW IS
HOW YOU MANAGED TO
ACCESS WHAT AMOUNTS TO
A CLOSED SHOP WITH FAKE
PRESS CREDENTIALS THAT
WOULDN'T FOOL MY
GRANNY.

LET ALONE
HOW YOU MANAGED
TO GET A WEAPON IN
THERE WHEN MOST PEOPLE
COULDN'T GET IN A
TOOTHPICK.

AND THERE'S
THE SMALL MATTER OF
HOW YOU DON'T SHOW
UP ON ANY SURVEILLANCE
TAPES UNTIL YOUR BIG
MOMENT.

BUT, SEE, HERE'S THE THING THAT
REALLY INTRIGUES ME: HOW COME
A MAN OF YOUR CONSIDERABLE
RESOURCES SUDDENLY DECIDES IT'D
BE A GOOD IDEA TO ATTACK AN
ATLANTEAN WITH A .38
CALIBER PISTOL?

HARDLY THE KIND OF
WEAPON YOU'D EXPECT TO
MAKE A DENT WITH, WOULDN'T
YOU SAY? UNLESS YOU NEVER
INTENDED TO MAKE A DENT IN
THE FIRST PLACE.

CHECK THE
FACTS, YOU
UNIMAGINATIVE,
FLAT-FOOTED
HARRIDAN. THIS
WAS NONE OF
MY DOING--

OH YEAH,
MISTER
OSBORN?
WHO?

I CAN'T
SAY.

DO I LOOK
LIKE AN IDIOT TO
YOU, NORMAN? DO
I? 'CAUSE I SWEAR
THAT'S WHAT YOU
TAKE ME FOR!

YOU BROUGHT
THE GUN, YOU PULLED
THE TRIGGER, A BAZILLION
PEOPLE WATCHED YOU DO
IT AND ALL I WANT TO
KNOW IS, "WHY"?

CALL ME
NORMAN AGAIN
AND I'LL KILL YOU
WHERE YOU
STAND.

I'LL CALL YOU WHATEVER I LIKE,
PAL. AND YOU'LL GET YOUR RESPECT
WHEN YOU EARN IT. YOU'RE NOT
EXACTLY IN A POSITION TO CALL
THE SHOTS HERE!

I WILL BE, YOU ANOREXIC
TART! I'LL TEAR YOUR FAMILY
APART, FROM GRANNY TO
THE GOLDFISH--

~AH-HUKK~

...I'M GOING...
GHHH...

~AH-HECHH~

...HUCHH...

WHAT THE
HELL?

GGG...
KK...

AAARRGGHHH!



"YOU KNEW THEY WERE THERE, MISTER OSBORN. AN ENTIRE WAREHOUSE FULL OF ATLANTEANS D.O.A., AND ALL SIGNS POINT TO YOU.

"ONE OF YOUR CUTE LITTLE EXPLOSIVE DEVICES FORGOT TO EXPLODE. THAT PUTS YOU AT THE SCENE OF A MULTIPLE HOMICIDE.

"THE EXACT SAME M.O. AS A COUPLE OF DAYS BEFORE-- SOME STORE OWNER GOES MISSING AND HIS AQUARIUM WINDS UP IN PRETTY MUCH THE SAME STATE AS THE WAREHOUSE.

"SAME TYPE OF CONCUSSIVE EXPLOSIVES, SAME PATTERN OF DAMAGE. WE ASSUMED ALL ALONG IT WAS THE STORE OWNER WHO DID THE DAMAGE."

BUT IT WASN'T, MISTER OSBORN. IT WAS YOU ALL ALONG.



SO WHAT
WERE YOU TRYING
TO DO, NORMAN?
'CAUSE IT SURE SEEMS
TO ME LIKE YOU WERE
TRYING TO FLUSH THESE
GUYS OUT.

IF YOU'D
WANTED TO KILL
THE STORE OWNER
THE FIRST TIME, HE
WOULD ALREADY HAVE
BEEN DEAD.



SAME AS THE ATLANTIAN
EMISSARY: THAT LITTLE
POPGUN OF YOURS WASN'T
ENOUGH TO KILL HIM,
JUST ENOUGH TO RUIN
HIS DAY.

IN OTHER
WORDS, YOU AIMED
WIDE ON PURPOSE.
NOW WHY WOULD YOU
DO A THING LIKE THAT?

GET IT THROUGH YOUR
THICK, PAVLOVIAN DOGGY
SKULLS, YOU MORONS:
I CAN'T SAY.

WHY? WHY
CAN'T YOU
SAY?

THEY PUT
SOMETHING
INSIDE ME--

THIS
INTERVIEW
IS OVER.

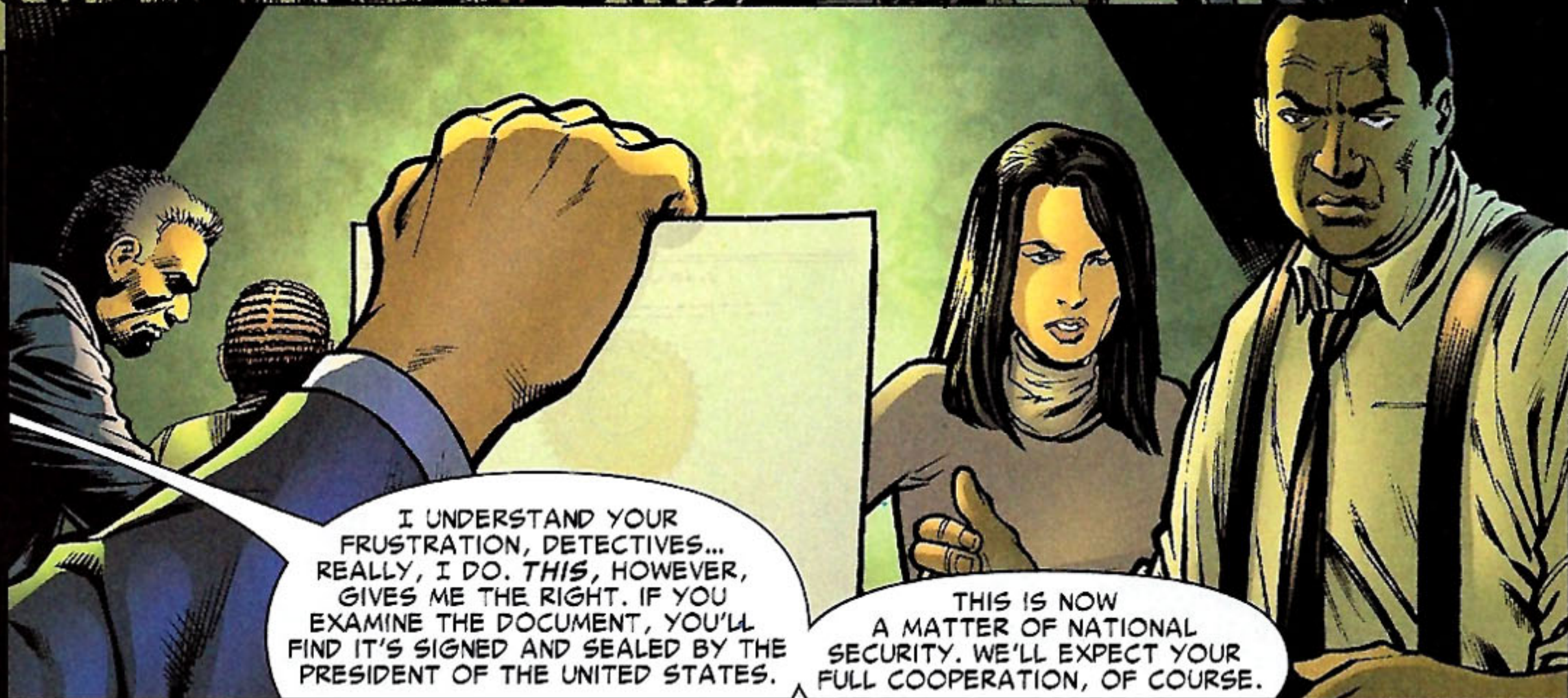


NOT YOU!



WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

MISTER OSBORN'S SUBJECT TO A HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION IN OUR JURISDICTION. NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW--NOT EVEN YOU.



I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION, DETECTIVES... REALLY, I DO. *THIS*, HOWEVER, GIVES ME THE RIGHT. IF YOU EXAMINE THE DOCUMENT, YOU'LL FIND IT'S SIGNED AND SEALED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIS IS NOW A MATTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY. WE'LL EXPECT YOUR FULL COOPERATION, OF COURSE.



NO! DON'T LET THEM... TAKE ME!

~AH-ECHH~

I'LL COOPERATE! I'LL TESTIFY!



HEY, DONNA...YOU FEEL KINDA DAMP?

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?



I HAVE A FEELING THE AMERICAN PEOPLE JUST GOT HOSED.

END.

Private William Eldridge of Battersea, London, enlisted in the 13th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers just a few short months after his wedding day. He fought at Arras, France, and was wounded in battle in the early days of November, 1917.

William was taken to a clearing station on the outskirts of Thiepval, France, where he died as a result of his wounds on November 4th.

His body was laid to rest in the Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun. He lies in Section 1, Row O, Grave Number 22.

William Eldridge was my great grandfather.

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE BOY, MY GRANDPARENTS KEPT ALL THEIR FAMILY PHOTOS ABOVE THE FIREPLACE NEAR TWO LARGE, BRONZE MEDALLIONS.

THE MEDALLIONS COMMEMORATED THE LOSSES OF MY GREAT GRANDDAD, WILLIAM ELDRIDGE AND MY GREAT UNCLE CHARLIE HAZLEGROVE.

THE PHOTOS WERE PLACED NEAR THE MEDALLIONS AS IF TO SAY, "THESE PEOPLE LIVE FREE BECAUSE OF THE SACRIFICES MADE BY THEIR ANCESTORS."

MY GRANDDAD BILL WOULD SIT AND POKE AT THE COAL IN THE FIREPLACE FOR HOURS. I REMEMBER I ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS FATHER ONE TIME.

BUT HE DIDN'T LIKE TO SPEAK ABOUT THE PAST.

GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM HAD ONLY ENLISTED A SHORT TIME BEFORE HE WENT TO FIGHT AT ARRAS.

I DOUBT THAT HE KNEW WHAT AWAITED HIM IN BATTLE.

I CANNOT IMAGINE THAT ANYBODY EVER REALLY DOES.

PAUL JENKINS
WRITER

RAMON BACHS
PENCILER

JOHN LUCAS
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STUDIO F
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VC'S GENT
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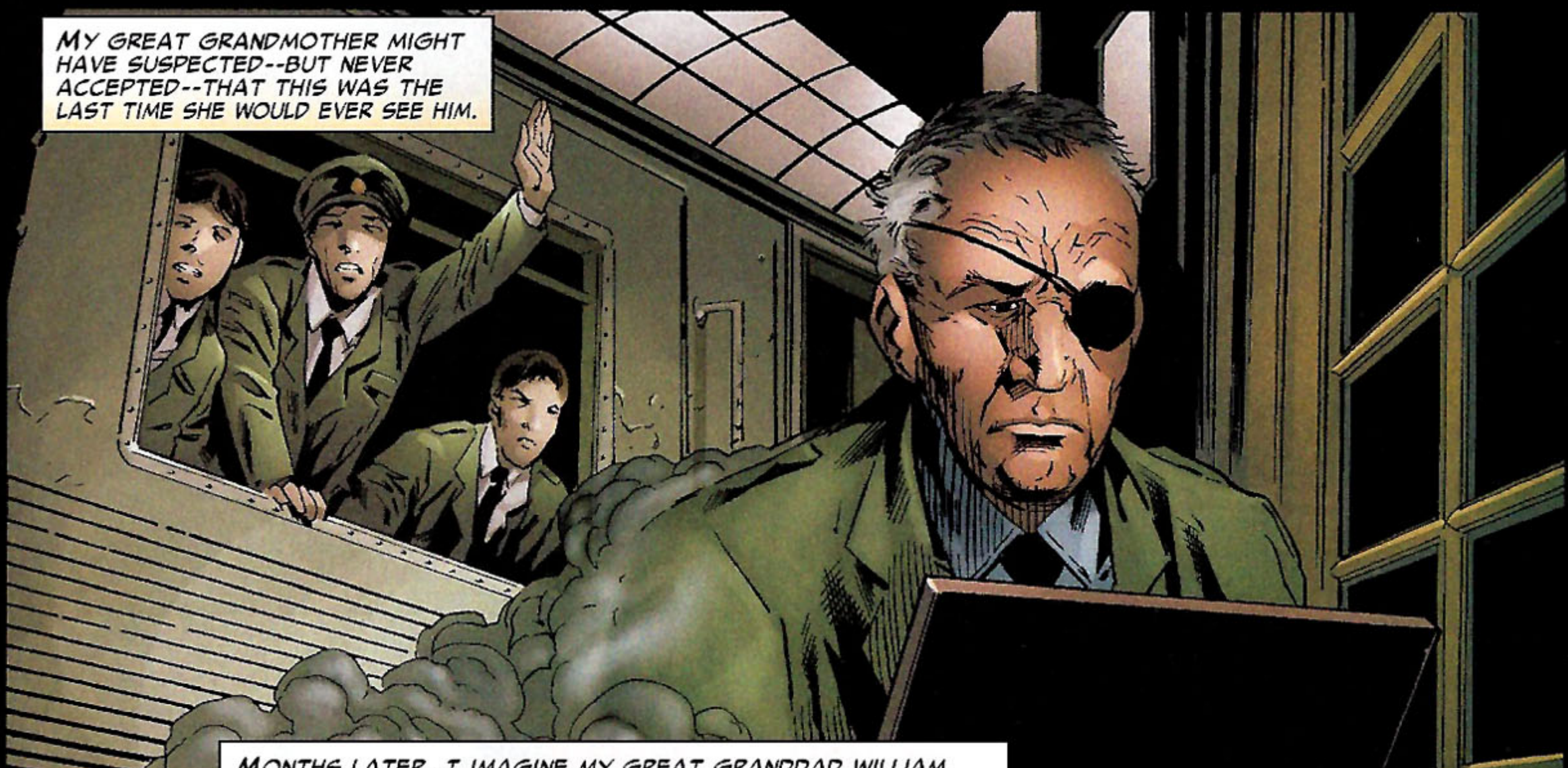
With gratitude to...
General Nicholas Fury
Who Served His
Country With Honor

FLORENCE--OUR "BIG LITTLE NANNY"--PROBABLY SAW HIM OFF AT VICTORIA STATION AS HE WENT AWAY TO WAR.

STANDING IN A THROG OF HUNDREDS OF SIMILAR YOUNG MEN FROM FAMILIES JUST LIKE OURS.



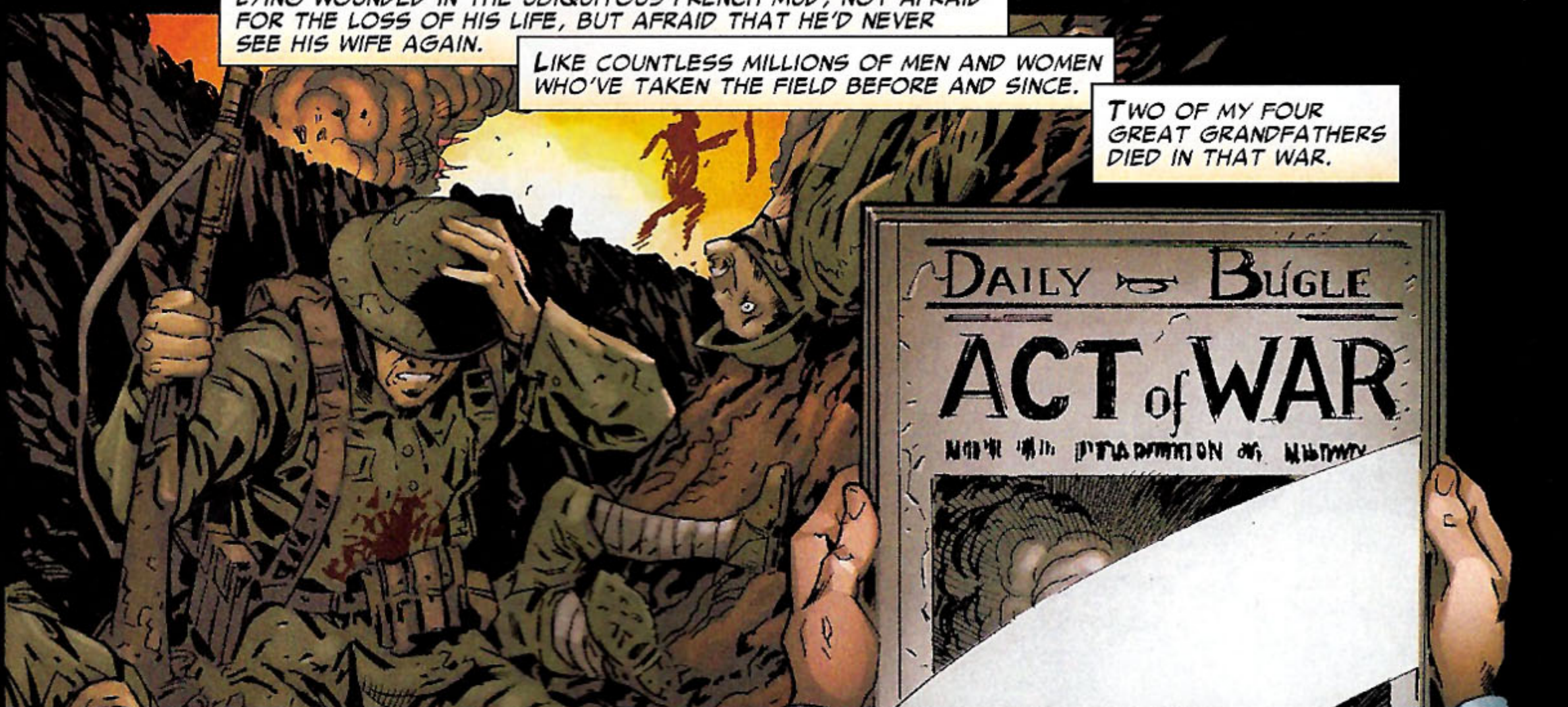
MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED--BUT NEVER ACCEPTED--THAT THIS WAS THE LAST TIME SHE WOULD EVER SEE HIM.



MONTHS LATER, I IMAGINE MY GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM, LYING WOUNDED IN THE UBIQUITOUS FRENCH MUD, NOT AFRAID FOR THE LOSS OF HIS LIFE, BUT AFRAID THAT HE'D NEVER SEE HIS WIFE AGAIN.

LIKE COUNTLESS MILLIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO'VE TAKEN THE FIELD BEFORE AND SINCE.

TWO OF MY FOUR GREAT GRANDFATHERS DIED IN THAT WAR.



DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, MY GRANDDAD BILL SERVED IN THE ROYAL NAVY. HE WAS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PEOPLE ALLOWED TO DO HIS CIVILIAN JOB--HE WAS A LORRY DRIVER.

THE DAY HE ENTERED SERVICE AT H.M.S. GANGES, THE GERMAN BATTLESHIP BISMARCK WAS SUNK.

GRANDDAD BILL RECEIVED A TELEGRAM FROM HIS BOSS: "WELL DONE, BILL! I KNEW YOU'D DO IT!"

MY DAD REMAINS IMMENSELY PROUD OF HIS SERVICE IN THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY. HE REGULARLY ATTENDS REGIMENTAL REUNIONS BUT THE RANKS ARE THINNING OUT A LITTLE AS THE D.C.L.I. HAS LONG SINCE BEEN DISBANDED.

DAD IS A GREAT STUDENT OF MILITARY HISTORY. HE ENSURED MY HEALTHY RESPECT FOR ANY MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES.

ALL IN ALL, OUR FAMILY IS MUCH LIKE ANY OTHER.

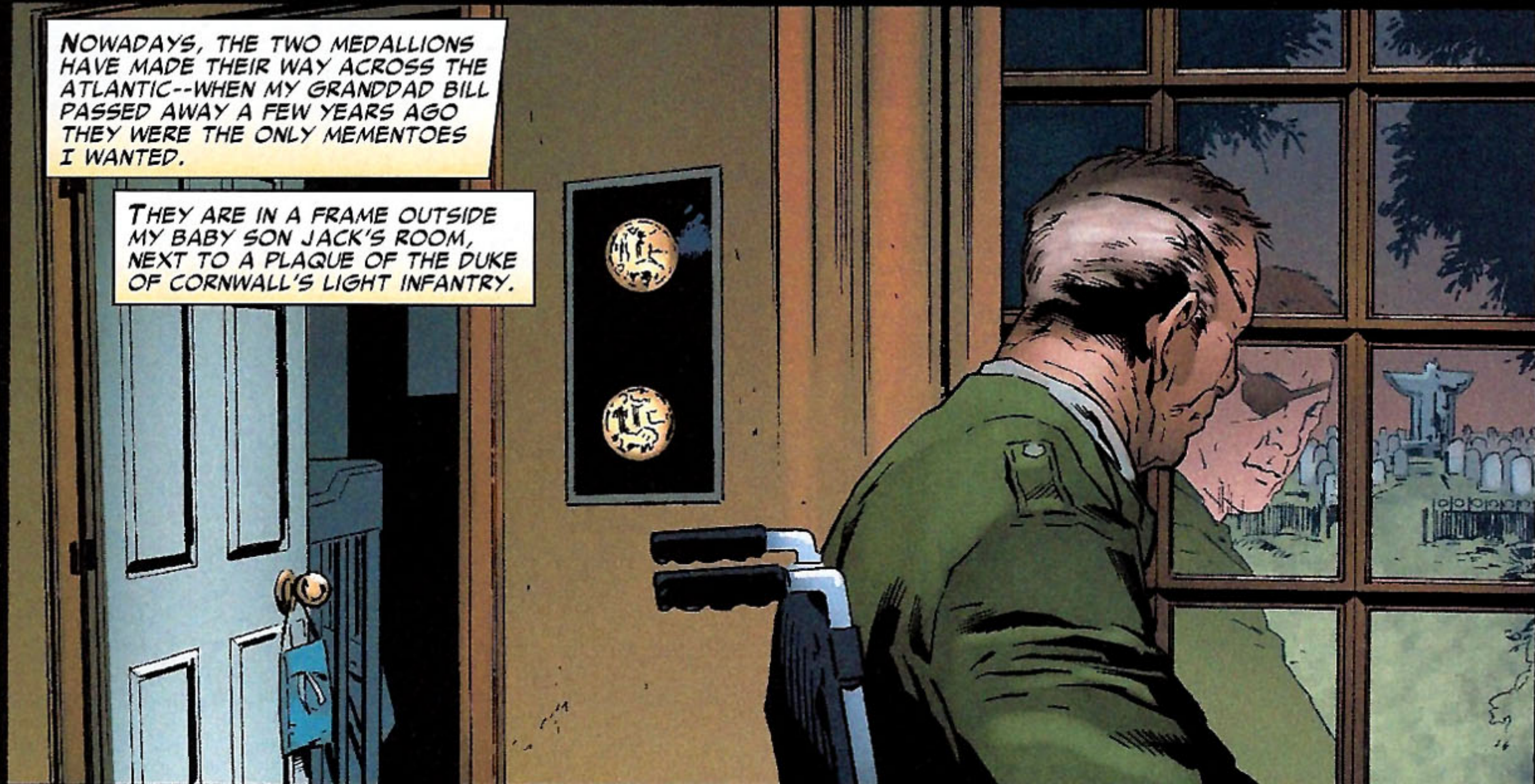
WE HAVE LIVED, WE HAVE LOST.

WE HAVE MUCH TO REMEMBER AND MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR.

MEMORIAL
FOR
ARMY VETERANS

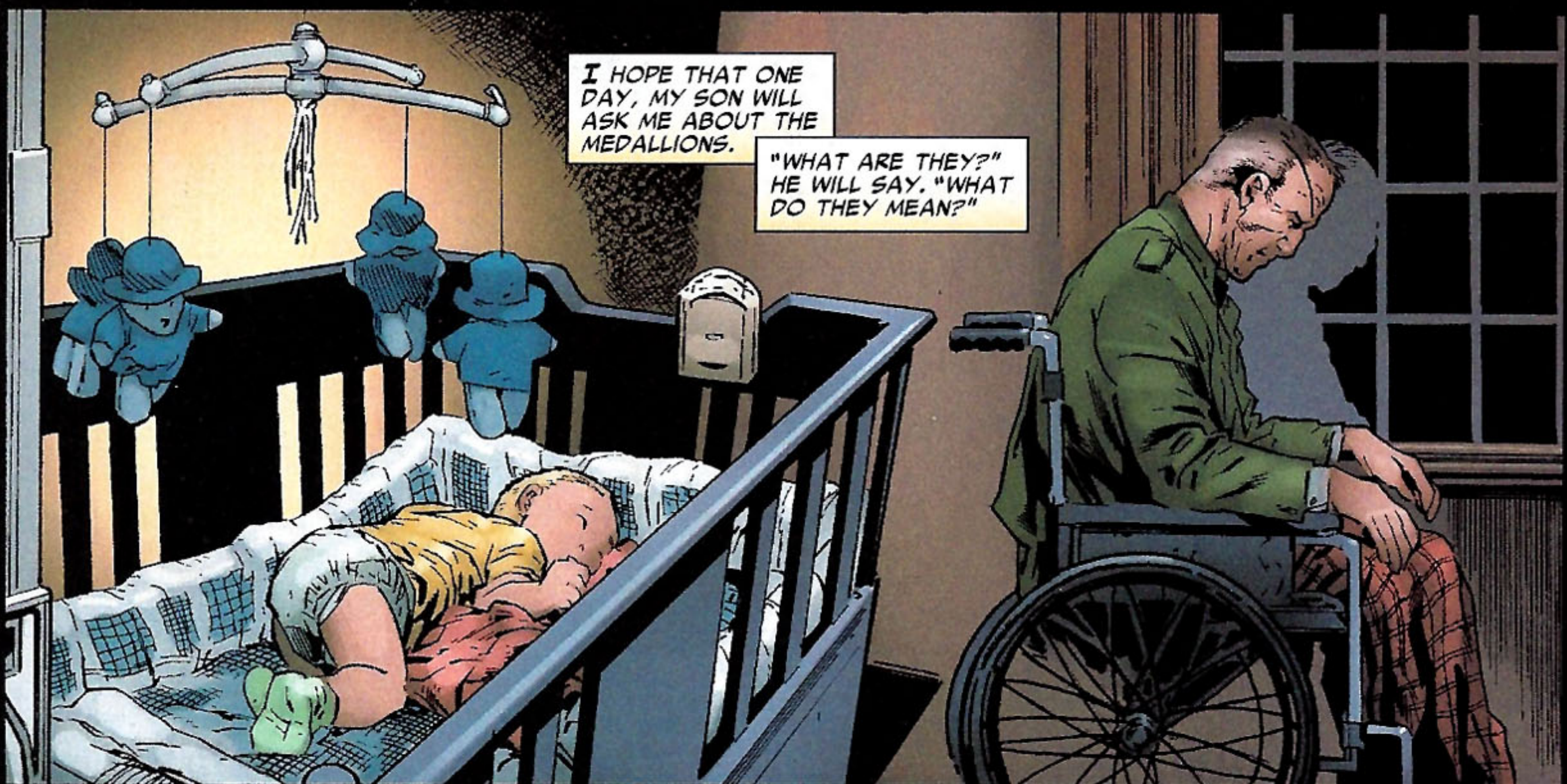
NOWADAYS, THE TWO MEDALLIONS HAVE MADE THEIR WAY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC--WHEN MY GRANDDAD BILL PASSED AWAY A FEW YEARS AGO THEY WERE THE ONLY MEMENTOES I WANTED.

THEY ARE IN A FRAME OUTSIDE MY BABY SON JACK'S ROOM, NEXT TO A PLAQUE OF THE DUKE OF CORNWALL'S LIGHT INFANTRY.



I HOPE THAT ONE DAY, MY SON WILL ASK ME ABOUT THE MEDALLIONS.

"WHAT ARE THEY?" HE WILL SAY. "WHAT DO THEY MEAN?"



AND I WILL TELL HIM THEY ARE THE SOULS OF HIS GREAT GREAT GRANDDAD WILLIAM AND HIS GREAT, GREAT UNCLE CHARLIE.

WHO DIED A LONG TIME AGO ON A FOREIGN FIELD SO THAT HE MIGHT BE FREE.



