

"I SEE HERE ON YOUR APPLICATION THAT YOU'RE ENROLLED AT NYU."

"WAS ENROLLED."

"WAS?"

"DROPPED OUT. DIDN'T FEEL LIKE THE RIGHT THING FOR ME AT THIS TIME. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?"



"AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DO."

"SO, I GOTTA DO SOMETHING WITH MY LIFE."



AND YOU THINK WORKING FOR NATIONAL INVESTIGATION COULD BE THAT SOMETHING?

HONESTLY, MR. BUCHINKSY...



PLEASE, CALL ME BUTCH.

HONESTLY, BUTCH, I DON'T KNOW WHAT FEELS RIGHT.

BEEN BACK FROM 'NAM NEARLY TWO YEARS, AND STILL TRYIN' TO FIGURE IT ALL OUT.

Never knew what I wanted to be when I grew up.



FELT THE **SAME** WAY WHEN I GOT BACK FROM KOREA IN '52.

NOT SO MUCH WHEN I GOT BACK FROM GERMANY IN '45.

BUT **THOSE** WERE DIFFERENT WARS.

CAN'T EVEN **IMAGINE** WHAT IT'S LIKE IN VIETNAM.

Then again, never really *thought* about growing up.



Only thought about *not* dying.

For me, not dying and growing up were the **same** thing.

IT'S WAR.  
PEOPLE **KILLING** OTHER PEOPLE OVER REAL ESTATE.

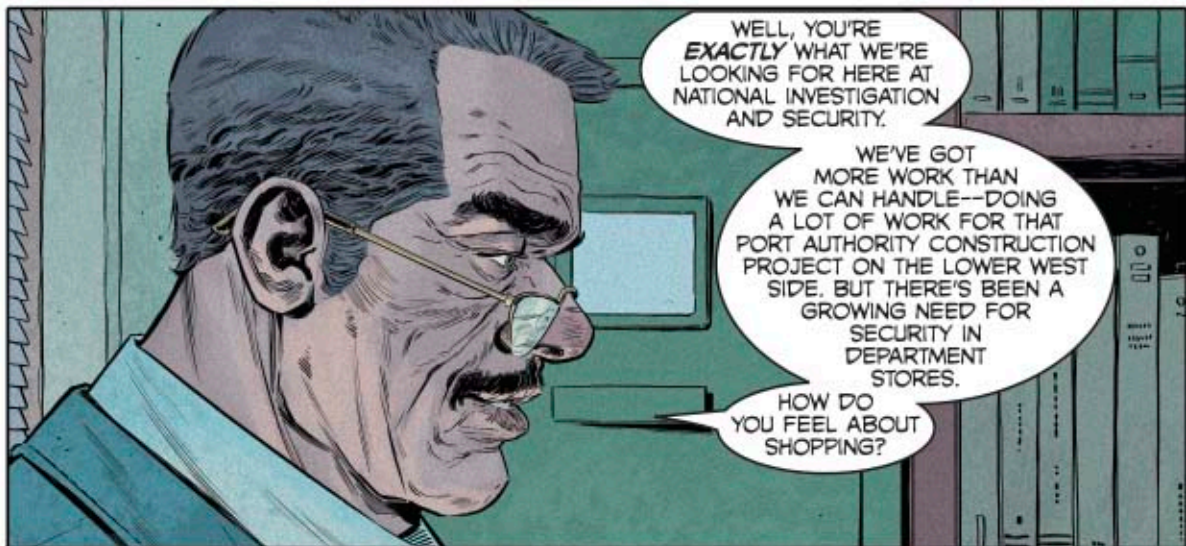


YOUR SERVICE RECORD IS **IMPRESSIVE**.  
THREE TOURS OF DUTY.  
PURPLE HEART. TWO BRONZE STARS.

SILVER STAR,  
AND A DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS...

IT ALL LOOKS LIKE A BUNCH OF FRUIT SALAD PINNED TO MY CHEST.

Making it back alive from 'Nam, I figured I'd grown up.



WELL, YOU'RE **EXACTLY** WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR HERE AT NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AND SECURITY.

WE'VE GOT MORE WORK THAN WE CAN HANDLE--DOING A LOT OF WORK FOR THAT PORT AUTHORITY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT ON THE LOWER WEST SIDE. BUT THERE'S BEEN A GROWING NEED FOR SECURITY IN DEPARTMENT STORES.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT SHOPPING?



Tried some different things.

SHOPPING?

BIGGER STORES HIRE US TO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SHOPLIFTERS, EMPLOYEE THEFT, THINGS LIKE THAT. WE HAVE ONE CLIENT SPECIFICALLY LOOKING FOR MORE NEGROES TO WORK AS UNDERCOVER SHOPPERS.



UNDERCOVER NEGRO SHOPPERS.

WHAT WILL THEY *THINK* OF NEXT?

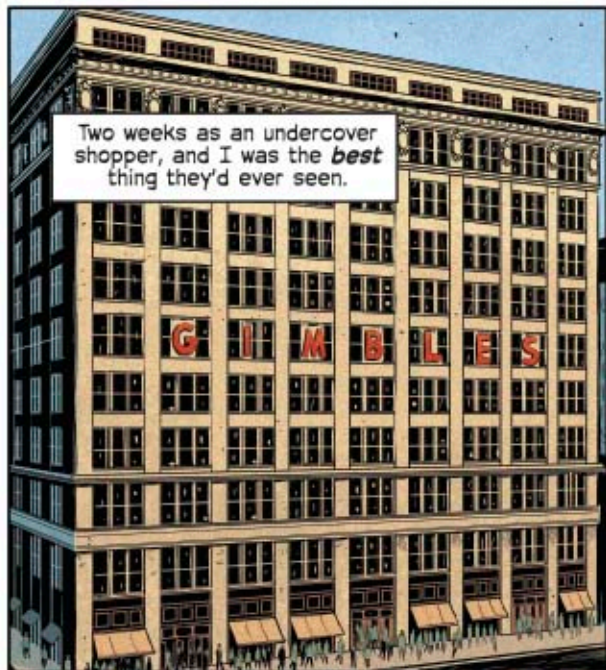
The boxing ring didn't work as *planned*. Neither did college, or the career as a lawyer that was gonna make me rich.



**WELCOME** TO THE TEAM, JOHN. WE'LL GET ALL THE NECESSARY PAPERWORK STARTED, AND HAVE YOU ON THE JOB IN NO TIME.

RIGHT ON.

And just like that, I was a *private dick*.



Two weeks as an undercover shopper, and I was the *best* thing they'd ever seen.



Could spot a booster from a mile away.



SORRY!

That's 'cause I used to be a booster.



GOOD WORK.

THANKS.

And a good thief can *recognize* another thief.



YOU OKAY?

At least that's what I *thought* until I met her.



NOTHING SEEMS BROKEN.

TELL ME--WAS THAT YOUR *IDEA* OF TRYING TO SWEEP ME OFF MY FEET?

SORRY ABOUT THAT. JUST DOING MY *JOB*.

Anything you have can be stolen.



WELL, MR. JOHN SHAFT, IT'S A *PLEASURE* TO MEET YOU.

I KNOW. I'VE SEEN YOU AROUND. I WORK IN COSMETICS. ARLETHA HAVENS.

JOHN SHAFT.

It's why you've got to *protect* the things that are most important.



THE *PLEASURE* IS ALL *MINE*.

And the best thieves...



THAT *REMAINS* TO BE SEEN.

I'M OFF AT SEVEN. YOU CAN TAKE ME OUT FOR *DINNER* TO MAKE UP FOR *KNOCKING* ME DOWN.

...they don't even *steal* what you have...



SOUNDS GOOD TO ME.

...you give it to them of your own *free will*.