



You will tell me everything I want to know.

Eventually.



Oh, hell, no. I'll tell you everything right now. Go ahead. Ask me anything.



What?

Everyone knows torture doesn't work. But it hurts a lot. I didn't sign up to get hurt a lot.

So! What do you need? Names, locations, mission plans? I'll tell you all of it. I don't care.



Uh...

...really?

Yup. I'll give up the lot. Where do you want to start?



Start with your name.

Michael Blackburn. Oh, man. Is that tobacco? Rolling your own smokes. That's a lost art back where I come from. Respect.



What are you doing here?

Well. That's a whole thing. My training is in what's called Force Reconnaissance.



I'm the idiot you send into unknown territory for forward observation, identification and recovery.

It kind of suits me. I don't like a lot of noise. Not big on chatter.



Could have fooled me.

Hey, you asked the question. Could you roll me a cigarette?

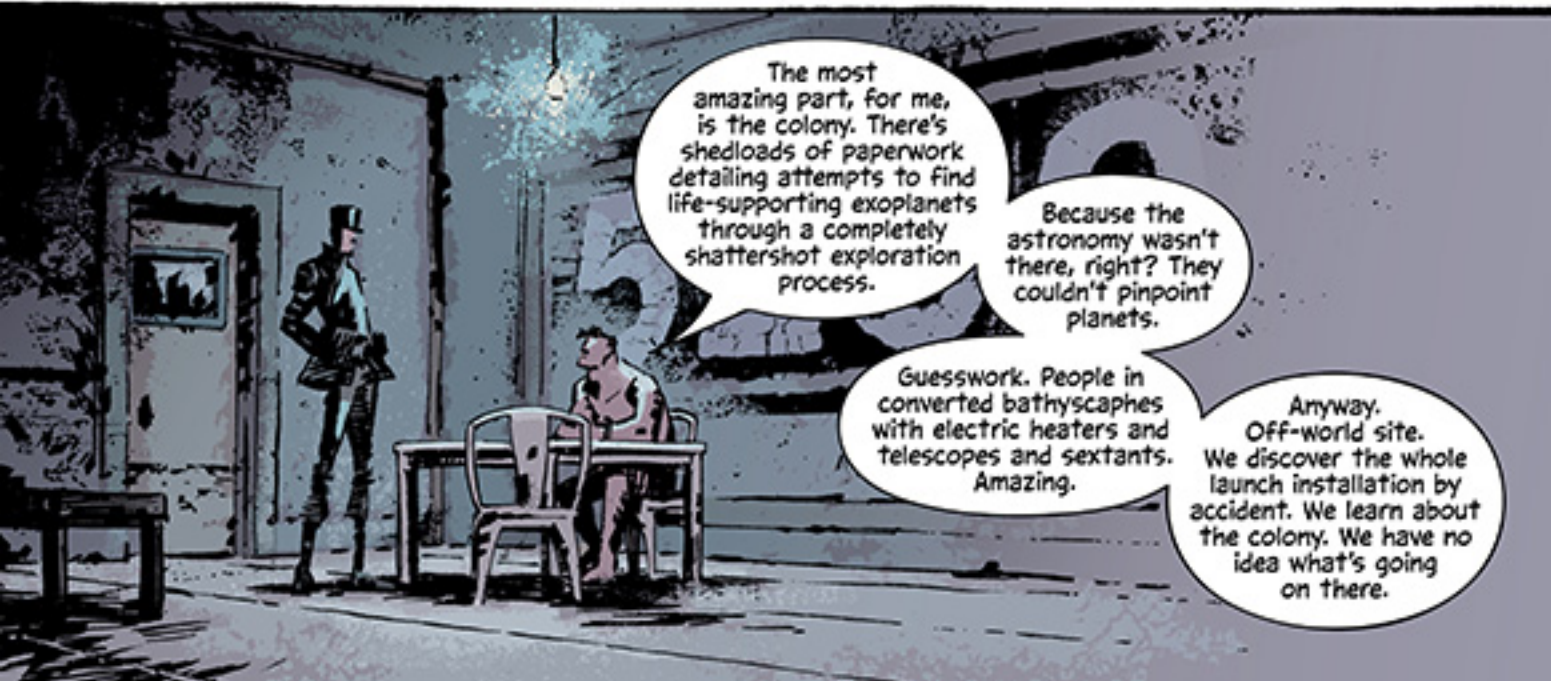
Answer the question. We'll see.



Right. What I'm doing here.

So my employers discovered that, around 1920, a group of industrialists and scientists found and operated a method to travel off-world.

An off-world colony was established some ten years later, and has been receiving intermittent resupplies ever since.



The most amazing part, for me, is the colony. There's shedloads of paperwork detailing attempts to find life-supporting exoplanets through a completely shattershot exploration process.

Because the astronomy wasn't there, right? They couldn't pinpoint planets.

Guesswork. People in converted bathyscaphes with electric heaters and telescopes and sextants. Amazing.

Anyway. Off-world site. We discover the whole launch installation by accident. We learn about the colony. We have no idea what's going on there.

