

**MISSISSIPPI DELTA. 20 MILES DEEP IN THE BATCHALOO SWAMP.**

Come closer and I'll tell you an ugly truth about being a detective.

On every bad case, there will come a time when you will feel crazy.

When you'll have followed a trail for days, weeks, and suddenly it just happens...you're no longer in the world.



You're inside a dusty room in your own head with no light and you're terrified. Every clue that you hope will let you out points back to you.

But then there will come a moment. You find something and...*whoosh*. The light pours in and every outline becomes crisp and clear. Every line distinct.

My mentor in detection, Henri Ducard, called this moment "*lancer du chapeau*." Or the "toss your hat" instant.

I call it the "window moment." Like standing at the window as the curtains open.

And on this case, it's happening right now.



The first time I met Jervis Tetch I was late to our meeting.



This time, he won't see me coming.

# Ends of the Earth Part 3

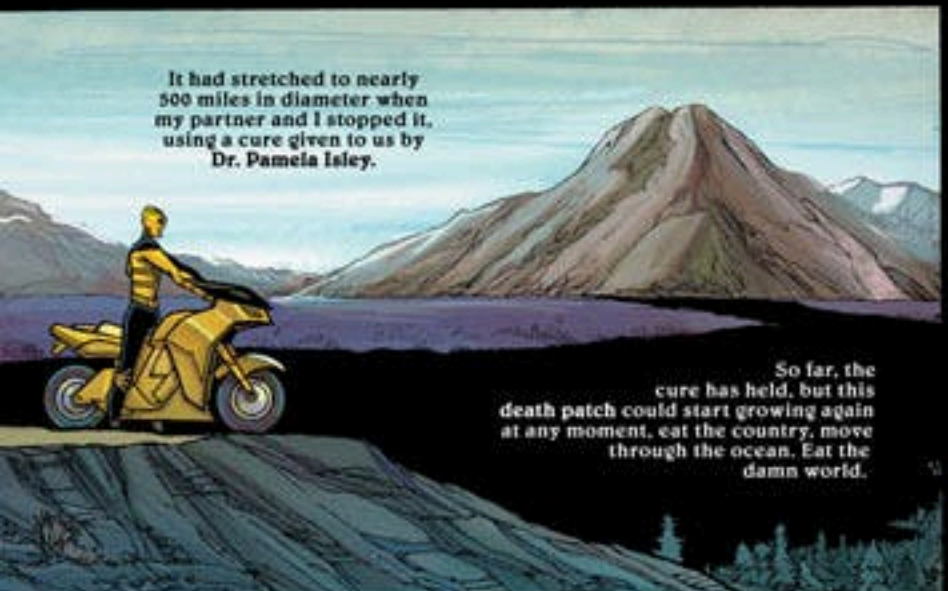
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The house belongs to a shell corporation called Brass M. Pouy R&D. It's the last point in a case that has taken me from the Arctic to the desert. A case in which millions of lives hang in the balance.

A month ago, Victor Fries released a spore into the atmosphere. That spore caused a necrotic patch that has grown by miles a day across the Northwest, killing everything in its path.



It had stretched to nearly 500 miles in diameter when my partner and I stopped it, using a cure given to us by Dr. Pamela Isley.

So far, the cure has held, but this death patch could start growing again at any moment, eat the country, move through the ocean, Eat the damn world.



Every step of the way, a team has been hounding my partner and me. They call themselves the Blackhawks, after a long-vanished strike force known to take down apocalyptic threats.



The Blackhawks' armor is more than just camouflage. It tracks eye-line movement, literally convinces your brain you're seeing what's not there.

Three hours ago, I traced that tech here and jetted down. Duke stayed behind to watch the patch. Make sure the cure held.



One hour ago, Duke went missing.



Right now, I want ans--



And then I hear a voice I know.

Kate Kane. Batwoman. She tells me to stop and listen to her. She says she has information that I don't.

Dick goes for the heart, says please, just trust them.



I tell them that they're family.



Of course I'll listen.



I owe them that.



Then I start taking them down.





Every fight has its hints. Red Hood errs when he draws his right Beretta first, the one closer to me.

I cut the distance...

...show him why, unlike leather jackets, capes never go out of style.



Nightwing stumbles, too.

Lights his sticks before he lunges...

...letting me mark him...

...wind up...

...and counter.



I could see the look in his eyes just before the flamingo hit.



The question.



How did I know?



Simple. Because my family knows how to #S%^ fight.



And then a noise...



...as the lawn comes to life.



Ah, Jervis...