



THE MEDICAL EXAMINER WASN'T ABLE TO WORK OUT MUCH MORE THAN THE TIME OF DEATH AND THE CONTENTS OF HIS LAST MEAL, BUT I FOUND HIS EQUIPMENT TO BE MORE HELPFUL.

THERE WERE RESIDUAL TRACES OF A CHEMICAL USED IN THE MANUFACTURE OF CIRCUIT BOARDS.

PHOTOLITHOGRAPHY IS FAIRLY UNCOMMON THESE DAYS, BUT THERE ARE STILL TOO MANY POSSIBLE LOCATIONS TO CHECK THEM.

BUT HIS HAIR AND CLOTHING CONTAINED POLLENS FROM AN ENDANGERED WILDFLOWER THAT IS ONLY FOUND IN ONE PARTICULAR COUNTY.

WELL, AT LEAST NOW DOC KNOWS WHERE TO LOOK, AND WHAT TO LOOK FOR.

THE FLOWER GROWS IN A SIX-MILE STRETCH ON THE EASTERN SLOPE OF A MOUNTAIN THERE, AT ELEVATIONS BETWEEN 150 AND 300 METERS ABOVE SEA LEVEL.






YES, DOC AND LONGSHOT ARE EN ROUTE TO CALIFORNIA NOW. WE SHOULD BE HEARING FROM THEM SOON.



PAT? OUR DATA ANALYSTS HAVE COME UP WITH SOMETHING.



THE SPIKE IN AGRIBUSINESS IN THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES HAS BOLSTERED MORE THAN ONE GOVERNMENT THAT WAS IN DANGER OF BEING OUSTED.

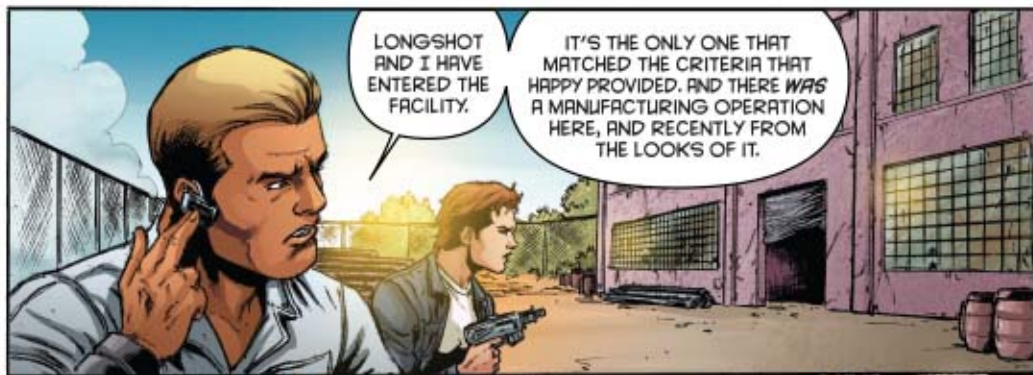


SO ONE COUNTRY IS HIT WITH A DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE, AND THE LEADERS OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES GET AN ECONOMIC WINDFALL AND MANAGE TO SOLIDIFY THEIR POLITICAL STANDING.



PAT, DO YOU READ ME?

YES, DOC, WE'RE HERE. WHAT'S YOUR POSITION?



LONGSHOT  
AND I HAVE  
ENTERED THE  
FACILITY.

IT'S THE ONLY ONE THAT  
MATCHED THE CRITERIA THAT  
HAPPY PROVIDED. AND THERE *WAS*  
A MANUFACTURING OPERATION  
HERE, AND RECENTLY FROM  
THE LOOKS OF IT.



BUT THEY  
CLEARED OUT  
IN A *HURRY*.

AND  
LEFT A MESS  
BEHIND, TOO.



WAIT, DO  
YOU HEAR  
THAT?

COME ON,  
WE'VE GOT  
TO GO!



SAVAGE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS.

THE FACILITY HAD BEEN ABANDONED, AND AUTOMATED DEFENSES WERE SET TO BLOW THE PLACE TO DUST IF ANYONE CAME DIGGING AROUND.

I CAN ONLY IMAGINE THAT THEY KNEW THAT WE WOULD TRACE THEIR LOCATION FROM AN EXAMINATION OF THE DEAD MAN WITH THE PARACHUTE AND THE OSCILLATOR.

WELL, IT WASN'T TOO OBVIOUS THAT WE'D FIND THEM, WAS IT?

DON'T WORRY, HAPPY. I'M STILL IMPRESSED WITH YOU.

WHAT ABOUT THAT CIRCUIT BOARD THAT LONGSHOT FOUND?

IT WASN'T FINISHED, THAT MUCH IS CLEAR. THEY WERE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF LAYING IN THE CIRCUITRY WHEN THE PLACE WAS ABANDONED.

WHAT IT WAS INTENDED TO DO, WE CAN'T BE SURE.

I'VE DONE A SPECTROGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE COMPONENT, SO WE KNOW WHAT IT'S MADE OF, AT LEAST. AND THAT'S WORRYING ENOUGH.