

MC 056: Jungle Moves

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G.I. JOE #56

Jungle Moves

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Summary: Dawn in Sierra Gordo. A group of Cobra soldiers led by Dr. Mindbender and the Baroness carry an unconscious Snake-Eyes back to the Terror-Drome. Snake-Eyes was left behind hours earlier by a group of Joes, thinking may have been killed by a barrage of grenades. In reality, the Cobras used stun grenades in an attempt to capture Snake-Eyes. Tomax and Xamot report that the counter-revolutionaries are staging another assault on the Terror-Drome. Baroness orders them to boost their defenses while Mindbender makes certain to secure Snake-Eyes inside the base. He also quietly orders an officer to prepare a helicopter for a "tactical evacuation" in case the revolutionaries are more successful than before. Serpentor has signalled for an update of the situation in Sierra Gordo, but Mindbender has his men stall for time so that he has a chance to regain control.

Somewhere on the coast of Sierra Gordo, a Tomahawk helicopter carrying the Joes that left Snake-Eyes behind lands on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Flagg. As the chopper sets down, Stalker wonders what he'll tell Scarlett about leaving Snake-Eyes behind. Stalker is still on a stretcher after being shot in the chest by Cobra machine guns. Hawk and Scarlett head for the flight deck where Stalker tells her with tears in his eyes that it was his own fault he got shot and that he should have left behind instead of Snake-Eyes. Scarlett tries to calm him, making him realize that Snake-Eyes could never have left him behind wounded. Hawk reminds them that Snake-Eyes is a survivor, and shouldn't be written off yet. He adds, "Scarlett, do you want a shot at going after him?" Scarlett answers, "What kind of question is that, Hawk?"

Dawn, on the campus of Georgia Tech. Grunt, who just left the Joe team to pursue an engineering degree, annoys his roommate by waking up much too early for a jog at sunrise. As he makes his laps around the track, he's surprised to hear someone yell, "Hey, Grunt!" He turns to see a beautiful woman, who tells him she guessed he was a "grunt" -- a nickname for a soldier -- because he was up so early and he still wore his dogtags. She explains that she spent four years as an Army chopper mechanic to pay for college. She guesses that he must have been in some elite special forces unit. Grunt makes sure to keep his classified secrets to himself: "Actually...I was never anything special. I was just another grease-monkey in the Chaplain's Assistants motor pool at Fort Wadsworth." She's happy to hear that. He won't feel some macho need to prove himself. She invites him to breakfast and introduces herself as Lola. Grunt starts to say his own name, but stops:

"Gr--"

"Is that a name or a growl?"

"Bob. Everyone calls me...Bob."

Back in Sierra Gordo, the Terror-Drome is under heavy attack by the counter-revolutionaries, now being advised by Recondo and Dial-Tone. As the battle goes on, the Baroness decides to evacuate the base. As she loads Snake-Eyes onto a transport chopper, Dr. Mindbender loads his Brain-wave Scanner into the base's Firebat jet, sending it on a computer-controlled flight back to Cobra Island. Tomax and Xamot remind him that they're sending a sapper team through the base to set explosives to destroy the base during the evacuation. "Ah, yes! Wouldn't want the Joes or the rest of the world to find out the real reason for selling these air defense bases..." The chopper and firebat take off, a Tomahawk helicopter lands near the revolutionaries' position, bringing the Joes' reinforcements: Scarlett, Flint, Roadblock and Tripwire. They're ready to rescue Snake-Eyes, but Recondo tells them they're too late. Flint suggests chasing them in the Tomahawk, but Scarlett disagrees: "No. We have a job to finish here first! After that nothing's going to stop me..."

On Cobra Island, Serpentor isn't confident in the Twins' ability to "destroy all the incriminating bits!" He leads three helicopters on a direct flight for Sierra Gordo to back up the operation with some firepower. He radios the chopper carrying the Baroness, Mindbender and Snake-Eyes. Mindbender expects his Emperor's praise, but gets yelled at instead. He orders them to head for the new Cobra Consulate in New York, and interrogate their prisoner there.

At the Terror-Drome, the Twins and their sappers sprint from the base and take cover. They wait until the Joes are inside before detonating the charges. But when they do, the charges don't go off. They gave Tripwire just enough time to find and cut the firing wire. Scarlett orders the Joes remove all of the charges. Tripwire then removes the explosives, and places the blasting caps alone at the seams of the pre-fab base's sections. Meanwhile, Scarlett and Flint scout out the

terrain. Scarlett's happy to see that Cobra built the base on high ground and above both an old railway to the west and a river to east. Tripwire detonates the blasting caps and there are several explosions, after which the base neatly falls apart into its pre-fabricated sections. Tripwire just loves it "when stuff falls nicely apart like that", while Flint is just glad that they don't have to haul the entire base away. Roadblock reports that a small party of Cobras is watching them from the treeline. Scarlett sees this as an advantage.

The Twins are getting worried, but decide to wait to call Serpentor for help. After all, it will be difficult for the Joes to get the Terror-Drome components out of the jungle. They watch as the Joes chop down some trees, and with the help of the revolutionaries they build a primitive crane with logs and rope. The crane lets them easily lift the heavy segments of the Terror-Drome onto a flatbed car of a train on the nearby railroad tracks. The Twins change their minds in unison: "Better call Serpentor!"

Some time later, the loaded train, apparently driven by Flint, makes its way downhill, letting gravity do all the work. Just then, Serpentor's helicopters arrive. Tomax and Xamot rush on board telling Serpentor to go after the train. The choppers catch up with the train and fire a barrage of missiles, destroying the it. But as the train explodes, we see that the driver, "Flint", was just a dummy wearing Flint's shirt and beret! Back at the Terror-Drome site, the Joes are sliding the real Terror-Drome segments down to the river where they'll be loaded onto barges and taken downriver to meet with the U.S.S. Flagg. The Joes see the decoy train explode off in the distance. Flint (wearing a t-shirt) thinks he gave up his shirt for a good cause, but Scarlett thinks he just did it so he could show off his muscles. "Looks like the good guys won this time," Flint says. Scarlett disagrees: "We haven't won until we get Snake-Eyes back..."

Meanwhile, at JFK airport in New York, a man is stopped by security guards at the metal detectors. Inside his bag is a mask made of beryllium steel. There's no law against it, so he boards his plane headed to Glasgow, Scotland. The stewardess asks if his trip is a vacation. "Business...", Destro tells her, "Family business..."

(Destro's story continues in G.I. Joe #57; Snake-Eyes' fate is revealed in G.I. Joe Yearbook #3.)

Review: "Jungle Moves" is one of those stories wherein the Joes defeat Cobra not by out-fighting them, but by out-thinking them. There's only about a page of combat, and most of that is done by the revolutionaries. As often happens with the bad guys, their overconfidence is their weakness. Tomax, Xamot and the others assume the Joes just can't succeed, but they surprise everyone.

At one point in the issue Mindbender drops some hints that there is more to Terror-Drome sales than just business. Cobra does have a master plan, but it isn't revealed until issue #67.

The strangest aspect of the story is the brief scene involving Grunt settling in at Georgia Tech. The scene itself isn't the problem. It shows Grunt trying to get back to a "normal" life after spending so long on the Joe team and the Army itself. What's weird is the fact that this storyline doesn't continue, and is conspicuously dropped. Grunt will only briefly appear almost ten issues later, and he doesn't make an important appearance for a year after that. Maybe Larry Hama decided the story wasn't interesting enough or wouldn't fit into the series, but it seems like a story that was just never written.

The issue includes the first appearances of Life-Line and Dial-Tone, although they have little significance to the plot, and Life-Line isn't even named and doesn't speak. Dial-Tone actually first appeared in Special Missions #2, but this is his first showing in the regular series. Tripwire returns in this issue, and it's funny to see him so happy that he managed to dismantle the Terror-Drome so neatly.

The only questionable part of the plot is the fact that we discover Snake-Eyes survived the last issue because he was hit by "stun grenades." It seems like a bit of a cop-out, but no one expected he was actually dead, I suppose. Anybody out there know if "stun grenades" actually exist?

"Jungle Moves" is a fun story and its fun to see the Joes use their heads to get the bad guys once in a while. As mentioned above, the rescue of Snake-Eyes is a story seen in Yearbook #3. This will make certain fans of the series by the Yearbook, so, once again, someone at Marvel is very good at marketing.

First Appearances:

- G.I. Joe Team: Life-Line; Dial-Tone (first regular series appearance, his second counting Special Missions #2)

Reprinted in:

- The Transformers (UK) #195-198 (December 10th - 31st, 1988). A Marvel UK series that began reprinting Action Force stories after the end of that series. These issues reprint this story in four parts, alongside original stories. All references to "G.I. Joe" were changed to "Action Force".
- Classic G.I. JOE: Volume 6 (December 2009). A trade paperback collection from IDW Publishing. Includes issues #51-60.