

MC 071: Bailout

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G.I. JOE #71

Bailout

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Summary: In the mountains of Sierra Gordo, not far from the recently crashed and burning C-130 transport plane (last issue), Wild Bill tries to splint Thrasher's broken arm while the injured Dreadnok screams in pain, his voice distorted through his broken nose. While the group of refugees look on, Crazylegs tries to hurry them up. Their burning C-130 can be seen for twenty miles! Maverick runs up the hill they're perched on, announcing there's a bus full of soldiers coming up the road below. Wild Bill considers gagging Thrasher so that the soldiers won't hear "our very own human siren, but Crazylegs has another solution. He knocks Thrasher out with the butt of his rifle. "Don't look at me like that," Crazylegs says to Wild Bill. "It worked, didn't it?"

As the bus approaches, the group gets out of site. Zarana gets an idea and dresses her, Thrasher and Monkeywrench in refugee clothing. Further up the road, she stops the bus as it approaches and tells the sergeant onboard that a plane crashed near her village and the "gringos" inside broker her brother's arm. She'll take them there if she shoots the gringos. On the bus, Zarana pops open an ammonia capsule under Thrasher's nose (to wake him up), puts an entrenching tool in his hand and punches his broken arm. The Dreadnok screams in pain and starts running through the bus, whacking everyone in sight with the entrenching tool. He manages to knock out everyone on the bus, finally stopping when Zarana knocks him out with the butt of her pistol.

At the dockside offices of the North American Banana Monopoly, Chip Goodfellow, the company's local representative, scolds General Villavaca for letting a group of Joes and the U.S. ambassador escape the country with documents that could ruin the NABM. The company won't support Villavaca's revolution any longer and suggests he loots the treasury and gets out of the country alive while he still can. Goodfellow starts packing up the money from his safe and calls his pilot, Bob, to prepare their old seaplane for takeoff.

Back in the mountains, the Joes and Dreadnoks have tied up the soldiers and put on their uniforms. A radio call sealing off the border tells them that they'll never pass as natives, even with the uniforms on. Wild Bill tells one of the refugees -- Hidalgo -- to take the bus and the other refugees to the border, since they'll be stopping Americans and soldiers, not farmers. The Joes and Dreadnoks walk for a while and then are surprised to see the bus return. Hidalgo tells the Joes they couldn't leave them alone and that they'll find a way to get them all out.

General Villavaca arrives at the nation's treasury building and finds Destro, his Sergeant Major, El Jefe and some of his counter-revolutionaries -- Villavaca's enemy. Destro tells the general they're here to discuss the future of the country and he's glad to see he brought the combination to the safe.

The Joes' bus arrives at the roadblock at the road into the city, with Zarana at the wheel. She smashes through the roadblock and jeeps carrying Villavaca's men take off after the bus.

Back at the treasury, Villavaca tells Destro that there's barely any money left in the treasury. "It has been looted by seven previous provisional governments!" He says that Chip Goodfellow has the real money because the NABM was bleeding Sierra Gordo dry for years and Chip has been robbing his own company. He'll take Destro to Chip's seaplane. They head outside to a pick-up truck, with Villavaca in the back with the Iron Grenadier. Meanwhile, the bus continues through the city, the Joes exchanging fire with the troops chasing them. At the NABM office, Chip Goodfellow is nervously trying rush Bob's pre-flight inspection, knowing that any number of people could be after him.

In downtown Rio Lindo, the Joes' bus with soldiers close behind is heading for the same busy intersection that Destro, El Jefe and Villavaca's trucks are coming to. They all arrive at the same moment and one of Destro's pickup trucks collides with one of the jeeps. After the crash, the near-dead army captain in the jeep sees Villavaca with the counter-revolutionaries. Before the general can explain, the captain shoots him, shouting "Traitor!" Villavaca's lifeless body falls from the pickup, as Destro and El Jefe drive on.

The Joes' bus reaches the docks and they spot Goodfellow's seaplane. The Joes, Dreadnoks and refugees all board the plane. When Wild Bill asks, Bob confirms the pre-flight check is finished. Wild Bill thanks him and heads for the cockpit. He and Maverick take off just as Destro shows up, firing on the plane. He realizes Goodfellow and the money must have been on board. "But who were all those other people?" El Jefe wonders.

On the plane, Thrasher is starting to panic after his last "bad experience" on his last flight. He'd having trouble breathing due to his broken nose. The others are trying to calm Thrasher when Goodfellow emerges from the rear cabin with a machine gun and a briefcase full of money. He's about to force Wild Bill to change course but Thrasher is fed up with the situation. He knocks Goodfellow down and kicks the door open trying get some air, causing Goodfellow and his money to be sucked out of the plane. Crazylegs grabs on to Thrasher before he gets pulled out, too. "Thrasher, you are such a geek!" Up in the cockpit, Wild Bill shouts, "Somebody close that hatch! It's drafty up here!"

THE END

Review: "Bailout" ends the three-issue story arc that briefly moved away from the larger storylines in the series. The story continues to be set more in the real world than other Joe stories, filled with corrupt politicians and wealthy corporations exploiting poor countries. Sierra Gordo continues to represent the sometimes chaotic third world dictatorships. Villavaca's willingness to "take the money and run" proves he was only in this revolution to gain power and wealth.

The Joes, meanwhile, are forced into working with the Dreadnoks to get them all out of Sierra Gordo alive. The Dreadnoks actually are the best Cobras to join up with the Joes, since they're only mercenaries and don't really care which side they're on. Their behavior shows that they may have some good traits. Zarana is the smartest of the Dreadnoks, while Thrasher's stupidity seems to make him almost childlike. The three Dreadnoks here aren't as completely reprehensible as they usually are portrayed, but maybe the Joes' presence keeps them in check. It's good to see the story focus on supporting characters, especially Wild Bill. Crazylegs is a fun character, too, with his "anesthetic", unfortunately he doesn't do much more in the series until his death years later.

Destro gets even more involved in the civil war, and the Iron Grenadiers control of Sierra Gordo will be explored more later on. Destro shows his mercenary side in this issue more than usual, thanks to his separation from Cobra. He seems to be very intent on getting Goodfellow's briefcase full of money. A highlight of the story is the chase through the streets of Rio Lindo and the Joes' fast escape from the country. Thrasher's dispatching of Goodfellow is funny because he simply did it because he wanted more air.

"Bailout" is a fun story, filled with some dark humor, corrupt politicians and high speed chases. It's a nice break from the main series' story, happening just before one of the series biggest storylines, beginning next issue.

Reprinted in:

- The Transformers (UK) #290-293 (October 6th - 27th, 1990). 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 8 (May 2010). A trade paperback collection from IDW Publishing. Includes issues #71-80.