

DDP 04: Reinstated! Pt. 4

Thursday, 27 May 2010

G.I. JOE v2 #4
Reinstated! Part 4
Cover Date: March, 2002

Writer: Josh Blaylock
Pencils: Steven Kurth
Inks: John Larter

Colors: Hi-Fi Colour Designs

Editor: Scott Wherle

Summary: News reports are coming in from all over the country that a mysterious phenomenon is striking military bases, causing vehicles, weapons and supplies to crumble away like ashes. Hospitals are becoming overcrowded with patients complaining of sudden migraines, severe pain and loss of motor functions. Most of the victims work for the government. All communications from Washington, DC have been cut off and people are awaiting word from the military. In a darkened room inside the Pentagon, a secret committee of Generals is meeting. They're questioning Hawk's reports that Cobra is behind the day's events, believing that Cobra could not stage such an attack so quickly after their return. Some believe Hawk only reinstated the Joes for his own purposes and Cobra's threat is a hoax. Hawk tells them they're only wasting time. He knows the Jugglers decommissioned the Joes back in 1995, "after baiting Cobra with the fake break-up of the team", but now the Joes are the country's only hope.

An Army convoy delivering relief supplies is ambushed by Cobra Vipers led by Major Bludd, while the convoy's air support is destroyed by Python Conquest fighters. The supplies are transferred to Cobra trucks and Vipers, Dreadnoks and Iron Grenadiers are soon distributing them to the people. In Washington, Destro's son explains that the people will believe Cobra is helping them and their own government is not. Armada asks him why he doesn't just conquer the country, but the younger Destro explains that the Nano-mites have a finite lifespan outside of the human body, and only Cobra Commander knew how to bring them to full power -- a secret Dr. Mindbender will try to extract with the Brain-wave Scanner. Armada tells him, "You're mad, Alexander." He tells her not use his real name in the field. "I am a Destro by blood and you will respect that." Armada says she can't believe she got caught up in a reckless plan by "a sad boy crying for Daddy's attention." Meanwhile, his Iron Grenadiers fire nano-bombs at the troops in Washington, destroying weapons and infecting soldiers. Alexander says he needs to give the people a reason to trust and obey him. Armada says he's delusional. "Just shut up and humor me," Alexander says.

In Scotland, Dr. Mindbender and two guards enter Cobra Commander's cell. The Commander tells them "the stars will reign down on you!" Mindbender thinks it's more mindless babbling. Suddenly, a guard is yanked up to the ceiling by a rope held by a figure up above. Mindbender shouts, "No! It cannot be! No you!" The second guard is hit with ninja throwing stars. "As I said, the stars will reign down on you."

Near Washington, the Joes prepare to attack. Flint's annoyed that they have to wait for Duke. When he finally shows, he's dressed as a soldier, and orders them to board the Wildfire choppers.

At Wright-Patterson AFB, Lifeline keeps watch over the infected Joes, upset that there's nothing more he can do to stop their suffering. He and Mainframe discuss the nano-mites, and the fact that even if they are shut down, they'll remain in the bloodstream, poisoning the bodies. Almost ready to give up, Lifeline suddenly gets an idea. The can be programmed to attack both machinery and bio-organisms. He thinks that they can reprogram the 'mites to turn on each other, turning themselves into replicas of the same cells they're destroying. Mainframe and his programmers will need to hack into Cobra's Gaijin satellite. Lifeline's called to the bio-containment ward. Scarlett and Snake-Eyes are quarantined behind glass after being infected by the 'mites while imprisoned. Spirit and Kamakura came out clean. Snake-Eyes writes a note and lets only Spirit read it. He agrees to Snake-Eyes' request. "The next time we see each other, I will have this for you." The visitors leave, and Scarlett tells Snake-Eyes that they could die soon, and wants him to know she forgives him. Snake-Eyes takes off his mask and they hug. "I love you, you big jerk."

Back in Washington, Zanya asks Zartan why he's acting like "Destro's" lackey. He explains that he's been infected with nano-mites. Zanya says she'll kill Destro for that, but her father says they can cure his skin condition, brought on by the chameleon gene experimentation he subjected himself to years before. "Destro" arrives, intent on keeping everyone loyal to him. He presses a button on his wrist, causing an infected Cobra officer to literally crumble to pieces. Not all the troops are infected, but they don't all know that. Tomax and Xamot arrive with a contingent of troops. Just outside the White House, Hawk addresses the troops, readying them for Cobra's attack.

Cobra's forces arrive, firing on the combined G.I. Joe and regular Army troops. Major Bludd says they aren't equipped to fight them, and Armada orders nano-bombs fired. The soldiers don't notice any effect until Cobra starts their charge and the Americans' weapons begin jamming and their tanks' armor becomes soft like paper. One of the new Joes begins

panicking, but Shipwreck tells him, "Pull yourself together, man!" Destro, meanwhile, pours champagne, ready to celebrate his impending victory.

Back at Joe HQ, Mainframe and one of the new Joe hackers, Firewall, discuss her hope that she can really do some good on her assignment, which was offered to her when she was arrested for hacking government web sites. They've all been working for thirty-six hours, and still can't get into Gaijin. Mainframe gets a message from Daemon that they've received a call from someone muttering incoherently, but keeps repeating the word "Gaijin", followed by a sequence of numbers. Mainframe asks why they don't just ignore the whacko's call, but Daemon says they ran a voice scan over their sound database. "It's Cobra Commander." The two Joes run to their computers.

Meanwhile, a news broadcast is interrupted when the U.S. Speaker of the House is giving a press conference. He says that their Army is ill-equipped to handle the mysterious incidents, and that before the President and his cabinet were evacuated, they decided to enlist the help of the only group with a grasp of the situation: Cobra. He introduces "Destro", who says that they've been given marshal authority and Cobra factions will arrive in many cities today to help with the crisis. In his hospital bed in the Silent Castle, the elder Destro is watching the broadcast. He finds that he can suddenly move and speak again, though he's still very weak.

In Washington, a second wave of Joes led by Lady Jaye and Dusty are heading to the White House via helicopter as "Destro" has captured Duke, Flint, Shipwreck and Rock & Roll. He taunts the Joes, who are unable to move, punching them. He then raises his gun to shoot Duke when the Joe finds he can move. He jumps up and punches "Destro" and the other Joes attack their captors as well. Alexander and Armada escape in the confusion. An unknown helicopter appears overhead and drops a ladder to them. They desperately climb aboard the 'copter, only to find the Baroness pointing a gun at them. With the nano-mites out of commission and a new wave of Joes, the tide of battle quickly turns. Rock & Roll spots the Speaker of the House and helps rush the man to safety before getting his lights punched out. The Speaker pulls off a rubber mask to reveal Zartan. He and Zanya quickly make their escape. As the fight continues, Flint is about to get shot from behind. Duke shoots the Cobra and saves Flint. Flint glares at him. "Showoff." As the battle comes to an end, the Joes have won and much of the enemy was captured or killed.

Weeks later, Alexander and Armada sit in a dark cell in Scotland. She tells him it's all his fault, but he reminds her she was quite willing to go along with him. They hear a noise, and Alexander asks the unseen person for help; food; water. The visitor appears: it's the true Destro, in his original black and red costume. He tells his son he's got some serious explaining to do.

Meanwhile, the Joes are having a barbecue to celebrate their victory and recovery from the nano-mites. It's at Roadblock's house, which he and Stalker discuss as being a sign of his successful career as a celebrity chef. Sitting under a tree, Scarlett sees that Snake-Eyes holds the box that Spirit retrieved for him. She's about to dismiss it as another secret, when Snakes (showing us his un-scarred face) shows her the contents: an engagement ring. END

Review: This issue is a good wrap-up to the "Reinstated" miniseries, though it continues to seem too rushed. Even so, just about every thread is tied up well, allowing for this to be a standalone series, and still keep things up in the air. The battle scenes are done pretty well, though they go by too quickly. The battle begins, and then the story jumps ahead to the Joes being captured by young Destro, then quickly they're free.

Character moments manage to make their way into the story. Snake-Eyes and Scarlett of course make up at the end. Lifeline's character is explored here as he feels helpless to save his teammates. Lifeline was barely used in the original series past one Special Missions issue, and it's nice to see a prominent cartoon character used in the new comic. Alexander -- Destro's son -- is shown to be even crazier than we suspected. His grandiose "world domination" scheme may seem over the top by the standards of Marvel's series, but it fits better with the cartoon -- which isn't necessarily a bad thing. Even so, his state of mind kind of lends itself to such a scheme, and we continue to see why his characterization was so exaggerated in issue one. He's acting like he thinks his father should act. We'll obviously see more of him. The original Destro only appears twice, so we don't get a look at his personality. What's most interesting about him is the fact that the nano-mites were apparently the cause of his illness. Hopefully, we'll learn more. Cobra Commander did have to test these things out, though, didn't he? It's also nice to see the return of Destro's original costume. The Marvel series stayed with variations of his Iron Grenadier costume until it ended. I didn't really like Alexander's costume, anyway.

The use of the White House lawn was a bit much, but it's a reminder of the cartoon miniseries showcasing Serpentor's rise to power which had its final scenes in Washington, DC. Still, considering this series started out with a four issue storyline, it was probably thought necessary to have a big, showy plot to bring readers in.

Cobra Commander's escape wasn't shown, nor was Mindbender's fate, but we can assume CC got away. The ninja from above must be Storm Shadow (though it's easy for me to entertain the idea that it's Billy -- after all, where did he go?), and it will be interesting to see if his being on the side of Cobra is explained and if we learn what he's been up to for all these years. And is he still "brainwashed" as he was when we last saw him?

There are some questionable parts of the story, such as stepping away from the big battle to have a quiet conversation with the new hacker character that we really haven't had time to care about. Soldiers are getting blown away and they're discussing the merits of coffee. Maybe the hackers could be doing that, but Mainframe -- the old veteran -- should be more aware of the severity of the situation. Also, the resolution of the Snake-Eyes / Scarlett story didn't necessarily have to be wrapped up so quickly. The tension between the two characters could have been more interesting if it was continued on past the miniseries. Again, I have to remain optimistic here. Now that the series seems to have proved itself popular enough to continue for some time, an ongoing storyline with out an arbitrary ending may improve the series, taking away the need to cram too much into a few issues. The next issue is a standalone one, set before the first issue. Hopefully, after that we'll see signs of better things to come.

Reprinted in:

- G.I. Joe: M.I.A.: Issue 1-2 (February 2002). This single volume reprints issues #1 and 2 for readers who missed them the first time.

- G.I. JOE: Reinstated! (July 2002). A trade paperback collecting issues #1-4.

- G.I. JOE: Disavowed, Volume 1 (June 2010). A trade paperback from IDW Publishing collecting issues #1-4. The title "Disavowed" refers to the fact that IDW has started a series that follows Marvel's G.I. Joe #155, and ignores the Devil's Due continuity.