

DDP 07: Reckonings Pt. 2

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G.I. JOE v2 #7

Reckonings, Part 2

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Summary: Somewhere of the Eastern coast off the United States, a small cargo ship crewed by Russians approaches the shore. One man tells the other he's nervous about smuggling a suitcase nuke into the country. The lead man believes this mission will let them get into Cobra. They're suddenly shaken, and see two G.I. Joe SHARCs firing on them. Shipwreck appears in one SHARC and shoots one of the men, as the other gets "the others". Hidden guns appear from inside the cargo ship, all manned by Cobras. As the Joes evade their fire, a number of jet skis surface, carrying divers, including Stalker, Wet Suit, and regular Joe troops. They take out many of the Russians as a firelight erupts. Wet Suit tosses a Cobra sniper into the water below, while Stalker and the others head below. With the aid of a small "cube-cam" tossed below, Stalker can see the positions of the Russians hiding below. Wet Suit and Shipwreck capture the Cobras above, while Stalker interrogates the men below. He whispers a threat to one of the Russians, scaring him enough to reveal the location of the briefcase. Stalker retrieves the briefcase, and the Joes board their SHARCs. Shipwreck jokes that he hopes carrying the nuke is exciting for Stalker. As they speak, an unseen figure swims beneath the SHARCs.

In a scene that starts "Earlier that day", Shipwreck and Stalker greets Wet Suit at Joe HQ, and are happy to have Wet Suit joining them again. Duke arrives and briefs the Joes on the nuke suitcase, explaining that the Russians built nearly 150 of the bombs, many of which were misplaced when the Soviet Union fell. He adds that Cobra Commander apparently obtained one over the past seven years and he now wants to bring it to him in the U.S. Wet Suit says they're ready for the mission and the new SHARCs are ready, as well. Shipwreck asks about the "kids" who will watch their backs. Wet Suit met the young "greenshirts", and says that they're "good kids", and he likes their team leader, Lt. Adcox. He adds that he sent them to the gym to meet someone just in case they're getting cocky. At the Wright-Patterson AFB gym, some regular Army soldiers are practicing hand-to-hand combat with the young Joes. After two of the men fight, a soldier asks Paige Adams if she wants to fight, and she easily takes him down, asking if any of the other sissies want more. They're interrupted by the arrival of Wet Suit's visitor: Beach Head. "You guys think they're sissies?" he says. "As far as I'm concerned, you all are. The name's Beach Head. Drop and give me fifty!"

At Destro's Silent Castle in Trans-Carpathia, Baroness and Destro relax in front of the fireplace, enjoying their peace until a Cobra aircraft smashes in the skylight above them, dropping several Neo-Vipers. Destro tells the Baroness to run and he takes out a few of the Vipers with his wrist-rockets. Iron Grenadiers join the attack as Destro's hidden castle defenses are activated. The security system read Cobra FANGs, Mambas and Flight Pods, and a fire fight erupts. Some of the defenses are destroyed and a Mamba lands on the roof. Destro heads for the roof to confront the Commander. "Enough of this! I refuse to hide in my own house!" He reaches the roof and he and Cobra Commander stand facing each other, pistols drawn. After a moment of silence (and after Zartan kills a Iron Grenadier sniper aiming at the Commander) Cobra Commander is unwilling to listen to Destro's explanation and wants to kill the "traitor". Destro orders the Baroness to "get the boy", and Nullifiers bring a shackled Alexander to meet the Commander. "Meet Alexander McCullen. My son."

Meanwhile, an angry Hawk speaks over the phone to the bureaucrat Cartwright in Washington. He tells Hawk that the Joes' budget is to be limited, and that a cap will be placed on the team roster. All other members will act on reserve status. He hangs up despite Hawk's protests. Cartwright turns to the unnamed General lurking nearby, telling him he wants him to leave now that he's done what he asked. The General speaks: "Good job, Cartwright. The Jugglers will be pleased."

Later -- after the fight with the Russians -- the Joe team's SHARCs arrive at the Philadelphia Naval Base, in a section believed by the public to be shut down. Shipwreck and Wet-Suit discuss Wet-Suit's reserve status and Shipwreck's happy he's back on the team. As they enter the dock building, neither of them realize what's hanging from the bottom of their vehicle: Storm Shadow. TO BE CONTINUED

Review: With a better mixture of character moments and action scenes, issue #7 continues to improve on the Devil's Due version of G.I. Joe. It's far from a perfect issue, but things are looking better. Though the issue is set in the middle of a story arc, the cramped feel of the first 4 issues has opened up, and the plot focuses on a smaller number of characters at a time. The best scene is probably the attack on Destro's castle. Many old Cobra vehicles reappear, two of them -- the FANG and Flight Pod (Trouble Bubble) -- with updated designs. The FANG actually seems to be in the design of

Hasbro's new FANG III toy. The Commander and Destro aiming at each other with armies backing them up is a great image. Some may be happy to see the return of Cobra Commander's mirrored helmet, which was absent from the Marvel series ever since issue #55. Zartan's killing of the Iron Grenadier is interesting. While for years fans asked for more "realism", the quickness of Zartan's snapping of the Grenadier's neck seems out of place, especially considering his reluctance to join Cobra in the last issue. When Alexander appears, Destro refers to him as Alexander McCullen, leaving off the name "Destro". This may indicate that Devil's Due has decided that "Destro" is a title granted to the Lord of the clan. Destro is both accepting Alexander as his son and rejecting him. That definitely fits in with Destro's personality, specifically his never being all good or all bad.

On the Joe side of things, this issue shows us that the cartoon is having an influence on the comic book. Shipwreck, Wet-Suit and Beach Head had very minor roles in the Marvel series. It was the cartoon alone that put the spotlight on them. Beach Head's appearance seems to be based entirely around his drill sergeant persona seen only in G.I. Joe: The Movie. This isn't a bad thing, since Beach Head's angry attitude makes him a funny character. Wet-Suit introduces himself rather dramatically as well, but hopefully every reintroduced character won't have to appear with fanfare. With so many characters, that could get old pretty fast.

The biggest problem with the issue is the odd story structure which just makes things confusing, and doesn't appear to have any reasoning behind it, other than to have an action scene start off the issue. After that first scene, the "Earlier that day" caption promises some interesting reason for the flashback, but none come up later in the story. The final scene abruptly moves forward to take place just after the first scene with the Russian boat, not even telling the reader that's what's happened. This also means we curiously miss Beach Head's training of the new Joes. We see scenes before and after, but not the actual training session. That's weird considering Beach Head "stars" on this issue's cover. The fight scene between the regular Army personnel and the Joes is also fairly confusing. It's hard to follow what's happening by just reading the dialogue, and an error coloring one of the Joes' shirts different from the others doesn't help either. Blaylock needs to work on this problem when writing similar scenes in the future. In the end, issue #7 isn't outstanding, but it's not too bad, and the series is continuing to improve.

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