

## DDP 08: Reckonings Pt. 3

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G.I. JOE v2 #8  
Reckonings, Part 3  
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Summary: At Destro's Silent Castle in Trans-Carpathia, he and Cobra Commander sit down at a long conference table. Destro is trying to convince the Commander that his son, Alexander is too blame for locking him up and taking over Cobra. The Commander isn't listening: "I guess the only way to be sure is to have the both of you killed." Destro forces Alexander to put on the "Destro mask" he wore, showing him that the highly advanced computerized mask changes shape to match the original Destro's mask and modifies Alexander's voice to sound like his father's. The Commander is impressed, but Destro's gift of the mask's technology -- and Destro's willingness to work for Cobra until his debt is repaid -- is not enough to satisfy his need for revenge. Destro also gives the Commander Mistress Armada, aka Lilian Osbourne, who first betrayed the Commander in his quarters. The Commander decides to accept the gift and Destro's offer.

At the supposedly mothballed Philadelphia Naval Base, the two Joe SHARCs escorting the briefcase nuke (from the last issue) arrive. Shipwreck, Wet Suit and Stalker meet two other former Joes, Tripwire and Clutch. Tripwire -- clumsy as ever -- is there to secure the briefcase, while Clutch has been working at the base as a mechanic since it was shut down in 1996. From a vent high above, Storm Shadow looks on. Outside, a truck arrives carrying Flint, Hawk, Beach Head and Kamakura. Hawk insists on following through with his plan, despite Flint's objections.

Back in Trans-Carpathia, the Commander explains his plans to Destro. He leaked information about the briefcase nuke to distract the Joes from the real delivery coming through Canada. Storm Shadow will have worked his way into the facility where Hawk has arrived to oversee the briefcase's arrival. If Storm Shadow is captured, he won't mind. His brainwashing will cause him to "go catatonic" if he's pressed too hard for information. He also simply writes off the "aspiring Cobra patsies from one of my Russian cells", considering them expendable. The Commander leaves with Lilian, leaving Destro to wonder, "What have I gotten myself into?"

At the snowy Canadian-US border, Cobra agents trying to sneak the real briefcase bomb into the country are stopped by Frostbite, Snow Job, Iceberg and other polar troops. After a brief firefight all of Cobra's Snow Serpents are apprehended. They report back to Hawk at the naval base. Hawk is meeting with some of the Joes, explaining that the original nuke was a fake and that they've been pretending to fall for Cobra's false information. He also adds that Storm Shadow is somewhere in the base, and he hopes to capture him. As the Joes fan out through the base, Mainframe uses hidden spy cameras to track Storm Shadow through the ventilation system. He drops from the ceiling, surprising some "greenshirts" and takes them out easily. He barely leaps through blast doors that are closing to seal off the hallway. Clutch, Stalker, Tripwire and some greenshirts hold him at gunpoint, and Storm Shadow puts his hands up in surrender, but throws a flashbomb that blinds the Joes, letting him easily beat them up and continue on his way to kill Hawk. He makes his way past Flint, Wet Suit and Shipwreck, and despite Kamakura's confidence in his ninja training, Storm Shadow deals with him quickly, as well. He then tears open the security lock on the door leading to Hawk's office, but to his surprise he doesn't find Hawk at all. He finds Snake-Eyes. TO BE CONTINUED

Review: Another issue showing that the series is shaping up better than it seemed at first. The story arc format may still be in place, but the pace is slower, and there are fewer characters, allowing for more development. Cobra and Destro's conversations are closer to the old series, with the Commander's calm, stubborn and sinister personality comes up against Destro's logical side. Though he cares little for Cobra Commander or his organization he feels he needs to repay his debt, or rather his son's debt. Despite holding Alexander at gunpoint and ordering him around he's determined to deal with him on his own. Blaylock has come up with a fairly plausible way of getting Destro to work for Cobra again, and not contradict his Marvel series decision to have nothing to do with Cobra.

As far as the Joes are concerned, Shipwreck's personality continues to match his cartoon persona closely, and the focus on characters like Beach Head and Wet Suit are probably due to their larger role in the cartoon series. Clutch's return is welcome, even though he's not acting like his obnoxious self. It's hinted that he's a little depressed about not being part of the team, so maybe that will be explored more later on. Clutch was a fun character in the Marvel series before all but disappearing, and it'd be nice to see him used more here. Tripwire may trip and fall, but he matches his past character, in that he only stumbles when he's not working with explosives.

The stolen nuclear weapon plotline is now shown to be mostly unimportant, and the Commander doesn't even react to the real nuke being taken from him. It's nice to see the Joes not really fall for the deception.

Some problems do crop up, though. When Destro hands Lilian over to the Commander, you have to wonder what the Commander has planned for her. It's possible that he's just focused on getting revenge on her, but it may be more disturbing than that. Hopefully Blaylock doesn't go for the worst case scenario. There's a missed opportunity later on when Storm Shadow comes up against the Joes. Showing Storm Shadow getting the better of a dozen or so of the best trained troops around is a bit much to take, but Larry Hama's Storm Shadow would have probably done the same thing. The real problem is that while Stalker is an old friend of the ninja, he doesn't say one word to him. Clutch is the one who shows concern, telling Storm Shadow that they'll help undo what Cobra did to him. Having Stalker try to reason with him seems to be a better idea. It would fit Stalker's personality, too. Hopefully, the Snake-Eyes/Storm Shadow/Stalker relationship isn't forgotten or ignored in the future. And we really don't yet know much more about why Storm Shadow is the only person not to break free of CC's brainwashing. Despite some missed opportunities, the issue works fairly well, and hopefully there'll be more improvements in the future.

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