

SM 07: The Old Switcheroo

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G.I. JOE: Special Missions #7

The Old Switcheroo

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Summary (by Russ Humphress): New York City, 5:24 PM ... According to a voice from the second of two trucks rolling toward the Cobra Consulate building. The first truck, ostensibly from Penultimate Pest Control, drives into the basement, and is cleared by the security guard, since they are on the list. We soon learn from the occupants that the truck has been hijacked. On the street level, after a predetermined time the second truck, supposedly from Cerberus Security, crashes through the main entrance lobby of the Consulate building. As the occupants of both trucks begin to suppress the armed cobra resistance, we learn that both groups are working their way toward the boiler room. We also learn that they are from Sierra Gordo, and intend to Co-Opt the Revolution out from under the "Hard-Line Proletariat Theory Mongers".

On the floor, in the Command Center... The Baroness takes situation reports, and discovers the identity of the Counter-revolutionaries. She calls for her security team, opting to supervise the fighting in person. Zarana, on the other hand, opts to stay in the command center, "where it's safe". In the boiler room, the counter-revolutionaries are drilling holes in the center of structural support beams, and packing them with C-4 explosives, conveniently prepackaged into one pound blocks by the supplier. They also realign the surveillance camera in order to communicate their demands. In the lobby, the Baroness orders all routes to the boiler room sealed, and is about to begin an assault, when a Televiper interrupts to tell her of a transmission over the closed circuit television system. The raiders introduce themselves as the Menshevikistas, the "Radical Bourgeois University Students of Sierra Gordo, and the rightful heirs of the revolution". They threaten to destroy the Consulate unless Cobra withdraws support from the current "puppet state".

The Baroness complains they're being blackmailed by "radical yuppie terrorists", but Dr. Mindbender points out that he's checked the building plans and only half the explosives they've planted would be sufficient to level the building. Zarana has apparently decided to come down from the command center, and also seems to think that a "bunch of school kids" couldn't possibly know enough about demolition to pose a threat. The Baroness wastes no time telling Zarana to shut up, and has a Televiper arrange a satellite linkup to Serpentor on Cobra Island. Serpentor isn't impressed, and tells the Baroness that if she can't handle the position of authority she's in, he'll replace her with someone who can.

Across the street, Chuckles, Dialtone, Psyche-Out and Lady Jaye monitor the situation developing at the consulate. Chuckles confers with Psyche-Out, and he seems to think the Baroness will perform according to the "projected scenario". He advises to go ahead with the operation.

Back in the lobby, the Baroness sends a Viper team to attack the boiler room, but the Counter-Revolutionaries easily take them out. Then to prove that they are serious, they tell the Cobras to watch the truck in the lobby. The Baroness and Zarana dive for cover as the truck explodes. The Baroness orders the building evacuated, and once again Zarana starts arguing with her. Dr. Mindbender's intervention prevents the two from moving to actual fighting, as the Cobras begin to evacuate the building, including the roof security detail. Chuckles notes this, and has Dialtone signal Breaker to cut power to the building. In the sewers below, Breaker relays the message to Tunnel Rat, and moments later, the consulate building is dark, as Both the Cobras and the Counter-Revolutionaries blame the power loss on the other side.

On the adjacent rooftop, Dialtone, Chuckles and Lady Jaye use powered gliders to cross to the roof of the Consulate. Dialtone gets to work tapping into the main communications line. In the boiler room, the Counter-Revolutionaries are arguing about whether they really should go through with blowing up the building (and consequently, themselves). While in the lobby, the Baroness and Zarana are once again arguing just short of actual blows. On the roof, Dialtone finishes patching a bug into the circuit test box on the main communications line for the building's satellite link. Psyche-Out signals the rest of the team to proceed with the escape phase of the plan. Lady Jaye takes out a long black wig and glasses, as Dialtone patches a mini-cam into the surveillance system. In the sewers, Breaker is just finishing patching the blown power cable.

In the boiler room, The power is back on, and with it, the television monitors. The Baroness informs the counter-revolutionaries that cobra has no intention of dealing with "amateur dilettante revolutionaries," and dares them to blow up the building. On the roof, we see Dialtone filming Lady Jaye's performance, and in the lobby, a Televiper shows the transmission to the real Baroness. Zarana and the Baroness finally come to blows, after another of Zarana's comments

pushes the Baroness over the edge. In the boiler room, the Counter-Revolutionaries activate the detonator, but instead of a building leveling explosion, the building is filled with riot gas. As the building empties completely, the Joes walk out the front door, wearing gas masks. Chuckles comments that everyone else will be blinded for 10-15 minutes because of the gas, and we find out that he sold it to the menshevikistas, telling them it was C-4 Plastic Explosive. He also helped them plan their mission and even drew the wiring diagram. Lady Jaye congratulates him, and he tells her couldn't have done it if Psyche-Out hadn't had complete behavioral profiles on all the people involved. As they walk off down the street, Lady Jaye comments that it seems a round-about way to plant a bug. Chuckles say they knew they needed to clear the building, they just needed to figure out how.

Review: This is an interesting issue, that clearly shows what the Special Missions series was for. We get to see characters who get little use in the regular series, doing things which are a part of their specialties. Larry Hama seems to have had a bit more freedom on the Special Missions books, and it really shows through. Of course, the terrorists (not Cobra, the other terrorists) do seem a little two-dimensional, but since they're really just the Joes diversion it makes for a very cool story. Chuckles is a good example of a strange Hasbro character that Larry Hama was able to make into a cool, useful character. This issue also marks a rare instance of Lady Jaye using her disguise skills. The constant undercurrent of competition between the Baroness and Zarana will continue beyond this issue. All in all a very good example of the Special Missions, and of A Real American Hero in general.

[Editor's note: This issue leads directly into issue #64, which shows the Baroness returning to Cobra Island after Serpentor relieves her of command of the consulate, just as he threatens to here, and replaces her with Zarana. It also shows some good motivation for what she does in issue #64....]

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