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# OPERATION MONTECRISTO

# XIII

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HAVING ESCAPED THE KILLERS SENT BY FRANK GIORDINO, THE DIRECTOR OF THE NSA\* WHO HAS SWORN TO GET HIM, XIII FOUND REFUGE IN COSTA VERDE.



\*NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY, BASED IN FORT MEADE, MARYLAND

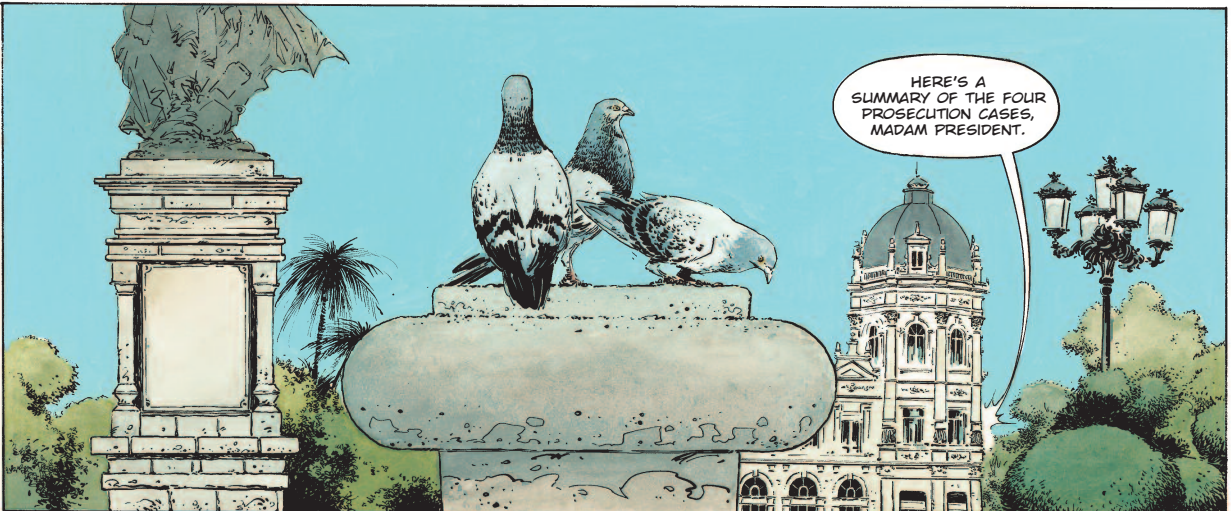
THERE, HE JOINED MAJOR JONES, COLONEL AMOS AND GENERAL BEN CARRINGTON, AS WELL AS MARQUIS ARMAND DE PRÉSEAU AND HIS WIFE BETTY, WHOSE HACIENDA IN SAN MIGUEL WAS DESTROYED BY THE NSA'S MEN.



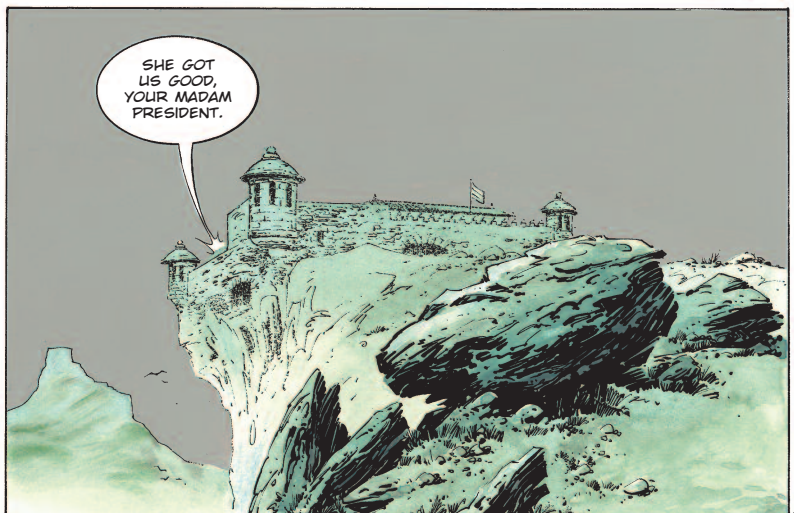
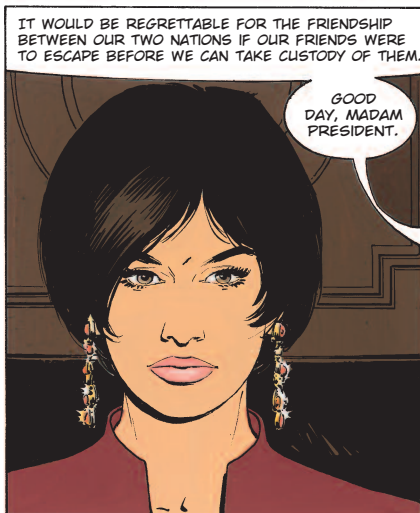
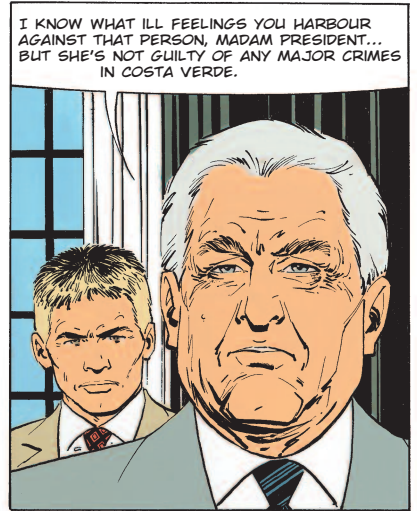
MOST IMPORTANTLY, HE MET AGAIN WITH MARIA DE LOS SANTOS, HIS FORMER WIFE AND NOW PRESIDENT OF THAT LITTLE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRY, WHOSE PROTECTION HE HOPED TO OBTAIN FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FRIENDS.



BUT THE UNITED STATES DEMANDED THE IMMEDIATE EXTRADITION OF THE FUGITIVES, THREATENING SEVERE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS. MARIA WAS FORCED TO HAVE THEM ARRESTED AND JAILED IN THE PALO SANGRE MILITARY PRISON.



HERE'S A SUMMARY OF THE FOUR PROSECUTION CASES, MADAM PRESIDENT.



DO YOU THINK SHE'S REALLY GOING TO TURN US OVER TO AMERICAN AUTHORITIES? AFTER ALL WE DID FOR HER COUNTRY?\*

I THINK SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CHOICE. GRATITUDE IS NOT A RELEVANT WORD IN POLITICS.

STILL, YOUR DEAR WIFE COULD FIND A WAY TO LET US ESCAPE. SHE'D SAVE FACE.

FACE, MAYBE. BUT NOT HER COUNTRY'S ECONOMY.

THE US GOVERNMENT WOULDN'T BUY IT FOR A SECOND.

STOP DEFENDING HER ALL THE TIME, DAMMIT! YOU'RE A DEAD MAN IF YOU SET FOOT IN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN, NUMBER XIII.

NOT JUST HIM.

\*SEE THREE SILVER WATCHES.

GIORDINO AND HIS ALLIES CAN'T AFFORD TO LET US TALK, EVEN IN A CLOSED TRIAL. I'M WILLING TO BET MY LAST CIGAR THAT WE'LL HAVE AN "ACCIDENT" BEFORE WE EVEN LAND ON AMERICAN SOIL.

CHARMING PROSPECT.

BUT IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO SIT AND WAIT TO BE "CLEANED UP" JUST BECAUSE I HELPED YOU SOLVE YOUR PROBLEMS, YOU GENIUSES ARE SERIOUSLY KIDDING YOURSELVES.

I'D RATHER RISK GETTING SHOT WHILE TRYING TO SCALE THIS WALL.

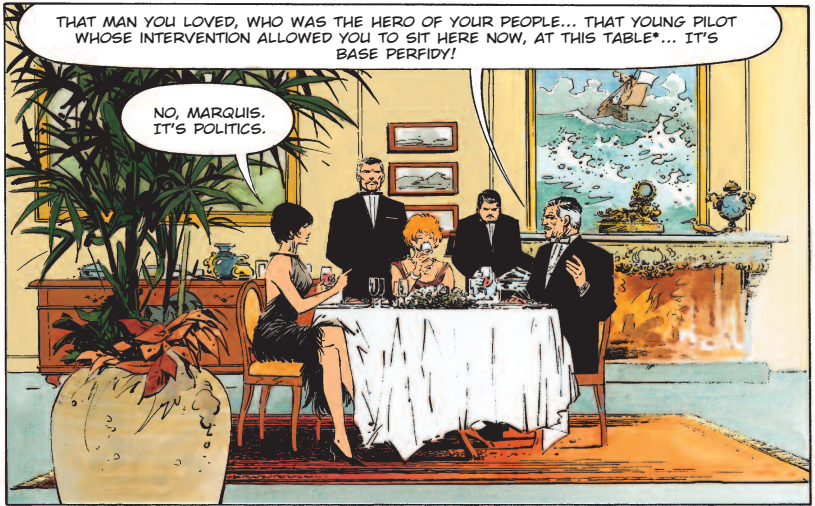
YOU WON'T EVEN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY, SEÑORITA.

I JUST RECEIVED ORDERS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. TOMORROW, YOU WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO THE MILITARY AIRFIELD, FROM WHICH A SPECIAL FLIGHT WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO THE UNITED STATES.

UNTIL THEN, MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO LOCK YOU UP IN YOUR CELLS TO AVOID THE KIND OF TEMPTATIONS MAJOR JONES WAS JUST TALKING ABOUT.



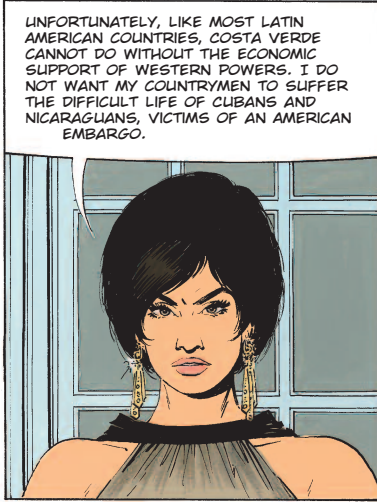
IT'S A DEATH SENTENCE FOR THEM. AND YOU KNOW IT, MARIA.



THAT MAN YOU LOVED, WHO WAS THE HERO OF YOUR PEOPLE... THAT YOUNG PILOT WHOSE INTERVENTION ALLOWED YOU TO SIT HERE NOW, AT THIS TABLE\*... IT'S BASE PERFDY!

NO, MARQUIS. IT'S POLITICS.

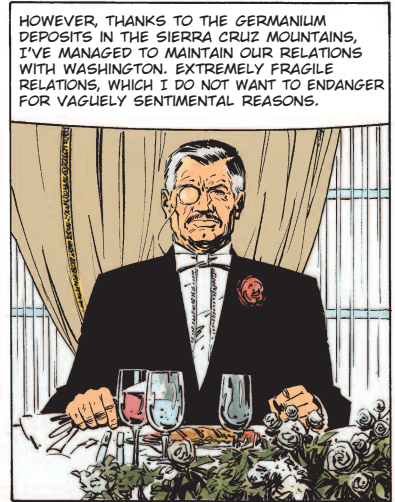
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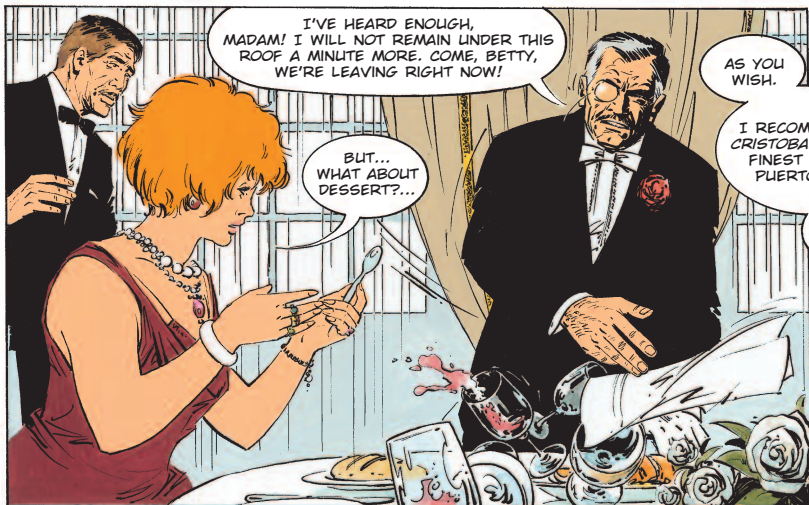
LUNFORTUNATELY, LIKE MOST LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES, COSTA VERDE CANNOT DO WITHOUT THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT OF WESTERN POWERS. I DO NOT WANT MY COUNTRYMEN TO SUFFER THE DIFFICULT LIFE OF CUBANS AND NICARAGUANS, VICTIMS OF AN AMERICAN EMBARGO.



NOR DO I WANT THEM TO RELIEVE THE SOCIAL INJUSTICE THEY EXPERIENCED UNDER ORTIZ'S DICTATORSHIP. A FACT THAT MAKES ME, IN THE EYES OF THE USA, A LEFT-WING PRESIDENT-AND, THEREFORE, POLITICALLY SUSPICIOUS.



HOWEVER, THANKS TO THE GERMANIUM DEPOSITS IN THE SIERRA CRUZ MOUNTAINS, I'VE MANAGED TO MAINTAIN OUR RELATIONS WITH WASHINGTON. EXTREMELY FRAGILE RELATIONS, WHICH I DO NOT WANT TO ENDANGER FOR VAGUELY SENTIMENTAL REASONS.



I'VE HEARD ENOUGH, MADAM! I WILL NOT REMAIN UNDER THIS ROOF A MINUTE MORE. COME, BETTY, WE'RE LEAVING RIGHT NOW!

BUT... WHAT ABOUT DESSERT?...

AS YOU WISH.

I RECOMMEND THE CRISTOBAL. IT'S THE FINEST HOTEL IN PUERTO PILAR.



GOOD NIGHT, MARQUIS.



\*SEE WHERE THE INDIAN WALKS.

