

The Foxbat Strategy

An Original Screenplay

by

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&

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What if the greatest military strategist
in all of history was a little man living
in a shabby New York warehouse...
and no one knew about him until the
deadliest world war game began?

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DARKNESS

A gentle, strange, almost childlike music begins.

FADE IN:

EXT. WASHINGTON, DC - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A dark winter storm is swirling over Washington, DC.

EXT. THE PENTAGON - DAY

Heavy snow begins falling.

SUPERIMPOSE: THE PENTAGON - 1980 - THE HEIGHT OF THE COLD WAR.

FADE IN:

INT. GENERAL PHILLIPS' OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - DAY

CU: TROPHIES IN A LONG, EXPENSIVE CASE.

Slowly, a glittering world comes into view, soft, vague images in gleaming silver and gold. Trophies by the score. A lifetime cast in burnished metals. Chess and tennis, the Normandy Invasion, archery, bowling, a Silver Star from Pork Chop Hill, all bearing the name of William Nathaniel Phillips.

THE MUSIC SLOWLY BUILDS

Among the trophies are photographs of a handsome man in uniform...with Presidents...reviewing the troops...competing to win.

Suddenly, the camera stops at the strangest trophy of them all. It holds a place of honor. The thing is large and twisted, ugly, but with a beauty both frightening and stark. It's the sculpture of a man dressed in rags kneeling on a massive piece of rotting wood. His arms and face are raised toward Heaven. From his wrists hang broken chains.

The figure has been formed entirely of barbed wire, hideous, jagged, a deadly rusting brown. Suspended just above it is a simple plaque that bears these words:

GIVEN TO CAPTAIN WILLIAM PHILLIPS BY THE MEN OF CELL BLOCK H - DACHAU - "NEVER AGAIN"

Above the plaque hangs a framed picture, grainy, old, slightly faded...of a young combat officer surrounded by men barely alive, with shaved heads, hollow eyes, dressed in rags. They are cheering, laughing with joy...reaching out...trying to touch him. FREE!

And on the face of the young combat officer is a frozen look of horror so great it will live ten lifetimes. Tears are streaming down the cheeks of young Captain William Phillips.

THE MUSIC PEAKS AND DIES

There is the sound of an office door as it opens and shuts. GENERAL WILLIAM PHILLIPS enters the room accompanied by his aide, COLONEL EDWARD MARSBURG, a younger man in his late 30s.

The office is large and thickly carpeted. There are no windows, but the walls are covered in rich, dark wood. Trophy cases dominate the room. Two flags are behind the massive desk. One is an American flag and the other the bright, red banner of a four-star general.

Phillips is carrying a very large, new trophy.

PHILLIPS

So, who's the stumbling block on appropriations this time?

MARSBURG

Senator Bradley, sir.

PHILLIPS

(good naturedly)

Every damn year. You'd think I was asking Congress to buy whores for the Soviet army. Freshman from Indiana, right?

Phillips sets the trophy on the desk and walks over to a trophy case.

MARSBURG

Yes. New on the committee. Short voting record, but it isn't friendly to us.

Phillips opens the case and begins clearing a space for the new addition.

PHILLIPS

Well, what we gonna have to do for him?

MARSBURG

He likes gadgets, sir. Toys and...uhh, explosions.

Phillips starts to smile.

PHILLIPS

Big ones or little ones?

MARSBURG

The bigger the better. I took the liberty of speaking with Admiral Drennan this morning...of course, at your request...about a demonstration. They're contacting the Senator's office.

Phillips goes back to the desk, gets the trophy and carries it to the case.

PHILLIPS

Dear God, I hate games, Ed.

MARSBURG

(suppressing a smile)

I know you do, sir.

Phillips places the trophy in the case, then stands back admiring it.

MARSBURG (CONT'D)

Congratulations on the Pentagon trophy. You were brilliant, sir.

PHILLIPS

(warmly)

Thanks, Ed. Thanks very much.

Marsburg exits. Phillips smiles at the new trophy. He is in love with it. His eyes are filled with pride, not simply the pride of a single victory, but the quiet arrogance of never really having known defeat.

The strange almost CHILDLIKE MUSIC begins again.

CU: The engraved plate on the trophy.

FIRST PRIZE - PENTAGON TACTICS AND STRATEGY CLUB - GENERAL WILLIAM N. PHILLIPS - CHAIRMAN - THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF.

EXTREME CU: Top of trophy

On the top is a group of tiny, golden soldiers locked in mortal combat. Somehow, the soldiers resemble toys.

Slowly the image blurs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOBBY STORE - NIGHT

The focus hardens.

EXTREME CU: Tiny miniature soldiers.

They are no longer soldiers on a bright trophy. They are miniatures in the glass case of a hobby store.

A face is looking through the glass at them. It is an unforgettable face. Large, thick glasses distort the eyes. Hair hangs down unkempt on the forehead. It is a face that expresses love and admiration as it stares at the tiny, uniformed men.

This is MICHAEL NORMAN BARONI.

An elderly SHOPKEEPER's hand reaches into the case and takes out six of the miniatures. He places them on the counter in front of Baroni.

The entire shop becomes visible. It is small and quaint. Baroni is the only customer. He touches the soldiers gently. The old shopkeeper looks on with a smile. He is wearing reading glasses and as he looks over them at his friend there is a twinkle in his eye.

Michael Norman Baroni is shabbily dressed in a worn, faded army fatigue jacket.

SHOPKEEPER

Well, whadaya think, Mike? They good enough?

Baroni picks one up and examines each detail.

BARONI

They're beautiful, Mr. Raskin. How much are they?

SHOPKEEPER

Hmmm...let me see here.

He reaches into the glass case. The price card is lying face down. The old man picks it up in such a way that Baroni can't see what it says. It's clear, the soldiers sell for \$3.50 each. The card is carefully placed back on the shelf exactly the way it was...face down.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

Can't beat the price. 'Sposed to be two dollars each, but for you? Tell you what. You can have'em for a buck fifty apiece. Cause I know you'll give'em a good home.

A smile touches Baroni's face.

BARONI

Okay, okay...I'll take all six. I think I've got enough.

He reaches into the pocket of his army jacket and pulls out some bills along with a lot of change. Spreading it on the counter, he starts to count. Soon it is painfully obvious that there isn't enough. The shopkeeper bends down.

SHOPKEEPER

Just a little short, eh? Well...let's see how much you got here.

The old man carefully counts it all out again as Baroni watches silently.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

Exactly eight dollars and twenty-eight cents...not including these...

He pushes out several subway tokens.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

You'll probably need them to get home, right?

The man looks over his glasses.

SHOPKEEPER (CONT'D)

Tell you what. Why don't you just take'em all and pay me the seventy-two cents next time you come in.

Baroni is grateful, but his mind is already drifting to other things.

BARONI

(absently)

Thank you, Mr. Raskin.

He reaches to the floor and picks up an expensive-looking, black collector's case. The shopkeeper watches as he carefully, but mechanically, places each soldier in a padded space.

SHOPKEEPER

Don't forget those Hessians, Mike. They'll be in for sure next week.

BARONI

Thanks a lot...Mr. Raskin.

Baroni closes the case. Then, without a word, turns and heads for the door without looking back. He walks with a slight limp. The shopkeeper only smiles and shakes his head.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

Michael Norman Baroni steps out from the store into the cold streets of the city. It is late winter.

CHILDLIKE MUSIC RESUMES

The solitary figure of Baroni moves through pools of light...and is lost in the darkness.

INT. CONSERVATORY RECITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Several hundred people in formal evening attire sit enraptured listening to an excellent string quartet. In the center of the crowd on an aisle sits a silver-haired gentleman with two women beside him. They are all middle-aged, rather sleek and well-fed. Next to them is an empty chair.

The man is VLADIMIR ZHILENKOV.

All three of them seem slightly distracted. They expected to meet a friend who has not appeared. They speak in Russian (with subtitles).

RUSSIAN WOMAN

(whispering)

Vladimir...are you sure he was to meet us?

ZHILENKOV

(whispering)

Yes, yes, I told you we talked this afternoon. He should have been here before we arrived.

RUSSIAN WOMAN

He has already missed half the performance and Anna is growing worried.

ZHILENKOV

I will go and make a telephone call.

She nods and leans toward her friend as Zhilenkov leaves his seat.

INT. CONSERVATORY LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Zhilenkov walks into the lobby. It appears empty. Moving to a telephone, he reaches into his pocket for a coin, then drops it in.

He is about to dial, when a hand suddenly grips his shoulder from behind.

Startled, Zhilenkov turns...and his eyes grow wide. The face that stares back at him is an unforgettable mask of ice. There isn't a hair on the head and the skin is very white. The man is not young, but his exact age is hard to determine.

The face displays no more emotion than a slab of granite. It seems as though neither horrible anguish nor exquisite pleasure could ever change that look. This is MIKAHIL IVANOVICH ROSTOCOFF and he is the last person Zhilenkov expected or desired to see in this place.

ZHILENKOV
(shocked and repulsed)
Rostocoff...

Rostocoff speaks in English and the voice is as cold as the face.

ROSTOCOFF
(with only the
slightest trace of a
Russian accent)
You are looking for Stepan.

Zhilenkov is so terrified that he can't answer.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)
Hang up the phone and come with me.
There has been an emergency. Stepan
is waiting.

Rostocoff turns on his heel and walks through a door into a hallway. Zhilenkov does not want to follow him, but he has no choice. Sweat beads out on his forehead as he hangs up the phone.

INT. CONSERVATORY HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff leads the man at a brisk pace down a long, narrow, poorly lit hallway. Their footsteps sound hollow in the gloom. Zhilenkov keeps up a steady stream of questions as he tries to hide his increasing terror.

ZHILENKOV
What are you doing here? Why are
you not in Washington? What do you
mean an emergency?

Rostocoff walks on without saying a word.

ZHILENKOV (CONT'D)

Rostocoff...why have you come to New York? Where is Stepan? Where are you taking me?

Rostocoff is utterly silent, which increases Zhilenkov's terror. They approach a door. Rostocoff opens it and stands waiting for the man to enter. Zhilenkov stops. He can see that the room is in shadows. His face begins to twitch.

Rostocoff eyes him like a snake staring at a crippled mouse.

ROSTOCOFF

(slowly and softly)

Vladimir...do you not wish to see Stepan? Are you afraid, Vladimir? Why are you afraid? Are we not old friends...the three of us...you, Stepan and I?

Slowly, Zhilenkov enters the room?

ZHILENKOV

(a small voice)

Stepan? Stepan?

INT. CONSERVATORY PRACTICE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zhilenkov finds himself in a room large enough for an orchestra to rehearse. The only light is a single spotlight that shines down directly onto the center of the floor. In the shadows are groups of chairs and music stands. On a wall hang string bases. A full percussion section sits in silence.

Zhilenkov turns slowly as Rostocoff enters the room behind him. The door shuts and the lock clicks.

ZHILENKOV

(terrified)

He is not here. You lied. What do you want of me, Rostocoff? Why have you brought me to this place?

ROSTOCOFF

Be calm, old friend. The time will be short that we will spend together. And you have hardly missed a note of your chamber music.

He touches a switch on the wall and MUSIC from the string quartet is piped into the room. Slowly, he walks toward Zhilenkov...who begins backing away.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

But you are wrong, Vladimir. Stepan
is with us. He is here. I
never...never...lie.

Zhilentkov backs through the center of the room...under the
light...and beyond. Rostocoff pauses beneath the light.

Zhilentkov trips over a group of music stands and falls to
the floor as they crash around him. Rostocoff doesn't seem
to notice as the man struggles to get up. Zhilentkov is so
terrified that he is in tears.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

Do you remember when we were boys,
Vladimir, you, Stepan and I? We
would go together to fish in that
stream...so long ago.

Zhilentkov is shaking.

ZHILENKOV

(whimpering)

Why...why...Mikhail? I have done
nothing to you. Why are you doing
this?

ROSTOCOFF

I shall never forget the water...how
cold...and blue...and deep it was.
We would fish together...and swim.
What good times we had. Do you
remember our game? We would hold
each other under the water. Once, I
almost drowned...

Zhilentkov groans horribly in the shadows like a wounded
animal.

ZHILENKOV

(in tears)

Oh please...Mikhail...

ROSTOCOFF

Ukraine is different now...changed.
But the water...it remains the same.
Cold. And blue. Ah, Vladimir...here
we are again...all three of us
together. It has been too long in
coming...this reunion...my dear, old
friends...

ZHILENKOV

What...have you...done to him?

ROSTOCOFF

Stepan is very near to us.
Look...there...in the grass. In the
shade by the stream. Our friend is
very near.

Shaking uncontrollably, Zhilenkov turns slowly around. And then he sees. His face goes ashen. From his throat comes a choking, gurgling sound.

Before him on a table are three large instrument cases. Beneath each is a growing pool of blood that drips slowly to the floor.

Gagging, Zhilenkov slips in the bloody pools and falls to his knees.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

We were like brothers...you, Stepan
and I...

Slowly, he walks toward Zhilenkov. Zhilenkov sees him and with a shriek starts crawling...scrabbling through the blood...knocking over dozens of music stands and chairs. Only Rostocoff's shoes are seen as he follows.

ROSTOCOFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We have lingered in the chambers of
the sea...with sea-girls wreathed in
seaweed red and brown...till human
voices wake us...and we drown.

Zhilenkov crawls through the percussion section. The drums and cymbals fall crashing to the floor. The man weeps and gasps for breath. Still the shoes and voice follow him.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

My dearest, old, old friend...why
did you turn the screws of hell upon
me? Why did you boil my flesh in a
cauldron of hate?

ZHILENKOV

(shrieking)

NO...NO...I DIDN'T. PLEASE...I DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.

ROSTOCOFF

The slave of my enemy who was once
my friend. The slave of my enemy
who wants my life to end.

ZHILENKOV
(SHRIEKING)
PLEASE...ROSTOCOFF...FOR THE LOVE
GOD...

ROSTOCOFF
For the love of a god who isn't there,
in a land where poison reeks in the
air...

Zhilenkov's desperate crawl ends in a corner where he crashes headlong into a gigantic harp. Grasping the strings, he tries to climb up.

CU: ZHILENKOV'S HANDS

The strings cut into his flesh and the blood runs. He strains. Then he gasps and gags. Rostocoff's whisper is sickeningly close and intense.

ROSTOCOFF (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The stream of your life must come to
an end...Vladimir Zhilenkov...who
was once my friend.

Zhilenkov's eyes bulge and blood trickles from his nose and mouth. His lips move, but he cannot speak. Slowly, a long, steel shaft like a large needle appears coming out of his mouth from the back. He gurgles.

The string quartet is concluding its performance as the needle presses against a harp string, breaking it with an echoing dissonance.

And the audience wildly applauds.

EXT. STREET NEAR SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Carrying an attaché case, Rostocoff hurries across a street toward the stairs leading down to a subway station. He is alone.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Though the station is empty, for the first time Rostocoff is tense. A train arrives. Looking over his shoulder, he steps quickly into a car.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

The car is half full. Rostocoff sits down. With a sigh of relief, he leans back and closes his eyes. The task is finished. The train roars through a tunnel. The lights flash on and off.

It stops. Rostocoff does not open his eyes. He hears people getting off. It starts again with a jerk. Suddenly, there is a metallic RINGING SOUND. Rostocoff's eyes open.

The long, bloody needle has fallen from his jacket to the floor.

There is only one other person left in the car facing him across the aisle. And that person is staring at him...and at the needle. Staring intently, disturbingly.

Mikhail Rostocoff looks into the face of Michael Norman Baroni. Baroni stares unblinkingly...the thick glasses distorting his eyes. In his lap is the collector's case.

Both men sit frozen...as the needle rolls back and forth between them on the floor. Neither makes a move to pick it up.

Finally, it stops beside Baroni's corrective shoes.

Rostocoff realizes that he must do something. He must pick up the needle. Slowly, he starts to reach down...trying to keep his eyes on Baroni's face. But to get it he must stoop.

Rostocoff gropes...and sees the corrective shoes. Then he has it in his hand. Rising from the floor he sits back down with the needle tucked once more in his coat.

But their eyes are still locked. Baroni stares at the man's face as though he were looking at some new species of insect.

Rostocoff can't stand it. No one has ever stared so intently...so probingly at him in all his life. To him, Baroni is a grotesque creature. He must disengage. He cannot hold the gaze.

The silent conflict deepens.

Paranoia crawls over Rostocoff. He fidgets and begins to sweat.

Baroni never moves. If anything he seems to be gradually leaning forward toward the man...inch by inch...staring...staring...forever staring.

Baroni clutches his collector's case. Rostocoff's attention focuses on it. On what might be in it. He shifts his own case onto his lap with a quick jerk.

Pointing one end toward Baroni, he pushes a button. A mechanism inside whirs almost silently. A hidden camera is taking pictures.

Rostocoff approaches the end of his endurance. He cannot stand the awful, unblinking stare much longer.

Baroni shifts his collector's case. Rostocoff reaches into his pocket and clicks off the safety of his pistol.

The train suddenly stops. The door opens. A mass of celebrating people enter. When the aisle clears...Baroni is gone.

Rostocoff trembles violently. He turns to look out the window...just in time to see Baroni limp through the turnstile.

Their eyes meet one last time...then Baroni is gone.

Rostocoff is a wreck. He huddles in his seat sweating profusely. He reaches inside his coat. As the train leaves the station, he rubs the hidden needle.

EXT. NEW YORK SLUM STREET - NIGHT

Michael Norman Baroni walks slowly through the rubble of a New York slum. It is cold. He turns a corner and moves down a dead-end street past a row of decrepit tenements.

Squatting at the end of the street is the filthiest eye-sore in the slum. It's an old run-down warehouse. Baroni walks toward it.

He passes a stoop littered with members of a street gang. They lounge around smoking pot and listening to a portable radio. They are known as the Savage Knights and this is their turf. When they see Baroni, they taunt him lazily...just as they have done a thousand times before.

KNIGHT #1

Hey...it's the general.

KNIGHT #2

Limping back from the war.

Several of them stand stiffly and spring mocking salutes.

KNIGHT #3

Hey, general, what war you win today, huh?

KNIGHT #4

Lots of blood when he fights, man.

KNIGHT #5

Where you goin', general?

KNIGHT #2

He's goin' home to fight like he
always does...sittin' on his ass.

The gang laughs at this ancient joke. But the oldest member of the Knights only sneers. This is ANDRES ESPINOZA, their leader.

Baroni ignores them. Finally, he reaches the trash-strewn entrance to the warehouse. A dim light burns over the doorway. Painted on the grimy glass in large letters are the words: SMITHFIELD STORAGE COMPANY.

And in much smaller letters below: Maintenance Engineer on Premises: Michael N. Baroni.

Baroni opens the door with two keys and enters.

INT. WAREHOUSE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Baroni stumbles in the dark until he finds the light switch. A tiny lamp illuminates a desk cluttered with yellowed papers and used coffee cups. Beyond the circle of light stretches the darkness of the first floor storage area. It is stacked high with old newspapers. A hideous mess.

Near the desk is an iron gate leading into a huge, ancient freight elevator. Baroni enters it...turns on the light...and goes back to lock the door. After the desk light is switched off, he begins his journey upward.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

As it moves, the freight elevator grinds and moans. Metal clangs against metal.

Baroni passes through floors of darkness until he reaches the fifth floor...the top floor. Here a single, bare bulb is already burning. He opens the elevator gate and steps out.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Before him is his home. A narrow cot. A table. A sink. A toilet. Two battered chairs. In fact, there are only three unusual furnishings in this stark little living space.

The first is a rather elaborate hamster run sitting on a crate near the cot. Next is a set of bookshelves hanging on one wall. The shelves are crammed with hundreds of volumes covering the wars of history. Last is an ornate Samurai sword dangling beside the mirror next to the sink. Beyond the living area the large room is dark.

A girl is sitting at the table. She looks at Baroni expectantly. She has been going through a small stack of mail. Beside her a pot of soup bubbles on a hot plate. This is ANGIE ESPINOZA, Andre's sister. She is attractive with a simple beauty. Most of all, Angie is intelligent and a truly pleasant person. She loves Baroni, but Baroni doesn't seem to notice her. He walks over to his hamster run and absently opens the door. Reaching into his pocket, he takes out a small treat that he has kept for them.

ANGIE

You're late tonight. I was worried.
I got the mail all sorted and I made
you some soup. Are you hungry?

BARONI

(absently)
Yes.

Baroni takes off his coat. He is in deep thought and distracted. Gradually, he looks up toward the mirror and sees the reflection of his own face. He goes to the mirror and stares first at his face and then at the Samurai sword. His fingers touch the steel. He rubs the sword exactly the same way Rostocoff rubbed the needle...as though steel were a bond between them.

Angie knows that something is different tonight. Something is wrong.

ANGIE

Michael...?

BARONI

(mechanically)
What.

ANGIE

I made you some soup.

BARONI

(not really hearing)
Oh...oh, good...

ANGIE

What's the matter? Is something
wrong?

Baroni walks over and stares down at the hamsters, watching them eat.

BARONI

(distantly)
No...no...it's nothing...

Another pause.

ANGIE

Michael...if you're not feeling good
or something this soup might...

BARONI

(looks at her without
really seeing her)
No...it isn't that...

She looks at him not knowing what else to say. He stares
into space beyond her.

BARONI (CONT'D)

It was...this man...on the subway.
I felt very strange. I almost...
remembered him...even though I never
saw him before.

Slowly, Baroni shakes his head and sits down at the table.
Angie pours some soup into his bowl.

ANGIE

It's pretty cold out there. This
will warm you up.

Baroni doesn't seem to see it or to hear her. Instead, he
opens the collector's case and takes out each little soldier.
Angie struggles to get his attention.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Michael...I got it finished.

He looks up at her absently, not comprehending for a moment.

BARONI

What?

ANGIE

I got it finished.

She points to the cot. A wrapped package is on it. Getting
up, she hands it to him. He opens it. A look of surprised
joy comes to his face. From the package he removes a long
military coat...identical to that worn by the officers in
the French Revolution.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Do you like it?

BARONI

Oh yes.

A stranger uniform was never seen. While it has been made with great skill, it's the wildest conglomeration of odds and ends imaginable. It's a uniform made of scraps.

ANGIE

I had a lot of trouble with the buttons. The ones on the front are different than the ones on the sleeves...

But his mind is already moving elsewhere. Angie sees it. Putting on the coat, he turns to a crude control panel on the wall and flicks several switches.

Gradually...amazingly...the top floor of the warehouse is illuminated by pools of light.

A strange, almost unbelievable world comes into view. Each pool of light reveals an intricate game board on a small table.

Beside nearly every board stands a battered, discarded store mannequin outfitted in a uniform from a war of the past. Angie made each one. The mannequins stand a sightless guard over the silent miniature battles being waged before them.

Baroni is a war games fanatic. He plays 30 to 40 war games covering all periods of history at the same time. Some are sea battles complete with tiny galleons or the latest aircraft carriers.

In another Roman armies march through Gaul.

Here the battle of the bulge is fought again. There the marines hit the beaches of Guadalcanal. Tiny soldiers in mock battles of the Civil War are breathtaking in detail.

Spread and grouped around the periphery of the game area are the most incredible models of all...huge, handmade replicas of weapons fashioned entirely from scraps and junk off the streets of New York City.

At the far end of the main aisle, a Sherman tank appears to be bursting through the wall. From a distance it looks real. But close up it can be seen that the tank is made from garbage cans and car parts.

There are pill boxes, fuselages of World War I biplanes and many other grotesque and wonderful collections of junk.

Baroni slowly walks out of the living area toward the center aisle. With each step he appears to stand a little taller. He is entering his own world, a world where he is no longer the poor, slightly crippled custodian of a dilapidated warehouse.

This is a world where he is in command of a thousand armies. Armies that march silently through the barriers of time.

Angie knows the ritual. She takes up the stack of mail and a clipboard and follows behind him. Baroni takes an envelope from her and rips out the letter. He reads quickly.

MONTAGE BEGINS

Then, he moves to a game board covered with soldiers in blue and gray depicting the Battle of Gettysburg. Standing over it, he looks down...thinking...feeling. In his mind, he hears the faint sound of muskets...of cannons booming...the call of the charge. Sweat beads out on his forehead.

BARONI

So that's what he wants to do...
okay...okay...

He glances at the Confederate mannequin across from him. Slowly, he reaches down and makes the moves called for in the letter. Then, pausing only a moment, he makes a counter move. Angie watches, noting Baroni's move on the clipboard.

Then, on he goes, from game to game...totally absorbed...mumbling unintelligibly to himself. Angie follows...

Through a submarine battle in the North Atlantic...then on to Dunkirk...to Carthage...to Stalingrad...to Chancellorsville...to Vietnam...to the American Revolution...and the Wars of the Roses.

At the last game, a panzer battle in North Africa, Baroni slowly makes the move called for in the letter. And then counter-moves immediately.

BARONI (CONT'D)

(whispering)
Checkmate...doom. Too bad for him.

With a look bordering on regret, he turns out the light over this table.

MONTAGE ENDS

Baroni reaches for another letter, but Angie shakes her head. There are no more letters left. It's almost as though he were awakening from sleep. Once more he is only Michael Norman Baroni.

BARONI (CONT'D)

(slowly)
How many games did I play?

ANGIE
(checking the clipboard)
Eleven.

BARONI
Is there anything to eat?

ANGIE
(smiling affectionately)
I could make you some soup.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Michael and Angie sit across from each other at the table. Once again, the only light is from the single bulb above them. He is eating a steaming bowl of soup. Angie is uncomfortable and a little sad.

ANGIE
It's getting late.

He nods.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I've gotta go or my brother'll make trouble.

BARONI
Yes, I guess it is late.

ANGIE
He told me to find out if you have it ready.

Baroni sighs, then rummages in the pocket of his army jacket.

BARONI
He's crazy. They're all crazy.

He pulls out a wrinkled piece of paper. Instructions are penciled all over it.

ANGIE
It's the Skulls. He wants to fight them again...right away.

Baroni only shakes his head and offers the paper to Angie.

BARONI
You think he's ever going to grow up?

She stands to go. Their eyes meet.

BARONI (CONT'D)

Angie...

There is a pause. Baroni starts to say something, but it won't come out. Finally...

BARONI (CONT'D)

Just tell him to see me if he can't read it.

Then, she is gone...not hearing what she hoped for. Angie begins her noisy descent in the freight elevator.

Baroni is left looking at his soup.

EXT. THE PENTAGON MAIN ENTRANCE - DAWN

A few civilians and military personnel are moving in and out of the massive structure.

INT. PENTAGON DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE OFFICE - DAWN

A meeting is taking place in the office of GENERAL TOM LOCKMAN head of Defense Intelligence. He is a thoughtful man in his late 40s. His name, rank and title are displayed on his desk.

In front of him sit several lower ranking officers, all of them part of Lockman's staff. His second in command, COLONEL ARTHUR CRANSTON, is seated with them. He is a young officer of extreme polish.

Two photos are projected on a screen across the room. One is a file photo of Vladimir Zhilenkov. The other is of a body lying face down next to a harp.

OFFICER #1

You want to see any of them again, sir?

LOCKMAN

Dear God, no. I haven't had breakfast yet.

CRANSTON

We probably shouldn't have called you.

LOCKMAN

No, no, you did the right thing, Art.

CRANSTON

If you want my opinion, sir, this should just remain with State and the police department.

LOCKMAN

It's the work of a madman, a butcher. And I still say there's a connection.

CRANSTON

Nobody else sees it, sir.

LOCKMAN

Five in the past seven months? All in the diplomatic community?

CRANSTON

But none of them professional assassinations. At Langley, it's hands off. Nothing to do with intelligence.

LOCKMAN

I don't care about Langley. They're still trying to figure out what happened at the Bay of Pigs. What did you say these two did again?

OFFICER #2

Sir, they were mid-level diplomats assigned to the Soviet UN delegation.

LOCKMAN

A real madman.

Lockman stares at the pictures on the screen.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

And how would we stop him?

CRANSTON

Sir?

LOCKMAN

Hell, every country in the world tries to screen their agents for maximum stability. But what if the system broke down? Bad enough a Hillside Strangler or a Son of Sam, but a certifiable lunatic and a pro as well?

CRANSTON

Do you really think that's a possibility, sir?

LOCKMAN
 (ignoring him)
 Wouldn't make any difference what
 country he came from...China...
 Turkey...the US. Dear God, it would
 be horror.

Lockman turns abruptly toward the men.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)
 Here's what I want done. I want
 psych profiles run on every known
 agent.

CRANSTON
 (incredulous)
 From all countries?

LOCKMAN
 All of them...even our own.
 Especially our own. And I mean in-
 depth.

CRANSTON
 But, sir, that could take months.

LOCKMAN
 Make sure it doesn't. I want this
 kept quiet. Strictly our eyes only.
 Let's get to work.

INT. SOVIET EMBASSY - ROSTOCOFF'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

The office is almost devoid of decorations. Behind the desk hangs a framed picture of Lenin. There is a Soviet flag in the corner. Rostocoff stands looking down at his desk. He is trembling. Sweat covers his forehead.

Spread across the desk are a dozen enlarged photos, all of Michael Norman Baroni.

A buzzer sounds on his desk intercom. The voice of a woman speaks in Russian (with subtitles).

VALYA KRONSKY (O.S.)
 (over intercom)
 The morning reports have been
 prepared. Do you wish to see them
 now?

ROSTOCOFF
 (startled)
 What?

VALYA KRONSKY

The morning reports, they are ready.
Do you wish to...

ROSTOCOFF

Yes, yes, bring them in.

Quickly, he scoops up the pictures, turning them face down on the desk. Then, he presses a button.

Another buzzer sounds, this one on his office door as it unlocks. A rather severe, nervous, pale-looking woman in her late 30s enters the room. This Rostocoff's secretary, VALYA KRONSKY. She hands Rostocoff a sheaf of papers, but can't help noticing his face.

VALYA KRONSKY

Are you...all right, sir?

ROSTOCOFF

Yes, I am all right.

She stands uncertainly looking at him.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

Well, why are you still here?

She hurries from the room.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - EARLY MORNING

EXT. PORTICO OF THE WHITE HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Two men stand near the steps. One of them is Presidential Assistant FRANK ANDERSON. He is in his early 30s. The other is well into his 60s, portly and elegantly dressed. This is Soviet Ambassador ANATOLY VELICHKO. He is very upset. Not far away, a black limousine waits for him.

ANDERSON

Mr. Ambassador, I assure you once again that your formal protest will be delivered to the President and the Secretary of State as soon as they return from Camp David.

VELICHKO

Mr. Anderson, there is no way for me to adequately express the outrage and grief this heinous act has caused the Soviet Union.

ANDERSON

Please convey the President's deep sorrow to the bereaved families. The United States is going to do everything necessary to apprehend the perpetrator of this awful crime and prosecute him to the fullest extent of the law. He will be found, Ambassador Velichko.

VELICHKO

Yes, yes, found and prosecuted to the fullest extent of *your law*. Good day, Mr. Anderson.

Velichko walks to the limousine. A driver opens the door and he gets in.

INT. SOVIET LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Seated in the limousine waiting for him is Mikhail Rostocoff. Velichko takes off his glasses and wipes his eyes. The limousine drives out through the gate and enters the traffic.

VELICHKO

They have left it up to their incompetent police.

(beat)

Ahh, Mikhail, I have known those men for over 30 years. It is beyond belief.

ROSTOCOFF

Indeed, Anatoly...I have known them since I was a boy.

VELICHKO

These Americans...they are crazed, insane. Our poor people are unprepared for such violence.

ROSTOCOFF

Have no fear, it doesn't matter what the Americans do. The KGB will find the murderer and deal with him. As section chief, I promise that.

VELICHKO

Be careful, my friend. I fear for the safety of us all. To think that now we must go and face the widows.

Velichko is on the verge of tears.

ROSTOCOFF

Strength, Anatoly, strength. We are surrounded by enemies and we must show no emotion.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - MORNING

Baroni is just waking up. Groggy, he sits up on his cot and gropes for his glasses. Then he pulls on his trousers. With his shoes on but not tied, he shuffles to the elevator and steps in.

INT. WAREHOUSE FOURTH FLOOR - MINUTES LATER

The front of this floor is filled with old lumber that is partly stacked, but mostly strewn. Baroni walks through the rubble, finally coming to a little alcove behind a huge pile of wood.

In the alcove is an old mattress and an army blanket. The floor around it is littered with empty Thunderbird wine bottles. The alcove is empty.

Baroni hears loud snoring coming from somewhere. He follows the sound picking his way into a nearby section filled with old office furniture stacked to the ceiling. There, curled up on top of an ancient filing cabinet, is a man. His head hangs down into an open drawer. The snoring reverberates. This is PETE. He is homeless.

Baroni tries to wake him.

BARONI

Pete...

The snoring continues.

BARONI (CONT'D)

COME ON, PETE, WAKE UP. WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO.

The snores are interrupted by groans.

BARONI (CONT'D)

YOU'VE GOTTA GET UP.

Slowly, Pete lifts his head from the drawer. At first, he doesn't know where he is. Baroni shakes him.

PETE

Okay, okay, I'll move, officer.

BARONI

Pete, this is Michael. Be careful, you're on top of a filing cabinet.

PETE

I'll get up, I'll leave. Just don't haul me in. I'll puke in your car again.

BARONI

(disgusted)
You're still drunk.

PETE

Mike? Mike...zat you? What're you doin' down here in the gutter?

BARONI

YOU'RE IN THE WAREHOUSE ON A FILING CABINET. NOW COME ON, GET DOWN FROM THERE.

Slowly, he helps the man climb down. Even with help, Pete ends up in a heap on the floor. As he rises, he lets loose a gigantic fart.

BARONI (CONT'D)

AWW, MAN...

PETE

(struggling to get his balance)
You ever had a guy park on top of you, Mike?

BARONI

Not recently.

They stagger toward the elevator with Baroni holding him up.

PETE

I couldn't believe it. A big Lincoln Continental. Woke up lookin' at his brake drums. Thought I died and got buried in a junkyard.

They enter the elevator.

BARONI

You should be so lucky.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - MORNING

Baroni has just finished making coffee. Pete sits on the cot with his face in his hands, groaning. Baroni pours a cup and tries to hand it to him. He doesn't want to touch it.

BARONI
You've gotta drink this.

PETE
Oh, man, you like to see me puke?

BARONI
It'd smell better than your farts.
We're wasting time.

PETE
Listen, Mike, can't we pour a little
Thunderbird into it? Just to kinda
bring up the flavor a notch.
Please...

BARONI
NO WAY. DRINK IT.

With a groan, Pete takes the cup and sips almost gagging.
Baroni ignores it and pours himself a cup.

BARONI (CONT'D)
Momo's gonna bring a new load today.
We can start building again.

Suddenly, from the street below they hear cars honking and
people cheering. Baroni moves to a window, opens it and
looks out.

ANGLE ON STREET

The Savage Knights have just returned victorious from a turf
war and a street party is developing.

BARONI (CONT'D)
It's Andres and his bums back after
a fight.

PETE
Please don't say they're bums. That's
kinda personal.

BARONI
How about jackasses?

PETE
Now that's all right.

Twenty members of the gang are carousing in the street with
their girls. Baroni sees Angie walking directly below. She
smiles and waves, motioning to him to come down.

BARONI

I better get down there before Momo pulls in. Let's go...and bring your coffee.

They enter the elevator and shut the gate. Slowly, it vanishes downward.

EXT. SLUM STREET - MORNING

The street is full of swaggering gang members. Several big portable radios are blaring and everybody is getting high. Baroni and Pete view the scene with disgust. Angie walks up to them.

ANGIE

(embarrassed by the gang)

Good morning, Michael. Hi Pete. How are you?

BARONI

How long is this gonna last?

ANGIE

I don't know. Not long. It's cold.

PETE

Hell...they don't feel no cold.

Andres sees Baroni. He starts to weave a slightly stoned path toward him.

ANDRES

Hey...General...

But at that instant, a threatening new noise is heard. It's the groan and roar of some giant mechanical device. The gang freezes for a moment. The party seems suspended in fear.

Around the corner rolls the most ancient garbage truck imaginable...filled with reeking trash. It clanks and groans over every inch of pavement. The gang sees and the fear turns into a roar of derision.

Faded letters on the cab door read: SYLVESTER NICASCIO
SCAVENGING CORPORATION - YOU TRASH IT, WE STASH IT.

The gang hoots and catcalls. They hang on the sides and heckle the driver who resolutely ignores them.

KNIGHT #1

IT'S THE MOLE.

KNIGHT #2
HEY, GARBAGE MAN.

The little, shriveled man behind the wheel is SYLVESTER NICASCIO, known as Momo, the Mole. His dirty overalls contrast sharply with a spiffy tie. On his face is both a layer of grime and a pair of reading glasses that hang on the end of this nose. He looks like a filthy, but scholarly, little rodent. Momo pulls the truck up in front of the warehouse.

MOMO
Good morning, Michael.

The gang gathers around the truck. Momo climbs out of the cab. The Knights laugh and jeer. He ignores them.

MOMO (CONT'D)
In the past three days I have
uncovered an absolute treasure trove.
Prepare to feast your eyes on the
harvest of the streets.

He climbs up into the bin as everyone gathers around at the back. From the stash, he extracts a nude, male mannequin. Someone has splashed red and black paint over the lower half of the body and it has only half a head of hair. The gang hoots and whistles.

MOMO (CONT'D)
I'm absolutely certain that this
prize was on its way to the Museum
of Modern Art.

The head suddenly drops off and falls to the street. With a yell, a gang member grabs it and they begin throwing it around. Baroni doesn't say anything, but the derision of the gang is making him angry.

Angie manages to retrieve the head. She looks with anger at her brother, Andres, who only sneers.

Next, Momo lugs out a heavy object. It's an ancient cannon covered with barnacles and rust.

MOMO (CONT'D)
And now...straight from the watery
world of Jacques Cousteau...

PETE
Hey, Mike. That's a cannon.

He climbs up and examines it carefully.

PETE (CONT'D)

It's a real cannon.

MOMO

A bit of history dredged up by a
garbage scow.

PETE

Mike, take a look at this thing.

But Baroni doesn't hear him. There is a strange look on his face. Slowly, the look turns to fear. He walks out into the street as though listening to something far away. Then he rushes back into the crowd and confronts Andres.

BARONI

DID YOU LEAVE SECURITY?

ANDRES

(mostly stoned)

What?

BARONI

THE PLAN. DID YOU LEAVE
SECURITY...SOME OF YOUR JERKS ON
GUARD?

ANDRES

Didn't need to. We beat their asses,
man.

BARONI

YOU DIDN'T LEAVE SECURITY. I SAID
TO LEAVE SECURITY.

ANDRES

Who you think you're talkin' to?

BARONI

IF YOU WANT TO DIE, THAT'S UP TO
YOU.

He turns desperately to Pete and Momo.

BARONI (CONT'D)

GET THE TRUCK IN THE WAREHOUSE FAST.

They look in wonder, but his friends follow his orders. Pete opens the big door and Momo drives the truck inside. Baroni pulls Angie into the building and the door rolls shut. The Knights laugh and go back to their party.

Without warning, the far end of the block fills with a hundred members of the rival gang...the Skulls. Rushing in, they strike with bicycle chains and baseball bats.

The Knights try to fight back, but they are stoned and outmatched.

MONTAGE OF THE BATTLE:

1. A chain slashes a gang member's face.
2. A bat strikes a Knight in the groin.
3. Bricks fly through windows of the warehouse.
4. A knife slashes flesh.

MONTAGE ENDS

INT. WAREHOUSE SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Angie, Pete, Momo and Baroni are standing by the window looking down. Angie is crying. Baroni is enraged.

EXT. SLUM STREET - A SHORT TIME LATER

On the street nothing is moving. The gang lies beaten and groaning. The warehouse door opens. Angie rushes out and goes to her brother. Baroni stalks out behind her and looks at the damage to the building. He is angrier than they have ever seen him.

BARONI

THAT'S IT. I'M FINISHED. I'M DONE
WITH YOU.

He stalks over to Andres who is lying injured on the curb with Angie trying to help him.

BARONI (CONT'D)

(cold, almost hissing)
Do you realize they could have killed
your sister?

Baroni heads back to the warehouse. At the door he yells...

BARONI (CONT'D)

YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO FOLLOW
INSTRUCTIONS. DON'T COME HERE
ANYMORE. NOT FOR ANYTHING. JUST
LEAVE ME ALONE.

With a crash, the door slams behind him.

EXT. NONDESCRIPT WASHINGTON DC APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Valya Kronskey stands rather uncertainly outside an apartment building. She carries a briefcase. Hesitantly, she checks the address, then walks up the stairs and enters the building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kronsky stands in front of the door to apartment 2D. She knocks quietly. No answer. After knocking again, she tries the door. Locked. Taking a key from her pocket, she unlocks it, then slowly opens it and walks in.

INT. APARTMENT 2D - CONTINUOUS

The living room is empty. The bedroom door is closed.

VALYA KRONSKY

Is anyone here?

No answer. She goes to the bedroom door and opens it...then draws back with a CRY.

ANGLE INTO BEDROOM

Confronting her is the huge face of Baroni on the wall. Sitting beneath it on the floor is Mikhail Rostocoff with his gun pointing at her head. Slowly, he lowers it and stands up.

ROSTOCOFF

Turn on the light.

INT. BEDROOM OF 2D - CONTINUOUS

She enters the bedroom and obeys. As she looks around, she is terrified. All the bedroom walls are covered with life-size blowups of Michael Norman Baroni.

VALYA KRONSKY

Who...is this?

ROSTOCOFF

He is trying to kill me. No more questions. Did you bring it?

The woman nods. Still shaken, she sets the briefcase down on the bed and opens it. Withdrawing a thick file, she hands it to him.

VALYA KRONSKY

Here is a copy of the Alpha list.
If they find it has been duplicated...

He takes it.

ROSTOCOFF

It is my responsibility. One of these men has hired this killer. Now go. Tell no one. Leave the key on the table.

Quickly, she closes the briefcase and obeys his orders. Rostocoff waits until he hears the outer door close...then, he opens the file. It's filled with dossiers and photographs. He pages through them.

The tension builds within him. Sweat beads out on his forehead. He glances at the face on his wall. He can almost feel the eyes of Baroni staring at him. Rostocoff lays down the file and looks from one wall to the next. Into the eyes of his enemy. It's almost as though the walls are closing in on him.

Suddenly, he reaches down and takes the first picture from the file that comes to his fingers. Glancing at it, he lays it apart from the rest, then almost runs from the room.

CU PHOTO

In small letters at the bottom is the name: SAMUEL N. THOMPSON.

INT. PENTAGON GYM - DAY

At first it appears as though General Thomas Lockman and General William Phillips are rowing boats side-by-side down a river against a blue sky.

LOCKMAN

It was no accident.

PHILLIPS

What do they say at Langley?

PULL BACK

They are on rowing machines in a large room with a blue wall.

LOCKMAN

Nothing.

PHILLIPS

Just a car wreck to them, eh?

Lockman rows harder, almost with a vengeance.

LOCKMAN

Car wrecks...don't do...that sort of thing...to people.

Lockman stops rowing, but Phillips continues.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

Name was Samuel Thompson. Head of the Soviet desk at the Agency.

PHILLIPS

He's their man, let them sweat it.
Leaving for New York. Last thing I
need to worry about is some gruesome
car wreck.

Lockman starts rowing again, but more slowly.

LOCKMAN

Taking a few days off?

PHILLIPS

Kind of...checking out a rumor.

LOCKMAN

About strategy games?

Phillips stops rowing and smiles.

PHILLIPS

Guess I can't keep a secret from
Defense Intelligence. What do you
know?

LOCKMAN

Not much.

PHILLIPS

Those game companies have better
security than we do.

LOCKMAN

That's the motivation of a profit
margin.

PHILLIPS

I'm gonna see Allan Lord tomorrow.
I'll let you know if I find out
anything. You ready for a new game?

LOCKMAN

Not if you're playing. I like to win
once in awhile.

A broad smile comes to Phillips' sweaty face.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - DAY

Baroni and Pete are on the roof of the warehouse working on
the old cannon. Behind them is a large electric sign that
reads: SMITHFIELD STORAGE. It's cold outside.

The front portion of the cannon is over a smoldering fire
barrel. Baroni is busy trying to burn and chip off the
barnacles.

Pete stands behind him taking an occasional swig from a bottle of Thunderbird.

PETE

You sure you're not gonna blow us all to hell? I mean, how do we know what's inside that damn thing. We can't get the back open.

BARONI

You know a better way to get barnacles off a cannon? Just don't stick your head near that fire and breathe or we'll have a real explosion.

He goes to work again chipping at the ancient metal.

PETE

(looking toward the staircase)

Damn...

Angie steps out onto the roof from the staircase. With her are Andres and two of his lieutenants. Baroni stands up. Angie approaches him. The gang members stay back.

BARONI

Why are they here? Why did you bring them up here?

ANGIE

Michael...please...just listen. Andres wants to say something.

BARONI

He's got nothing to say to me. They're brainless idiots.

The two gang members with Andres don't appreciate this.

GANG LT.1

Hey...pendejo...watch your mouth.

GANG LT. 2

Little cabron.

Andres silences them with a move of his head.

ANGIE

(low so Andres can't hear)

Michael, my brother made me do this. But please...ever since you stopped helping them they've been getting hurt bad.

BARONI
 Yeah, getting their dumb asses kicked.
 (disgusted)
 Oh, all right.

She turns and looks at her brother. Baroni goes back to work on the cannon. The gang members move forward. There is an uncomfortable silence as they stand looking at him.

BARONI (CONT'D)
 WELL?

ANDRES
 We want to make a deal.

BARONI
 A deal? A deal requires exchange
 and there isn't anything you've got
 that I want.

ANDRES
 We need plans.

BARONI
 Well, you'd better start thinking.

Angie gives him a pleading look. Rolling his eyes, Baroni stops working and stands up.

BARONI (CONT'D)
 You want a deal? Okay, all right.
 Here's the deal. First, you follow
 my plans to the LETTER. Understand?
 No Changes. Second, the next time
 you bring any fighting near this
 warehouse it's all done...forever.
 You got that? And third, I need
 help around here once in a while.

GANG LT. 1
 Hey, we ain't janitors, man. Go to
 hell.

BARONI
 Fine. GET OFF MY ROOF.

ANDRES
 No, wait...okay.

GANG LT. 2
 What are you saying?

ANDRES
 SHUT UP.
 (MORE)

ANDRES (CONT'D)

(to Baroni)
Is that all?

GANG LT. 2

Is that ALL?

ANDRES

I SAID, SHUT UP.

BARONI

That's not all. And you agree to leave the old bums on the streets alone. No more kicking and spitting on them.

ANDRES

(after a pause)
Okay...it's a deal.

His lieutenants look at him as though he's crazy, but they're afraid to say anything.

ANDRES (CONT'D)

Now, I want those plans. We got a big one going down.

BARONI

You'll get them...after some work gets done. Then you can go out and kill yourselves, I don't care.

Andres leans close to Baroni. There is an ugly look on his face. He speaks loudly for his friends to hear.

ANDRES

Okay, general. Okay, little man. It goes your way for now. But you listen to me. You give me what I want and I win with it or I'm gonna burn this warehouse down with you and all your little games in it.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - OUTER HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Wearing a civilian suit and carrying a briefcase, General Phillips arrives at the offices of Allan Lord. The outer hallway is very plush. The saccharine sounds of Muzak fill the place. On both walls huge board games are mounted for display. The firm creates dozens and dozens of them for all ages.

On the wall, the spread of games starts out utterly bland for small children, funny little creatures shooting at each other.

But as Phillips walks down the hall, he passes more and more that have real violence built into them. The very last section of the hall displays war strategy games from all periods of history. The images are bloody and lurid.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - RECEPTION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The reception room is beautifully decorated. The corporate logo hangs on the wall. It's a lovely painting of two innocent, little boys down on their knees shooting what appear to be marbles. But they aren't. They are cannon balls with monster faces fired from tiny guns. Beneath it is the slogan: Playing Together Means Slaying Together.

An attractive RECEPTIONIST greets Phillips.

LORD RECEPTIONIST
General Phillips...good morning,
sir. What a pleasant surprise. Mr.
Lord will be so pleased.

She picks up a telephone.

LORD RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
Mr. Lord, General Phillips has come
to see you.
(beat)
I'll send him in.
(beat)
Yes, I did...at 2:30.

She hangs up and turns to the general.

LORD RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
You can go right in.
(coy)
Do I need to search you?

PHILLIPS
I think you do. I keep saying, you're
the only game here I'd really like
to play.

She smiles, then presses a button beneath the desk. Next to the button is a loaded pistol in a holster. A hidden door in the wall under the corporate logo opens automatically. Phillips enters.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - INNER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The inner hallway is even more luxurious. It's covered with the bloodthirsty images of warriors in battle. Waiting for Phillips with a smile, is his old friend ALLAN LORD.

Lord is a trim, well-dressed, handsome man in his mid-fifties.

ALLAN LORD

Bill, how are you? It's been too long.

PHILLIPS

Every time I come, you've redecorated the place.

ALLAN LORD

Gotta do something with the money. Come on in.

INT. LORD'S PENTHOUSE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Lord's penthouse office is luxurious and strange. It's decorated in a futuristic medieval war motif with designs of ancient weapons and castle facades that look like something on another planet. Through the glass walls, the view of the New York skyline is breathtaking. The men sit down in chairs that look like small thrones.

PHILLIPS

All right, Allan, out with it. You know why I'm here. I want to know about the new game.

ALLAN LORD

(laughing)

You see why we need security? That's what I like about you, Bill. Games are all business. When are you gonna retire? There's an opening on our board coming up.

PHILLIPS

I've got a few more years left in me.

ALLAN LORD

I guess I can tell the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs what's happening. We're all set for a major release next week. Big press conference. The whole world will know.

Phillips' eyes gleam. He leans forward intent on every word. Lord loves the attention.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

I started this company 20 years ago on a shoestring. You know what, Bill?

(MORE)

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

My marketing staff just told me that a million people are playing my strategy games every week. A million. War gaming is the largest division I've got. And the time has come for the granddaddy of'em all.

Lord stands.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

We've just developed the most thrilling new strategy game in the history of warfare. And we're getting ready to sponsor the Master Championship of International War Game Competition.

PHILLIPS

Fantastic. How do I enter?

ALLAN LORD

All you have to do is buy the game. Come with me.

INT. ALLAN LORD'S AUDITORIUM - MINUTES LATER

The two men enter a small auditorium. In the front is a table under a spotlight. Spread out on it is the actual game with all of its pieces. In the center of the table rises a white, nuclear cloud made of plastic and cotton. Around are masses of infantry, tanks, war ships and missiles. Aircraft hang from above on fishing lines. On a lighted stand near the table shriek blood-red words:

ARMAGEDDON - THE MASTER STRATEGY GAME OF WORLD DOMINATION

Looking like a child with a new toy, Phillips walks around the table. The game includes a large board that folds out in four directions with an electronic grid. A hand-held calculator-size computer control unit plugs in at each of the game-playing positions.

ALLAN LORD

(oozing pride)

The latest electronics. There's a miniature computer inside. It's the closest thing possible to fighting a real war.

PHILLIPS

Who designed this? Was it Bentley? Greerson?

ALLAN LORD

Our whole board of directors took a hand.

PHILLIPS

You've got a retired Pentagon right here.

Lord hands Phillips the rule book. The General is enthralled.

ALLAN LORD

It'll be a national competition. Rules are simple. We'll coordinate the whole thing on our company computer. As usual, everybody will play by mail using pseudonyms. Blind draw until the final round.

PHILLIPS

Pseudonyms?

ALLAN LORD

That's right. You won't know who you're up against. It let's us talk about the players in our ads without using names. Pretty smart, huh?

Phillips plugs in the electronic control. Then, he touches a button. The grid begins to glow an evil red. Slowly, it encompasses a map of the world. He touches another button. There is a roaring sound and a white flash of light.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

Nuclear capability for each player. He can destroy his enemy, himself or the whole world. Of course, in the competition anybody who destroys the whole world automatically loses.

Like a child, Phillips pushes more buttons. There are more blasts.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

There'll be two divisions...one civilian and the other military. Until the last game.

PHILLIPS

What about the prizes?

ALLAN LORD

The final round'll be held in Atlantic City. Listen to this. It'll be winner-take-all.

(MORE)

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)
He'll receive the title WORLD MASTER
OF WAR GAME STRATEGY. He'll get an
all-expense-paid trip for two through
all the major battlefields of the
world...and for pocket money, 200
thousand in cash.

Phillips' eyes are wide with dreaming.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)
But that's not all.

PHILLIPS
It's not?

ALLAN LORD
No.

He points to a small platform where a curtained table stands.
Then, he moves to a wall and pushes a button. The lights in
the room dim.

CU: PHILLIPS FACE

It's suddenly bathed in a golden glow. His eyes grow even
wider.

Slowly, he walks up the steps of the platform. The light on
his face is brighter.

Phillips is standing in front of the most wonderful trophy
he has ever seen. It's four feet high with a marble base
and a golden body. At the pinnacle is a stunning replica of
Winged Victory all in gold and silver. The spotlight captures
every gleam. Above winged victory is a monstrous, golden
head without a face.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)
You see that head? On it will be
sculpted the face of the winner.

Directly below the head is a large plaque with the words:
WORLD MASTER OF WAR GAME STRATEGY - TOURNAMENT OF ARMAGEDDON.

Phillips stares as though in worship.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - DAY

A bright, red mailing piece is spread out on Baroni's table.
Momo, Angie, Pete and Baroni are all reading different parts
of the mailing. There is a strange look on Baroni's face.
He picks up the main brochure, the blood-red one with the
white mushroom cloud and \$200,000.00 printed across it.

Suddenly, he shouts for joy. His friends have never seen him like this before. Rushing into the game part of the room, he paces up and down the center aisle.

BARONI

The best players...of all time. ALL
OF THEM.

Suddenly, he stops and looks around.

BARONI (CONT'D)

All of this will have to go. We're
gonna start over.

Rushing back to his friends, he turns to Momo.

BARONI (CONT'D)

We're gonna need a lot of materials.
I'll make a list.

MOMO

The trash of New York is yours.

BARONI

(to Pete and Angie)

And people to help. We've gotta
have help to build. Pete, your
friends...

PETE

Sure, Mike...you bet.

Baroni's excitement is taking hold of them.

BARONI

200 grand. I could start a museum.

INT. GENERAL PHILLIPS' OUTER OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - DAY

Phillips' outer office is bustling with activity. Lockman is there waiting for him. He carries a folder. Phillips enters. They all stand. Marsburg is with him.

PHILLIPS' SECRETARY

Good morning, General. Welcome back.
How was your trip?

PHILLIPS

Magnificent, thank you.
(beat)
Hello, Tom. Come on in.

INT. GENERAL PHILLIPS' OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - CONTINUOUS

Phillips bustles into his office.

PHILLIPS

Did you get the announcement in the mail?

LOCKMAN

What announcement?

PHILLIPS

Tom, it's incredible, the biggest war game in the history of competition.

LOCKMAN

Well, I'm sure you'll win it. Bill, listen, I wanted to bring this report to you myself. There's been another death associated with Langley.

He hands the report to Phillips who doesn't even look at it. He only takes it and drops it on his desk.

PHILLIPS

Okay, I'll read it. There's a 200 thousand dollar cash prize, but the trophy...

LOCKMAN

It was Thompson's assistant, Redgate. Burned to death in his home.

PHILLIPS

Well, that's tragic, but these things do happen.

LOCKMAN

They're investigating, but they think it could have been arson. The body was incinerated.

PHILLIPS

(slightly annoyed)

You're really invested in this, aren't you?

LOCKMAN

I pray to God I'm wrong, but if I'm right, something really horrible is going on, Bill.

A thoughtful, rather intense look comes to Phillips' face.

PHILLIPS

Wait a minute...I've got it.

Lockman looks expectant.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Since you're not going to play, you can help me.

LOCKMAN

What?

PHILLIPS

Nobody's going to use their real name. Strictly pseudonyms. It'll be easy for you to crack those name covers. Knowing who's playing in the Pentagon'll be a big advantage. I mean, it's just good strategy, right? Know your enemy. That's what it's all about. Why don't you find out who's entering? Get every fact you can, okay?

Lockman is speechless. He can't believe what he's hearing.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

I'm putting everything into this, Tom.

Phillips's eyes mist over.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Finally, finally, after all these years...everybody's going to know what I can really do. And it's all for my country.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - DAY

Baroni is building his new strategy room. All the game tables are gone. In their place are piles of what appears to be junk. Along with several vats of what might be plaster.

His construction crew is a motley assortment of bums and three or four unhappy gang members. The place looks like chaos. The gang members are doing as little as they can, but gradually Baroni's world strategy model is taking shape.

Angie enters. Baroni joins her. For a moment they quietly look at the construction.

BARONI

I've submitted my code name. I hope nobody's chosen it yet.

ANGIE

What is it?

BARONI

Foxbat.

ANGIE

Foxbat? What's a foxbat?

BARONI

A supersonic Russian interceptor,
the MIG 28. Foxbat's the NATO
designation. It could be the
deadliest jet fighter in the world.

INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT GAME ROOM - EVENING

Phillips' game room is the exact opposite of Baroni's warehouse. It is a model of smooth construction. Military carpenters and electricians are completing installation of a large, electronic map of the world. It is almost finished. Phillips is standing by the control panel waiting to test it. Lockman comes down the stairs carrying a folder.

PHILLIPS

Tom, you're just in time. Look at this.

Phillips plays with the control panel. Lights go on and off. He pushes a button. There is a flash of light and a mushroom of smoke appears in Russia. Phillips laughs.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Nuke'em, that's what I say. This is even better than the game. The game doesn't have real smoke.

LOCKMAN

(not laughing, looking
tired)

Very impressive. I got the list for you. It's up to date as of this morning.

Phillips takes it eagerly and begins leafing through it.

PHILLIPS

Excellent...excellent...well done...
outstanding...nobody new here. Now
what I'd love to get is a list of
the commie players.

LOCKMAN

That I can't do. Or the civilians.

PHILLIPS

They don't matter. I'll crush'em in
the first round.

LOCKMAN

I'm sure you will.

PHILLIPS

I owe you a big one, Tom.

Phillips doesn't see the look of disgust on Lockman's face. He's too deeply engrossed in the list.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

With this I can take advantage of every weakness. Blast'em, burn'em, DESTROY. That trophy is MINE.

EXT. HIGH ABOVE THE WAREHOUSE ROOF - NIGHT

MAJESTIC MUSIC BEGINS

Down...down...between the letters of the flashing Smithfield Storage sign...into more darkness...through the roof.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - CONTINUOUS

From the high ceiling, a world comes into view. Then down...

MAJESTIC MUSIC BUILDS

Moving swiftly, flying around the world. Then, slowing to a stop. At the North Pole on a rotating platform is an ancient, stuffed chair. In it sits Michael Norman Baroni as though he were the monarch of the universe. He is satisfied and tired. The work is finished. Baroni sighs and closes his eyes.

Suddenly, his eyes open. There is no discernable noise, but he is alert. He swivels the chair with his feet until it faces a dark stairway entrance. Then, he pushes a button on a small control panel. Pools of light illuminate the floor around the 3D map.

From out of the stairway emerge Andres and ten of the Savage Knights. They look like silent evil shadows as they spread themselves around the edge of the world.

BARONI

What do you want?

ANDRES

It's payday, general. You owe us. We got a deal.

BARONI

The deal was you were supposed to help around here.

(MORE)

BARONI (CONT'D)

You sent me four worthless jerks
who barely knew how to pound a nail.

The gang erupts with displeasure.

ANDRES

We have waited and we ain't waiting
no longer.

He lifts his foot and stomps down on Australia. There is a sickening crunch as he pushes through to the floor.

BARONI

STOP THAT. DON'T DO THAT. ALL RIGHT,
ALL RIGHT, I've got what you want.

Reaching under the chair, he pulls out a clipboard. From it he tears off several sheets and throws them across the world to Andres who retrieves them from the Pacific ocean.

BARONI (CONT'D)

You fight on April 26, not one day
sooner. Understood?

ANDRES

WHAT? NO WAY. That's two weeks
from now.

BARONI

The deal was you follow my plan. No
changes. There's a full moon that
night and you're gonna need it.

Andres looks at the pages, then folds them and heads for the stairs. The gang follows. At the staircase, he turns and looks back at Baroni.

ANDRES

If we lose, cabron...you're
dead...MUERTE!

When they are gone, Baroni sinks back into the chair, takes off his glasses and rubs his eyes.

INT. APARTMENT 2D - NIGHT

Rostocoff sits in his apartment drinking scotch. His face is drawn and tense. On the table next to him is a pistol. Through the open bedroom door he can see the giant face of Baroni staring back at him.

He checks his watch. In front of him are two, small stacks of photographs. From one, he picks up the photo of a MIDDLE-AGED BUREAUCRAT.

After looking at it for a moment, he lays it down. From his jacket pocket, he removes the needle. Spraying it from a small bottle, he meticulously cleans it with his handkerchief.

EXT. MARINA - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

At the end of a wharf lined with small yachts is tied a particularly beautiful sail boat. A light is on in the cabin.

ANGLE THROUGH CABIN WINDOW

The BUREAUCRAT in Rostocoff's photograph sits at a desk reading a stack of reports.

INT. SAIL BOAT CABIN - MOMENTS LATER

Deeply engrossed in a document, he doesn't see a fleeting shadow pass on the wharf. A few moments later, he looks up. He thinks he hears something. But it's too late.

CU: HIS FACE

It freezes. Slowly, his mouth opens. From out of it appears the needle. Rostocoff takes hold of the man's head and bends it over the paper. As drops of blood run down, he manipulates the head and the needle to draw a smiley face on the paper.

INT. RAILROAD FREIGHT YARD - NIGHT

In a ghostly, abandoned railroad yard, the Skulls are waiting for the Savage Knights. Wind howls around an old water tower. The broken hulks of freight cars take on eerie shapes.

The yard is not large. On three sides it's hedged in by abandoned buildings. The fourth side is open. A wide, deep gully with a shallow creek marks the boundary. The only way out of the yard on this side is across an ancient, railroad bridge.

The gang is trying to be brave, but the silent wait is making them nervous.

SKULL #1

I don't like it. This is bad, man.

SKULL #2

Stay cool. We beat their asses before. We'll do it again. Only this time we're gonna cut their balls off.

SKULL #3

They ain't got no balls. Probably won't even show.

Suddenly, there is the groan of iron grating on iron. The gang looks around, trying to find the source. Then they see. Out of the darkness, four huge, old wooden boxcars are rolling fast down the tracks toward them.

SKULL #1

What the hell...?

SKULL #2

GET READY. THOSE IDIOTS ARE INSIDE.

The gang lines up on each side of the tracks waiting to strike. But when the cars get close, all four explode into raging flames.

The gang panics as the flames spread outward. They turn and run in the only direction open to them...across the bridge. The blazing boxcars follow. But, suddenly, the cars reach converging tracks. Two of them derail, while the other two continue after the Skulls onto the ancient structure.

When they are in the middle of the bridge, the gang stops in horror. Two more cars are rolling toward them from the opposite side. These also burst into flames.

There's only one escape. Jump from the bridge 25 feet into mud and shallow water. They do it, yelling, landing on top of each other.

The four blazing boxcars collide above them with a huge explosion. Chunks of burning debris crash into the water around them. The bridge is on fire.

The inferno illuminates the steep banks of the gully. Covered in muck, the Skulls struggle to climb out. Above them appear, Andres and the Savage Knights holding baseball bats.

INT. PENTAGON - LOCKMAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

Lockman is pacing. On the wall near his desk is a bulletin board. Tacked on it are six photographs of dead men. A door opens and a YOUNG SERGEANT enters.

YOUNG SERGEANT

Here it is, sir.

He hands him a photograph. Lockman tacks it on the board. It's of the bureaucrat's head lying on the desk with a crude smiley face in blood on the paper next to his mouth.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Thousands of letters are being processed. Dozens of operators are keying game moves into the system. Allan Lord enters with a TV REPORTER and a video team.

He beams into the camera.

ALLAN LORD

Steve, here in this room we are processing the thousands upon thousands of strategic game moves that we receive every day from players around the world. You are witnessing the biggest international war game competition in all of history.

TV REPORTER

And what they are doing is fighting World War Three...by mail?

ALLAN LORD

That's exactly right. We call it Armageddon.

Lord points to the wall where an electronic map of the world is hanging covered with red and blue lights.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

As you can see on our map, the game has two divisions. Blue lights are military players and red are civilians.

TV REPORTER

It certainly looks like Armageddon is taking the world by storm.

MONTAGE OF GAME PLAYING

INT. DINER - NIGHT

A YOUNG MAN sits behind the counter at an all-night diner. Several other young men come in and sit down. They watch as he plays Armageddon.

INT. UNIVERSITY FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

A whole floor is locked in combat with studies forgotten.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME - DAY

A YOUNG MOTHER isn't watching the soaps on TV. Her child is crying. She is playing Armageddon.

INT. WAR GAMES CLUB - DAY

Thirty people of all ages are sitting at tables deeply engrossed...playing Armageddon.

INT. AIR BASE REC ROOM - NIGHT

Young airmen are grouped around a COLONEL who is making moves and listing them on a piece of paper.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

The electronic map is on fire with blinking red and blue lights.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - DAY

Baroni paces around his world...moving fleets and armies...living and breathing the reality of global war.

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. SLUM STREET - DAY

Angie leaves her building carrying a covered tray. The street is empty. Going to the warehouse, she enters.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Angie walks in. Pete and Momo are waiting for her. They all have a very conspiratorial look. They whisper...

ANGIE

Where is he?

PETE

Upstairs.

ANGIE

Does he know? Is he still asleep?

MOMO

The man doesn't expect anything, my dear. He is exhausted.

ANGIE

Don't come in until I wake him.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Baroni is asleep sprawled out over the game with pencils and paper around him. His glasses have slipped off. Angie emerges from the stairway. She stands beside him and touches his shoulder.

ANGIE

Michael...Michael...

Slowly, Baroni begins to awaken. He is very groggy. Suddenly, he JERKS AWAKE. Groping feverishly for his glasses, he shoves them on.

BARONI

My last move...I fell asleep. It's got to get in the mail.

He throws papers aside searching.

BARONI (CONT'D)

In an envelope. All ready. WHERE IS IT?

ANGIE

Michael, don't worry. I mailed it two hours ago...right after you fell asleep.

He freezes and looks at her for a moment almost not comprehending.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

It's all done.

Baroni sinks into his chair with a sigh of relief.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I always take care of the mail for you.

He looks at her...almost for the first time. There is a moment between them. Baroni begins to really see her...to understand.

BARONI

You do. You really do, don't you.

Angie's face suddenly lights up.

ANGIE

We have a surprise for you. You're birthday was three weeks ago. We waited until the game was finished.

Pete and Momo walk out of the stairway carrying a beautiful, lighted cake. Baroni sees it, but his eyes are still on Angie. She looks back at him with real love.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Happy birthday, Michael.

INT. ALLAN LORD'S AUDITORIUM - MORNING

The press is gathered in force. The electronic map has been moved from the computer room into the auditorium. Only a few red and blue lights are flashing. Beside the map is a large, digital readout on which are displayed the names of the final players in each division.

In the red column are listed the code names: Phantom, Foxbat, Armada, Dagger, Thunder and Shark. On the blue side the leader is Cobra. Following that name are: Gunfighter, Stingray, Eagle, Rommel and Napalm.

Lord stands behind a lectern looking at the map as he speaks to the press.

ALLAN LORD

In only a few moments, we will know the winner in each division. The players' last moves are being processed in the computer at this time.

As the crowd watches, the colored lights begin to blink out one by one. All are finally extinguished except for a red one in New York City and a blue one in Washington, DC. On the readout only two names remain: Foxbat and Cobra.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

We now have our division winners. In the civilian division, from New York City...Foxbat. And representing the military from Washington, DC...Cobra.

VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE' (O.S.)

But who are they? What are their names?

ALLAN LORD

Oh, I'm afraid that must remain a secret. Only the computer knows.

There are groans from the crowd.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

Our winners will be presented at the Grand Championship Match which will be held in one week at the Imperial Regent Hotel in Atlantic City.

INT. GENERAL PHILLIPS OFFICE - DAY

Phillips and his staff are celebrating with champagne.

MARSBURG

(toasting)

To Cobra...your last game will be your easiest. And that new trophy case is on the way.

The group cheers and raises their glasses. A peaceful, confident smile is on Phillips' face.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Angie enters from outside. She finds Baroni seated at the desk. In his hand is a yellow envelope. He hasn't opened it. Without speaking, he holds it up to her. It's a telegram.

ANGIE

What is it?

BARONI

Final results of the game.

ANGIE

(nervously)

Well, why haven't you opened it?

Baroni has saved this moment to share with her.

BARONI

I thought I'd wait. It's mail. You handle the mail.

Angie realizes the meaning behind what he has said. She takes the envelope and with trembling hands tears it open. There is a pause.

ANGIE

(gasping)

You won. YOU WON! YOU'RE GOING TO ATLANTIC CITY FOR THE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP. MICHAEL..YOU WON...YOU WON!

The full realization of the victory...and their closeness sweeps over them. Angie pulls him up and they hug. This is the most wonderful moment of their lives.

EXT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE - DAY

Colonel Arthur Cranston, General Lockman's assistant, walks stiffly through the main entrance into the building. He is dressed in civilian clothes.

INT. SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTE - MOMENTS LATER

Cranston doesn't stop at any of the displays. He moves quickly to an exhibit in a far corner. A man waits for him in the shadows. It's Rostocoff.

CRANSTON

(angry whisper)

Why did you call me? Do you want to jeopardized everything?

ROSTOCOFF

I contact any agent I choose.

CRANSTON

This is insane. People are dying all over this city. Everybody's watching everybody. Now what the hell do you want?

ROSTOCOFF

My country desires that you begin earning the money you are being paid. Your reports...they are bland...without substance.

CRANSTON

You risk our lives to criticize damn reports? In case you have forgotten, I don't work for you. We work TOGETHER.

ROSTOCOFF

I need information immediately. Where will General William Phillips be located this weekend.

CRANSTON

Why do you want to know?

ROSTOCOFF

Just tell me.

CRANSTON

He's going to compete in Atlantic City. A war strategy game. Half the officers in the Pentagon will be there to watch. And security will be half a mile deep. Is that the critical information that was worth risking our lives?

ROSTOCOFF

Also, the KGB is well aware of the many unusual deaths that have occurred during the past months. We too are investigating. I demand to know of any plot within the Pentagon to assassinate Soviet agents.

CRANSTON

What in hell are you talking about? The Pentagon has been too busy playing games to do anything else. Now if that's all you wanted to know...

Rostocoff is trembling. He steps from the shadows and grips Cranston's arm

ROSTOCOFF

Do you think I am a novice? A fool? Would I have risked this meeting without proof that such a plot exists? Get the facts and be ready when I contact you again. Tell no one.

CRANSTON

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME.

Still glaring, Rostocoff vanishes into the shadows leaving Cranston enraged.

INT. GENERAL LOCKMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

In Lockman's office, the bulletin board is filled with gruesome pictures of murdered men. Lockman is preparing to leave. He is packing his briefcase when Cranston enters. He is back in military uniform.

LOCKMAN

Art, glad you got back before I left.

He picks up a thick report and hands it to him.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

The psych profiles. In today. Took damn long enough.

CRANSTON

How do they look?

LOCKMAN

Frightening. They're ALL unbalanced. I've only scanned it, but the probability is high that there are three men especially capable of

(MORE)

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

murder. I mean, really dangerous. Gehrman of West Germany. My bet's on him. Hell, the man spent half his life in a mental institution. Phillipe Sanchez of Chile. He collects kitty porn.

CRANSTON

Children?

LOCKMAN

No, kitties, CATS. DEAD ONES.

CRANSTON

Ewww...

LOCKMAN

Trust me, you don't want to know.

(beat)

The 3rd one is a Soviet attaché named Mikhail Rostocoff.

Cranston almost freezes.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

But I really don't think it's him. He's too stupid. A brilliant 89 IQ.

(beat)

I'd love to beat Langley on this. While I'm in Atlantic City assign a team to each of these idiots. Damn, I don't want to go to that fool game, but you know Phillips.

(beat)

We're close. I can feel it, Art. Let's nail this bloody murderer before anybody else gets popped.

INT. APARTMENT 2D - DAY

CU: ROSTOCOFF'S HANDS

Slowly, he takes a picture from one stack and places it face up on another. It's a photo of General William Phillips. Rostocoff stands. He's wearing the uniform of a U.S. Army Colonel. Picking up his attaché case, he turns to go.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - DAY

The casino is chaos. The huge marquee on the front reads: ARMAGEDDON WORLD WAR STRATEGY GAME FINAL - FOXBAT VS. COBRA. A crowd is waiting at the entrance. Many are in military uniform. The Pentagon has ordered the troops out in force to support their General.

General Phillips arrives in his military limousine. He gets out. Marsburg and Lockman are with him. The crowd cheers. Phillips plays the winner's role to the hilt, smiling and waving.

In the shadows of the building stands Rostocoff, in uniform, carrying his case. When the crowd passes into the building with Phillips, Rostocoff follows them.

A few moments later, a cab pulls up. Out of it comes Baroni, Angie, Pete and Momo. They have to scrounge between them for enough money to pay the driver. No one takes any notice of them. The men are wearing suits that fit rather strangely, as though they came from a Salvation Army resale shop.

INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - MOMENTS LATER

As Baroni and his friends enter the casino, they are speechless. One end has been redesigned to accommodate the final round of the game. Against one wall, huge and brilliantly lighted, is a world map playing board.

Baroni's pseudonym, FOXBAT, is in flashing lights. Across from it is that of his adversary, COBRA. The casino is alive with people placing bets on the game. Baroni and his friends follow the crowd into the banquet hall.

INT. CASINO BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

They enter the banquet hall. Miles of tables are already in position, set for dinner. At the front is a raised platform with an elegant podium. Somehow none of them expected this, least of all Baroni. Stunned, they stare at everything.

INT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - DAY

Phillips and his entourage are admiring the big game board. He goes to his side of the room where a table and large, comfortable chair are waiting for him. Phillips sits down and relaxes, the picture of confidence.

PHILLIPS

Damn, it's almost like the Pentagon strategy room.

MARSBURG

You should feel right at home, sir.

PHILLIPS

I do, Ed, I really do. There's a feeling in the air. It's victory, Ed. WORLD STRATEGY DOMINATION.

Above them, around the casino gaming area runs a second floor balcony.

On the balcony, in the shadows stands a man in uniform.

INT. CASINO BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

From the balcony, Rostocoff looks down on the General.

INT. CASINO BANQUET HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Baroni is with his friends. His face is covered with sweat and he is slightly trembling. His friends are concerned.

BARONI

Listen...I've gotta think...so many people. I mean...I didn't know. I've only played by mail...alone. I mean...I'm not feeling very well. Maybe I'd better...find a bathroom. You wait here...

Baroni rushes back through the casino searching for a men's room. His face is ashen. Finally, he sees a sign. There's a men's room upstairs on the second floor.

INT. CASINO SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff hurries into the men's room with the attaché case under his arm. The room is empty. Moving quickly to a stall, he enters, shuts the door and bolts it.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

Pulling down his pants, he sits on the toilet. Sweat beads out on his forehead. Quickly, he opens the case. Inside is a miniature sniper rifle broken down for carrying. Taking out the pieces, he starts assembling it.

Suddenly, the door to the restroom opens. Rostocoff stops assembling and waits for the intruder to leave.

INT. CASINO SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Baroni is a nervous wreck. He doesn't notice the occupied stall. After using the urinal, he goes to the sink. Slowly, he washes his face and hands.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff grows impatient. The man out there is taking a very long time.

INT. CASINO SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

After carefully drying his hands and face, Baroni begins pacing the floor, trying to calm his nerves.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff doesn't understand what's happening.

INT. CASINO SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gradually, without realizing it, Baroni paces nearer and nearer Rostocoff's stall.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, the corrective shoes become visible to Rostocoff...pacing...slowly pacing. He cannot believe his eyes. He turns white with terror. Sweat pours from him. He trembles.

INT. CASINO SECOND FLOOR MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As he paces, Baroni suddenly feels a strange intuitive sensation. Gradually, he focuses on the closed stall. He stops and turns toward the metal door. A look of shock and questioning is on his face. Under the door, he sees legs with pants down.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff sees the shoes stop and face him. He is frozen...motionless. Tears and sweat stream down his cheeks. In his mind, the assassin is raising the gun. Stifling a sob, he bites his lip until it bleeds. In a moment, he will be blown to pieces. Rostocoff is about to scream, leap up and throw open the door, when, suddenly, several men enter the restroom talking loudly.

MAN #1 (O.S.)

Well, you wouldn't feel so hot either if you'd just blown 500 bucks.

MAN #2 (O.S.)

I told you not to play 26. Didn't I tell you not to play 26?

MAN #1

SHUT UP.

Suddenly, the shoes vanish. Quickly, Rostocoff stuffs the weapon back in the case, jumps up, pulls up his pants and leaves the stall.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - MINUTES LATER

Rostocoff rushes from the building. A cab pulls up, but there is a line of people waiting for it. A very large, older woman starts to get in.

Rostocoff pushes past the people...throws her to the ground...and jumps in the cab himself. Everyone starts yelling at him.

WAITING MAN #1
HEY, YOU CAN'T DO THAT...

WAITING MAN #2
CALL THE COPS.

WAITING WOMAN
Did you see what he did to her.
SOMEBODY HELP HER.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

The driver jerks around and starts yelling at Rostocoff.

CAB DRIVER
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE...?

But the words die in his throat when he sees Rostocoff's face.

ROSTOCOFF
Drive...the airport...fast...

INT. CASINO BANQUET HALL - DAY

Baroni rejoins his friends. He is calm, but pale. He speaks quietly.

BARONI
I can't do this. My nerves are
playing tricks on me. Something's
wrong. It's the crowds...the noise.
I can't stand to be in here.

His friends are shocked.

PETE
But Mike...whadaya mean? This whole
thing's set up for you.

BARONI
I just can't play. I'll have to
forfeit.

ANGIE
(almost in tears)
Oh Michael...you would've won.

BARONI
It's no good. I shouldn't have come
here. I've made a terrible mistake.

ANGIE

NO. There's got to be a way.
There's got to.

She thinks desperately.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute. Listen...what if you
played from home, from the warehouse?

MOMO

Angie may have something there,
Michael. She may have.

BARONI

I don't know...maybe I could, but
they'd never allow it.

MOMO

Don't be too sure, my friend. Look
around. Betting alone is in the
millions. They might do just about
anything to save this game.

BARONI

It won't work. Even if they'd let
me, I can't do it. I don't have a
phone.

PETE

Don't worry about that. I'll rig
somethin' up.

ANGIE

Momo, will you stay and try to set
it up. You're good at that.

Momo gulps and looks lost.

MOMO

Well...I uhh...I mean...uhh...

ANGIE

Just do your best. Here's Michael's
official invitation.

(she takes it from
her purse and hands
it to him)

It's got to work...please!

MOMO

Well...certainly. I'll do everything
I can. I'll try...

Angie hugs him.

BARONI

I need to get out of here right now
or I'm gonna puke.

INT. CASINO BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The awards banquet is a gaudy affair. The hall is filled with people. The walls are covered with red, white and blue bunting. A military band is playing. At the front of the room on the stage are the huge trophy and a smaller trophy.

Not far away is the speaker's table and it's almost completely empty. The program is ready to begin. The crowd isn't listening to the band. There is much talk going on throughout the room.

INT. BACK STAGE - NIGHT

A group of men in tuxedos are standing in the wings. Among them are General Phillips, Colonel Marsburg, several members of Allan Lord's staff and some representatives from the casino. Lord is in the center of the group. Everyone is very disturbed.

Phillips is angry, but he maintains an icy calm. Allan Lord is the most upset of all.

PHILLIPS

(coldly)
...and you can't reach him?

ALLAN LORD

(shaking his head)
No listing. He said he was coming.
(turning to an
assistant)
Didn't he say he was coming?

Lord's assistant nods.

PHILLIPS

Well, where the hell is he? If I
hear that damn band play another
song...

ALLAN LORD

If...if he doesn't show up...

PHILLIPS

(deadly)
What do you mean, if he doesn't show
up?

Suddenly, from out of the shadows a meek, frightened man joins the group.

It's Momo and in his hand is the yellow telegram.

MOMO

Uhh...pardon me...Mr. Lord?

ALLAN LORD

Yes, yes, what do you want?

MOMO

I think you're looking for this...

Lord sees the telegram.

ALLAN LORD

BARONI? Oh, thank God you're here.
Where the hell have you been?

MOMO

No,no,no...I'm not him. But I know
where he is.

ALLAN LORD

WHAT?

MOMO

He's gone home.

All of the men are speechless with horror.

ALLAN LORD

What is this man saying to me.
Somebody tell me what this man is
saying?

MOMO

Oh, he was here earlier...but he...got
sick. I wanted to tell before,
but...but...you were so busy. And I
didn't know...what to say.

ALLAN LORD

I think I'm going to be ill. I THINK
I'M GOING TO BE VERY, VERY ILL.

PHILLIPS

(with extreme patience,
as though talking to
an idiot)

Well...when is he going to come back?

MOMO

Oh...he's not...

ALLAN LORD

I think...I need...an ambulance.

PHILLIPS

(with utterly strained
patience)

But what about the game. We were supposed to play a game together. Doesn't he understand that? I don't care if he comes in an iron lung...HE'S GOT TO PLAY THE GAME.

MOMO

You don't understand about him. He's not used to all this. He's only played by mail. You know...it's all these people and such. He went back home.

PHILLIPS

I'll send the whole damn army after him.

MOMO

He wanted me to talk to Mr. Lord about it. You see, he just has to be in his own game room...where he lives...by himself. I was gonna tell you all of this before...but I just couldn't. Anyway, he could play by calling in his moves on the telephone. But if you don't want to let him do that...I guess he'll have to forfeit. He's really sorry.

ALLAN LORD

SORRY? HE'S SORRY?

Phillips almost collars Lord.

PHILLIPS

(through gritted teeth)
Listen, I came here to play.

ALLAN LORD

What the hell can I do? You win by default.

PHILLIPS

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

A CASINO REP steps into the group. His silky-smooth look barely hides his toughness.

CASINO REP

No forfeiting, Mr. Lord. The casino would lose big. It would cost us millions. No way.

ALLAN LORD
 (utterly desperate)
 Well...the runner up is here. You
 could play the runner up.

PHILLIPS
 Unless I play the winner of that
 division, I will not accept that
 trophy.

CASINO REP
 Yeah, the runner up won't cut it.
 Changes all the odds. For the good
 of everybody involved, particularly
 you, Mr. Lord, I think you should
 take this man's suggestion. Let
 your player call in his moves.

PHILLIPS
 He'll have an advantage. It'll be
 easier to play without the crowd
 pressure.

ALLAN LORD
 All right, all right. He's got his
 representative here...
 (to Momo)
 YOU ARE HIS REPRESENTATIVE AREN'T
 YOU?

MOMO
 Oh, yes...yes sir...I am.

ALLAN LORD
 All right then...you can leave your
 representative, General. You can
 both play from wherever you damn
 please.

The crowd is getting restive. The band is just concluding a
 march. As Lord prepares to walk out onto the platform he
 hisses at Momo...

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)
 I. Hate. You.

Momo winces at every word.

INT. CASINO BANQUET HALL - MOMENTS LATER

The crowd cheers as Lord steps up to the microphone.

ALLAN LORD
 I'm very sorry for the delay.
 (MORE)

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

Our special thanks to the Fortress Military College Band. You have all waited so patiently...uhh...there has been a slight change of plans.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - MORNING

The crowd has gathered beneath the big game board for the beginning of the match. Momo is seated in a large, easy chair. In front of him is a table with a red telephone and writing supplies.

Marsburg sits in a similar chair across the room. A digital clock above the game board reads: DAY 1 - 0950 HOURS. Lord stands on a platform in the center of the room and speaks into a microphone.

ALLAN LORD

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to remind you of the special rules for this last round of competition. Once the game begins, it will continue without stop until midnight each night. Every morning, the starting time will be five o'clock AM. Each player will have a maximum of one hour to make a move. Up to three offensive or defensive combinations are legal. Nuclear strikes may be used only two times by each player during the entire competition. A player may not use nuclear weapons against his opponent's home country unless he occupies at least two grids within that country. It will be a grueling, brutal course...but THIS IS ARMAGEDDON!

The crowd applauds.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

Has telephone contact been made with both players?

Marsburg nods. He holds his phone. Momo looks very sheepish. The digital clock reads 0956.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - MORNING

Angie and Baroni watch as Pete works feverishly. He is hanging out of the fifth floor window, patching a line into the phone system from a pole below. Baroni holds an ancient black telephone to his ear.

BARONI
 OKAY...I'VE GOT IT. I'VE GOT A TONE.

Angie sighs with relief as Pete climbs back inside.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The red phone rings on Momo's table. The time is 0959.
 Momo and Allan Lord both breathe a sigh of relief.

MOMO
 Hello?
 (whispering)
 You're just barely in time. Where
 have...

Suddenly, Momo is aware of all the eyes on him.

MOMO (CONT'D)
 Uhh...we're...uhh...ready to commence
 play.

Lord takes a coin out of his pocket.

ALLAN LORD
 Colonel Marsburg, please call heads
 or tails.

MARSBURG
 Heads.

The coin drops.

ALLAN LORD
 Heads it is. General Phillips has
 either choice of sides or the first
 move.

Marsburg mumbles into the phone and then speaks up.

MARSBURG
 The General accepts choice of sides.
 Naturally, he chooses to lead the
 forces of the United States and her
 allies.

The crowd cheers. Red and yellow lights of various shades
 go on representing the forces of the western world on the
 giant map.

ALLAN LORD
 Then, your opponent will lead the
 Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.
 And he will have the first move.

Momo whispers into the telephone. Blue and green lights go on all over the board representing Baroni's forces.

ALLAN LORD (CONT'D)

Let the competition begin.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Baroni is sitting in his chair on top of his world. The old telephone is on a long cord. He mumbles into it and pushes several buttons on the control panel. Lights blink on in the Mideast, central Europe and the People's Republic of China.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

An announcer's voice booms out as the same lights flash on the big board.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Move one...Foxbat. Attack grid
362...West Germany. Ten armored and
infantry divisions supported by
tactical air strikes. Attack grid
526...Israel...saturation
bombing...high explosives, napalm,
chemical nerve agent...followed by
airborne assault and three divisions
of infantry. Attack grid
401...Taiwan, the Republic of China.
Massive nuclear missile strike.
Major civilian and military targets.

There is a pause.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Computer analysis move one, Foxbat.
West Germany, NATO engaged. Israel
70 percent civilian population and
total military capability destroyed.
Taiwan, Republic of China...
neutralized.

INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT GAME ROOM - DAY

Holding the phone, Phillips gazes down on his sophisticated world model. Several of his friends are with him. The same lights flash on his model. He looks confident. The clock behind him reads: 10:15.

PHILLIPS

Interesting...interesting.

INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT GAME ROOM - NIGHT

The clock now reads 8:30 PM. The look of confidence is gone from Phillips' face. All of the people with him look tense as he talks into the telephone.

PHILLIPS

I'm well aware of that, Marsburg.
And I don't need you to tell me.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - NIGHT

The digital clock now reads: DAY 1 - 2030 HOURS. Momo looks exhausted. Marsburg's tie is loose and his coat off. Many of the military people look slightly ill.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Computer analysis move 8...Cobra.
France...NATO defense inadequate.
Saudi Arabia...US armored attack
blocked. Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean
naval battle...outcome uncertain.
Nuclear attack, Panama. Canal
destroyed.

On the board it is obvious that Soviet forces are doing very well. Lights of blue and green are blazing on the border between western Germany and France. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are filled with them. A sea battle is raging in the Indian Ocean just outside the Persian Gulf.

Several people, including some military personnel are lined up to change their bets.

LIEUTENANT

(speaking quietly)

I don't care about the new odds.
Put it on Foxbat.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - NIGHT

Baroni slumps in his chair. The lights on his world are blazing. Angie takes his glasses off. He doesn't awaken.

INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT GAME ROOM - NIGHT

Phillips looks very tired as he dials the telephone.

PHILLIPS

Tom...this is Bill. Sorry to wake
you. Top priority. Get Colonel
Bates, duty officer at the computer
center. And bring your assistant,
what's his name? Yeah, Cranston.

(MORE)

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
Meet me in my office, 45 minutes.
It's an emergency.

INT. GENERAL PHILLIPS OFFICE - NIGHT

Phillips sits behind his desk. He's managed to straighten himself up a little bit, but still looks worn and frazzled. Lockman, Cranston and Bates are seated in front of him.

PHILLIPS
(unemotional)
I think you men are aware of what is
happening in Atlantic City.

They all nod.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
It is no secret that I am barely
holding my own. Now, I want you
to understand that the potential for
personal loss is of no concern.
However, I have come to believe that
much more is at stake here than any
of us have realized.

Lockman and Cranston glance at each other.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
If what I think is true...this is a
matter of the gravest national
importance.

He stands up and begins to pace.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
This opponent of mine...Foxbat...is
entirely too proficient to be what
he claims, only an individual,
civilian player. The fact is,
gentlemen, that in my entire career
I have never lost a war game to any
human opponent.

He pauses and looks hard at the men.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)
In point of fact, my only loss was
in a game two years ago...a special
contest that I played against the
Pentagon Central Strategy Computer.

Phillips begins to pace again.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

It is my belief that my opponent in Atlantic City is nothing less than a sophisticated, strategy computer of the first magnitude. A computer that we know as Foxbat.

The men look at each other not knowing what to say.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

If it is such a computer...as indeed it must be...there remains one question of paramount importance. Whose computer is it?

(beat)

General Lockman, Colonel Cranston, the task of military intelligence is to get us that information fast. And in total secrecy. Oh, how smoothly the subterfuge was handled at that banquet, arranging to play anonymously. It's got to be the Soviets. I'm competing against a Soviet computer.

LOCKMAN

But why would they risk such a thing?

PHILLIPS

What better way to test their system against us. They knew we would find out. They wanted us to. They wanted me to do exactly what I'm going to do. From this point on it will be computer against computer.

(beat)

Don't you understand? If they win they know they have reached full parity. They're ready for war. I believe that the future of the Western World is at stake in this game. And we're going to show them what our technology can do.

He turns to Bates.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Colonel Bates, beginning tomorrow morning I want all of my moves dictated by the Pentagon Central Strategy Computer.

BATES

Sir, I'm not sure I can get geared up in less than four hours. The variables...

Phillips shoves a stack of papers at him.

PHILLIPS

You'll find the variables are almost exactly those already programmed into the system for simulated global warfare.

(beat)

Gentlemen, from this point forward we are on full alert. The United States is at simulated war.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - LATE MORNING

Baroni walks around his world...sweating and agonizing over his moves. Angie tries to offer him food. He refuses it with a wave. The pressure is extreme.

BARONI

I can't understand it. He's so much better. Why is he so much better than yesterday?

INT. CASINO LOBBY - LATE MORNING

The tension in the casino is mounting. The tactical situation is changing. Momo and Marsburg are on their telephones. Momo mops his forehead with part of the table cloth. Marsburg stares across the room at him.

The board is glowing with lights. The red and yellow lights have pushed back a grid into Germany. The naval war in the Indian Ocean is expanding to the advantage of the U.S.

Red and blue lights are alive in all the countries of the Mideast. A second naval battle is being mounted in the North Sea. The Scandinavian countries are covered with red and blue lights. The lights are at war in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Computer analysis day two...move 20, Cobra. West Germany. Warsaw Pact forces are falling back. Civilian population centers destroyed. Norway. Warsaw Pact forces blocked. Afghanistan...U.S. armored infantry drive continuing.

EXT. WASHINGTON STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

A car pulls up to the curb on a busy street. A telephone in a booth is ringing. Mikhail Rostocoff gets out of the car and hurries to the booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

He picks up the phone.

ROSTOCOFF

Why have you waited so long to contact me? Do you have what I want? There is new evidence...

CRANSTON (O.S.)

(on phone)

SHUT UP. LISTEN. Time is short.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Cranston is in a phone booth talking into the phone.

CRANSTON

Now get this straight. There is no Pentagon plot to assassinate Soviet agents.

(pause)

I AM NOT LYING. CLOSE YOUR STINKING TRAP AND LISTEN TO ME. The war game contest in Atlantic City, do you know about it.

(pause)

ROSTOCOFF, ANSWER ME.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff is white and trembling.

ROSTOCOFF

What...do you know...of Atlantic City?

CRANSTON (O.S.)

(on the phone)

The whole damn Pentagon is in an uproar. Is the Soviet Union involved in those games?

ROSTOCOFF

WHY ARE YOU WASTING MY TIME WITH SUCH IDIOCY. IS THIS ALL YOU HAVE FOR ME...GAMES?

CRANSTON

(coldly with authority)

Look down the street. Do you see a black car?

Rostocoff looks. There is a black car parked a block away. He begins to shake.

CRANSTON (CONT'D)

Listen carefully. There is no plot, but your life is still at stake. General Lockman suspects that you are the murderer we have all been looking for. During the last 24 hours your every move has been watched. If you follow my directions to the letter, you will be safe. I have protected you and will continue to do so...if you cooperate.

Rostocoff stands rigidly, almost frozen, gripping the phone.

CRANSTON (CONT'D)

First, go to your apartment and destroy all those ridiculous photographs. You're getting sloppy in your old age. Yes, I know they're there. I saw them myself. I am arranging for evidence to be planted on another man...an agent from Chile. But there is work to be done. ROSTOCOFF...ARE YOU LISTENING?

ROSTOCOFF

(a croak)

Yes...

CRANSTON

The war games in Atlantic City, some organization using the code name Foxbat is competing with the Pentagon Strategy computer and nobody knows who's going to win. Do you understand the implications of that, Rostocoff? It's no longer a game. The whole balance of power is in jeopardy. A Pentagon team is searching for Foxbat right now.

(beat)

And if you want to stay alive, you've got a job. Find Foxbat before they do. I've muddled up their search so you can get there first.

(MORE)

CRANSTON (CONT'D)

A team of my people are standing by in New York. That's where Foxbat appears to be located. Go there. Destroy everything, people, computers, nothing must remain by tomorrow morning. We can't let any of it fall into the hands of the Pentagon. The kill must be done between midnight and five AM. You have no choice about this, Rostocoff. Fail to destroy Foxbat and you die.

The phone clicks off.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - LATE AFTERNOON

Cranston leaves the phone booth and moves to a waiting car. A TOUGH-LOOKING MAN is behind the wheel. Cranston talks to him through the window.

CRANSTON

He will be followed to New York. You meet him there. A limo will be waiting. Approval has come direct from Moscow. After you destroy Foxbat, kill Rostocoff and leave him. He's gone totally insane. All of it will be blamed on his insanity.

INT. PENTAGON WAR STRATEGY ROOM - EVENING

Phillips has called a meeting. Fifty key military leaders are assembled. Behind Phillips is a war strategy board larger than any ever seen. It shows nothing yet. Phillips looks like a tired, old man as he speaks to his subordinates.

PHILLIPS

...And for a short time today, it looked as though we were gaining the advantage. We've all known that it would come to this, simulated warfare in preparation for actual conflict. That is why we spent billions to develop the most efficient, flexible...and destructive computer we thought possible. In a few hours, we will have reached the end of the second full day of war. It is my duty to clarify the status of our situation.

Phillips nods to a man at a control panel. The giant strategy board leaps into life with a frightening message.

War is raging throughout Europe, the Mideast, northern Africa, the British Isles and Japan. In addition, it has come to the coasts of Canada and Mexico. The men in the room are shocked.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

We are in the middle of a simulated holocaust. Our computer system, which we believed to be the most advanced in the history of technological warfare, is clearly unable to withstand the onslaught.

He nods to the man at the control panel again. Huge words flash across the screen. SIMULATED GLOBAL CONFLICT - DAY TWO. PROJECTED OUTCOME - DEFEAT. ALTERNATIVE FULL NUCLEAR STRIKE.

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Military intelligence has been searching for Foxbat. General Lockman...?

LOCKMAN

Sir, as of yet we do not have any information. All transcontinental telephone lines and satellite transmissions are being monitored. So far, without success. We are working as fast as we can without stirring up any attention. The slightest threat of exposure could cause Foxbat to break and run. Indications are that the contact point could be located in New York City.

PHILLIPS

Have you gotten any information from the contest staff?

LOCKMAN

No such attempt has been made due to the uproar it would cause. The rules of the game have been so deeply breached by both sides that we felt everything must be done in complete secrecy. At the conclusion of this meeting I am leaving for Atlantic City to personally coordinate the search.

PHILLIPS

Gentlemen, the situation is desperate.
(MORE)

PHILLIPS (CONT'D)

Foxbat must be found before the end of the game. In the meantime, I have notified the President of the gravity of the situation. By his Executive Order, effective immediately, all United States and NATO forces throughout the world are on high alert. Within 24 hours, simulation could become reality.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - MIDNIGHT

Baroni is a sweating, exhausted hulk. He sits staring at nothing. Angie and Pete are with him.

BARONI

I can't believe it. It's...so hard. Never like this before.

ANGIE

It's over for the day. You've got to sleep, Michael. You're going to pass out.

PETE

You're winning, Mike. You're winning.

BARONI

I don't think I can keep going. He's too good. I don't think I've got the strength.

ANGIE

You've got to sleep. Come on. Right now. We'll stay with you.

She helps him up. He stumbles to a cot and slumps into it.

INT. ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS HALLWAY - NIGHT

The hall is empty. Three heavily armed men wearing masks enter. They place a directional explosive onto the door of an office. After setting it, they jump back. It explodes, blowing open the door. The men rush in.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE ALLAN LORD AMUSEMENTS - A SHORT TIME LATER

The three men rush out of the building and get into a late model limousine that's waiting.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff and a driver are waiting inside as the men leap into the vehicle. Rostocoff looks like a caged animal. One of the men hands the driver a piece of paper. They take off their masks. The leader of the group is the tough-looking man Cranston spoke to.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN
GO, GO, WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.
LET'S GET 'EM.

The limousine speeds away.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - NIGHT

All the lights are off on the fifth floor. Baroni is asleep on the cot. Angie is sleeping in the chair bent over the table and Pete is rolled up in a blanket on the floor.

Suddenly, Baroni's eyes flash open. The same strange, terrible feeling is coming over him again. He gropes for his glasses and looks at his watch.

Getting up he goes to a window and looks out. The street below is empty, but he knows something is wrong.

INT. WAREHOUSE STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Quietly, so he won't wake his friends, Baroni moves down through the darkness of the stairs, compelled by his intuition.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Finally, he stands just inside the lighted warehouse door that leads to the street. He's afraid to open it.

EXT. SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

At that moment, the black limousine pulls up to the entrance to Baroni's block. Its lights are off as it stops in the shadows.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

The men inside scrutinize the warehouse a block away.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN
Smithfield storage. That's gotta be
it.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Slowly, Baroni reaches for the door handle. Opening the door a little way, cautiously, he tries to see out.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

The men see the door open. One of them points.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Baroni doesn't see the limousine. The street appears empty.

EXT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Very slowly and fearfully, he steps out from the protection of the building. He's confused, uncertain of his intuition. He stands under the light outside the door, but his face is not visible.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Rostocoff's full attention is drawn to Baroni. At first, he doesn't recognize him. He can't see his shadowed face under the light. But then...very slowly...terror begins to grip him as he sees Baroni start to walk down the block toward them...limping.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN

We'll hit him and then move inside.

EXT. SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Baroni still doesn't know the car is there. Yet, he is closer. He pauses beneath a street light and looks around.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, Baroni's face is totally visible to Rostocoff. He begins to shake uncontrollably. The other three men are getting out of the car. They expect Rostocoff to follow.

EXT. SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Baroni sees the men as they walk toward him.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff is strangling with terror. Instead of getting out, he slams the car door shut and shrieks. In an instant, his gun is to the driver's head.

ROSTOCOFF

IT'S A TRAP. A TRAP TO KILL ME.
DRIVE. DRIVE.

EXT. SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

The limousine leaps forward. The three men in the street are startled, but they recover quickly. Baroni is frightened. As they get closer, the Tough-looking Man calls out to him.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN

Good evening.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS

The limousine races forward. The driver tries to draw his gun. There is a terrifying struggle. Rostocoff shoots him in the head. The car crashes into the side of a building. Rostocoff is knocked unconscious on the floor.

INT. SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Ignoring the crash, the men confront Baroni.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN

Beautiful night, isn't it?

Baroni doesn't answer.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN (CONT'D)

We're looking for Michael N. Baroni.

Baroni can't bring himself to speak.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN (CONT'D)

(softly)

Could that be you? Could you be
Michael N. Baroni?

The man pulls out a black automatic with a silencer. He smiles as he carefully points it between Baroni's eyes.

TOUGH-LOOKING MAN (CONT'D)

Guess what, Foxbat. You lose.

Baroni turns and runs, hobbling pitifully as fast as he can. The man smiles as he aims at Baroni's back. Just as he's pulling the trigger, a baseball bat crashes down on his forearms. The muffled shot misses. He screams in agony as his arms are broken. The Savage Knights leap onto them from windows above.

Baroni doesn't even turn around. He just keeps running for the warehouse. Behind him, the Knights have complete control of Cranston's men. They drag them into the darkness. There are more screams and blows...then silence.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - MOMENTS LATER

The limousine sits crashed against the building. The driver is slumped over the wheel, dead. Rostocoff is still unconscious on the floor in the back.

Suddenly, the car is engulfed with gang members wielding baseball bats and sledge hammers. In only a few moments the limousine is destroyed. The Knights vanish as quickly as they appeared.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff slowly opens his eyes. His skin is horribly discolored by the street light. He is covered with glass. His face is cut and bleeding. Never have his eyes been filled with more hate and insanity. Slowly, he rises.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR LIVING SPACE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Baroni stands trembling, his chest heaving, gasping for air. Pete and Angie wake up startled and confused.

ANGIE

Michael...what's wrong?

PETE

What's goin' on?

BARONI

(gasping)

Someone...someone tried to...someone tried to...kill me.

PETE

Man, you're dreamin'.

BARONI

NO, NO, IT WAS REAL.

ANGIE

What are you saying?

BARONI

They tried to shoot me...down on the street.

PETE

Muggers...

BARONI

Was no mugger. Three of'em. Got out of a Cadillac.

Slowly, Baroni catches his breath and gets control.

BARONI (CONT'D)

Knew my name. Andres got'em.

(beat)

I could feel them coming. The feeling...it woke me up.

Baron's fear begins to grip Pete and Angie.

ANGIE

But Michael...why...?

BARONI

It's because of the game.

ANGIE

The game?

BARONI

He was about to shoot me...then he said, Foxbat, you lose. Those exact words.

PETE

Oh, man, that's NUTS.

ANGIE

But the game is only a game.

Baroni looks at them. He is beginning to understand what is happening.

BARONI

No, no, not anymore.

Suddenly, the freight elevator begins to groan. Baroni stares at it, terrified, once again sweating and frozen. His fear gets to the others. Pete looks around for a weapon. The only thing he sees is the ancient Samurai sword. He grabs it and stands ready at the elevator entrance.

When it arrives, it's filled with gang members. They are relieved. The gang mocks Pete for his sword.

KNIGHT #1

Hey, look at this cabron. It's Kung fu.

They all laugh uproariously. Pete looks very sheepish as he lowers his sword. Andres walks to the table and drops three automatic pistols with silencers. Angie cringes when she sees them.

ANDRES

You got fancy friends, man. But they won't be visitin' no more.

The gang laughs. Andres silences them with a wave. Baroni looks like he's going to be ill.

ANDRES (CONT'D)

We save your ass, man. You ain't worth it, but we done it anyway...cause we like you so much. NOW YOU OWE US.

The gang yells in agreement.

ANDRES (CONT'D)

So I got a little question. Why would pros come down here in a big flashy car to dump on a broken-down, crippled, two-bit warehouse janitor? What you got goin' for yourself, little man? We want in. What you got stashed in this stinkin' heap?

The gang shouts their agreement and gathers menacingly around Baroni and Angie.

BARONI

(scared)

There's nothing...nothing here. You've gotta believe me.

The gang doesn't believe him. They shout at him and move in closer. It's then that Angie steps to Baroni's defense. And she is really angry.

ANGIE

LEAVE HIM ALONE, DO YOU HEAR ME?
LEAVE...HIM...ALONE.

The gang is so surprised at her that they stop. Angie focuses on her brother.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

(almost in tears)

You could never understand...no, not you. You could never understand somebody who didn't spend his life hurting and killing and ripping people off. And what the hell do you have going for yourself? He's telling the truth. And I'm not going to let you hurt him. DO YOU HEAR ME? HE'S BETTER THAN ALL OF YOU PUT TOGETHER.

There is a moment of uncomfortable silence, then Baroni speaks.

BARONI

You want to know what's happening?
Okay. I'm playing a game...you know
that. A really big game. For a lot
of money. 200 thousand dollars.
And I'm winning. If you want it,
you can have half the prize.

The gang is excited. Angie and Pete are shocked.

BARONI (CONT'D)

Whatever's happening, it's not gonna
stop with those three men. More
will come...and more.

ANGIE

Oh, Michael...

BARONI

(with a strange look
in his eyes)

The game never was a game. Games
always turn out to be real. Always.

ANDRES

So what we gotta do? What's the
catch?

BARONI

The catch is after what you've done
they're gonna try to kill us all.
These guys are professionals. I've
gotta have guards. We have to know
when they come for us. The real
battle's gonna take place in the
warehouse...right here. I want to
set up the bottom floors to protect
this room...just long enough to finish
the game. You have to keep them
away from me for 36 hours. When
they come next time, all hell's gonna
break loose.

ANDRES

So, let's get going? What do you
want us to do first?

BARONI

We start on the ground floor.

The gang heads for the elevator. Baroni is about to follow
them, when Angie grabs his arm and speaks urgently to him.

ANGIE

Michael, why don't you just stop?
If you stop the game, maybe they'll
leave us alone.

Baroni shakes his head sadly.

BARONI

After you've played a game long
enough, you can't stop. The game
starts playing you.

INT. CASINO - PRIVATE HOTEL ROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Cranston and Lockman are with a team of Pentagon specialists.
They've set up listening equipment.

LOCKMAN

(angry)

I want to know how the hell Rostocoff
could have slipped out of
surveillance.

CRANSTON

I don't understand it, but I'll find
out.

LOCKMAN

Who'd you put on him, a bunch of
high school kids?

CRANSTON

No, sir...

LOCKMAN

Well, I've called the dogs. We'll
find the bastard.

CRANSTON

Regarding Foxbat, here's what I've
done so far. I've ordered a team to
Lord Amusements. They're going to
work with the police.

LOCKMAN

WHAT?

CRANSTON

Somebody tried to blast their way
into Lord's building during the night.

LOCKMAN

DAMMIT!

CRANSTON

Anyway...we'll get what we want quietly. We should have a fix on Foxbat's location anytime. And the phone tap is set up for the casino. I've made sure the phone in their man's room is cut off. Their only contact will be the game phone. We'll hear every word. First call should happen any time.
 (checks his watch)
 It's 4:45 now. They're usually on the button.

Suddenly, the phone rings...and Cranston's face goes absolutely ashen. The room is tense. Foxbat is calling in.

MOMO (O.S.)

(over phone)

Hello...Michael...?

BARONI (O.S.)

(over phone)

I tried to call you a couple of hours ago.

MOMO

My phone is out in the room. And the hotel didn't have anybody who could fix it.

BARONI

Listen...listen to me. Everything's changed.

MOMO

What do you mean?

BARONI

You've gotta be careful. A few hours ago three men tried to kill me.

Lockman and Momo are equally shocked.

MOMO

WHAT?

LOCKMAN

Damn, DAMN...

(to Cranston)

I want to know who made that hit.

Cranston can only shake his head.

MOMO

What do you mean they tried to kill you? Who?

BARONI

No time to talk now. Just be careful. Are you ready for my moves?

MOMO

Shoot.

BARONI

Three armored divisions to grid 540. Got that? 540.

Slowly, the truth is dawning on Lockman.

LOCKMAN

Turn it down. Record it all.

Baroni's voice disappears. Lockman begins to talk almost to himself.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

What if...just suppose...that the whole Pentagon assumption is all wrong. What if it isn't the Soviet Union...or any country? What if there's no computer at all? JUST ONE GUY ALL ALONE?

Cranston doesn't like this line of reasoning, but he's afraid to say anything.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

Just a guy who likes to play games. War strategy games. And the only thing that makes him different from everybody else is the fact that he happens to be THE GREATEST MILITARY STRATEGIST WHO'S EVER LIVED? What if that were true? What would he mean to this country?

(beat)

And what would happen...IF THE SOVIETS FOUND HIM FIRST? THEY'D KILL HIM.

The phone rings on another line into the room. Cranston picks it up.

CRANSTON

Go ahead.

He listens for a moment, then turns to Lockman.

CRANSTON (CONT'D)

Trace has gone through. It's
someplace in Harlem. Can't tell
exactly where. Not a number. Phone
company is checking it out.

LOCKMAN

Oh, dear God, this guy is gonna be
dead. Is he still on the line?

The specialist monitoring Foxbat's call nods.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

I'VE GOTTA TALK TO HIM RIGHT NOW.

He races from the room. Cranston is right behind him.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - DAWN

Lockman runs across the Casino with Cranston following.
They get to Momo's table just as he hangs up the red phone.
Momo is shaken by Baroni's call. With a trembling hand, he
hands Foxbat's moves on a sheet of paper to one of the
officials who is standing by.

LOCKMAN

Listen, I know somebody's trying to
hurt your friend. I've gotta talk
to him right away. He needs
protection.

MOMO

(afraid and suspicious)
Oh, yeah? How'd you know that? I
just found out myself one second
ago.

LOCKMAN

PLEASE...just let me talk to him.
Get him back on the phone.

MOMO

Can't be done. Can't help you even
if I wanted to. Just have to wait
another hour.

(beat)

Who the hell are you anyway?

Lockman is so frustrated he can hardly stand it.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - DAWN

The gang is working fast, rearranging the junk on the first
floor.

EXT. ROOFTOP SOME DISTANCE AWAY - DAWN

The leaders of the Skulls watch the warehouse. They see the Knights carrying things into the building.

SKULL #1

What you think they got in there,
man?

SKULL #2

I don't know, but we gonna find out
and pay'em back good. Kick their
damn asses.

INT. CASINO LOBBY - ONE HOUR LATER

The phone rings at Momo's table. He picks it up. Lockman and Cranston are close by.

MOMO

Hello, Michael...?

BARONI (O.S.)

(over telephone)

Have you got Cobra's moves?

MOMO

Yeah, but first, there's a guy here
who wants to talk to you real bad.

BARONI

Who is he?

MOMO

Some kind of general.

BARONI

I don't want to talk to him.

MOMO

That's what I told him you'd say...

Lockman pulls the phone from Momo.

MOMO (CONT'D)

HEY...?

LOCKMAN

Listen, please listen to me. This
is General Lockman...

BARONI

(yelling)

I DON'T WANT TO TALK TO YOU...

LOCKMAN

I'm head of military intelligence at the Pentagon. I know somebody has tried to kill you. I believe it's the Soviets.

BARONI

OR THE UNITED STATES ARMY...

LOCKMAN

NO, NO, PLEASE BELIEVE ME. It wasn't us. I want to help you. You need protection. They'll come back. I want to send a team.

BARONI

ABSOLUTELY NOT. YOU LEAVE ME ALONE.

LOCKMAN

I'M TRYING TO KEEP YOU ALIVE. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND. I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY. PLEASE...JUST GIVE ME YOUR LOCATION.

BARONI

YOU ALREADY HAVE MY LOCATION.

A man comes up to Cranston and hands him a slip of paper. Cranston looks at it, then gets Lockman's attention.

LOCKMAN

Just a moment...please...hold on.

BARONI

LET ME TALK TO...

Lockman takes the phone from his ear...but won't give it to Momo.

MOMO

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

CRANSTON

(whispering)

We've got his address.

LOCKMAN

(whispering)

Get the place surrounded, but tell'em to stay completely out of sight.

CRANSTON

Let me go up there alone and talk to him. I could gain his confidence.

Lockman nods and turns back to the phone.

LOCKMAN

(to Baroni)

Listen...please...we don't want to hurt you. We are not your enemies. Let me send my assistant...unarmed... to talk to you. He'll meet you anywhere you want.

There is a pause.

LOCKMAN (CONT'D)

Are you still there?

BARONI

Okay...maybe. I'll think about it. I'll tell you in one hour. NOW LET ME TALK TO MY FRIEND.

Lockman hands the phone back to Momo.

INT. PENTAGON WAR STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

The scene on the big board is growing more desperate by the hour. It burns with lights. The United States is surrounded by red and yellow forces. On the sea. Throughout Canada and Mexico. Phillips has pulled back what he has left of his army. Blue and green lights stand ready at the borders of the country prepared to defend against assault.

The war room is filled with ringing phones and tense voices. Phillips alone sits quietly...without emotion. In the face of impending defeat, the total professional.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - DAY

Baroni is just finishing a new set of moves. Pete and Andres are with him.

ANDRES

You're crazy, man. All I gotta say is don't get yourself wiped out before you win. After that, you can go to hell.

BARONI

Is the work all finished?

ANDRES

Yeah, it's done. And there's nothin' movin' on the street.

PETE

Mike, you don't trust this Pentagon jerk, do you?

BARONI

Trust has nothing to do with it.
I'll meet him away from the warehouse.
It'll buy us time.

ANDRES

Like I said, you are ready for the
loony bin, man.

BARONI

I have to know why this game matters
so much. I have to. But the most
important reason is strategy.

PETE

Ain't good strategy to get yourself
killed.

BARONI

The way the game is going right now
I might be able to finish by the
first moves tomorrow morning. A
meeting might stall them off, keep
them from trying to get in here for
awhile. So I told him 3:30 AM. No
sooner. If anybody tries to get in
here before that, I'll vanish without
a trace. He understands. Now listen,
Pete. I want you to get some of
your friends...

INT. CASINO LOBBY - EVENING

The casino is a frazzled mess. Momo is a nervous heap at
his table. Marsburg slouches, looking anything but military
in his sweaty clothes. The attack on the Continental United
States is well underway.

INT. PENTAGON WAR STRATEGY ROOM - NIGHT

In the Pentagon strategy room, the clock reads 2355 hours.
The generals and their aides are pouring over every possible
move and counter move. They're desperate. Only Phillips is
calm. His uniform is freshly pressed and immaculate.

Above them, the big board glows with fiery colors. Battle
lights are flashing through the United States. The major
lines of red and yellow are moving toward each other. One
from the north and the other from the south. They are driving
forcefully toward Washington, DC. Washington is about to be
crushed.

Giant letters flash out the message: SIMULATED EVACUATION.
PRIORITY ONE PERSONNEL NOW IN FINAL STAGES. LAST WARNING.

A call comes to Phillips at his desk. He picks up the phone.

PHILLIPS

(quietly)

Yes, I'll take it.

INT. MOBILE UNIT - HARLEM - NIGHT

Lockman is in a mobile command unit calling Phillips.

LOCKMAN

We are at Foxbat's location. We have it surrounded.

INT. PENTAGON WAR STRATEGY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PHILLIPS

Well, what are you waiting for, General? Why don't you move in?

LOCKMAN (O.S.)

(over phone)

We're afraid of scaring him off, Sir. I'm positive it's just one...lone...person.

PHILLIPS

Absolutely impossible. But it doesn't make any difference anymore. Do you understand? At all costs, Foxbat must be stopped before the game ends. I hope that is completely clear to you. Foxbat must not be allowed to make its next move tomorrow morning. It must be forced to lose by forfeit. We...must...win.

LOCKMAN

My assistant is going to meet Foxbat in three and a half hours. Just to talk.

PHILLIPS

Just to talk?

LOCKMAN

We have no other choice. We're in the middle of a slum. If we set foot near his building he'll vanish. And I believe he can do it in spite of all our surveillance. We can't risk a direct attack unless there is no other alternative. Sir...this man is a national asset. We've got to protect him.

Phillips responds with a voice like a blade of ice.

PHILLIPS

National asset be damned. Tomorrow I will face the President...the Congress...the nation...the free world...and tell them that the Pentagon Strategy Team, upon which our very freedom depends, a team utilizing the most expensive and sophisticated computer ever built...HAS LOST A SIMULATED WORLD WAR. NO. It could unleash the holocaust. The game must be stopped before this night is over. Do you understand, General? Do whatever is necessary...even it means someone must die.

INT. CAR ON EVIL SLUM STREET - NIGHT

Cranston is inside with several men in an unmarked military vehicle. All of them are in civilian clothes. Cranston checks his watch.

CRANSTON

I've got 3:25. Give me fifteen minutes. If I don't come back...get in there.

EXT. EVIL SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

Cranston gets out of the car and begins walking down the dark street. Reaching into his coat pocket, he clicks the safety off his automatic.

He turns a corner. In front of him is a narrow space between two deserted buildings. At the end, a light hangs down.

EXT. SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS - CONTINUOUS

Cranston walks toward the light and stops under it. Baroni steps out of the shadows.

BARONI

Okay, you've got two minutes.

Cranston stares at him.

CRANSTON

You're Foxbat?

BARONI

TWO MINUTES.

CRANSTON

First, I want to congratulate you on the way you've played the game. Your strategy is brilliant. In fact, that's the problem. You've played too well.

(beat)

Do you know who you're really playing against. Would you like to know?

BARONI

Some army general.

CRANSTON

Oh no, not anymore. You were playing against the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But that changed at the very beginning when you started to beat him.

BARONI

So who am I playing against now?

CRANSTON

You've outsmarted yourself, my friend. You're not just playing against an army general. You've taken on the whole Joint Chiefs of Staff and the damn Pentagon strategy computer.

BARONI

(trembling)

No...no...I can't believe that.

CRANSTON

Oh, yes. It's true. And most important of all...you're going to win. That makes you the most dangerous man alive.

He takes out the pistol and aims at Baroni.

BARONI

But it's only a game.

CRANSTON

I know, but now you've changed the whole balance of power. I think you understand why I have to kill you. It's for the good of the world.

BARONI

(yelling woodenly)

PLEASE...DON'T SHOOT ME.

It's a signal. Suddenly, Cranston is struck from above by a garbage can that knocks him to the ground. Then sand bags and refuse rain down on him dropped from a platoon of bums stationed in all the open windows. It continues until he is completely covered.

BARONI (CONT'D)

You brought a load of crap...but so did I.

When Cranston manages to crawl out of the stinking heap, Baroni is gone. He has escaped the way he came, through a large hole in one building that is now boarded up. Cranston is covered in feces.

Enraged, he struggles to get up, then rushes toward the street.

EXT. EVIL SLUM STREET - CONTINUOUS

But he hasn't gone more than a few feet when he is tripped and sprawls on his face. In an instant, a cord is around his neck strangling him.

On top of him is Rostocoff. The agent is filthy. His face is covered with dried blood. His clothes are torn. The last vestige of sanity is gone from him. As he chokes Cranston, he whispers almost soothingly in his ear.

ROSTOCOFF

Hello, old friend. It was you all along. You sent me to where he was waiting so I could be killed. But you failed. And now the game has changed.

(beat)

Let yourself go. Drift off into the great ocean of eternity. And after you are gone, he will die...slowly, because of the torment. I could have drowned him before, but I waited because I knew you would come.

Cranston's eyes bulge out as he chokes. There is a flash of the needle.

ROSTOCOFF (CONT'D)

(grunting at the effort)

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea...with seaweed red and brown...till human voices wake us...and we drown.

The needle protrudes from Cranston's eye.

Suddenly, the military car screeches around the corner. Its headlights shine on Rostocoff as he pulls out the needle.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The men see Rostocoff clearly as he drops Cranston and vanishes into the darkness.

MILITARY AGENT
THAT'S ROSTOCOFF.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - NIGHT

Baroni rushes into his game room. He is sweating, but joyous and exhilarated. Angie is waiting for him. Switching off the lights, he goes to the window. Angie joins him. They look down on the empty street.

ANGIE
What happened?

BARONI
He tried to kill me just like I knew he would.

ANGIE
Oh, Michael...

BARONI
It's okay, it's okay. I was right.
It's the Pentagon.

ANGIE
But why?

BARONI
The game's all messed up. I'm not playing against a single man anymore.

ANGIE
What do you mean?

BARONI
Cobra's the whole Pentagon. The whole thing.

ANGIE
How could that be?

BARONI
I don't know, but it doesn't matter anymore. They'll never let me live. I'm sure of it now.

Angie is too upset to speak.

BARONI (CONT'D)

You've got to get out of here,
Angie...fast. They're going to come.
And they're gonna hit us hard.

ANGIE

And you're going to stay?

BARONI

I have to. It's all finished. All
figured out. Just one more move and
I can't get Momo in his hotel room.
They've taken care of that. I've
got to be here to place that call in
one hour. If I can just live for
one more hour. But you have to get
out of here, Angie, right now.

ANGIE

NO. I'm staying with you...no matter
what. I love you, Michael.

Then, through all his obsession, he truly sees her. He takes
her in his arms. They cling together.

BARONI

I love you too. Thank you for
everything. I'm sorry. I just played
too long. Now there's no way out.

ANGIE

I won't leave you.

EXT. WAREHOUSE FRONT - NIGHT

A small, hollow thump is heard. The electric light over the
warehouse door is shot out. A Pentagon agent in the shadows
stands holding a pistol with a silencer. Two more agents
rush to the door and place a satchel charge.

EXT. WAREHOUSE OPPOSITE SIDE - CONTINUOUS

In a tiny, dark alcove on the other side of the warehouse
behind several large trash bins Rostocoff is working
feverishly. He has loosened the bolts on an old ventilation
fan and is prying an opening into the building.

EXT. WAREHOUSE FRONT - CONTINUOUS

The demolition team leaps away. There is a tremendous
explosion and door is blown open.

A Pentagon attack squad of 40 men rushes into the building.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Inside, they fan out with weapons raised. The room is dark and quiet.

EXT. WAREHOUSE OPPOSITE SIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff crawls into the first floor of the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff crawls in behind a mountainous stack of newspapers.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR FRONT - CONTINUOUS

The Pentagon team searches the room with flashlights. They try the light switches. None work. The room is filled with trash in huge mounds. The men can't see either the stairs or the elevator. Both are well-hidden behind piles of stinking refuse.

TEAM MEMBER #1

Smells like a sewer.

The team breaks into smaller search groups. They move down paths that run between the mounds.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR REAR - CONTINUOUS

Mikhail Rostocoff crawls on his hands and knees from behind a giant stack of trash. He hears the sounds of men on the other side of the building.

Suddenly, in front of him he sees a figure standing silently. The man's back seems to be toward him, but it's hard to see in the darkness. He takes out his needle, then, like a cat, he is on the man, driving the point into his back. To his surprise, he finds himself attacking one of Baroni's mannequins.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR FRONT - CONTINUOUS

As the Pentagon team searches through the room for a way up into the building, they too, confront and attack mannequins grouped together.

One squad finds itself trying to kill Confederate soldiers. The men are unnerved.

TEAM MEMBER #1

This is crazy.

TEAM MEMBER #2

Store dummies...what in hell?

Another squad attacks mannequins dressed as Roman soldiers.

TEAM MEMBER #3

Man, this place is stinking weird.

TEAM MEMBER #4

Keep moving.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR REAR - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff stalks. In front of him is another mannequin. With rage, he throws it aside and creeps around a mountain of reeking refuse...only to confront a third, dark figure. But when he tries to push this one away he discovers it's a real man. Before he can react, he's struck across the face with a board. He falls.

His attacker is about to strike him again, when Rostocoff pulls out his automatic with the silencer and shoots him. There is a dull thump as the man falls dead.

Rostocoff sits on the floor with his needle in one hand and his pistol in the other. His head is reeling from the blow. Blood drips down his face. This infuriates him even more. He struggles to his feet.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Pentagon team is fragmented around the room and nervous due to the false attacks on mannequins. Suddenly, there is the blasting shriek of many air horns. From inside the mounds of trash hordes of gang members emerge and attack.

INT. WAREHOUSE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff hears the fighting erupt. Then, from above him someone jumps on his back. He finds himself being strangled. There is a fierce struggle as Rostocoff gains control and kills his attacker.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR FRONT - CONTINUOUS

For a few moments, the Pentagon team takes a beating, but very quickly they gain the upper hand. Part of the team manages to find the stairway. It's blocked by newspapers on their side and wood on the other.

There is a signal. The whole team pulls back and regroups, fighting around the stairway entrance. Demolition specialists place a satchel charge behind the newspapers by the stairway door. The whole team drops to the floor as an explosion rocks the building.

The stairway door is gone leaving a gaping hole. The team heads for the stairs. The fighting is fierce.

INT. WAREHOUSE NEAR ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff crawls to the top of a huge mound of trash and watches in the dim light. His head is aching and bloody.

INT. WAREHOUSE STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

On the stairway between the first and second floors, the assault team discovers that a second wooden barrier has been erected. A second satchel charge is placed against it and the team falls back.

Just as it is about to go off, Andres reaches through the barrier and pushes it down the stairs. It explodes, killing the demolition men and blowing out a number of steps.

INT. WAREHOUSE NEAR ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

From his perch on the mound of refuse, Rostocoff turns and looks behind him. He is in front and above the freight elevator. Quickly, he slithers over the top and into it.

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff gropes, trying to make the elevator work, but it's been disconnected. He feels around the ceiling until he finds a panel. He struggles to remove it.

EXT. SLUM STREET NEAR THE WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Lockman's mobile command post is parked near the warehouse.

INT. MOBILE UNIT - CONTINUOUS

Lockman is watching the building from his mobile unit. Suddenly, he finds himself surrounded by old cars. The Skulls have chosen this moment to make their biggest hit.

To Lockman's amazement, a hundred gang members fill the street.

EXT. SLUM STREET NEAR THE WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The gang is yelling and screaming. Many carry firebombs which they throw through the warehouse windows. Soon the building is ablaze.

Dozens of reserve Pentagon agents rush into the street and begin fighting the gang, but they are clearly outnumbered.

INT. MOBILE UNIT - CONTINUOUS

Lockman's command unit is under attack. He yells into a radio.

LOCKMAN
CHECKERS ONE, THIS IS CHECKERS TWO.
WE ARE UNDER ATTACK. ALL UNITS
CONVERGE AND SEND FIRE BACKUP ASAP.

INT. WAREHOUSE STAIRWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As the fire begins to blaze on the first floor, the Pentagon assault team has fought its way up the broken stairs to the second floor landing.

Here the gang has constructed another barrier between the second and third floors. This one is of oil drums. The agents on the stairs try to pull them down. Behind the drums, Andres takes a sledge hammer and begins to destroy several wooden pins. The agents feel the stairs slowly give way.

They try to push out onto the second floor, but they are assaulted by gang members and driven back. All of the stairs beneath the third floor collapse in a twisted heap of screaming men, wood and oil drums.

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff has removed the panel from the ceiling and is pulling himself up through the hole.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

His head and shoulders are through the opening when a noose drops around his neck. Two gang members push him back down into the elevator.

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Rostocoff dangles twisting and lurching, choking to death. He manages to take out his pistol. Then he shoots upward through the ceiling over and over. Above him, the two gang members fall. Rostocoff drops to the floor gasping, but only for a moment. Then, he climbs back up into the shaft.

INT. WAREHOUSE FIRST FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The first floor is an inferno.

EXT. WAREHOUSE FRONT - CONTINUOUS

To escape the flames, gang members and Pentagon agents pour out of the windows onto the street. Only to be met by the rival gang waiting for them and already at war with other agents and the first wave of police.

Dozens of sirens are wailing. The Pentagon abandons the fight.

The fire is moving to the second floor of the warehouse. More agents and gang members jump from the windows. The street battle is chaos. The block is jammed. Fire trucks arrive, but they can't get in. They wait at the entrance to the street with sirens screaming, horns blasting and lights sweeping the area.

INT. WAREHOUSE ELEVATOR SHAFT - MOMENTS LATER

Rostocoff is climbing brick by brick between the second and third floors. The fire has burned through the elevator and is beginning to sweep into the shaft. The heat is unbearable, but he still climbs.

The clothes on his back catch fire. He screams and tries to put it out, almost losing his grip. He drops his pistol. The skin of his legs and back begin to blister. His face is a mask of agony and hate. He will not stop. His obsession gives him almost super-human strength. He won't let himself die. He must reach Baroni.

INT. WAREHOUSE TOP FLOOR GAME SPACE - MOMENTS LATER

Baroni and Angie are still together. Smoke is filling the room. Angie holds a flashlight while Baroni is trying to call on the telephone. His clipboard is in his hand.

BARONI

It's no use. They haven't opened
the phone line at the casino yet.
Still five more minutes.

The smoke is getting thicker, but there are still no flames. Pete rushes into the room.

PETE

Everybody's gone. We gotta get outta
here.

BARONI

Take Angie. I've got to wait a few
more minutes.

ANGIE

I won't go without you.

Pete looks back down the stairs.

PETE

Too late. Stairs are burning down
below.

BARONI

Take her and get up on the roof.
I'll be up there in a minute.

ANGIE

MICHAEL...

Pete grabs her. She pulls away.

BARONI

ANGIE, PLEASE. GO WITH PETE.

Pete pulls her with him. Suddenly, the call goes through.

BARONI (CONT'D)

MOMO...IS THAT YOU? HELLO...

(beat)

YEAH...I'VE GOT THE MOVES. ARE YOU
READY?

It is then that Mikhail Rostocoff climbs out of the elevator shaft onto the fifth floor. His back is horribly burned. The fire still smolders on him and the pain is hideous, but everything else is forgotten when he sees Baroni.

For the first time since the subway, Baroni and Rostocoff are face-to-face. Baroni is speechless with the phone in his hand.

Rostocoff moves slowly toward his enemy...obsessed with destroying the man who has haunted him. The needle is ready.

Baroni drops the phone. Rostocoff leaps toward him slashing at him with the needle. Baroni strikes Rostocoff's burned arm with his clipboard. Rostocoff screams in agony and the needle drops to the floor.

Then, Rostocoff is on him. They fall with the insane agent on top. With animal strength, he rips and tears and smashes Baroni's face with his fists and claws. Baroni's glasses are crushed on his head.

BARONI (CONT'D)

(screaming)

I CAN'T SEE. I CAN'T SEE...

Then Rostocoff finds the needle. Baroni gropes wildly, blindly. Rostocoff's hand is on his throat.

At that instant, Angie runs back into the smoke-filled room. Rostocoff doesn't see her he's so absorbed with killing Baroni. Baroni jerks his head just in time and the needle sticks in the floor after slicing his cheek.

Suddenly, there is a WOMAN'S ENRAGED SCREAM. Before Rostocoff can move, his head is split in two down to his nose by the ancient Samurai sword wielded by Angie. She stares in horror at what she has done. The sword is still embedded in his skull.

Pete rushes in. Dripping with blood, Baroni struggles to his knees.

BARONI (CONT'D)
ANGIE, ANGIE...I CAN'T SEE. MOMO'S
ON THE PHONE. GIVE HIM THE MOVES.

She gets control of herself. Pete helps her find the clipboard, then holds a flashlight so she can read from it.

ANGIE
(in a shaking voice)
Division nine to grid 398...Northern
Virginia. Division six to grid
400...Maryland. Nuclear strike...grid
399.

Baroni stumbles across the room to the hamster run. Though blood is streaming down his face and he can hardly see, he finds the little animals. One by one, he puts them into his shirt.

Angie completes the call.

ANGIE (CONT'D)
I'M DONE. HE'S GOT THEM, MICHAEL.
COME ON.

Fire is everywhere. The world model is burning. They rush toward the stairs leading to the roof.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Baroni, Angie and Pete stumble out onto the roof and stand trembling on the edge of the building. From below, the voice of Lockman blasts over the loudspeaker.

LOCKMAN (O.S.)
(over loudspeaker)
JUMP...ONE AT A TIME...INTO THE NET.

They look down. The firemen have a large net ready.

BARONI
Pete, you go first.

Pete gulps and then drops five floors to safety. Baroni turns to Angie.

BARONI (CONT'D)
Just remember. I will love you
forever.

They kiss.

BARONI (CONT'D)

GO!

And she falls to the net.

EXT. SLUM STREET BELOW - CONTINUOUS

As Angie climbs out of the net, Lockman is beside her.

LOCKMAN

Is that man up there Michael Norman
Baroni?

ANGIE

Yes.

LOCKMAN

I just heard from Atlantic City.
Tell him...he won.

She screams for joy.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Baroni stands on the edge of the building trying to get the
hamsters arranged so they won't be crushed in the fall.
Suddenly, he hears Angie's voice over the loudspeaker.

ANGIE

(over loudspeaker)

MICHAEL...THEY'VE GIVEN UP. YOU
WON! YOU WON!

CU: BARONI'S FACE

As he hears, on it comes a look of wonder.

In the street below, the gang has heard. They begin shouting
in unison...

GANG

FOXBAT...FOXBAT...FOXBAT...

EXT. SLUM STREET BELOW - CONTINUOUS

Angie is crying. Pete hugs her.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - CONTINUOUS

For a moment, the little man on the pinnacle stands alone.
He is filthy and covered with blood. His shabby clothes are
ripped and torn. Fire rages behind him. But the whole world
is spread out beneath. The first rays of the morning light
catch his face. Tears are running down his cheeks through
the grime.

But Michael Norman Baroni is smiling...smiling as he has never smiled before.

The chanting fades into the theme...as the Foxbat steps from the pinnacle and falls in slow motion toward the net below.

FADE OUT:

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