

**United Artists**



THE FOXBAT STRATEGY

by

Jerry L. Jackson

and

Michael Britton

Based on a screenplay by

Coleman Luck and Mickey Curran

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FADE IN:

EXT. GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD - MORNING

Mist shrouded morning sun sculpts the tree-lined fields and rolling hills. The diffused light and muted colors provide a sense of tranquility, punctuated only by a pair of doves, winging their way toward some unknown destination.

Without warning, an immense EXPLOSION of fire, earth and smoke FILLS THE SCREEN.

TITLE CREDITS BEGIN

We are in the very midst of fierce, hand-to-hand combat at the battle of Gettysburg. It is July 3, 1863. Blood-curdling SCREAMS, relentless RIFLE FIRE, earth-shaking artillery EXPLOSIONS, and the confused SHOUTS of men in peril fill our eyes and ears.

In a MONTAGE of CLOSEUPS the battle progresses...Hands, dirty and sweating, struggle to reload a rifle...A saber is drawn...A pistol is cocked, fired...A bayonet is affixed to a rifle...A face is twisted with fear and pain...Feet are running, stumbling.

Somewhere a Union OFFICER screams orders to his men. He catches a bullet in his shoulder, grimaces, but continues to direct wave after wave of advancing soldiers.

A Confederate INFANTRYMAN carrying a flagstaff falls, mortally wounded. Before the regimental banner hits the ground, another Grey-coat picks it up and runs on.

Bayonets slash and mini balls SHRIEK as the roiling sea of Blue and Grey infantrymen tear each other to pieces.

We see up close the individual payments in pain and suffering, men giving what Lincoln will soon call "the last full measure of devotion."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD - LATER

The fighting has stopped. The guns are silent. Thick smoke has replaced the morning ground fog and hangs heavily over the carnage. The smell of gun powder fills the air.

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We hear the CRIES of the hopelessly wounded as the CAMERA PANS over the human refuse. Everywhere SOLDIERS are sprawled on the ground; soldiers totally exhausted, soldiers helping their comrades, soldiers writhing in pain, soldiers who feel no pain.

As the CAMERA slowly continues to PAN around, it reveals the incongruous image of two state-of-the-art military helicopters parked on the edge of the battlefield.

A smattering of APPLAUSE begins and builds as the PAN moves past a variety of delighted spectators and finally stops on a reviewing stand. The stand is filled with CIVILLIAN and MILITARY DIGNITARIES, enthusiastically showing their approval of this re-enactment.

CREDITS END

We hold for a minute on a slightly pompous-looking Four-Star General: GEN. WILLIAM NATHANIEL PHILLIPS, early sixties, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a fit and commanding presence --- the ultimate soldier. To his side stands his aide-de-camp, COLONEL EDWARD MARSBURG, mid-thirties and ambitious.

The combatants are now standing up and dusting themselves off. Some light cigarettes. They are laughing and waving to the spectators.

Phillips is applauding with the others, but his response is indifferent, only what would be "proper."

EXT. THE PENTAGON - DUSK

Looking east toward the Capitol, we see the Pentagon bathed in the orange glow of the setting sun. From this askew angle the massive structure looks peculiar yet awesome.

INT. THE PENTAGON - GEN. PHILLIPS' OFFICE - DUSK

EXTREME CLOSEUP of 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."

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And with the trophies are photographs of a handsome man in uniform...with Presidents...reviewing the troops...competing to win. It's the kind of display that can't be missed -- the kind of display that's not meant to be missed.

Suddenly the CAMERA STOPS at the strangest trophy of them all. It holds a place of honor.

The thing is large...and twisted. Ugly...yet with a beauty both frightening and stark. It is the sculpture of a man dressed in rags...kneeling upon 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.

Just above it hangs a simple plaque that bears the words:

Given to Captain William Phillips  
By The Men Of Cell Block K  
Dachau  
"Never Again"

And above the plaque there is a framed picture...grainy...old...slightly-faded...of a young combat officer surrounded by men barely alive...shaved heads...hollow eyes...dressed in rags. They are cheering...laughing with joy...reaching out...trying to touch him...free.

On the face of that combat officer is a frozen look of horror. Tears are streaming down the cheeks of young Captain Phillips.

The office door opens. Gen. Phillips and Col. Marsburg enter, having just returned from Gettysburg. Phillips takes off his coat and hangs it in his closet during the following.

PHILLIPS

Every year we go up there it gets worse...Hell, half the Confederates were using side arms that weren't even invented until 1867...What do we have for tomorrow?

MARSBURG

We should go over the procurement list for your meeting on the Hill.

(CONTINUED)

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PHILLIPS

Damn...we're not soldiering anymore. Every time we come around for appropriations it's the same old shit. As chairman of the Joint Chiefs you'd think I wouldn't have to go begging.

Phillips crosses to his large desk and sits down. Marsburg stands in front of the desk waiting. The office looks like that of any major corporation head; opulent with thick carpeting and rich, dark wood. Overhead track lighting spotlights two large trophy cases which dominate the room. The desk is flanked by an American flag and the bright red banner of a four-star general.

PHILLIPS

Who's the stumbling block on the committee?

MARSBURG

Senator Parker, General.

PHILLIPS

Freshman from Indiana?

Marsburg nods.

PHILLIPS

Military record?

MARSBURG

Navy. He was a competent pilot. Nothing derogatory.

Phillips turns and looks absently out the window.

PHILLIPS

We're not interested in blackmail, Ed.

MARSBURG

Of course not, General.

There is an understanding between these men. They are enjoying themselves.

PHILLIPS

And what have you found out?

Marsburg has been waiting for this cue. He sparkles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSBURG

He likes gadgets, General. Toys.  
Explosions.

Phillips smiles.

PHILLIPS

Big ones or little ones?

Phillips turns to face Marsburg. They smile at each other.

MARSBURG

... Big ones...

Phillips walks back to his desk and sits down. Firmly planting his elbow on the desk, he raises his forearm and opens his palm. With no other signal, Marsburg follows suit and they begin to arm wrestle. Their conversational tone never falters.

PHILLIPS

Why don't you set up some appropriate demonstration.

Phillips is losing.

MARSBURG

I took the liberty of speaking with Admiral Drennan this morning... at your request. They're contacting the Senator's office.

Phillips decisively pins Marsburg's arm to the desk. His poker face thinly hides his delight.

PHILLIPS

(with mock boredom)  
God, I hate games, Ed.

MARSBURG

(suppressing a smile)  
Yes, General...  
(looks at his watch)  
We're due in the conference room in five minutes. We should leave now.

PHILLIPS

(sighing)  
Right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Phillips rises from his desk and he and Marsburg head for the door.

PHILLIPS

I'm sick and tired of morons who  
know nothing about modern warfare  
telling me what I can and can't  
do...

The door closes behind them.

INT. HOBBY STORE - LITTLE ITALY, NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

CLOSE UP on a strategy grid board. Tiny tanks and infantry pieces are arranged on the map.

YOUNG CHILD (O.S.)

You can't do that!

TO SCENE in the back of a small, quaint store where two boys, JIMMY, eight, and SAL, eleven, are playing a war-strategy game at a large table covered by a grid map.

Jimmy looks puzzled and innocently surprised.

JIMMY

Why?

SAL

There's a river there. You can't  
move non-amphibious equipment through  
there.

An old man, ALBERT DE VITO, owner of this establishment, watches the game with a twinkle in his eye. He remains silent in this dispute, discreetly allowing the learning process to take its course.

CLOSE UP of a GROWLING black dog, teeth bared, ferocious and salivating. The terrifying stare of a killer.

VOICE (O.S.)

...And if that doesn't work... run!

A dog biscuit flies into the dog's open mouth and his demeanor changes to complete docility.

TO SCENE in the front of the store, as the surprisingly small dog WHINES affectionately and nuzzles the young man in front of him.

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MICHAEL NORMAN BARONI is about twenty years old, but his body has yet to fill out. Thick, curly hair forms an unruly frame around his unforgettable face. Large glasses slightly distort his Italian features. He has intelligent, gentle eyes that, at this moment, reflect pleasure. He smiles and rubs the dog's ears.

BARONI

You're too smart for those other  
dogs to catch you again, anyway...

De Vito walks up quietly and watches this scene with affection. He COUGHS -- a painful, wheezing cough.

Baroni looks at the old man with concern, as the dog jumps on De Vito's leg. De Vito laughs warmly.

DE VITO

Teaching Guido some defensive tactics?

BARONI

What? Oh, yeah...I finished the taxes.

(pause)

Are you all right?

De Vito pushes his glasses back on his nose and smiles wearily.

SAL (O.S.)

And I'm telling you, you can't do that...

DE VITO

Oh, I'm alright, but I think the boys  
could use some help.

Baroni shifts uncomfortably. De Vito urges gently.

DE VITO

Go on. They won't bite ya... I'll feed  
Guido, and then we'll see how much money  
I'm losing, staying in business...

Baroni reluctantly heads for the back of the store.

SAL

If it were possible, then the Germans  
would have done it and cut off the Allies--

The children become aware of Baroni's arrival. There is an awkward silence. None of them seems to know what to say. Baroni is as uncomfortable as they are. Finally...

SAL

Mister, he's trying to cheat, and--

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

JIMMY

I am not cheating.

SAL

If you could do that, snot breath, it would have changed the whole outcome of World War II.

JIMMY

Just because the Germans didn't do it, doesn't mean I can't.

The children stare defiantly. Baroni finally has an opening.

BARONI

(to Sal)

He's right about that, you know.

SAL

But that river's a quarter mile wide there. Panthers can't drive through water.

Baroni is about to speak, when Jimmy pipes up.

JIMMY

Panthers could too cross water! It just depended on how they were fitted. Some could even 'swim' across deep water or ford rivers with a snorkel... The Germans didn't use what they had... But I am.

Baroni is impressed with the eight year old's logic. The eleven year old is not. Baroni is intrigued.

BARONI

Where did you find out about the Panther water capabilities?

JIMMY:

In the 1944 Wermacht Field Handbook for Panther Commanders.

SAL

There is no water factor even listed in the game's armament catalogue for Panthers.

Baroni ponders for a moment. Sal smiles at Jimmy.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BARONI

Technically, he's right about the rules...

Sal beams.

BARONI

But if you're interested in the reality of the situation, then the information about the Panthers' performance capabilities has to be the final solution.

Sal is deflated. Guido trots in.

DE VITO (O.S.)

Closin' time. You two are gonna have to decide the fate of the world tomorrow.

The boys carefully watch each other leave the table and head for the front. Baroni follows while the dog nips playfully at Sal's heels.

Baroni stops at an old, roll-top desk and picks up the tax papers. Sal turns around and kicks at Guido. The dog GROWLS and goes into his fearsome act. Sal cowers.

SAL

Mr. De Vito!

DE VITO

Come here, Guido...

Guido is immediately lovable again. De Vito smiles at Sal.

DE VITO

See, he didn't mean it.

JIMMY

Dummy. He was just putting on his 'ferrocious count... counte... '

DE VITO

'Ferrocious countenance.' You know... like a defensive strategy?

Sal is unimpressed.

JIMMY

Like a bluff... He faked you out.

Sal flashes one last look of disgust at Jimmy as they go out the front door. Amused, De Vito shakes his head.

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CONTINUED:

De Vito walks behind the counter and lifts a massive, elegantly bound antique book. He carefully positions it on the glass and waits for Baroni.

BARONI  
(points to papers)  
Here's what you owe the government...  
This is your net, down here.

De Vito clears his throat. Baroni looks up from the papers.

DE VITO  
(beaming)  
This is for you.

De Vito proudly opens the book to the title page.

CLOSE UP on the book:

"ON WAR"  
Karl Clausewitz  
1818

TO SCENE as Baroni is thunderstruck, speechless. He gazes at the book, then starts to protest. De Vito knew he would.

DE VITO  
Don't even start, Michael. I've been searching for this since I recognized your talent eight years ago. No one else deserves it more or can appreciate it like you can.

BARONI  
But, Mr. De Vito, I can't--

DE VITO  
You won't take money from me, so...  
Think of it as payment for helping me every year with these damn income taxes.

De Vito nervously shuffles the tax papers.

DE VITO  
What I'm about to say may not be news to you, but listen for a minute and indulge an old man...  
(pause)  
I don't get to see you much any more.  
...Maybe I'm the...  
(searching for the words)  
...last link... with the old neighborhood...

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CONTINUED:

Baroni looks at the floor uncomfortably.

DE VITO

... I've never wanted to presume to fill the role of your parents, God rest 'em... but one of the curses of growing old is the damnable need to impart wisdom you wouldn't have listened to in your youth...

Baroni shifts his weight from one foot to the other. De Vito stops fidgeting with the papers and looks directly at Baroni.

DE VITO

... Michael, you're gifted... and the world is not kind to gifted people. It always wants to make them mediocre... Michael...

The pause is pregnant. It is clear that De Vito is groping for the right words... finally.

DE VITO

... Don't be mediocre.

The two friends gaze at each other. For a moment, deep emotions surface in Baroni's eyes -- he begins to expose himself. The moment passes, he can't open up.

De Vito smiles, closes the book and pushes it across the counter to Baroni.

Baroni looks down at the book, then up at De Vito. Words would be inappropriate, the feelings are understood.

DE VITO

Will you stay for a cup of coffee?

BARONI

(uncomfortable)

Oh thanks, but I have some places to get to before they close.

Baroni slowly picks up the book and heads for the door. De Vito looks warmly after him.

EXT. HOBBY STORE - NIGHT

Baroni steps out into the street. He pulls his worn fatigue jacket tight against the night air and stands for a moment, looking around the quiet neighborhood. There are memories here.

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Baroni shudders once. He looks at his gift, then moves off through pools of light until he is lost in the darkness.

INT. NEW YORK HIGH RISE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Pipes SQUEAK as the shower is shut off behind the closed bathroom door. A cloud of steam pours out as a MAN in his mid-forties walks into the bedroom of his modest but tasteful apartment. He has a towel wrapped around his waist and HUMS light-heartedly to himself.

He slides his watch on, checks the time, and brushes his thinning, sand-colored hair at the mirror by the bed. In mid-stroke, he looks down at his waist, then grabs for any loose flesh. He gets about two inches.

MAN

(to someone O.S.)  
Time to hit the gym, my pet... Or  
I'll be as fat as you.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who?... Moi?

MAN

French? Before dinner? C'est possible?

He puts the brush away and walks over by the window. There, in a massive cage is the VOICE -- CHAUNCY, a large, male, African Grey parrot.

The man opens a bureau next to the cage.

MAN

What will it be tonight?

CHAUNCY

Duck... Definitely duck.

He removes a package from the drawer, opens the cage and deposits the food in the dish. Chauncy FLAPS in anticipation.

MAN

Cannibal.

CHAUNCY

Awk... Dinner at eight. Dinner at eight. Louis is late, Louis is late.

The bird begins eating. LOUIS (pronounced "Lewis") looks at his watch, closes the cage door and hustles out of shot.

INT. NEW YORK HIGH RISE APARTMENT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Chauncy is gazing out the window through the bars of his cage. New York is ablaze with lights. The parrot is licking his beak and bobbing his head.

Louis is finishing an impeccable four-in-hand knot in his club tie. He buttons his suit coat and checks the final result in the mirror. It's okay. Everything seems to be in order. He picks up his overcoat and heads for the door.

CHAUNCY

Roll the dice, my friend... Roll the dice.

Louis checks his watch and throws Chauncy a look for mercy.

LOUIS

Give me a break, Chaunc'. I have to be at the theater...

CHAUNCY

Tsk, tsk, tsk... Play the game...  
Roll the dice and play the game...  
If you lose, I'm not to blame...

Louis rolls his eyes. He reluctantly crosses to a table next to the cage, by the window. Some kind of board game is set up and there seems to be a game in progress.

LOUIS

You are impossible.

Chauncy CLUCKS and FLAPS his wings. Louis rolls the dice and moves a piece on the board. Drawing a card from one of several multi-colored stacks, he reads it.

LOUIS

Tuesday... Shit! Not today.

CHAUNCY

Merde... Sheiste... Shit... One more roll... One more roll... One more roll and you're out of the hole...

Louis looks somberly at the parrot. He picks up the dice and tosses them. Counting out the squares with his game piece, he lands on a square called "SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES." He is not pleased. He draws from the appropriate stack. The card reads, "BEWARE THE SCHOLAR" and is decorated with a cartoon caricature of a young man in cap and gown, wearing large, round glasses.

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LOUIS  
(to himself)  
Beware the scholar?

CHAUNCY  
Beware the scholar... Beware the  
scholar...

Louis puzzles over the meaning of the phrase. He sits at the game table and places the card next to the first card and two others that had been drawn previously; DAY OF THE WEEK - "TUESDAY", WEAPON - "CANDLESTICK", and the last, TARGET - (XEROX PHOTO). On the target card is a xerox of a file-type photograph that has been carefully taped over the original cartoon. The xerox shows a close-up of a MIDDLE-AGED MAN, smiling at the camera.

Chauncy SQUAWKS.

INT. MANHATTAN BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The middle-aged man from the xerox photo, MARC THOMPSEN, opens the front door of his well-appointed apartment. He juggles a grocery bag as he hangs his hat and coat, then carries the bag into the kitchen.

Thompson stows most of the contents of the bag in the refrigerator, moves a casserole from there to the microwave and punches the timer.

While he pours himself a glass of wine, he notices the SOUND of the television coming from another room. He smiles conspiratorially, fills a second glass, and carries both out of the kitchen.

The den is filled with pictures of Thompson and a beautiful blond woman; sailing, skiing, standing with various dignitaries in evening wear. The television is BLARING... no one is watching. Thompson is puzzled for a second, even disappointed. Then he smiles knowingly.

THOMPSEN  
(Swedish accent)  
Mary?... Mary, where are you?

Thompson walks further into the room, enjoying his wife's playfulness. From the shadows behind the door, Louis creeps up in back of Thompson.

THOMPSEN  
(loud, teasing)  
Guess I'll have to drink both glasses  
myself... Or invite that new secretary  
over...

Louis is wearing brown leather gloves. He raises a heavy candlestick, poised to strike. Thompson begins to turn...

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CONTINUED:

THOMPSEN

Mary?--

The blow misses its mark and hits Thompson on the jaw, knocking him to his knees. The red wine flies, splattering on the light-colored carpet. Thompson looks up at Louis, dazed and terrified.

THOMPSEN

Who are you? Why... ?

Louis momentarily freezes. Suddenly wild with fear, Thompson lunges at him. They struggle. Finally, Louis overpowers him and delivers a lethal blow to the cranium. Thompson lies limp on the carpet. The television PLAYS inanely on.

Louis stares at the body, catching his breath. He suddenly notices the wine stains, grimaces, tosses the candlestick aside, and runs to the kitchen. He returns with a towel and works feverishly to wipe up the mess.

Thompson GROANS and starts to move. Louis looks terrified. He searches frantically for the candlestick. It's by the couch. He grabs it and hits Thompson on the head. He waits to see if Thompson moves again... He does. Louis hits him again. Once more for good measure... No movement.

Louis gently rolls the dead man face up and carefully places the candlestick next to the body. Ceremoniously, he removes the game cards from his pocket and arranges the DAY OF THE WEEK, WEAPON, and TARGET cards on Thompson's chest. He isn't quite sure what to do with the SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE card, so he keeps it in his hand.

Louis stands and aims an expensive, well used 35mm camera at the scene. The motor drive WHIRS three times.

He repockets the game cards from the body and glances around the room. Everything seems to satisfy him... except the remaining card in his hand. He stares at it trying to determine its meaning... "BEWARE THE SCHOLAR."

Finally, Louis repockets that card, picks up the candlestick and leaves the room.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

Louis walks down onto the platform. It seems to be deserted. He is nervous and fidgets with the camera slung around his neck. He keeps looking around for any threat, any person at all.

He walks from pillar to pillar, working his way toward the end of the platform. The DISTANT ROAR of a subway can be heard faintly. There is an ECHOING SOUND much closer. It rattles him. He strains to hear, trying to determine its origin.

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The distant train's metal brakes SCREECH at some other station. Louis is still. He waits for silence to return so he can hear. He is sweating. There is a LOUD NOISE from the other end of the platform.

Louis' eyes are riveted in the direction of the sound. He backs away from it, fearfully. He hugs a pillar and waits.

The source of the noise, a DRUNK, stumbles into view and sits down on a bench. The DISTANT TRAIN starts again.

Louis releases the pillar and continues backing away from the drunk. His eyes remain wide. The SOUND OF THE TRAIN is growing closer. The sound and the empty expanse of the platform are becoming more and more threatening.

An express train SCREAMS into the station on the far track. Louis ducks behind a pillar and crashes into an unseen figure. He jumps back in terror.

A stunned Michael Baroni stares from behind the pillar at this stranger. A stranger who disturbed his reading and knocked his books to the floor. The SOUND OF THE TRAIN is deafening.

Louis backs a few feet and stops. They both stand frozen, trying to determine if the other is a threat, neither sure what to do.

The ROAR OF THE TRAIN passes and continues away into the distance. The platform is silent again.

Baroni finally breaks the stalemate. He stoops to pick up the scattered books at his feet. He especially checks De Vito's gift.

As Baroni struggles with the books, we SEE his combat boots. They would be unremarkable except for the laces -- they are multi-colored binder's twine.

For the first time, Louis notices the books. There is an uncanny resemblance between Baroni with his glasses and the caricature on the game card that read "BEWARE THE SCHOLAR."

Louis GASPS and pales. He is in a complete panic. His right hand jabs unconsciously at the camera hanging at his waist. The motor drive WHIRS several times.

The SOUND startles Baroni. He looks up. The camera stops firing. Louis seems paralyzed.

Baroni slowly stands erect. A strange look comes over his face, a look we will remember and see again. He intuitively senses something about this man.

The intensity of the stare is too much for Louis. He bolts up the stairs to the street. Baroni watches him go, then looks down at his books, troubled.



EXT. NEW YORK SLUM STREET - NIGHT

Baroni walks through an incredibly desolate and deserted street. Garbage is strewn everywhere. He is lost in thought, still troubled by his bizarre encounter. He clutches his books tightly.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Baroni walks up to an ancient, rundown warehouse at the end of the street. The cockeyed lightbulb above the door casts eerie shadows on his features as he fishes for his keys. On the grimy glass in large letters are the words:

SMYTHFIELD STORAGE COMPANY  
(Long term rates available)

And in much smaller letters below:

Maintenance Engineer  
On Premises  
Michael N. Baroni

He finishes opening one lock and begins the second. He sees his reflection in the door glass and becomes entranced, as if the glass might hold an answer to his questions.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey Baroni.

Baroni is startled and spins around. When he sees the familiar face, he blushes and fumbles back to the lock.

ANGIE ESPINOSA is an intelligent, quileless, and attractive Puerto Rican girl of 17 who lives nearby. She is also the sister of the local gang president, Andres.

ANGIE

Are you all right, Michael?

Baroni keeps working on the stubborn second lock. He is embarrassed.

BARONI

(mumbles)

What? Yeah, I'm O.K....

The door opens at last. Now he struggles to get the key out. Angie is unphased.

ANGIE

(pleasantly)

Have you seen Pete? I want to show him some of these.

She opens a large sketch book she is carrying and displays several detail drawings of a Trojan horse. Baroni glances over at them shyly and keeps trying to get the key out.

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BARONI  
(still mumbling)  
It's not...

ANGIE  
What?

BARONI  
... supposed to be... be...

ANGIE  
Who?... Pete?

The key finally jerks out of the door. Baroni realizes he hasn't yet answered her question. His discomfort doesn't seem to phase her. She's used to it.

BARONI  
No... no I haven't seen Pete for...  
I guess a couple of days.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

He walks inside the warehouse without commenting on Angie's artwork. In the darkness, the first floor storage area, musty and crammed, stretches beyond. Nearby there's an office and the iron gate of an ancient freight elevator. She follows and carries on a conversation while Baroni busies himself.

ANGIE  
I hope he hasn't run into my brother.  
Since Andres took over the SK's, all  
he wants to do is fight and hurt people.  
Some role models... those shit-heads...

Baroni looks up, puzzled.

ANGIE  
You know... their gang?

BARONI  
No... yeah, I mean I know... that wasn't  
what I meant.

He collects the large amount of mail caught in the wire basket at the bottom of the chuted drop. Angie turns on the light to help him see. He doesn't seem to notice. She looks a bit perplexed by Baroni's level of distraction, then shrugs it off.

Baroni stands and pores through the collected stack of mail. Now Angie shifts uncomfortably.

ANGIE  
(hesitantly)  
Is it... all right if I come in and...  
y'know, see if Pete is maybe somewhere  
inside?

(CONTINUED)

Baroni continues his shuffling of mail and doesn't look up. He starts to head for the freight elevator. Angie doesn't know if she should follow or not.

BARONI

(absently)

Yeah... sure.

Angie starts after him. She notices that the outside door is still open. She starts to ask Michael if he shouldn't close it. In view of his present state, she just smiles and closes it herself. She throws the deadbolt and runs to make the elevator.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As it moves, the elevator grinds and moans. METAL CLANGS AGAINST METAL.

Neither of them speaks as they pass through floors of darkness. Angie looks inquisitively over Michael's shoulder to see what great fascination his letters hold.

The elevator stops on the fifth and top floor. A single, bare light bulb is already burning. Baroni opens the elevator gate and steps out. Angie follows gingerly.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

This is Baroni's home: A narrow cot. A table. A sink. Two battered chairs. A make-shift shower curtain hides a toilet and shower. It is a stark, small living space.

A set of bookshelves stands against one wall, crammed with hundreds of volumes on war history and military strategy. Somehow out of place, hanging beside the mirror above the sink, is an ornate, antique Samurai sword.

The living space is separated from the rest of the warehouse floor by a thin room divider... the lower half, ancient wood... the upper, frosted glass. Beyond the divider is darkness.

Baroni sets his books and mail on the table. Angie stands at the entrance to the living area and watches. He picks up the book that De Vito gave him and looks for a place for it on the bookshelf. He passes the mirror and catches his reflection. It stops him, just as the door glass had. Angie sees the hesitation, brief as it is.

ANGIE

Is something wrong, Michael?

He carefully puts his new volume on the shelf. He seems not to have heard her. She decides to rephrase the question.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGIE

Are you--

BARONI

Do you think I'm weird?

ANGIE

(trying to be light)

Unusual maybe, weird no.

Baroni is still wrestling with his problem and not responding to humor. She takes a serious tack.

ANGIE

Who told you you were weird?

BARONI

Do you ever feel like you know  
somebody, even though you don't?...  
And maybe you know something about  
them that you shouldn't?

Angie is lost. This isn't making sense to her. She remains silent rather than blunder into his train of thought. He suddenly realizes what this must sound like to her.

BARONI

(embarrassed)

If you want to look for Pete, you  
should probably look downstairs...  
If he were up here, we would've--

ANGIE

Please tell me what this 'weird'  
thing is about.

Baroni slides back into remembering the stranger in the subway. He gets that look on his face--as though he were very far away. It's a struggle for him to talk.

BARONI

There was this guy... man... in the  
subway. He bumped into me while I  
was reading... Then he just looked  
at me. I felt... Then he took my  
picture and ran away. Like he was  
really scared of something...

(turns to Angie)

Of me, I think.

ANGIE

What did he say?

BARONI

He didn't say anything. But, I had  
this feeling...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGIE

Why would he be scared of you?

BARONI

I don't know...

(smiling awkwardly)

Must've been my ferocious countenance.

There is an uncomfortable pause. Angie decides to change the subject.

ANGIE

You sure got a lot of mail.

It brings Baroni back to the stack of mail on the table. He quickly sorts through it, separating out the personally addressed letters. There is an excited urgency to his movements. He tears open the first envelope and carries the rest as he reads. Angie sits quietly at the table, still cradling her sketch pad.

Baroni crosses to a crude electrical panel on the wall and flips a series of switches.

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

Through the misty, frosted glass of the partition, a strange, almost unbelievable world comes INTO VIEW...

A world of worlds... Of landscapes. Terrains. Battlefields and war. Each pool of light bathes an elaborate game board.

Miniatures. Gridmaps. Sandtables covered by battlegrounds of the most intricate complexity and detail.

Here, Roman armies sweep through Gaul. There, the Battle of the Bulge is fought again. Legions march on Carthage. Stalingrad is besieged, Austerlitz proclaimed, and sea battles blaze with tiny galleons, or the fire-power of the latest 20th century aircraft carriers.

Beside nearly every game board stands a battered, discarded store mannequin dressed in a uniform from the appropriate period. The mannequins are like sightless guards watching over the silent battles being waged before them.

Baroni is a war-strategy game fanatic.

He plays 30 to 40 separate games, covering different periods of history, all at the same time. A single game can take months to play.

The historical outcome of these battles has no significance here. Baroni and his through-the-mail opponents have a fresh start each time a new game is begun... a chance to rewrite history, limited only by the resources of each side and the player's ability to out-manuever his opponent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spread and grouped around the periphery of the game area are the most incredible models of all... huge, hand-made replicas of weapons fashioned entirely from scraps and junk from 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 almost real. But close up, we can see that the tank is made mostly of old garbage cans and auto parts.

There are pill boxes, a World War I bi-plane and many other grotesque and wonderful collections of junk.

Baroni, mail in hand, slowly walks toward the center aisle. With each stop he appears to stand a little taller. He is entering his own world... a world where he is in command of a thousand armies... a world where he is no longer a shy warehouse custodian, but the master of destinies.

Angie stands at the edge of the living area and watches Baroni's transformation, fascinated.

MONTAGE BEGINS

Baroni strides to a table covered with tiny soldiers in blue and gray depicting the Battle of Gettysburg. He glances at the open letter in his hand, moving the enemy's pieces according to its instructions.

BARONI  
(reading aloud)  
Pickett's Brigade to squares 60  
through 75. Northwest artillery  
fall back, with no morale loss...

He glances at the Confederate mannequin across from him, then back at the table.

It takes no more than a second -- a flickering gaze of total concentration -- and he makes his lightning countermove.

BARONI  
(whispering)  
Check...

Then on he goes, from game to game... opening the letters... totally absorbed... mumbling to himself...

Through submarine battles of the North Atlantic and on to Dunkirk... to Guadalcanal... Iwo Jima... a space war somewhere in the universe... Chancellorsville... Southeast Asia... the American Revolution... and the Wars of the Roses.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

At the last game... a tank battle in North Africa... Baroni slowly makes the move called for in the letter. He counter moves almost immediately.

BARONI  
(whispering)  
Checkmate...

Regretfully, he turns out the light over this last table. He looks down at the mail. All of it has been opened.

MONTAGE ENDS

ANOTHER ANGLE

It is as though he is awakening from sleep. Once again, he is only Michael Baroni. As he walks OUT OF SHOT, the mannequins and tableaux are illuminated by the ghostly, red light of the warehouse's vertical neon sign. Partially visible through one of the windows in the background, the letters flash nervously: M,Y,T,H.

Baroni shuts off the rest of the lights in the game area and shuffles back into his living area. He looks tired.

Angie is gone, but Baroni doesn't seem to notice... maybe doesn't remember she was there. Something on the table catches his eye. He picks it up.

It's a sketch... more than that actually, a wonderful rendering of Baroni hunched over one of his games. It somehow captures the magical concentration, fantasy and vulnerability of Michael in his world.

Angie has signed it. Michael looks at it thoughtfully, with just the hint of a smile.

INT. THE PENTAGON - GEN. LOCKMAN'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

LT. GENERAL TOM LOCKMAN, head of military intelligence, is concluding a meeting in his secluded Pentagon office. His staff of lower ranking officers is seated in front of his desk.

His assistant, MAJOR ARTHUR POWELL, late thirties and efficient is seated with them.

LOCKMAN  
One final thing... I heard on the news this morning about another murder. Some attache to the Swedish consulate in New York. His wife came home and found him clubbed to death... That makes five in the last seven months, all in the military and diplomatic community.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

24.

Lockman puts his elbows on the desk and buries his face in his hands, troubled.

LOCKMAN

I know the other agencies are working on this. Art, what have they got?

POWELL

Sir, the latest INSUM indicates they're all coming up empty. All but two of the victims have been from different countries and none of them have been professional hits. The C.I.A. has worked up a computer profile--

Lockman looks up and cuts him off.

LOCKMAN

The hell with Langley. They're still trying to figure out what happened at the Bay of Pigs...

(pause)

Guys, I'd like to crack this. Let's show them that Military Intelligence isn't a non sequitur. Art, run with it.

POWELL

(with confidence)

Yes, Sir.

LOCKMAN

O.K., that's it. I've got to get out of here.

(proudly)

My kid is having her first recital this morning.

The staff gets up and starts to leave.

LOCKMAN

One more thing. Let's keep this investigation black. Strictly 'eyes only.'

INT. NEW YORK HIGH RISE APARTMENT - MORNING

Louis sits at the game table, lost in thought. Wearing his paisely pajamas and looking tired, he stares out the window into the early morning light.

In the background, the stereo is PLAYING "Imagine," by John Lennon. Chauncy sits in his cage, bobbing to the music and WHISTLING sporadically. The cage door is open.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

LYRIC (in part)

Imagine there's no countries...

It isn't hard to do...

Louis absently shuffles the deck of game cards.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - MORNING

Baroni is just waking up. He sits on the edge of his cot and tries to collect his senses. Groggy, he gropes for his glasses, then pulls on his trousers. He reaches under the bed and pulls his boots out, slips them on and ties the multi-colored laces. Still half asleep, he shuffles to the elevator and steps in.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FOURTH FLOOR - MORNING

The front of this floor is filled with old lumber that is partly stacked but mostly strewn. Baroni walks through the rubble. He comes 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 bottles that once held Thunderbird wine.

BARONI

(to himself)

Damn...

He turns to leave. Suddenly a SNORTING SOUND stops Baroni. He cocks his head, listening... silence.

Baroni cautiously makes his way toward the center of the floor. Once again he freezes at the SOUND, now closer. Again silence.

Baroni strains through his glasses to see into the far corners of the room. Gradually, he walks over to a section filled with various large and strange objects... war paraphernalia, under construction. It is a sort of workshop.

The major piece in this conglomeration is a mammoth Trojan Horse made of metal scraps and refuse. Nearby stands a partially clothed mannequin being outfitted with the armor of a Trojan soldier.

Baroni is now standing directly under the oversized horse's head. To his amazement, the HORSE SNORTS at him. It takes him a moment to recover.

BARONI

Pete... ?

(pause)

Pete... is that you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Another SNORT from the animal.

BARONI

Pete, come on... It's time to get up.

No response. Finally, Baroni gets an old wooden box and places it under the horse's head. Standing on the box, he can just reach the horse's mouth.

BARONI

(loudly, into  
horse's mouth)

Pete... Wake up.

Instantly from within the horse comes BANGING and YELLING that would wake the dead. Suddenly, the side of the animal opens, exposing a ramp. A body comes careening out, head-over-heels, landing on the floor in a heap. Several empty wine bottles follow, clanking as they fall.

PETE OLSEN, wino and architect of the military tableaux on the fifth floor is very, very hung-over. He is wearing the helmet of a Trojan soldier. His body doesn't move.

BARONI

(genuinely concerned)

Pete, Pete... are you okay?

Minor movement and some groaning indicate life.

BARONI

What were you doing in there?

Baroni helps Pete get up... slowly.

PETE

Was a nightmare... was terrible... horrible... dreamed I was Helen of Troy and I got eaten by a horse.

BARONI

I think it's time you tried a new vintage.

PETE

Oh, Mike... it was so real...

BARONI

(sighs with resignation)

I know... Come on, we've got work to do.

PETE

Yeah... Okay...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stagger back toward the elevator. Baroni is holding Pete up.

BARONI  
(gently teasing)  
I didn't know that horse was gonna  
be that big. How you going to get  
it upstairs?

PETE  
(brightening as best  
he can)  
It'll fit. Wait'll you see it when  
it's done. Angie's comin' by tonight  
with some drawings for it.

BARONI  
Your friend came by last night.  
She obviously didn't find you.

They continue toward the elevator.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - MORNING

Baroni has just finished making coffee. Pete sits on the cot with his face in his hands groaning. Angie's drawing of Baroni hangs in the background.

Baroni pours a cup of coffee and tries to hand it to Pete. He doesn't want to touch it.

BARONI  
We're wasting time...

PETE  
Listen, Mike... can't we pour a  
little wine into it... just to kind  
of bring up the flavor a little bit?  
Oh, please...

Baroni shakes his head. With a groan Pete begins sipping. Baroni pours himself a cup.

BARONI  
(very off-handed)  
When do you think you might be able  
to finish the electrical work down  
on three?

Pete looks up with a wary expression.

(CONTINUED)

BARONI

(good humoredly)

I know, I know... work is a real interruption in your life... but the paper company's rented some more space down there.

PETE

Aww... I never have enough time to do the important stuff... like that Turkish catapult... wait a minute... Angie came by last night? That means Momo's comin' by this mornin'... He'll have a new load. I can finish the tail.

BARONI

We've got to talk about this, Pete. I mean how much more stuff can you cram in up here?

PETE

Aww... there's plenty of room...

Suddenly from the street below they hear the SOUND OF CARS HONKING and PEOPLE CHEERING. Baroni moves to a window. The local street gang, the SK's have just returned victorious from a turf war and a street party is developing.

BARONI

It's Andres and his bums... looks like they're back from a fight.

PETE

Mike, please don't call 'em bums. They ain't bums. Those bastards scare me to death.

About sixty members of the gang are carousing in the street with their girls.

BARONI

We'd better get down there before Momo pulls in. Come on... bring your coffee with you.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Baroni and Pete enter. Slowly, the elevator moves downward. Pete is not happy at the prospect of encountering the SK's.

PETE

Damn them all to hell. You know what they did to Slippery Jack? Beat him to a pulp... that's what they did... just for the hell of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baroni's face tightens. He is angered by this news.

BARONI

When?

PETE

Oh, I don't know, a couple o' nights ago... Listen Mike, a little wine in this...

BARONI

No.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MORNING

The street is full of swaggering gang members. Several big portable RADIOS are BLARING SALSA MUSIC and everybody is getting high. Baroni cautiously looks out from behind the warehouse door. One of the SK's sees him.

SK

Hey wop, who invited you?

ANDRES ESPINOSA, president of the SK's, turns and sees Baroni, then weaves a slightly stoned path toward him. Baroni isn't interested in seeing Andres, but he doesn't want the gang to hurt Momo either.

ANDRES

Hey... Commandante... You come to celebrate with us, man?

Baroni eyes him coldly and nervously surveys the party.

ANDRES

We beat their ass good, you know?  
They won't fuck with us no mor--

He is cut off by a threatening NOISE from around the corner. It is the GROAN and ROAR of some giant mechanical device. The whole group freezes. The party is suspended in fear.

The world's most endangered, polluting stake truck... a sagging, spit-and-bailing-wire contraption... piled high with the most eclectic junk imaginable CREAKS INTO VIEW.

The gang sees and the fear passes in a ROAR of derision. On the side of the cab, faded, "artistically" hand-painted letters proclaim: SYLVESTER NICASCIO SCAVENGING CORP... YOU TRASH IT. WE STASH IT.

The gang HOOTS and CATCALLS. A few hang on the side of the truck and heckle the driver who resolutely ignores them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baroni does not like this situation.

ANOTHER SK

Hey...Moleman, what you got for us?

The little, shrivelled man behind the wheel is SYLVESTER NICASIO, much better known as MOMO THE MOLE. In his late sixties, he is a sage, feisty, unpredictable paradox who speaks with flowery diction.

His dirty overalls contrast sharply with a spiffy bow tie. His face wears a layer of grime and a pair of reading glasses that make him look like a filthy, yet scholarly little rodent.

The truck nears the warehouse. Pete has yet to emerge.

BARONI

(yelling)

Pete, open the door... open the big door for Momo.

The massive door begins to roll up. The drive motor is giving all its got to raise the rusting portal. Pete on the inside, Baroni on the outside, begin to direct Momo into the warehouse.

It's not an easy job. The truck doesn't maneuver like she used to.

MOMO

This is quite a reception... where's the band?

A beer bottle smashes on the side of the truck.

PETE

If we get through this alive, I'll buy you a band.

Baroni is frightened, not sure how far the gang will go. More objects start flying toward the warehouse and truck, breaking a few windows in the process. The truck is almost inside. The SK's continue their catcalls.

Baroni keeps his back to the gang, continuing to guide Momo to safety, hoping that nothing more serious will happen.

Suddenly, he stops and slowly turns around. His facial expression changes from fear to that faraway, intuitive look. He seems to be a different person as he strides toward Andres, oblivious to the gang.

The warehouse door closes behind Momo's truck in the background. Several of the gang members hurl a final volley against the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI

Do you have security?

ANDRES

(mostly stoned)

Security?... You think I need  
security from you?

BARONI

No, not from me. From the One-  
Eighties.

ANDRES

What you talkin' about, Baroni?

A SCREAM from the party answers his question. The young girlfriend of one of the SK's continues to scream as the end of the block is filled with sixty or seventy members of the rival gang, the One-Eighties. Many have newly acquired wounds from the earlier battle. All are armed with chains, baseball bats, tire irons, etc.

There is a horrible moment when the entire scene is frozen, like a deadly fresco.

Baroni breaks and runs back to the warehouse. The One-Eighties attack, marching through the drunk and stoned SK's, savagely cutting and beating them with little resistance.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - MORNING

Baroni locks all the locks and braces the entry door. Pete and Momo are waiting anxiously.

PETE

(out of breath)

You gotta be more careful. I need  
a drink.

Baroni chides him with a look. We HEAR the fighting in the street, not that a little thing like that is going to deter Momo from his grandiloquent ballyhoo.

MOMO

Never mind drink... never mind the  
savage tribes outside. We're safe  
in this fortress... Gentlemen, in  
the past three days I have uncovered  
an absolute--

A brick CRASHES through a window. All three duck.

MOMO

... treasure trove...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Pete's enthusiasm temporarily displaces his fear.

PETE

You brought stuff for the tail?

MOMO

My old friend... prepare to feast  
your eyes on the harvest of the  
streets.

Momo climbs into the back of the truck as Baroni and Pete watch, glancing apprehensively toward the SOUND of the ongoing battle.

From the trash, Momo extracts several store mannequins in various forms of disarray. One has paint splashed on the lower half of the body and only part of a head of hair.

MOMO

This prize was on its way to the  
Museum of Modern Art...

He hands it down to Pete as the head falls off. Momo then turns and clears some of the other refuse away from the center of the truck bed. An old, tattered oriental rug covers something beneath.

Momo faces his comrades with dramatic flourish.

MOMO

That's right, that's right... crowd  
right in... and now, straight from  
the watery world of Jacques Cousteau...

Momo pulls the rug into the air like a cape and reveals an ancient cannon, covered with barnacles and rust.

PETE

Hey, Mike... it's a cannon.

Pete jumps up on the truck to examine the cannon. Baroni is still distracted by the fighting.

PETE

It's a real cannon...

Another object BREAKS a window as they HEAR the sound of a body thrown against the door. Pete and Momo look at each other.

PETE & MOMO

(in unison)

Maybe we'd better get upstairs.



INT. THE PENTAGON - PHILLIPS' OFFICE - DAY

Lockman is meeting with Phillips. Phillips is doodling.

LOCKMAN

There have just been too many to  
be coincidence.

PHILLIPS

Five in seven months doesn't sound  
like coincidence... Keep me informed.

Lockman nods.

LOCKMAN

Marlene tells me you're taking a few  
days leave.

PHILLIPS

Kind of... checking out a rumor...

LOCKMAN

Strategy games?

Phillips smiles and looks up.

PHILLIPS

No secrets from Military Intelligence.  
What do you know?

LOCKMAN

Not much.

PHILLIPS

(bemused)

Well... those game companies have  
better security than we do, anyhow.

LOCKMAN

(ironic)

That's the difference between a profit  
margin and national security.

PHILLIPS

I'm going up to see Allan Lord tomorrow.  
I'll let you know what I find out. 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' face. The intercom buzzes.

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Gen. Phillips, Mr. Sebring is here.

Phillips rolls his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS

(to himself)

Shit...

(into the intercom)

O.K., I'll be right with him.

He shakes his head in displeasure and turns to Lockman.

PHILLIPS

'Sugar-tit' Sebring, deputy director of export commodities. Just be glad that you don't have to deal with these U.N. assholes... I don't think half of these nurds remember what side they're on.

Lockman smiles and stands.

LOCKMAN

Well, it's good that you're here to remind them.

He is at the door.

PHILLIPS

Thanks, Tom.

Lockman exits and passes Sebring who is now ushered in. Phillips stands and beams.

PHILLIPS

Lou, it's been too long.

For the first time we see Sebring's face. It is Louis. He smiles.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - DAY

Baroni and Pete are working on the old cannon. Behind them is a large sign that reads: SMYTHFIELD STORAGE. It is cold outside.

The front portion of the cannon is cradled over a small fire in a fifty-gallon oil drum. Baroni is chipping away at the barnacles with a chisel and hammer where the fire is licking at the cannon. Pete is alternately shaking a bottle of Coca-Cola, squirting it on the barnacle-free areas of the gun and wiping it with a cloth.

Pete nudges Baroni and points to a spot on the cannon. Baroni starts to chisel there. Pete steps back and nips from a bottle of wine. He manages to cap it and get it back in his coat just as Baroni finishes the spot and turns around. Baroni looks accusingly at Pete... who only shrugs innocently.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI

Hey... how come all of a sudden I'm doing all the work up here.

PETE

You know, Mike... I'm not so sure this was such a good idea after all.

BARONI

Well, listen... I've got plenty of work to do downstairs. You're the expert on this thing.

PETE

Yeah, but... hell, even experts make mistakes sometimes. I still don't like the idea of not knowin' what's inside this thing.

Baroni goes back to work on the cannon.

PETE

I mean... if this baby's loaded... it could blow us from here to Valley Forge...

Pete starts to take out the bottle again. Baroni stops work for a moment but doesn't look up.

BARONI

The only danger I can see at this point is if you happen to stick your head down here and breathe on the flame... then we'd have a real explosion.

Pete shoves the bottle back in his pocket.

PETE

(with mock indignation)

Damn...

Baroni smiles to himself.

There is a sudden NOISE and they both look toward the stairs.

Standing in the doorway is Andres. He strolls out on the roof and surveys the view. Baroni watches him a moment, then goes back to work on the cannon. Andres eyes the cannon barrel which is aimed directly at him. He looks to see what Baroni is doing. Pete nervously looks away. He reaches instinctively for his bottle, then thinks better of it.

The silence is deafening, save for Baroni's chisel. Finally...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES  
(forcing a laugh)  
Is that thing loaded, man?

Pete snorts and walks behind the cannon. Baroni keeps chiseling.

BARONI  
(without looking up)  
What are you doing in my warehouse?

ANDRES  
Hey, man, it's a free country, right?

Andres swaggers toward Baroni and Pete, careful to stay out of the cannon's line of fire. Pete twitches around behind the cannon. Baroni looks up at Andres with great intensity. Andres stops. Baroni goes back to his chiseling.

ANDRES  
I wanna talk, man.

BARONI  
(still working)  
So talk.

Andres moves forward a few more feet. He looks slightly and uncharacteristically uncomfortable.

ANDRES  
(nodding toward Pete)  
Not with him around...

Pete, sensing advantage, stands a bit taller. Andres glowers at him and he shrinks back down.

ANDRES  
(to Baroni)  
Come on, man, this is private.

Baroni stops chiseling, and looks down at the ground. He thinks a moment, then looks at Andres, sizing him up. Baroni turns to Pete.

BARONI  
(gently)  
Wait for me here, okay?

Pete blinks back at him, uncertain. Baroni stands and walks toward Andres.

PETE  
Mike, whaddaya--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI  
(turns back to Pete)  
I'll be alright.

Baroni reaches Andres. Andres looks over at Pete, then motions for Baroni to come with him to the stairs. Pete pulls out his bottle and drinks heavily, all pretense gone.

Baroni stops inside the doorway.

BARONI  
This is far enough.

Andres isn't so sure, he closes the door to guarantee their privacy.

ANDRES  
It's time, man... I need more.

BARONI  
No. I'm not--

ANDRES  
We had a deal, man.

BARONI  
Deal? You can't seem to keep your part of it. You've been beating up on the bums again. You were supposed to keep your stupid gang wars away from my warehouse--

ANDRES  
(hissing)  
Listen, you little wop-shit, you give me war plans or I'll burn this fuckin' warehouse to the ground with you in it.

BARONI  
No. I did it once because you said you'd leave the bums--

Andres is livid. He lunges at Baroni and grabs him by the neck, pinning him against the wall.

ANDRES  
(shouting)  
You give me plans or I'll make sure there ain't no more drunks breathing around here...

Outside, Pete is still standing by the cannon, straining to hear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES (O.S.)

... including your friend out there.

The last line is about all Pete can make out. He begins to inch toward the doorway, to hear better.

Andres is still holding Baroni by the neck.

ANDRES

You got that?

Baroni blinks that he understands. Andres releases him.

BARONI

(quietly)

I... I'll need some time. And you've got to promise to leave Pete and his friends alone... That's still the deal.

Andres looks at Baroni as though he might kill him. Instead, he laughs...

ANDRES

You amazing, you know that?

BARONI

(persisting)

Agree to the deal.

There is a SCRAPING NOISE from outside. Andres tenses. He violently kicks the door wide open, crouched to fight.

Pete stands quaking in a half crouched position. He has crept to within ten feet of the door.

Andres growls. Pete jumps. Andres laughs.

BARONI

(quietly)

Agree.

ANDRES

You want a deal, little man? Okay, here's the deal. You have 'em ready when I want 'em... and then we'll see about the rest of it.

Andres growls once more at Pete. Pete blinks. Andres laughs and leaves down the stairs. Baroni watches him go. Pete slowly walks over to Baroni.

PETE

(troubled)

Mike?...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baroni turns to his friend, tries to smile.

PETE

... What deal?

Baroni doesn't want to answer. He looks back down the stairs. Pete nudges him.

BARONI

(softly)

Oh, he just wants some used lumber,  
next time we get some in... I told  
him he could have it...

(faces Pete)

... if he'd keep his damn gang fights  
away from here...

Baroni gazes at Pete with deep affection. Pete's  
furrowed brow finally relaxes. They smile at each other.

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

Wearing a civilian suit and carrying a briefcase, Gen.  
Phillips arrives at the offices of Allan Lord. The  
outer hallway is very plush and very long.

The saccharine sounds of MUZAK fill the chamber. On both  
walls, games are mounted for display. The firm creates  
dozens and dozens of them for all ages, everything from  
simple board games to complex creations of electronic wizardry.

The games start out utterly bland... for small children. But  
as Phillips walks, he passes more and more that have a tone  
of violence about them. The very last section of the hall  
displays war-strategy games from all periods of history.  
The cover art of each box is wonderfully lurid.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - AFTERNOON

The reception area is beautifully decorated. The corporate  
logo hangs large on the wall. It is a delicate line drawing  
of two innocent little boys down on their knees shooting  
marbles. Above it is the name of the company and beneath  
it is the slogan: "People who play together... stay together."

An attractive RECEPTIONIST greets Phillips.

RECEPTIONIST

General Phillips... good morning,  
sir. What a pleasant surprise.

PHILLIPS

Good morning, Miss Needham.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Lord will be so pleased.

She picks up the phone.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Lord... General Phillips is here to see you.

(beat)

I'll send him in.

(beat)

Yes, I did... 2:30.

She hangs up the phone and turns to the General.

RECEPTIONIST

You can go right in.

(coy)

Do I need to search you?

PHILLIPS

I'm clean. Of course, if you really want to...

She smiles, then presses a button beneath the desk. A door not far away opens automatically. Phillips enters.

INT. INNER HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Phillips steps out into the inner hallway. It is even more luxurious. Standing, waiting for him with a smile is his old friend ALLAN LORD. Lord is a trim, well-dressed, handsome man in his mid-fifties.

LORD

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

PHILLIPS

Every time I come it seems like you've redecorated the place, Allan.

LORD

Got to do something with the money. Come on into my office.

INT. LORD'S PENTHOUSE OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The penthouse office of Allan Lord is lavish. The room is decorated in a modern/medieval motif. Strangely futuristic designs in shining chrome and steel are everywhere contrasted with dozens of ancient weapons and castle facades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED

The view of the New York skyline is breathtaking through the glass walls. The men sit down. The "game" begins.

LORD

By the way... I heard that Sara Davenport was in town.

PHILLIPS

Who?

LORD

Sara Davenport. Tailback for 'Phillips' Fillies.' 1939 or was it '40?...

PHILLIPS

Enough! You don't mention that again and I won't bring up Key West.

Lord smiles and reaches for a sheet of paper on his desk.

LORD

I just got this report from my staff this morning. I still can't believe it. Seventeen million people a week are playing my strategy games. Seventeen million. It's amazing the sense of power some people get from playing games.

PHILLIPS

(coy)

The voracious appetite for new games must be overwhelming.

LORD

(a beat; cagily)

What have you heard?

PHILLIPS

Enough to know that I want to see it.

LORD

You know, strategy games have become my largest division. Come with me.

Phillips' eyes gleam with expectation. Lord leads the way to an auditorium entrance.

INT. HALLWAY - AFTERNOON

Lord and Phillips stop outside an imposing door. Lord places his right palm against a plastic plate on the wall. The plate glows green and the door slides open. Lord looks at Phillips, smiles and gives a slight shrug.

INT. LORD'S AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

The door closes behind them. Lord walks over to a light panel and throws several switches. The preternatural light bathes... THE GAME. Phillips gasps.

One large, and two smaller tables hold the game, in its three versions. A heraldic banner, blood-red like the game boxes, hangs vertically overhead. A logo of a nuclear mushroom cloud is emblazoned over with the name of the game:

ARMAGEDDON  
THE MASTER STRATEGY GAME  
OF WORLD WAR III

Lord watches Phillips' face as he begins to explain the details. Phillips is drawn to the large, center table. Lord stays behind.

LORD

Bill, it's the 'grand-daddy' of them all. I swear, with this I die happy.  
(pause)

Until now, no game has combined the divisional, tactical, strategic and grand strategic levels of conflict-simulation. Three versions will maximize our potential consumer penetration.

Phillips wasn't prepared for this.

PHILLIPS

(taking it all in)

Who?

LORD

The best design minds in the country. McNeely from Rand, Lesser at Livermore, Keithen -- working jointly and individually.

Phillips hesitates a moment, then pushes a button on the control panel. There is a ROARING SOUND and a white flash of light.

LORD

You bet nukes. It'll be the closest thing to fighting a real war, each player with the full complement of weaponry realistically determined to be in his arsenal. Of course, as in life, so in art: Anybody who destroys the world automatically forfeits.

(pause)

Oh, did I mention that to advertise it, we are going to have a national tournament?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Phillips' jaw slackens.

LORD

All the play will be by mail until the finals. The finalists will compete head-to-head in Atlantic City. Giant awards banquet, a real blowout.

PHILLIPS

(almost afraid to ask)  
And the spoils?

Lord knows this is where Phillips lives and takes great delight in revealing the prizes.

LORD

There are no runners-up in nuclear war. Winner take all.

Phillips is enthralled.

LORD

There'll be an all-expense-paid trip for two through the worlds major battlefields. \$100,000.00 in cash. The title of MASTER OF WAR GAME STRATEGY. And...

Phillips waits with burning anticipation. Lord smiles and points to a small platform where a curtained table stands. He moves to a wall and pushes a button. The lights dim.

CLOSEUP - PHILLIPS' FACE

It is suddenly bathed in a golden glow. His eyes grow wide. Slowly he walks up the steps of the platform. The light on his face grows brighter.

TO SCENE

Phillips is standing in front of the most wonderful trophy he has ever seen. It is 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. On the plaque at the base of the trophy in letters three inches high are the words:

FIRST PRIZE  
MASTER OF WAR GAME STRATEGY  
TOURNAMENT OF ARMAGEDDON

Phillips stands transfixed like a child.

INT. WAREHOUSE FOURTH FLOOR WORK AREA - AFTERNOON

Angie is painstakingly painting some detail on one of the eyes of the Trojan Horse. Her hand slips and she paints across the eyelid.

ANGIE  
(whispering)  
Shit.

She grabs a rag and daubs at the errant paint. She starts to paint again.

PETE (O.S.)  
(shouting)  
Whoooooooooooo!!!

Her hand slips at the scream. She is frustrated. We walk with her to find Pete and the reason for his exclamation.

ANGIE  
Peter!

PETE (O.S.)  
Over here, Angie... Angie! You  
gotta see this. You won't believe  
it... I don't believe it!

Pete, Momo and Baroni are gathered by the elevator looking at a familiar blood-red brochure. They are all excited, but Pete can barely contain himself.

PETE  
(to Baroni)  
We're gonna be rich... We're gonna  
go to all the great battlefields of  
the world...

Momo watches Pete bemusedly. Baroni is re-reading the brochure for Armageddon. Angie is waiting for someone to fill her in.

MOMO  
(to Angie)  
It's a game--

PETE  
's not just a game. It's a ticket  
out of here. 's a chance for Mike  
to find somebody really worth while  
to play against.

Baroni looks up from the mailer.

BARONI  
(thinking out loud)  
It will be all the best players.  
It's not going to be all that easy--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

You're a cinch to win! The only thing...

(freezes; a new thought)

The board! Good god-a-mighty. We're gonna have to build a new board... No, not a board. We're gonna build a war room! Better 'n even the Pentagon.

MOMO

As always, the trash of New York is yours my friends.

PETE

Angie, can you help me with some sketches, some plans?

ANGIE

(shrugs; despondent)

Sure. My mom wants me to quit school anyway... I'll have lots of time.

Momo frowns and looks at Angie. She tries to look more festive. It doesn't work. Pete rambles on, oblivious to her mood.

PETE

Great! I've got some ideas--

BARONI

Pete, there's no time for all that. I want to start playing now. I need to.

Pete is stumped for a moment, then brightens.

PETE

I'll recruit all my friends. They can help. Won't take any time at all. We'll work shifts. Come on upstairs. I'll show ya.

Baroni reluctantly follows Pete up the stairs. Angie hangs back, trying to be happy for her friends, not wanting to ruin their excitement.

MOMO

(quietly)

Why would you quit school?

ANGIE

To get married. To get pregnant. To go to work. To live the way she does.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOMO

I thought you wanted to go to art school when you graduated.

Angie isn't sure she wants to have this conversation. Not now, anyway. Momo won't let her off the hook.

MOMO

You told me you 'just had to.'

ANGIE

She says it isn't fair for me to think I'm so special when she's got younger ones who need to eat and can't earn it themselves yet...

MOMO

You've got a job.

ANGIE

She says I could earn more money doing something 'sensible'... Right now, I don't have an answer for that.

Momo looks intently into her eyes for a moment, reading. He smiles knowingly, reassuringly.

MOMO

You will... you know you will.

Angie can't hold back a smile. She nods sheepishly in agreement, another victim of Momo's charm.

INT. THE PENTAGON - PHILLIPS' OUTER OFFICE - MORNING

A confusion of lower ranking OFFICERS and CLERKS bustle in and out of the reception area. Lockman sits on a couch, waiting. He has a folder. He checks his watch.

The secretary's phone rings.

SECRETARY

(into phone)

General Phillips...

(pause)

How long?

(checks watch)

Thank you, Bob.

(hangs up, turns to Lockman)

He just passed the front security desk. About...

(checks watch)

sixty-seven seconds.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

(smiles)

You seem to have your own  
intelligence network around here.  
I should check with you more often.

She blushes slightly, then recovers.

SECRETARY

It's not what you think, General.  
This way I can have everything ready  
for him so all he has to do is walk  
through...

(she begins to collect  
her stacks to hand to  
Phillips)

... then, he doesn't have to--

Phillips bursts through the outer door. He punches a button  
on the side of his watch and checks the lap time. His  
secretary looks distraught, he is almost surpressing his glee.  
Lockman stands.

PHILLIPS

Good morning Marlene, Tom.

Lockman nods his reply. The secretary finishes collecting  
Phillips' morning cables and briefing papers. She hands them  
to him.

SECRETARY

(without enthusiasm; beaten)  
How was your trip?

PHILLIPS

(taking papers)  
Fine. Wonderful, thanks.  
(checks watch again)  
I think that's a new record.

She sits back at her desk, red-faced. He turns enthusiasti-  
cally to Lockman.

PHILLIPS

Come on in, Tom.

INT. PHILLIPS' OFFICE - MORNING

Phillips leads Lockman in.

PHILLIPS

Tom, it's staggering... The biggest  
war strategy game in the history of  
competition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

Well, I'm sure you'll win it, Bill.  
Listen, I wanted to bring this report  
to you myself--

PHILLIPS

There's a \$100,000 cash prize. But  
the trophy...

Phillips is not here yet. Lockman puts the report on his  
desk and waits. Finally...

LOCKMAN

There's been another murder...  
It was Grevy's assistant, Dekom...

Phillips comes back to the here and now.

PHILLIPS

Dekom? In procurement?

Lockman nods solemnly.

PHILLIPS

(shaken)  
Damn. I played golf with him last  
week. Hell of a handicap... When?

LOCKMAN

Don't know. It was hard to tell.  
It's all in there...:

(motions toward the file)  
Pictures too, but I wouldn't look  
before lunch.

PHILLIPS

Who's on it?

LOCKMAN

My assistant, Art Powell--

PHILLIPS

(impressed)  
You are worried, aren't you?

LOCKMAN

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

PHILLIPS

I can't believe it... about Dekom,  
I mean... Where do you want to take  
this?... Are you coordinating with  
anyone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

No one else seems to be that interested...

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

LOCKMAN

It's just taking so damn long to put the pieces together.

PHILLIPS

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

Lockman looks expectant.

PHILLIPS

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

LOCKMAN

(confused)

You lost me...

PHILLIPS

No one's going to use his real name... in the game. Strictly pseudonyms. Knowing who's playing in the Pentagon'll be a big advantage. Probably my only real competition. It should be easy for you to crack the code names for me, find out who's entering. That way I can anticipate their strategies. Get everything you can... Okay?

Lockman can't believe what he's hearing.

PHILLIPS

It would be a great favor to me, Tom.  
(faraway look)

Everybody's going to know what I can really do.

Lockman watches him a beat, clears his throat, and stands to leave. Phillips self-consciously comes back.

PHILLIPS

What was Dekom's wife's name? I should call her, or something.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

HAMMERS POUND and HANDSAWS CUT. All the game tables are gone. In their place are piles of what appears to be junk...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

along with vats of what might be plaster.

The place is in complete chaos. Pete is trying simultaneously to direct his motley construction crew of bums and winos, and wire an intricate, if jerry-rigged panel made from scrap wood.

Momo and some of the "helpers" are carrying large indeterminate pieces of junk to a collecting area. Some of them steal sips from a communal jar of something red, but most of them seem to be happily involved in this project. They are taking it very seriously... some even salute Pete on occasion. Maybe it's his cockeyed WW II officer's hat with scrambled eggs.

Baroni is tucked under the front of the tank replica that comes out of the wall at the end of the room. He is completely absorbed in reading the hefty rule book for Armageddon.

Angie is creating some massive, curved sections of something out of papier maché. She is partly covered with it. She watches Pete walk over to Baroni and interrupt him with something. Baroni absently answers and goes back to his reading. Pete beams and walks toward Angie.

ANGIE

What is it?

PETE

I need you to paint a sign.

(gleefully)

It should read...

(he raises his hand as

if he could see it now)

... FOXBAT

He waits expectantly for her response. She is non-plussed.

ANGIE

What's a FOXBAT?

Like a small child, Pete is disappointed when she is not impressed. He can't believe she doesn't even know.

PETE

FOXBAT is the NATO designation for the Russian Mig 25...

(no response)

A Russian fighter plane. It could be the deadliest fighter in the world.

... And Mike's gonna use it for his code name. In the game.

Angie smiles up at Pete.

## INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT - EVENING

We are looking at a washer and dryer sitting side by side. The dryer is SPINNING. In the background we hear CONSTRUCTION NOISES. The dryer stops and CHIMES.

Phillips and Lockman come down the stairs to the utility room. Phillips is wearing running shorts and an athletic shirt. Lockman is in uniform and carrying a folder.

PHILLIPS

You know, since Margret left me,  
I never seem to have any clean socks...

He opens the dryer door and begins to separate about a dozen pairs of running socks. Lockman doesn't want to be here.

LOCKMAN

(offering the folder)

Here is the list you asked for. It's  
up to date as of this morning.

PHILLIPS

(great show of folding socks)

List?

Lockman is disgusted by this charade, but plays it out.

LOCKMAN

The Pentagon players... for Lord's  
game?

PHILLIPS

(nonchalantly takes the list)

Oh, I'd forgotten about it... Thanks,  
Tom...

(senses Lockman's discomfort)

Come here, I have to show you this.

LOCKMAN

I really just came by to drop off the  
list, Bill--

Phillips is already leading him through a heavy door frame that looks out of place in a home. Next to it is a thick concrete and steel door, removed from its hinges.

Lockman follows before Phillips disappears around the corner.

They walk through a maze-like tunnel of concrete block. There are construction lights hanging from the ceiling and heavy electrical cables running the length of the maze. The CONSTRUCTION NOISES are growing louder.

LOCKMAN

What is this?... A bomb shelter?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS

(nods, pleased)

This was in the house when I bought it. I did some renovating then, but what we're doing now... Wait'll you see.

They emerge in the plushiest bomb shelter ever built. The 20'x40' room is a carefully organized game player's paradise. Every electronic gadget imaginable has found a home here.

PHILLIPS

(proudly)

It's my 'Eagle's Nest'...

And to prove it, there is a giant, brass eagle dominating the far wall.

In the center of the room a team of military carpenters and electricians is just finishing a large high-tech map of the world: Plexiglass and brushed chrome, with four-color displays.

Phillips watches Lockman's face for a reaction. Lockman looks around the room but betrays nothing. Phillips takes the initiative.

PHILLIPS

Let's try it, fellas...

The workers all stop. Phillips strides to the control panel at the center of the map. He flips some switches and the map comes alive with light. He is pleased.

PHILLIPS

(to Lockman)

Watch this...

He inserts a key in a lock on the panel and turns it. Some lights on the panel blink. He grins back at Lockman then faces the map again. He pushes one more button.

A BRILLIANT FLASH OF LIGHT erupts over a section of Russia. RUMBLING THUNDER cracks from hidden stereo speakers... An unmistakable mushroom cloud of smoke drifts upward from the center of the light flash.

PHILLIPS

Authentic nuclear strikes...  
Better than the real game.

Lockman is having a tough time hiding his disgust, but Phillips is waiting for a response.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

(flatly)

... That's... something...

(pause)

Listen, I really do have to go now.

PHILLIPS

Sure, Tom. I'll walk you out.

(takes Lockman's arm and  
walks, charming)

Oh, I meant to tell you. I put  
your name with mine on some flowers  
I had sent to Mrs. Dekom...

(a moment for that to  
sink in)

... And thanks again for that list.  
I owe you a big one.

They disappear into the maze again. A couple of the technicians throw each other some dubious looks then go back to work. We stop on the nuked area of Russia. The affected area is now represented by charcoal black.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Total darkness FILLS THE SCREEN.

EERIE, MAJESTIC MUSIC BEGINS.

Slowly, as though seen from outer space, the earth is revealed, moving out of eclipse.

MUSIC BUILDS

From the North Pole, the continents sweep away in every direction. The entire gleaming globe hangs in space, deceptively serene from this distance.

We are LOOKING DOWN from the ceiling of the warehouse. The earth has moved out from behind the rim of a large light.

MUSIC PEAKS AND DIES.

NEW ANGLE

LOOKING ACROSS the globe from the equator. Up at the North Pole sits... a chair. One large foot, then another begins to climb AWAY FROM THE CAMERA... it's Baroni.

He carefully climbs up to the old, stuffed chair and ceremoniously sits down to survey his world.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

PETE'S crew has constructed a polar projection map, the top of which sits a full four feet from the floor and is 30 feet in diameter.

Baroni is satisfied and tired. His studying complete. The competition can begin. He sighs. His eyes close.

Suddenly his eyes open... He sits up. There is no discernible noise, but he is alert. He swivels his chair so it faces the stairway entrance. He pushes a button on a small control panel beside him. Several more pools of light illuminate the floor around the map.

From out of the stairway darkness emerge Andres and ten of the SK's. They look like silent, evil shadows as they spread themselves around the edge of the world.

BARONI

What do you want?

ANDRES

Time's up, man... We gotta deal, remember?

BARONI

I said I would need some time--

ANDRES

What's all this shit?  
(gesturing around)  
Toys?

Andres walks around the globe, threateningly. Baroni turns his chair so he can watch him.

ANDRES

You got time for toys, and you  
ain't got time for me?...  
We ain't waiting no longer, man.

Andres picks up his foot and stomps down on Australia. There is a sickening CRUNCH as he pushes through to the floor.

BARONI

No, don't do that!... I've got  
what you want.

He reaches beneath the chair and takes out his clipboard. He pulls several sheets from the back and throws them across the world to Andres who retrieves them from the ocean.

BARONI

You've got to follow those plans  
to the letter. Otherwise, you'll  
end up--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SK  
We can read, asshole.

ANDRES  
(smiling)  
Don't worry wop-shit. Saturday  
we leave security.

BARONI  
You can't fight Saturday. In two  
weeks there's a full moon. You'll  
need it--

SK  
Two weeks! Bullshit, man!

Andres looks coldly at Baroni. Baroni just stares back. The  
gang members continue to voice their disapproval. Andres  
decides.

ANDRES  
We'll wait, man...

The SK's settle down. Silence.

ANDRES  
The little Commandante knows what  
we do to him an' his friends if  
these don't work out.  
(nods to his men)  
Let's go...

The gang members file toward the stairs. Andres lingers.

ANDRES  
(quietly to Baroni)  
Just 'cause my little sister comes  
around here sometimes, don't mean  
I won't do what I said...

Andres heads for the stairs.

BARONI  
Don't forget your part of the deal.

ANDRES  
(turns to Baroni)  
What deal? I just said, 'We'll see.'

With that he laughs and disappears down the stairs. Baroni  
sinks back into the cushions... takes off his glasses and  
rubs his eyes.

FADE OUT:

EXT. NONDESCRIPT XEROX ROOM - NIGHT

The SCREEN IS BLACK. We hear a DOOR CLOSING. Suddenly THE BLACK SCREEN IS WHITE and huge black letters fill the frame: XEROX ROOM.

We are looking at the frosted glass of the door to the room and someone has just turned on the light inside.

INT. NONDESCRIPT XEROX ROOM - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE UP of a hand turning the lock on the door knob.

TO SCENE

Louis is carrying a large attache case, from which he pulls a thick stack of files. He nervously checks the door once more and then starts the Xerox machine.

EXTREME CLOSE UP on the tray of the machine as black and white images of numerous military personnel settle neatly, one on top of the other. The MACHINE DRONES rhythmically on.

EXT. THE MALL - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

The full moon shines brightly. We PULL BACK to reveal Lockman staring up at it. Major Powell approaches. In the background, the lights of several police and military vehicles flash. A body is being loaded into an ambulance.

POWELL

We won't know 'till morning, but it seems to fit the profile.

LOCKMAN

Damn...

INT. LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - COMPUTER ROOM - MORNING

Thousands of letters are being keyed into the computer by dozens of operators. Lights, a video camera and other pieces of equipment are being set up. A TV REPORTER and a minicam team are laughing and excitedly talking about something when Allan Lord walks in.

LORD

Come on, guys, let me in on it.  
What's up?

The Reporter pulls his shirt tail out, raises his arms, and motions for Lord to do the same. For a second, Lord looks confused, then follows gamely. TWO SOUND MEN begin to fit them with wireless mikes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV REPORTER

My cameraman covered this great story last night. Some Harlem police captain found a set of keys and a note that says, 'You're welcome.' They go outside and there's this stolen moving van parked, illegally, right in front of the precinct house! And, get this, when they opened it up they find three million dollars worth of ripped-off stereo equipment and forty-seven members of this street gang... uhh... The One-Eighties. Anyway, the gang is so embarrassed they won't tell who put them in there, or how... It won't make much difference. It looks like they're all going up the river.

The sound men finish. Lord, now the seasoned media pro, puts his clothes back in order.

LORD

(light-heartedly)

Well, if they'd been playing one of my games, they wouldn't have had time to get into such trouble... Are you all set up?

CREW MEMBER

Ready when you are.

LORD

Then let's do it.

INT. LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - COMPUTER ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

CLOSE UP ON TV MONITOR

LORD

As you can see here in this room, thousands upon thousands of entries are being received daily. Each move is programmed into the computer and the outcome is sent back to the individual player automatically. We never see it.

TV REPORTER

Let's talk about that for a minute. If I wanted to know how I'm doing at any given point, could I just give you my name and find out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORD

Not your given name, Steve. Your code name. We won't match up any individuals with their codes until our two divisional winners meet for the final game in Atlantic City. Until then, only the computer knows.

TV REPORTER

That and my bank balance... Tell us about this map over here...

They walk in front of an electronic map of the U.S. Red and Blue lights flash over the entire country.

LORD

Our two divisions are color coded. The Blue lights are military players... The Red are civilian entries. As you can see this is the largest and most successful war game competition in history.

TV REPORTER

(turning to camera)

Armageddon... That's the name of the game. The Third World War... by mail. And by the look of that map... Armageddon is taking the country by storm.

INT. COLLEGE DORM - NIGHT

An entire hall locks in combat, on the floor that serves as their gameboard.

INT. AIR BASE - REC ROOM - NIGHT

Young airmen group around their squad leader as he chalks possibilities.

INT. WAR STRATEGY GAMES CLUB - DAY

Thirty or forty people are sitting at tables, poring over moves.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE PENTHOUSE - DAY

A butler circulates, picking up crumbs and debris as rich kids hover over their game, absorbed.

INT. ALL-NIGHT DINER - NIGHT

A waitress ignores a group of arriving truckers, seals her next mailed move, playing Armageddon behind the counter.

INT. THINK TANK - DAY

Half a dozen Herman Kahn-types finish puffing their pipes and staring at the sophisticated wall-projection board, then seal their moves.

CLOSE SHOT - POSTAL SORTING MACHINE - DAY

On and on envelopes, all addressed to 'Armageddon' flash through.

INT. LORD AMUSEMENTS, INC. - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

On and on blink the Red and Blue lights.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Baroni is sitting in his chair on top of the world, furiously writing down moves on his clipboard.

Pete and Momo watch quietly from the edge of the game area. Angies stands behind them. Pete keeps looking nervously at his watch. There is great tension in the silence.

Baroni stops writing. He checks his papers, scrutinizes the globe to be sure, then stands and stretches.

Pete EXHALES audibly. He CLEARS HIS THROAT, sets his shoulders and marches with great pomp to the edge of the globe. He stands at attention and waits for Baroni to realize he is there.

Baroni finally looks at him.

PETE

Sir. Request permission to have the honor to post your final moves, sir.

Momo chuckles silently in the background. Baroni looks confused for a second, then absently nods his approval. He puts the papers into a pre-addressed envelope and hands it down to Pete, across the world.

Pete pivots and marches toward the elevator, beaming. Momo watches Baroni for a moment. His eyes twinkle.

MOMO

(quietly, to no one in particular)

I think maybe I'll accompany the honor guard to the post office.

We hear the ELEVATOR MOTOR start to GRIND. Momo runs after Pete.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOMO  
(shouting, grand delivery)  
Hold the chariot, oh Mercury!

The GRINDING STOPS.

Momo jumps into the elevator and the GRINDING STARTS again.

Angie and Baroni are left alone. His mind isn't yet back from the game. She watches him with a small smile.

The ELEVATOR MOTOR STOPS as the car reaches its destination. There is an awkward silence. Finally...

ANGIE  
(softly)  
I hope you win.

Baroni nods blankly in mute reply.

ANGIE  
What would you do?...

Baroni doesn't understand.

ANGIE  
... if you win?

Baroni is taken aback. He focusses on her, perplexed.

BARONI  
I don't know... I hadn't really  
thought about it...

Angie looks surprised. She thinks for a moment.

ANGIE  
Where would you go?

BARONI  
(confused)  
Go?... Why would I go anywhere?

Angie is as dumbfounded by his answer as he is by her question. They stare at each other, thinking foreign thoughts.

INT. THE PENTAGON - PHILLIPS' OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE UP of a champagne cork erupting from a bottle.

TO SCENE as Phillips and his staff continue their celebrating. Marlene wears a flight jacket already emblazoned with "ARMAGEDDON -- EAGLE" in fiery tones of red.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

MARSBURG

(toasting)

To 'EAGLE'... may your last game be  
the easiest... and I've already  
ordered a new trophy case.

The group cheers and toasts Phillips. A confident smile is  
on his face.

INT. WAREHOUSE - THIRD FLOOR - EVENING

Angie sits alone in front of a make-shift easel, painting on  
a piece of discarded masonite. She is very absorbed in her  
work. The painting is like nothing we have seen her do before;  
a fanciful landscape with vivid, evocative colors. It is very  
quiet in this area of the warehouse.

Baroni appears behind her and walks silently to within a couple  
of yards. He stops and watches her work... Angie's intensity  
seems to be a new experience for him. He looks troubled, a  
question etched on his face.

Finally he turns to leave, embarrassed at intruding on her  
privacy. His foot hits a loose nail and it PINGS.

Angie spins around and sees Baroni. She reaches up instinctively  
to cover her painting -- to hide from him. Then she seems to  
soften, to understand.

ANGIE

(smiling)

You know where I'd go?

Baroni just keeps looking at her. He doesn't know.

ANGIE

I'd get the hell away from here and  
find someplace where people live...  
and I could do what I wanna do and  
make a living doin' it.

Wouldn't we all. Baroni wrestles with it a moment, unsure how  
to respond. He finally nods toward the painting...

BARONI

You really are very talented...

He knows it sounds lame and he is uncomfortable. Angie to  
the rescue...

ANGIE

Big lot of good it'll do me, doing  
handpainted plates on that damn  
assembly line at 'Montezuma's Plate  
Works'...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She didn't mean to sound so bitter. She manages a sweet, almost encouraging smile.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FOURTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Angie and Momo are relaxing with Pete in his workshop area. Pete is showing Angie how to tie some fancy sailor's knots. She watches intently, Momo grins in amusement.

PETE

(tying a rope)

Then... you take this through here...

In one fluid motion, he tightens the seeming mess of knots into a wonderfully proportioned piece of rope sculpture. He grins at his handiwork. Even Momo is impressed.

ANGIE

Wonderful... What is it?

PETE

It's a 'sheepshanke'... you use it to shorten ropes without cuttin'em.

MOMO

I believe it was also instrumental in naval hangings at sea by the British Navy in the days of Cap'n Bligh and other similarly inclined arbiters of life on the high seas--

PETE

They would have used a traditional hangman's noose.

Baroni appears in the background at the far end of the floor. He walks toward his friends as though in a trance. They continue, unaware of his presence.

MOMO

True, my friend... for the clean and kindest of neck breakings it was without equal. But the venerable sheepshanke was used to facilitate the abrupt jerk at the end of the long fall.

Baroni arrives at the group. They all look at him, the frivolity fading from their faces. He doesn't look well.

He pulls something from his pocket... a crumpled telegram.

BARONI

(dazed)

I guess I won...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angie, Pete, and Momo are speechless for a second. Momo finally takes the telegram out of Baroni's hand...

PETE

(exploding)

Hot damn, Jiminny! We did it, Mikey!

Angie jumps up and SQUEALS with happiness for Baroni. He stares into space. Angie and Pete quiet down as Momo reads aloud with great dramatic flourish...

MOMO

Telex from LORD AMUSE, New York City.  
Attention, FOXBAT. Regarding Armageddon... Greetings and congratulations. Be advised that you have been declared the final and irrefutable winner in the civilian division of Lord Amusements' national competition of Armageddon...

Angie and Pete are beside themselves. Baroni is listening intently now as Momo continues, beaming...

MOMO

Arrangements have been made for you to travel to Atlantic City to compete in the final confrontation against the winner of the military division--

Pete jumps up and down, chanting...

PETE

We're going to Atlantic City, we're going to Atlantic City...

MOMO

Your accommodations there are provided at the Imperial Regent Hotel...

(skipping down)

Please confirm...

(skips again)

Again congratulations. Best regards,  
Allan Lord, President, Lord Amusements.

Pete is still chanting and dancing around. Momo and Baroni now join him in his chant and dance. Angie starts to lose her enthusiasm. She looks dejected. The other three slow down, sensing it.

ANGIE

How long will you be gone?

There is a pregnant pause. Baroni doesn't understand. Pete looks from Baroni to Momo to Angie...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE

Well... you're going too, aren't you?

Angie just looks at him like a lost puppy, unsure of where she stands.

MOMO

(grand)

Of course she is. We can't leave her alone in this neighborhood, can we?

Momo laughs. He is joined by Pete, then Baroni. Finally Angie begins to giggle and playfully tosses a towel at Momo.

INT. THE PENTAGON - LOCKMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The desk is covered with stacks of reports and photographs of dead men. A blackboard has lists of names scrawled under specific headings: EMBASSIES, U.N., U.S. INTELLIGENCE, U.S. MILITARY, STATE DEPT., FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE, FOREIGN BUSINESS, SCIENTISTS.

Lockman is packing some of the files into his briefcase. Powell is helping him.

POWELL

The frequency seems to keep increasing...  
Our boy has to make a mistake soon...

LOCKMAN

(glances at blackboard)

His range of targets seems to be increasing too... Hand me that one on the nuclear physicist, over there.

Powell grabs a file off the edge of the desk and gives it to Lockman.

POWELL

Maybe there is something in this bird thing... There were minute traces of bird shit in carpet samples from two of the last three... It's pretty thin though...

LOCKMAN

Damnit! Art, I think we're close to this. I feel it. I don't know why it's so damn important for me to go with Phillips to this fool game...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

We'd better get lucky soon. I don't know how much longer I can keep this out of the press. If they raised a big ruckus now, it could drive this guy deeper than he is already.

Lockman snaps his case shut. He gazes at the names on the board.

LOCKMAN

Art, keep on it. Let's nail this guy... whoever he is... before anybody else dies. It's scary. Many more and he's gonna put a serious crimp in the world's leadership.

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chauncy SQUAWKS. He jumps from his perch in the cage to the open door.

Louis is intently playing the game. He rolls the dice. A four.

CHAUNCY

Play the game... Play the game...  
Roll the dice and play the game...

Louis moves a game piece and lands on a square marked DAY OF THE WEEK. He draws from that deck: "FRIDAY." He places the card next to the previously drawn WEAPON card that reads: "RIFLE."

Chauncy flutters over and lands on the game board. Louis ignores him.

CHAUNCY

One more roll... One more roll...  
One more roll and you're out of  
the hole...

Louis continues to look at the game board, oblivious to the bird. He slowly picks up the dice and rolls... A seven. He moves another game piece and reaches for the TARGET stack. Chauncy pecks playfully at his extended arm...

CHAUNCY

Check the rules... Check the rules...  
Check the rules and you never lose...

Louis swings his arm at the bird, knocking him out of the way. Chauncy SQUAWKS in protest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS  
(hissing to Chauncy)  
I always play by the rules.

Louis hesitantly lifts the TARGET card from the stack. He breathes heavily. He turns the card. The taped on photograph is... GENERAL PHILLIPS. Louis stares at the picture while Chauncy lovingly tries to climb on his hand.

EXT. IMPERIAL REGENT HOTEL - ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

The casino in Atlantic City is a scene of chaos. In blazing lights, a huge marquee holds letters three feet high: LORD AMUSEMENTS PRESENTS . . . ARMAGEDDON! WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP FINALS -- FOXBAT vs. EAGLE

Crowds of people are milling around the hotel entrance. Many are in uniform. It is obvious that the Pentagon has ordered the troops out in force to support Phillips.

The General arrives in his military limousine. He gets out with Col. Marsburg and Gen. Lockman. The crowd begins to cheer. Phillips plays the winner's role to the hilt, smiling and waving to everyone, the conquering hero.

In the shadows stands Louis Sebring, holding an attache case. Part of the crowd passes into the casino with Phillips. Louis follows.

A battered cab arrives. Baroni, Angie, Pete and Momo have to scrounge between them for the fare, their suits look like Salvation Army. No one notices their arrival as Baroni apprehensively surveys the scene. TV technicians are completing their hook-ups.

TV CREWMAN  
(yelling at Baroni)  
Hey buddy, move it, will ya?  
We're trying to do a feed here!

Baroni is startled, tries to ignore him as the group moves inside.

INT. IMPERIAL REGENT HOTEL - CASINO - DAY

The interior of the casino leaves Baroni and his friends speechless. The place holds the oddest assortment of people imaginable. Blue-haired old ladies, dealers, hookers, military personnel, change girls, fat men in Bermuda shorts -- it looks like a giant costume party.

Everywhere, slot machines keep up their relentless CLAMMERING,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

their lights flashing. Elaborate posters direct Baroni and friends to one end of the casino and the entrance to a gigantic ballroom.

INT. IMPERIAL REGENT HOTEL - CASINO BALLROOM - DAY

This is it. The room is jammed with people. If possible, it is even more claustrophobic than the casino. Tables are set for the opening dinner. The walls are festooned with red, white and blue bunting. The names FOXBAT and EAGLE flash at each other from opposite sides of the hall.

At the front on the raised stage are a podium, head table and Winged Victory -- all, however, dwarfed by the mammoth electronic Armageddon gameboard which pulses on the wall, waiting for the game to begin.

Somehow Baroni didn't expect all of this, didn't plan for all of this. He looks stunned.

OTHER SIDE OF THE CROWDED ROOM

Phillips and his entourage are admiring the big game board. He sits down and relaxes, the picture of confidence.

PHILLIPS

Damn... it's almost like the War Room.

MARSBURG

You should feel right at home, sir.

PHILLIPS

I do, Ed... I really do.

INT. BALLROOM BALCONY

Louis looks down on Phillips from the mezzanine overlooking the ballroom floor.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM

Baroni stands with his friends, his face covered with sweat. He is almost trembling. None of them know what to say to him, what to do for him.

BARONI

(dazed)

So many people here... I didn't know...  
I've got to collect my thoughts... I've  
only played... alone... I mean... I'm not  
feeling very well... Maybe I'd better  
find a bathroom... Wait for me...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Baroni makes his way through the confusion, his head swimming.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Louis enters the men's room with his attache case under his arm. The room is empty. He moves quickly to a stall, walks in, shuts the door and locks it.

INT. STALL

He drops his trousers around his ankles and sits down. He then opens the case on his lap and begins to assemble a rifle that has been broken down for easy carrying.

Suddenly the door to the men's room opens. Louis stops assembling the rifle.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Baroni is a nervous wreck as he enters and does not notice the occupied stall. His boots RESOUND against the floor. Every sound is exaggerated in this tile and stainless steel chamber.

He hurries to a basin for a heave, but it's a dry one. He breathes deeply, then runs the water to wash his face.

INT. STALL

Louis HEARS the water running. He grows impatient. The man out there seems to be taking a very long time.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Baroni finishes washing his face and attempts to turn off the water. No use, the handle is broken. It spins in his hand. Baroni dries his face and hands as the SOUND OF THE WATER fills the room. He begins to pace, trying to calm his nerves.

INT. STALL

The water now SOUNDS like a speeding train. Louis is becoming unnerved. He hears Baroni's boots ECHO back and forth.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Without realizing it, Baroni haltingly paces nearer the stall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He is gradually overtaken by his intuition, he focuses on the door, what might be behind it.

INT. STALL

Suddenly, those boots with their multi-colored laces become visible under the door. Louis puzzles, wondering where he's seen them before. The boots stop and face the door. The SOUND of the train seems to be getting louder, closer.

CU LOUIS

And then it dawns. The subway, the books, THE SCHOLAR! Louis clutches his unassembled rifle and cringes against the attack he expects is eminent.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

Baroni stares at the door, disturbed:

INT. STALL

Louis waits, sweating. He closes his eyes. The restroom DOOR OPENS... Several MEN enter, talking loudly.

MAN #1 (O.S.)

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

MAN #2 (O.S.)

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

MAN #1 (O.S.)

Hell.

Louis opens his eyes. The boots are gone. He quickly stuffs the rifle back into its case, pulls up his pants and rushes from the stall.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

LOUIS

(mumbling)

... he's not in this game... Not this game... its against the rules...

The men look at each other and laugh as Louis flees the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN #2

Yeah, you check the rules, that'll up  
your winnings by at least fifty per cent.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - DAY

Baroni rejoins his friends. He is shaken and pale... like he  
has seen... or felt... a ghost.

BARONI

(quietly)  
I can't do it. My nerves are playing  
tricks on me. Something's wrong...  
(shakes his head)  
... the crowd... the noise. I can't  
think straight in here.

His friends are astonished.

PETE

Mike... whadaya mean? This whole  
thing's set up for ya.

BARONI

I just can't play... with this  
feeling.

ANGIE

Oh, Michael... you're gonna win.

BARONI

It's just no good. I don't belong  
here. I shouldn't have come... I  
shouldn't have even started this game.

MOMO

Yes, you should. You're the best,  
you owe it to yourself.

PETE

You can't just give up.

Angie brightens. She has an idea.

ANGIE

What if you played from home...  
from the warehouse?

PETE

She's got something there, Mike.  
It's perfect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI

I don't know. I don't see how it would work. They'd never allow that.

MOMO

(grandly gesturing)

Don't be too sure, my friend. Look around. The inertia of the free-enterprise system has been unleashed. Dollars are at work here. They might do just about anything to save this game.

BARONI

It won't work. Even if they'd let me... I don't even have a phone.

PETE

Don't worry 'bout that, I got tricks Ma Bell never heard of.

ANGIE

Momo, you could stay and talk to 'um. Set it up. You're good at that.

Momo's smile suddenly fades to uncertainty. He gazes around the room and sputters. Pete and Angie's excitement continues.

PETE

Grrreat idea! They won't be able to say no. It's gotta work.

Momo's not so sure. His facade is gone, but no one seems to notice.

MOMO

Well... I'll... uh... I'll do everything I can, but this isn't exactly my arena... I mean...

PETE

Just tell 'em that's the way it has to be.

BARONI

(heading for the exit)

I need to get out of here... I'm not feeling well.

Pete and Angie follow Baroni toward the door, leaving Momo standing in the chaos. Angie says something to Baroni and then takes a yellow envelope from him and runs back to Momo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGIE

The telegram, you might need it.

Momo looks at it and sighs with trepidation as Angie runs off to catch up with Pete and Baroni.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - NIGHT

The awards banquet is a gaudy affair. The hall is filled with hundreds of people. A military band is PLAYING loudly.

It is almost time for the program to begin.. On the stage at the front of the room the head table sits... empty.

INT. BACKSTAGE

Allan Lord, Gen. Phillips, Col. Marsburg and several Lord staff members are standing in the wings having an intense discussion. To one side, huddled next to a backdrop anchor, trying to stay out of the way of several harried stagehands, is Momo.

PHILLIPS

I can't understand this, Allan...  
I can't understand this at all...

LORD

(upset)

We felt very certain he would show up by now...

PHILLIPS

Well, where is he?

LORD

We don't know. He hasn't checked in...

PHILLIPS

I thought you had this thing under control.  
Call him. Mobilize. Do something.

LORD STAFFER

General... there's no phone listing on his computer entry.

PHILLIPS

You've got to be kidding me.

LORD STAFFER

We've checked all the other hotels in town.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORD  
If he doesn't show up...

PHILLIPS  
What do you mean 'If he doesn't  
show up?'

Suddenly from out of the shadows, a meek, frightened Momo steps up to the group.

MOMO  
Uhhh, pardon me... Mr. Lord?

LORD  
(turning away)  
Not now...

MOMO  
I think you're looking for...

Lord sees the telegram in Momo's hand.

LORD  
FOXBAT!... Where the hell have you  
been? We've got to get the  
proceedings under way here...

Lord takes Momo's arm and begins to lead him and Phillips to the stage entrance.

LORD  
(hurried)  
FOXBAT this is EAGLE, General  
Phillips, your opponent. Bill,  
this is FOXBAT, better known as... ?

Momo stops short of the stage entrance.

LORD  
What's the matter now?

MOMO  
Mr. Lord... I'm not him... but I  
know where he is...

LORD  
What?

MOMO  
He's gone home.

All of the men are speechless with horror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LORD

What are you saying?

MOMO

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

PHILLIPS

(as though talking  
to a child)

Well... when is he coming back?

MOMO

(sizing Phillips up:  
he doesn't like him)

Oh... he's not.

The men look even more aghast.

LORD

But, what about the game?...

MOMO

(to Lord)

You see, sir...

(puffing up)

... well, you don't understand about him. He didn't know it was going to be like this. He isn't used to all these people and noise and everything... so he went home.

PHILLIPS

(to Lord)

I'm holding you personally responsible for this.

MOMO

(ignoring Phillips,  
wilting slightly)

He wanted me to talk to you about it. You see... he has always played from his own game room... where he lives... by himself. I was going to tell you before... but... Anyway, what he'd like to do, if you'll agree, is to do that now. He could call his moves in on the telephone or whatever.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

LORD

(angry, sputtering)

He can't do that. You can't come in here at the last minute and pull this kind of crap. I'm sorry... whoever you are... FOXBAT has just forfeited.

Momo hangs his head.

PHILLIPS

Allan... I came here to play.

LORD

(frantic)

What the hell can I do? I'm going to lose my ass on this. The whole ad campaign is in the toilet. You win by default.

PHILLIPS

No... that is not winning...

LORD STAFFER

I don't think we can get away with that, Mr. Lord... the casino people ... we've signed contracts.

LORD

(utterly desperate)

Don't you think I know that? Wait a minute, wait a minute...

(turning to another staffer)

Lee, did you say that the runner-up was here?

(as the staffer nods)

Get him in here.

PHILLIPS

No way, Allan.

LORD

But, Bill--

PHILLIPS

Listen, when I win that trophy it's not going to be from some runner-up. If FOXBAT wants to play from home, fine. I'll go home, too... You started this game... Now you make it work.

Lord is stunned.

DISSOLVE TO:

## INT. CASINO BALLROOM - DAY

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.

LORD

Ladies and gentlemen... I'd like to remind you of the special rules for this final round of competition. Play will commence each morning at 0500 and continue without stop until 2400 hours each night for as many days as it takes for one player to completely annihilate the other. Each player will have a maximum of one hour to make a move. A cluster move, including up to three offensive or defensive combinations is permitted. Nuclear strikes may be used only twice by each player during the entire competition. A player may not use nuclear weapons unless he occupies at least two grids within the target country. It will be a grueling, brutal course... but this is war.

The crowd APPLAUDS.

LORD

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 - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

Baroni watches as Pete hangs out of the fifth floor window feverishly patching a line into the phone system pole below. Baroni holds an ancient lineman's telephone to his ear.

BARONI

Okay... I've got it... I've got a tone.

Baroni sighs with relief as Pete climbs back in.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - DAY

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)

Where are you?

Suddenly Momo is aware of all eyes.

MOMO

(loud and self-  
consciously)

Ahem... we're... uhhh... ready to  
commence play.

Lord takes a coin out of his pocket.

LORD

Colonel Marsburg... please call it.  
Heads or tails...

MARSBURG

Heads.

The coin drops.

LORD

Heads. EAGLE 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.  
And naturally he chooses to lead  
'Blue' -- the forces of the United  
States and her NATO allies.

The crowd CHEERS. Blue lights of various shades go on  
representing the forces of the Western world on the giant map.

LORD

Then FOXBAT will lead 'Red' -- the  
Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.  
And he will have the first move.

Momo whispers into the telephone. Red lights go on across  
the board... representing Baroni's forces.

LORD

Let the competition begin.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

Baroni is sitting on top of his world. The 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 BALLROOM - DAY

An ANNOUNCER'S VOICE booms out as the same lights flash onto the big board.

## ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

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 explosive... napalm... chemical nerve agent... followed by airborne assault... three divisions infantry. Attack... grid 401... People's Republic of China... massive nuclear missile strike... major civilian and military targets.

There is a pause.

## ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Computer analysis move one, FOXBAT. West Germany NATO Forces engaged. Israel... seventy percent of civilian population and total military capability destroyed. People's Republic of China... Neutralized for next thirty moves.

## INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT - DAY

On the phone in his 'EAGLE'S NEST,' Phillips gazes down on his sophisticated world model. Several of his friends are with him. The same lights flash on his board. He looks confident. The clock behind him reads 10:15.

## PHILLIPS

Interesting... interesting...

DISSOLVE TO:

## INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT - NIGHT

The clock reads 8:30. The look of confidence is gone from Phillips' face. He is tense... very tense. All of the

(CONTINUED)

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people with him look tense. He talks into the telephone.

PHILLIPS

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

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - NIGHT

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

ANNOUNCER

Computer analysis... move 8... EAGLE.  
France... NATO Defense... inadequate.  
Saudi Arabia... U.S. armored attack  
... blocked. Persian Gulf/Indian  
Ocean. Naval Battle... Outcome  
uncertain. Nuclear attack... Cuba.  
Military capability/civilian  
population destroyed.

On the board it is obvious that Soviet forces are doing very well. Red lights 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.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

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.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Baroni slumps in his chair. The lights on his world are blazing. He is asleep.

INT. PHILLIPS' BASEMENT - NIGHT

Phillips looks very tired as he dials the telephone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS

Tom... this is Bill. Sorry to wake you... I want you to get Colonel Bates... yeah... he's the duty officer at the computer center. And bring your assistant... what's his name? Right... Powell. Meet me in my office in forty-five minutes... It's top priority.

INT. PHILLIPS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Phillips has managed to straighten himself up a little, but he still looks worn. He greets Lockman, Powell and MAJOR BATES at the door.

PHILLIPS

(charming)

Colonel Powell, Major Bates, Tom; come on in.

Phillips closes the door and crosses to his desk.

PHILLIPS

Thank you, gentlemen, for coming. I'm sorry to drag you down here in the middle of the night.

LOCKMAN

That's alright, sir. What's the flap?

Phillips sits down at his desk and the men sit facing him.

PHILLIPS

I think you men are all aware of what's happening in Atlantic City.

They nod.

PHILLIPS

It's no secret that I'm barely holding my own in this game.

LOCKMAN

(with an edge)

Is that what this is about?

PHILLIPS

(smiling)

No, no, I certainly wouldn't have called you down here simply for my own personal needs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS (CON'T)

(serious)

Whether I win or lose as an individual will be of little consequence, but the situation that exists now could be a matter of the gravest national importance.

Lockman isn't sure he heard that right. Phillips takes a deep breath.

PHILLIPS

Let's take a look at my opponent. Tom, you've seen me play, you know my record. Sure, I've had some tough contests, but I've always come out on top. On top, against military strategy teams. On top, against civilian think tanks. On top, against the best.

(pause)

This opponent I have, this FOXBAT is much too proficient to be merely what he claims to be; an individual, civilian player.

Lockman blinks.

PHILLIPS

I've only lost one strategy game in my entire career of gaming. Two years ago we had a special contest. I played against our own Pentagon Strategy Computer Program. Gentlemen, I believe that the facts point to only one conclusion.

(pause)

What remains is how to most effectively handle the situation.

Phillips has lost them.

LOCKMAN

Excuse me, sir. What conclusion?

PHILLIPS

Tom, I'm sure you see it. There is no way a mere mortal could make the kind of moves he does. No one player could ever combine the detailed understanding of contemporary tactics and logistics and have such a sound, intellectual overview... I'm playing against a sophisticated strategy computer. A computer that we know as FOXBAT.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Lockman and Powell look at each other out of the corners of their eyes.

PHILLIPS

What brilliant subterfuge at that awards banquet. We were manipulated right into this... It's the Russians. It couldn't be anyone else. You'll have to locate them and confirm this, of course, but I'm absolutely sure of it.

POWELL

What could they possibly gain?

PHILLIPS

Major, what better way to test their system against ours? They knew that we'd find out. They wanted us to. If they were to win Armageddon, they'd know that at last they'd reached full parity with us... That our computer system, upon which our entire tactical and strategic first strike defense is based ... is inferior to theirs. That their computer can beat ours... Armed with that knowledge, they would surely feel secure enough to launch a first strike attack for real... confident of final victory. Gentlemen, what's at stake in Atlantic City is no mere trophy in a childish game... what's at stake is the future of the free world.

The men are speechless.

PHILLIPS

Major Bates... beginning tomorrow morning I want all of my moves dictated by the Pentagon Central Strategy System.

At his words, the men's shock deepens.

LOCKMAN

If what you propose is true... why play into their hands.

PHILLIPS

I wo-- We can't miss this opportunity to show them what our technology can do.

Phillips shoves a stack of papers towards Bates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS

You'll find the variables are almost exactly those already programmed into the system for global warfare. Men... from this point forward we are on full alert. The United States is at simulated war.

Phillips slumps back down in his chair. When it becomes obvious that the meeting is over, Bates and Powell rise and leave. Lockman stares at Phillips. Phillips begins clicking a ballpoint pen. He is absorbed in watching the glob of ink on the very tip. Finally, Lockman rises and goes to the door. He pauses for a moment, then...

LOCKMAN

General...

Phillips doesn't respond.

LOCKMAN

(concerned)

Bill...

Phillips is in another world. Lockman turns and exits.

INT. PENTAGON - PHILLIPS' OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

Lockman closes the door to Phillips' office. Major Bates has been waiting for him.

BATES

General Lockman, should I really reprogram the computer?

LOCKMAN

(flatly, with resignation)

An order is an order.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - LATE MORNING

Baroni walks around his world... sweating and agonizing over his moves. Pete appears with a plate of food. Baroni looks up, dazed. Pete offers the food. Baroni refuses it with a wave and looks back at the globe. The pressure is extreme.

BARONI

I can't understand it. He's so much better...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI (CON'T)  
(to Pete, perplexed)  
Why is he so much better than yesterday?

Pete shrugs helplessly. Baroni looks back at the map with renewed determination.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - LATE MORNING

The tension is mounting. As the tactical situation changes Momo and Marsburg are on their telephones. Momo mops his forehead with part of the tablecloth. Marsburg stares across the room at him.

The board is glowing with lights. The Blue 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 (V.O.)  
Computer analysis move 20. FOXBAT.  
West Germany... Warsaw Pact forces  
falling back. Civilian population  
centers destroyed. Norway...  
Warsaw Pact forces blocked.  
Afghanistan... U.S. armored infantry  
drive continuing...

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Louis is running from room to room, searching frantically for something. The apartment is a shambles. Chauncy is flying around loose, SQUAWKING and chattering excitedly.

CHAUNCY  
Roll the dice... Roll the dice...  
Play the game... Check the rules...  
Roll the dice... Play the game...

Louis rips through piles of photographs and negatives. Some are file-type photographs, others are of dead bodies.

CHAUNCY  
Louis is late... Check the rules...

Louis finds the photos of the Swedish diplomat and the candlestick. He pauses a moment, then searches faster. He finally discovers the series he took of Baroni in the subway. He studies them quickly with a glass. Louis selects one with Baroni looking directly at the camera and another of him bent

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

over, picking up his books. He charges out of the room. Chauncy flies in circles and SQUAWKS.

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - DARKROOM - EVENING

In a rapid MONTAGE, we see Louis do blowup after blowup of a section of the photograph of the fallen books. Each successive picture increases in graininess as the image looms larger and larger... the semi-blurred image of a card -- Baroni's library card -- sticking out of one of the scattered books.

Chauncy's MUFFLED CRIES filter through the closed door.

Louis holds a magnifying glass up to the last blow-up. The printing on the card is very blurry, the name and address are covered by the book... wait... there is a number. The library card number. Louis scribbles on a scrap of paper.

INT. LOUIS' APARTMENT - EVENING

Chauncy flutters wildly about the room, SCREAMING. Louis doesn't seem to hear. He is staring at the face shot of Baroni.

CHAUNCY

Roll the dice... Play the game...  
Check the rules... Louis is late...  
Beware the scholar... Roll the dice...  
Check the rules... Dinner at eight...

Louis jumps when Chauncy's 'Beware the Scholar' line sinks in. He glowers at the bird... a fearful, hateful look. Chauncy continues in perpetual motion around the room, SQUAWKING.

Louis, ever so neatly affixes the face shot of Baroni to... a TARGET card. He holds it up and stares at it, completely ignoring the SHRIEKING parrot.

Chauncy FLAPS NOISELY out the open window, unnoticed.

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - EVENING

Phillips has called a meeting. A half dozen key military leaders are assembled. Behind Phillips is a war strategy board larger than any we have seen. It shows nothing yet.

Phillips looks almost like a tired old man as he speaks to his subordinates.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PHILLIPS

... And for a short time today it looked as though we were gaining the advantage. We have all known that it would come to this... simulated warfare in preparation for actual combat. That is why we have invested billions of dollars developing our war computers. In a few hours we will have reached the end of the second full day of conflict. It is my duty to clarify for you the status of our situation.

Phillips nods to a man at a huge control board. The gigantic strategy board leaps into life... with frightening messages. War is raging throughout Europe, the Mideast, Northern Africa, the British Isles and Japan. In addition, war has come to the coasts of Canada and Mexico. The men in the room are shocked.

PHILLIPS

The world is in the midst 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 board again. Huge words flash onto the screen. SIMULATED GLOBAL CONFLICT... DAY TWO... PROJECTED OUTCOME... DEFEAT... ALTERNATIVE... FULL NUCLEAR STRIKE.

PHILLIPS

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

LOCKMAN

All transcontinental telephone lines and satellite transmissions are being monitored for computer feed. So far... no success. We are working as quickly as we can without risking detection. Indications are that the contact point could be located in New York.

PHILLIPS

Have you gotten any information from the contest staff in Atlantic City?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

No, we can't. Lord's organization has most probably been infiltrated. We believe that a unit like FOXBAT would be highly mobile. The slightest threat of exposure might cause them to break and run. Our only chance to capture and destroy is by complete surprise. At the conclusion of this meeting I am leaving for Atlantic City to personally coordinate the search.

PHILLIPS

Gentlemen... the situation is desperate. FOXBAT must be found before the end of the game. I have notified the President. By Executive Order... effective immediately ... all United States armed forces are on full combat alert. NATO has been advised. Within twenty-four hours, Armageddon... this simulation of a world war could become a reality.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

It is quiet. Angie puts her sketch pad down on the table and walks from the living area to the game room. Pete is curled up on the floor, asleep. Angie bends down, checks him, and pulls the blanket up around his shoulders.

She walks toward the globe. Baroni is sitting in his chair, exhausted, staring into space. Angie looks at the lights on the globe, settling her gaze on a group of islands near New Zealand. She smiles to herself.

Baroni comes out of it long enough to notice her.

BARONI

(feebly)

Hi...

ANGIE

You should get some rest.

BARONI

I can't believe it... it's so hard.

ANGIE

But you're winning, Michael...

BARONI

I don't think I can make it. He's too good. I don't think I've got the strength.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGIE

Sure you can. But it's over for the day and you need some sleep.

Baroni looks at Angie. A question forms on his face.

BARONI

What were you smiling at?... Just now.

She thinks a moment and smiles to herself again. Finally...

ANGIE

This globe of yours... It's just... funny the way it means different things to you and me...

It's still not clear to Baroni.

ANGIE

I mean... you want to stay here, in this room and... well, sit on it... 'n when I look at it, all I want to do is leave. It's like a catalog of places to go.

Baroni ponders this for a moment, a frown on his face.

BARONI

You really do want to leave?

ANGIE

(with resolve)

I will leave... But right now, I'm going to get some sleep and so should you.

Baroni continues his pondering. Angie smiles at him.

EXT. NYU SCIENCE BUILDING - NIGHT

Louis glances around and enters the front door of the building. No one else is in sight.

INT. NYU SCIENCE BUILDING - NIGHT

Louis ducks down a deserted corridor and walks to a door marked:

COMPUTER ACCESS CENTER  
Time Available  
Contact Grad Student at Admin Hall

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

He listens at the door. VOICES and SCUFFLING FEET can be heard approaching from the other side. He quickly backs around the corner and waits.

Two students walk out of the room LAUGHING. As they disappear down the hall, Louis manages to catch the self-locking door just before it CLICKS closed.

INT. NYU COMPUTER ACCESS CENTER - NIGHT

Louis sits down at a terminal. He is sweating. He pulls the scrap of paper with Baroni's New York Public Library number out of his pocket and sets it next to the keyboard.

After he punches in some access codes, the screen lights up with the library's file on that number. There is no address listed, only the name, "M. BARONI." There is however, a Social Security number for reference.

Louis springs into life and punches in a series of access and security clearance codes. "WAIT"...

The entire terminal blazes with the life history of Michael Norman Baroni: BIRTH, EDUCATION, PARENTAGE, SELECTIVE SERVICE, I.R.S. RECORDS, VA BENEFITS paid on his father's death, and on and on. It seems endless. Finally, at the end, Louis sees what he came for... an ADDRESS.

The terminal flashes "END" and asks for instructions, but Louis is already gone. The door CLICKS shut.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

All the lights are off. Baroni is asleep on the cot, Pete is still rolled up on the floor, and Angie is dozing in a tattered sleeping bag.

Suddenly, Baroni opens his eyes. That strange, terrible feeling is coming over him again. He gropes for his glasses and looks at his watch.

Looking down from the window he can see that the street below is empty. Yet something is drawing him.

INT. WAREHOUSE STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Baroni quietly moves down the stairs. He walks through the darkness, compelled by his intuition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Finally he stands just inside the lighted warehouse door that leads to the street. Something is not right.

EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET - NIGHT

From across the street, the warehouse looks deserted. The warehouse door begins to open. In the FOREGROUND shadows, something moves. A silhouette. It's Louis.

Baroni slowly steps out from the protection of the building. He is confused... uncertain of his own intuition. He steps full out and for a brief moment is under the light outside the door.

Louis tenses, bristles with anticipation.

Baroni cautiously walks down the sidewalk in front of the warehouse. He peers around the corner. As his eyes adjust to the absolute darkness of the alley, Louis steals across the street toward Baroni's back. He stops just a few feet shy of Baroni.

Baroni's head tilts. He turns around, sensing something, and faces Louis. Louis' face is in the shadows. No one breathes...

LOUIS

Michael Norman Baroni... You weren't supposed to be in the game.

Baroni can't quite see the face. Louis starts to reach into his coat. Baroni's eyes widen and he bolts for the door.

Louis raises a silenced, automatic pistol. He aims carefully, savoring the moment with a small smile. Baroni will not reach the door.

Without warning, a baseball bat crashes down on Louis' forearms. The MUFFLED SHOT misses as he doubles over, screaming in agony.

Baroni never turns around. He gets to the door and SLAMS it behind him.

Andres and the SK's have appeared out of the darkness. They surround the agonized Louis. Andres twirls his baseball bat menacingly.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Baroni rushes out from the stairway. He stands trembling... his chest heaving... GASPING for air. Pete MOANS and wakes up, confused.

PETE

Whazzit... whas goin' on?...

(concerned)

Mike?

BARONI

(out of breath)

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

PETE

Aw, Mike... you're dreamin'.

Angie comes to and sits up in her sleeping bag.

BARONI

No... it was real... Tried to shoot me... down on the street.

ANGIE

(concerned)

Was it Andres?... The gang?

BARONI

No. Andres got him. They saved me.

PETE

Another gang, maybe?

BARONI

Was no gang... One guy... Suit and tie...

(catching his breath)

He knew my name. I could... feel him... before he got here... The feeling woke me up. There was something... familiar...

PETE

(sits up, with growing fear)

This is crazy... Why would anyone...

BARONI

Because of the game...

ANGIE

(incredulous)

The game...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARONI

(nodding)

He said it... 'You weren't supposed to be in the game'... Exactly those words... Then he pulled out a gun...

PETE

Oh, man... that's nuts...

ANGIE

But Michael, it's only a game.

Something is beginning to dawn on Baroni. He shakes his head.

BARONI

No. Not anymore...

Suddenly the freight elevator begins to GROAN. Baroni freezes, terrified at the SOUND... once again sweating... Pete looks around for a weapon. The only thing he sees is the old Samurai sword. He grabs it and stands ready by the elevator.

The elevator stops. The doors open. It is filled with gang members. Baroni is relieved. The gang mocks Pete about his sword.

SK #1

Hey, look at this, man. It's Kung Fu.

They all LAUGH derisively. Pete looks embarrassed... and lowers the sword. Andres walks to the table, glances at Angie, then drops the expensive automatic with a silencer.

ANDRES

You got fancy friends, man... but this one won't be comin' to visit no more.

The gang begins to LAUGH. Angie stands up. She and Andres exchange looks. He is uncomfortable with her here, but finally ignores it. He silences the gang with a wave.

ANDRES

We save your ass, man. You ain't worth it,  
(glances at Angie)  
but we done it anyway... 'cause we like you so much. Now you owe us.

The gang YELLS in agreement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES

So you tell me, man. Why would some dude in a suit come all the way down here just to waste a two-bit janitor? What you got stashed in here?

The gang SHOUTS their agreement.

ANGIE

(warning)

Andres!

Andres glares at his sister. Other gang members hover menacingly around Pete and Baroni. Baroni makes a decision.

BARONI

I'm playing a game... for a lot of money... and I'm winning. If you help me, I'm willing to give you half.

ANDRES

Since when do people kill ya for playin' a game?

BARONI

The prize is a hundred thousand dollars.

The dollar figure has an effect on the gang. Andres tries to read Baroni. Angie is very worried. Pete looks shocked. Baroni stares back at Andres... challenging.

ANDRES

What's the catch, man?

BARONI

Deal time, Andres. Somebody's going to try to kill us to keep me from winning... Professionals... In numbers next time. I need guards.

The challenge is clear. Andres wants to hear more.

ANDRES

Go on.

BARONI

We'll wait here. They'll come to us. 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 thirty-six hours. When they come, all hell's gonna break loose.

ANDRES

... And you'll give us half?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The gang members are getting restless, AD LIBBING about "let's get started." Andres has little choice.

BARONI

We'll start on the first floor.

Andres nods solemnly at Baroni. He turns and the gang members file NOISILY to the elevator. Andres sneers at his sister.

ANDRES

You playin' games too?... con un pirinolita Italiano?

He throws a look at Baroni and follows the gang. Baroni is too charged up to notice.

BARONI

Pete. Go down and get them organized. Collect some materials from the other floors. I'll be down with some plans in... about an hour. Okay?

Pete is frightened and very unsure of this arrangement.

BARONI

It'll be alright, Pete. Really.

Pete warily nods his compliance. Not convinced. He trudges off to the elevator. Baroni becomes immersed in writing plans for fortifying the warehouse.

ANGIE

(to Baroni, warning)  
Andres doesn't like you...

BARONI

(keeps writing,  
uncharacteristically terse)  
It doesn't matter. He likes the money.

Angie has never seen Baroni like this. It scares her.

ANGIE

Those people who wanna kill you?...  
Why don't you just stop playing?  
If you'll stop, they'll stop.

Baroni stops his writing and looks at her, almost as though she were a stranger.

BARONI

(incredulous)  
I can't stop... I can't...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Baroni goes back to his furious scribblings on the clipboard, obsessed. Angie is very shaken.

INT. CASINO - PRIVATE HOTEL ROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Lockman and Powell are with a team of Pentagon specialists. They have set up sophisticated electronic listening and wiretapping equipment.

POWELL

What I'm most worried about is tipping them off. If they've got a 'counter' team here--

LOCKMAN

It's no different for them. They always know. We always know--

The PHONE RINGS over the speaker on the monitoring equipment. The hotel room falls silent, all ears straining to hear.

MOMO (V.O.)

(on phone)

Hello... Michael?

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

I tried to call you during the night--

MOMO (V.O.)

(on phone)

This hotel is an outrage. Suddenly the phone in my room goes out. No one is in the right union to fix it until after the weekend--

Lockman looks questioningly at Powell. Powell smiles, taking credit. Lockman nods his approval.

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

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

MOMO (V.O.)

(on phone)

What?

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

You've got to be careful... a few hours ago... someone tried to kill me...

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Lockman leans into the speaker. Momo is shocked.

MOMO (V.O.)  
(on phone)  
What?

LOCKMAN  
(whispers to Powell)  
I want to know who made that hit.  
We've got enough unidentified  
players running around here.

Powell nods.

MOMO (V.O.)  
(on phone)  
What do you mean they tried to kill  
you?... Who? Why? Was it--

BARONI (V.O.)  
(on phone)  
No time to talk now. Just be careful.  
Are you ready for my moves? Three  
armored divisions to grid 540... got  
that?... 540

MOMO (V.O.)  
(on phone)  
540... Michael, what's going on?  
Why would anyone--

BARONI (V.O.)  
(on phone, urgently)  
Momo, please just get the moves down...

Lockman isn't listening anymore. Something is dawning.

LOCKMAN  
Turn it down... record it all.

Baroni's voice fades out. Lockman begins to talk, almost  
to himself.

LOCKMAN  
... My god... Can you imagine?...

Powell looks at him, questioningly.

LOCKMAN  
What if Phillips' assumption is wrong?  
What if it isn't the Soviets? What if  
it is just one guy? One guy who likes  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN (CONTD.)

to play strategy games? One guy who is really good?... And if that's true, can you imagine how valuable he would be to this country?... Or to the Russians?

Powell contemplates for a moment. Another thought...

POWELL

... Or what might happen to him if 'they' found him first...

The PHONE RINGS. Powell looks at Lockman, then answers the phone.

POWELL

Yeah.

(listens for a moment,  
then turns to Lockman)

Trace has gone through... Someplace in Harlem. Can't tell exactly where ... not a regular number. Phone company is checking it out...

LOCKMAN

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

The specialist monitoring FOXBAT'S call nods. Lockman races out of the room. Powell is right behind him.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - VERY EARLY MORNING

Momo is holding the phone, writing down moves. He looks weary and shaken. A game official stands by.

MOMO

(into phone)

I will... Yes, you be careful too.  
Good by, my friend.

He hangs up just as Lockman and Powell dash up to the table. Momo is writing the last information down when he sees them out of the corner of his eye. He blanches, then tries desperately to remain calm, act as if he hasn't seen them.

MOMO

(forced belligerence,  
to the official)

Make certain these are logged in at...

(checks watch)

5:10 A.M. Any more foul ups and someone will have to answer to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The bewildered official takes the papers and leaves. Momo makes a show of busying himself, ignoring Lockman and Powell.

LOCKMAN

(to Momo; rushed)

Listen... we really don't have much time. I must talk to your friend. Right now. I know somebody tried to hurt him. He needs protection--

MOMO

(wide-eyed with fear)

How could you possibly know about that when I just--

LOCKMAN

Please, just get him back on the phone. Let me talk to him.

MOMO

(puffing up, indignant)

Impossible. I am incapable of initiating contact... even if I were inclined to do so. You'll just have to wait for him to call back in an hour. Who in the hell are you, anyway?

Lockman is so frustrated he can hardly stand it.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - DAWN

The gang is working feverishly, rearranging junk. The freight elevator GROANS past, filled with more refuse, on its way to another floor. Pete is rigging something.

INT. CASINO BALLROOM - ONE HOUR LATER

The PHONE RINGS at Momo's table. He picks it up.

MOMO

Michael? Are you alright?

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Have you got his moves?

MOMO

Michael, there's some Army general here who insists on speaking to you.

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Absolutely not.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MOMO

That's exactly what I told him  
you'd say--

Lockman takes the phone away from Momo.

MOMO

Hey, what the hell are you...?

LOCKMAN

Listen, please listen to me. This  
is General Thomas Lockman, United  
States Defense Intelligence. I know  
someone has made an attempt on your  
life. I think it may be the Soviets...

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Or the United States Army...

LOCKMAN

No. Believe me. No. Your life is  
in serious jeopardy. You must leave  
your location at once. They will try  
again. You are up against forces that  
will stop at nothing, do you hear me?

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone, tensely)

Yes, sir, I do.

LOCKMAN

Then suspend your game and evacuate  
your location now, before it's too late.

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone; a beat)

No, sir. I will not suspend the game.  
It's gone too far to stop now.

LOCKMAN

Then let me send a team in to protect  
you. Give me your location.

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

That is not about to happen. Besides,  
you already know my location. It was  
your people who were here before.

A man hands Powell a slip of paper. He gets Lockman's  
attention.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOCKMAN

Damnit. I'm trying to keep you  
alive. Don't you understand...  
Just a minute... please, hold on.

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Let me talk to...

Lockman takes the phone from his ear, but won't give it  
back to Momo, who sits in deep fear trying to figure out  
what's going on.

POWELL

(whispers to Lockman)

We've got his address.

LOCKMAN

(whispering)

How?

POWELL

(whispering)

You don't want to know.

LOCKMAN

(whispering)

Scramble an URBSALT company from Fort  
Hamilton and surround the place...  
but stay out of sight till I get there.

Powell nods and leaves. Lockman thinks a second, then...

LOCKMAN

(to Baroni, into phone)

Listen, FOXBAT, please. I am not your  
enemy. Let me send my assistant, Major  
Powell... just to talk to you. As a sign  
of good faith. He can meet you anywhere  
you say.

There is a pause. Momo is watching Lockman with eagle eyes.

LOCKMAN

(into phone)

Are you still there?

BARONI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Okay... maybe... I'll think about it.  
I'll tell you in one hour. Now, let  
me talk to my friend.

Lockman offers the phone to Momo, who grabs it and HARRUMPHS  
theatrically.

## INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - DAY

The scene on the big board is growing more desperate by the hour. It glows with lights. The United States is surrounded by Red forces... on the sea... throughout Canada and Mexico. Phillips has pulled back what is left of his army. Blue lights stand ready at the borders of the country... preparing to defend against the assault.

The War Room is filled with RINGING PHONES and TENSE VOICES. Phillips alone sits quietly, without emotion, in the face of coming defeat. The total professional.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

Baroni is just finishing a new set of moves. Pete and Angie are close by. Andres is keeping an eye on the street below.

ANDRES

You're crazy, man... Just don't get yourself wiped out before you win.

Baroni keeps writing on the clipboard. Pete edges close to him.

PETE

You don't really trust this Army guy, do you Mike?

BARONI

Trust has nothing to do with it. It's just good strategy.

(looks up from clipboard)

It'll be away from the warehouse and a meeting will stall them off, buy some time. Maybe enough to finish the game.

Baroni goes back to his writing. Pete is very worried.

PETE

You shouldn't be away from your defenses, Mike.

ANDRES

Damn good defenses, too!

Angie is going crazy with anxiety. Baroni finishes his moves.

BARONI

Is all the work done downstairs?

PETE

Maybe we should check it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDRES

We checked it four times, man.  
We're ready for 'em.

BARONI

Pete, I want you to get some of  
your friends...

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - NIGHT

The generals and their aides are poring over every possible move and counter-move. They are desperate. The room clock reads 2355 hours. Only Phillips is calm. His uniform is freshly pressed and immaculate.

Above them all, the big board glows. Battle lights are flashing through the United States. Two major lines of Warsaw Pact forces are driving toward each other... one from the North, the other from the South. Between them, about to be crushed, is Washington D.C.

Giant letters on the status display read: SIMULATED  
EVACUATION PLANS... PRIORITY ONE PERSONNEL ... NOW IN FINAL  
STAGES... LAST WARNING...

One of the phones next to Phillips flashes. He picks it up.

PHILLIPS

(quietly, into phone)

Yes... I'll take it.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - HARLEM - NIGHT

Lockman and Powell are in an armored communications van in the dark rubble of Harlem. Lockman is on the phone...

LOCKMAN

We've got FOXBAT's location surrounded  
and are holding our position--

PHILLIPS (V.O.)

(on phone)

Why haven't you moved in, General.

LOCKMAN

Sir... Bill, I believe, for a variety  
of reasons, that FOXBAT is not what  
we had at first thought. I really think  
it is just one, lone person--



INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - NIGHT

PHILLIPS

That is completely impossible, General! In any event it's irrelevant, do you understand? FOXBAT, whatever you think it is, must be stopped before the game ends. It must not be allowed to make its next moves tomorrow morning. It must be forced to lose by forfeit. We... must... win.

LOCKMAN (V.O.)

(on phone, deep breath)  
I'm sending Powell, my assistant, in to meet FOXBAT in three and a half hours. They'll talk--

INT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - HARLEM - NIGHT

PHILLIPS (V.O.)

(on phone)

Talk?

LOCKMAN

Bill, please, I've got to check this out. We've got a responsibility here. I can't risk a direct attack until I've exhausted all the alternatives. This guy could be a national asset. We've got to protect him--

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - NIGHT

Phillips responds with a voice like a blade of ice.

PHILLIPS

National asset be damned. I will not be put in the position of having to explain to the President, the Congress, this nation... the Free World, that the entire Pentagon Strategy Team, using the most sophisticated and expensive computer program ever devised, has lost a simulated world war. A simulated world war that could unleash the holocaust! No General. That is not about to happen. The game must be stopped at all costs, before this night is over... I want FOXBAT terminated ... do you understand?

INT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - HARLEM - NIGHT

Lockman hangs up the phone. He is very unnerved. Powell

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

is concerned, waiting to hear...

LOCKMAN

He doesn't care... He wants him dead.  
He just ordered me...

INT. CAR - HARLEM SLUM STREET - NIGHT

Powell sits somberly in an unmarked military vehicle with several other men. All of them wear olive fatigues. Powell checks his watch.

POWELL

It's... 3:25. If I'm not back in...  
fifteen minutes, come in and get me.

The squad leader nods. Powell slides out of the car.

EXT. SLUM STREET - NIGHT

Powell walks down the darkened street. A CAT SCREECHES and a DOG HOWLS in the distance. He walks on, grim and resolute.

He turns a corner onto another, smaller street. It appears deserted. Not far away is the entrance to an alley. Powell walks toward it and stops under a street light. He waits. After a few moments...

BARONI (O.S.)

(from alley)

Okay. Look straight up at the light.  
Keep your eyes wide open.

(pause)

Now... slowly... walk into the alley.

Powell enters the darkness. He is still semi-blinded from staring at the light. The alley is short and narrow... a dead end with buildings rising several stories on either side... no windows.

At the end of the alley stands Baroni... alone.

BARONI

That's far enough... You've got  
two minutes.

POWELL

You are brilliant. You know that.

BARONI

That's why you want to kill me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

It isn't us. I swear. But you've got to quit now.

BARONI

I won't. I can't. You knew that.

POWELL

You're not just playing against one General. When you started to win, all that changed. You're playing against the whole damn Pentagon. Things have gotten out of hand.

BARONI

That's impossible...

POWELL

This isn't a game anymore. There are people, lots of 'em... who see you as a threat. Not just to General Phillips, but to the security of the whole world. You could change the balance of power.

BARONI

(dumbstruck, breathless)

That's... crazy! That's...

POWELL

You've got to come with me. Talk to the people in charge. Straighten things out. Abandon this lunatic game--

BARONI

NO--

A GUN SHOT cuts Baroni off. From the end of the alley, behind the startled Powell, LOUIS charges in, FIRING WILDLY.

LOUIS

(shouting)

The Scholar must die! The game must be played! Rules! Check the rules!

Baroni can't see who it is. Neither can Powell. Suddenly, heavy objects start raining down from the rooftops on either side of the alley. Both Powell and Louis are knocked to the ground. Baroni escapes through a hole in the wall.

A platoon of bums, assembled on the roofs, are hurling down pieces of pipe, sand bags and other varieties of refuse. They disappear shortly after Baroni is safely away.

Louis gets up first, grabs a piece of pipe and attacks Powell. He beats him savagely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS  
(screaming)  
You aren't in this game! You're  
breaking the rules!

TIRES SQUEAL and headlights flash on Louis in mid-swing. He freezes. It's Powell's back up, a minute too late. Louis grabs his pistol and vanishes into the night. Two squad members race off in pursuit. The rest dash to Powell and begin CPR on his body.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR - NIGHT

Baroni runs into his strategy room, sweating but exhilerated. Angie is waiting anxiously.

BARONI  
Is Pete back?

ANGIE  
He's down below...

Baroni throws open the switch box, shuts off all the lights, and rushes to the window. Angie joins him. The street is empty.

ANGIE  
What happened?

BARONI  
(joyous)  
They tried to kill me. I knew they would.

ANGIE  
My God!

BARONI  
They tried to fox me... elementary strategy  
... One of them talked to me... tried to  
distract me. Then another one came in and  
opened up... shooting... it was amazing.  
He really shot at me.

Angie is very concerned about Baroni's state of mind. He seems incongruously happy. Baroni hustles over to a surplus electrical generator and primes it.

ANGIE  
Why did they shoot at you? What did  
they say?

BARONI  
I'm not playing against one guy...  
(proudly, slightly amazed)  
I'm playing against the whole Pentagon--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGIE

We've got to get out of here.

BARONI

(delighted)

It wouldn't matter. They'll never let me live. I'm sure of that now. Even if we stopped the game... I've got to stay alive long enough to finish the game. Then it won't matter--

ANGIE

Listen to yourself! This is crazy. Please, there's got to be a way to reason with them, tell 'em it's a mistake. No game is worth getting killed for!

The lights on the globe sputter back to life as the generator KICKS IN.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - FRONT - NIGHT

A small, hollow THUMP goes apparently unnoticed as the light over the warehouse front door is shot out. A Pentagon commando stands in the shadows holding a silenced pistol as a comrade rushes up to the door and begins to pick the locks. First one, then the second. The door opens. He signals. Immediately, six others join him and enter with weapons raised.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

They seem to be in a hallway. It is dark and silent as they proceed toward a dim light at the far end. Suddenly, the light vanishes with the BANG of a closing metal hatch. Another BANG from behind and they are trapped in a giant "dempsey-dumpster."

MUFFLED SHOUTS of confusion come from within as the SK's padlock the garbage bin and seal the front door with heavy timbers.

Inside, the team leader calls for help.

TRAPPED TEAM LEADER

(into walkie-talkie; pissed)

Detroit leader, this is Mustang leader. We've been taken. They've got us in some kind of armored cell.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - BACK

In a tiny, dark alcove behind several trash bins, Louis is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

working feverishly. He has loosened the bolts on an old ventilation fan and is prying an opening into the building.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - FRONT

A demolition team places some plastic explosives around the large truck entrance and steps back.

INT. WAREHOUSE - THIRD FLOOR

The enormous BOOM! stuns Pete and Andres who dash to the windows.

THEIR POV - THE STREET BELOW: The reality's even greater than the imagining. The truck entrance is blown, real life commandos are swarming to plan from every direction, and now -- BOOM! -- there goes a side door.

The attack is on.

TO SCENE - PETE AND ANDRES

ANDRES  
(suitably impressed)  
Shit, man...

EXT. WAREHOUSE - BACK

Louis too has heard the explosions. He puzzles momentarily, then squeezes beneath the fan into the first floor of the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - BACK

Louis crawls on the floor behind a mountainous stack of newspapers and waits for his eyes to adjust to the dark.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Forty commandos charge in and fan out, weapons raised, attack positions assumed... nothing. They can FAINTLY HEAR their comrades in the bin but cannot immediately find it. It has been covered with trash and debris.

They begin to search the floor with flashlights that make ghostly images in the smoke-filled room. The entrances to the elevator and stairways have been hidden behind huge mounds of rubbish. The darkened environment has a very eerie feeling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The commandos break into six-man teams and explore the pathways between the mounds.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - REAR

Louis crouches and makes his way toward the SOUND of the commandos in the front.

Suddenly, there is a figure directly in front of him. In the darkness, it seems to be facing away. Louis picks up a pipe and smashes the man's head. Unbelievably, the head goes flying across the floor.

Louis has just killed one of Baroni's mannequins from the game room and his face reflects his confusion.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

The commandos search the room for a way to the upper floors. They too, confront and attack store mannequins.

One team finds itself battling Confederate soldiers, another Roman and German troops.

COMMANDO #1

Jesus Christ...

COMMANDO #2

What the F--

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - REAR

Louis stalks through this world of light beams and darkness. He encounters a group of three more mannequins and throws the first one aside.

To his surprise, the second hits him over the head; sends him reeling. Louis manages to draw his pistol and SHOOT the man. He SHOOTs the third figure to be safe and struggles to his feet.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR

The commandos are fragmented around the room, disquieted. They react to the SOUND of the gun fire.

INSERT - Somewhere, a hand places the needle of an old record player into the groove of an LP.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Machine gun FIRE erupts from every corner. Brilliant muzzle flashes erratically light various parts of the floor. The commandos, caught in a cross-fire, group in the center and BLINDLY RETURN FIRE.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - REAR

Louis dives for cover, away from the spray of the commandos' GUN FIRE. Bullet-shredded newspaper flies through the air.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - CENTER

The commandos' fusilade has little effect against Pete's well hidden hi-fi speakers and strobe lights.

The SOUND EFFECT of the machine guns stops and the lights begin to strobe as one, creating a nightmarish atmosphere around the already spooked commandos. There is a NEW SOUND now, hard to make out. Could it be? No, impossible. The SOUND gets louder, closer. Yes, it is! The commandos turn to see, out of the smokey darkness -- AN AIRPLANE -- diving right at them!

Pete's World War I bi-plane has been rigged on a cable and passes within inches of the startled commandos as they turn and FIRE at it. Its momentum carries it up to the ceiling in a large arc. An unseen SK releases the cable and the plane crashes down backwards onto the scrambling Pentagon teams.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - SIDE

Louis looks around, wondering what the hell is going on. He makes his way along one wall, toward the front of the building.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - CENTER

Several commandos are pinned beneath the bi-plane. Others are limping or crawling away from it. They check each other for wounds.

COMMANDO #1

Hey, Lieutenant. No one got shot.

COMMANDO #2

Over here. Hoskins bought it...  
Right in the forehead.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Two SK's crouch, hiding above the office. One looks perplexed

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

at overhearing that someone was shot. The other one grins sheepishly and pulls a revolver out of his shirt. The first one shrugs, reveals his own hidden weapon. They smile and move out of shot.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - CENTER

The commandos struggle to reorganize and continue their mission.

The SOUND of a CRASH directs their attention toward the truck entrance where some of the SK's have overturned Momo's stake truck and blocked the open doorway. Six SK's flee into the mounds of refuse. Several commandos FIRE after them.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

The two SK's on top of the office smirk at each other and OPEN FIRE on the commandos. One of them triggers an AIR HORN.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR

On cue, a dozen SK's emerge from various parts of the room, BLASTING AIR HORNS and SCREAMING. Some of them FIRE GUNS, others attack with anything they can find. The commandos are disoriented and the SK's take full advantage.

A couple of SK's manage to retrieve some of the commandos' automatic weapons from under the crashed plane and OPEN FIRE.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

A team leader radios out to Lockman.

CORVETTE LEADER

(into walkie-talkie)

... this is Corvette Leader. We have encountered moderate resistance; will advise.

EXT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - HARLEN - NIGHT

Lockman is monitoring the assault. A Captain and a squad of commandos stand ready.

LOCKMAN

(into walkie-talkie)

Corvette Leader, this is Detroit Leader. Do you want to pull back and order tear gas?

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Bodies are being thrown in all directions.

CORVETTE LEADER  
(into walkie-talkie)  
Negative. Hold on gas until extent  
of opposition is determined.

EXT. MOBILE COMMAND UNIT - HARLEM - NIGHT

Lockman seems distracted.

LOCKMAN  
(into walkie-talkie)  
Roger. Detroit Leader out.

• He hands the walkie-talkie to a nearby commando.

CAPTAIN  
Shouldn't we go in with some anti-tank  
weapons?

Lockman doesn't answer, he is lost in thought.

CAPTAIN  
Sir, shouldn't we send some heavy  
back-up?

LOCKMAN  
Did you see Major Powell's body?

The Captain's jaw tightens.

CAPTAIN  
Yes sir, he was quite dead. Would  
you like to see him, sir?

LOCKMAN  
No... How was he killed?

CAPTAIN  
It looked like he'd been clubbed to  
death. Two of our men gave chase, but  
were unable to locate the assailant.

Lockman's brow furrows.

LOCKMAN  
(to himself)  
Something's just not right here.

The Captain shrugs and resumes his watch of the warehouse.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Fierce hand-to-hand fighting has erupted. The Pentagon teams are taking a beating. The SK's use the stacks of newspapers to ambush several small commando groups. Knives rip and improvised weapons bludgeon. Guns are useless in this close combat.

In the confusion, a commando team discovers a blocked stairwell entrance.

A WHISTLE IS SOUNDED. The commandos fall back and regroup as a demolitionist places a charge next to the stairwell door. Two more WHISTLE BLASTS drop the commandos to the floor. The EXPLOSION rips open the door.

Several teams break and run for the opening. The commandos are beginning to overrun the outnumbered SK's on this floor.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Louis crawls to the top of a huge mound of refuse and watches through the dim light. His head is aching and bloody.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - STAIRWELL

The commandos place a satchel of explosives on a wooden barrier they find between the first and second floors. As they turn to leave, Andres reaches through the barrier and throws the satchel back down the stairs. The EXPLOSION erupts at their feet. Fire breaks out.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - FRONT

Louis sees an opening in the wall. It's a way into the elevator shaft. He finds the elevator deliberately jammed between floors and works his way into it. The elevator won't operate so he begins to remove the maintenance panel from the ceiling.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - SECOND FLOOR

As the fire begins to blaze on the first floor, two teams of commandos fight through the barrier in the stairwell onto the second floor landing.

They take a cursory look around and charge up the stairway to the third floor. Andres and two SK's, however, are waiting, knocking out the remaining linchbolts from under the connections.

The stairs go CRASHING, dumping their cargo of commandos to the floor below. Immediately, a third team fires a heavy barrage up the destroyed stairwell, forcing Andres and the SK's back from the third floor landing.

EXT. MOBILD COMMAND UNIT - NIGHT

Flames can be clearly seen inside the first floor of the warehouse. MUFFLED GUNFIRE is sporadic. One of the walkie-talkies inside remains in the send mode: SOUNDS of the battle, SHOUTS of men filter over the radio.

Lockman listens and watches with a growing sense of frustration. Finally...

LOCKMAN

(to Captain)

Get me civilian fire and police back-up.

Lockman slowly walks away from the van.

INT. WAREHOUSE - SECOND FLOOR

While some commandos secure climbing ropes to the third floor, others continue to FIRE up the stairwell.

Out of the darkness, twenty, well-aimed oil drums SLAM into the area in front of the stairs, knocking several commando teams around like bowling pins. Fifty SK's attack the teams with axe handles and metal spikes.

Two commandos are nearly to the third floor on the ropes. A GAS ENGINE STARTS. The climbers look up. Arcing over the landing and descending toward them is a RUNNING, GAS-POWERED LAWN MOWER, tethered on a rope. The spinning, exposed blade misses them by inches and swings like a deadly pendulum below. They fall from the ropes and FIRE at the mower, hitting the gas tank. Flaming gasoline rains down on them.

COMMANDO

(into walkie-talkie)

Detroit Leader, this is T-Bird Leader.

I'm tired of playing with these guys.

I'm coming out. I want two more squads armed with CF 37's, four of the recoilless, armor piercing cannons... hold.

The man next to him whispers in his ear. The team leader grins.

COMMANDO

(on walkie-talkie)

... and one ME 50... with variable range compression heads.

CAPTAIN (V.O.)

(on walkie-talkie, crackling)

Roger, we copy. I'll inform Gen.

Lockman and they'll be standing by.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - ELEVATOR

Louis has removed the panel from the ceiling. He pulls himself up through the opening.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - SHAFT

As his head and shoulders protrude through the hatch, two SK's slip a rope around his neck and push him back down through.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - ELEVATOR

There he hangs. His feet cannot touch the floor. He twists and lurches, choking.

Louis manages to draw his pistol and FIRE several rounds through the ceiling. The rope goes slack and he drops to the floor, GASPING. He HEARS movement above and EMPTIES his gun into the wooden ceiling.

He waits a moment, abandons his pistol, and climbs back through the ceiling hatch.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - FIRST FLOOR

The first floor is an inferno. Silhouettes of agonized men and boys stumble through the flames -- their only thought now is survival.

## EXT. WAREHOUSE - FRONT

Gang members and commandos alike climb from windows out into the street, trying to escape the flames. The SK's quickly blend with the gathering crowds of neighborhood onlookers. Sirens are heard WAILING, getting closer.

LOCKMAN

(into walkie-talkie)

This is Detroit Leader, all teams  
disengage... I repeat, disengage...

The fire is rapidly moving to the second floor. More commandos and SK's jump to the street below. The block is jammed. Fire trucks begin to arrive, but can't get in. People and vehicles are everywhere. SIRENS SCREAM and spotlights sweep the warehouse.

## INT. WAREHOUSE - ELEVATOR SHAFT

Louis is climbing brick by brick between the third and forth floors. The fire has burned through the elevator and is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

beginning to sweep into the shaft from the second floor entrance. The heat is unbearable.

The clothes on his back catch fire. He screams and tries to extinguish the flames, his face a mask of agony. He continues to climb, driven.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR

Baroni is trying to place a call on the phone. Angie stands at the edge of the world, very frightened. Smoke is filling the room.

BARONI

(to Angie)

Plug the blue cable into the generator box.

Angie runs to the generator and looks for the blue cable. She finds it, holds it up and looks questioningly at Baroni. He nods urgently. She hesitantly plugs it in and several ceiling lights illuminate the globe. Pete dashes in.

PETE

(breathless)

All the defenses are gone... The stairs are on fire... There's no way out!

Angie looks like she's going to scream, panic-stricken. She suddenly calms, becomes almost serene, and slowly walks to Baroni.

BARONI

(to Pete; urgently)

Get out of here... Take Angie and get up on the roof... I just need five more minutes.

Pete stumbles. He CHOKES -- the smoke is getting to him. Angie stands in front of Baroni. He stops jabbing at the phone dial. There's something in her expression.

ANGIE

(with great sincerity)

Michael... There's something... I wish--

Pete whisks her away -- no time for talking. They head up the stairs. Baroni goes back to work on the phone.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

BARONI

(into phone)

Momo?! Yeah, everything's fine.  
Listen, I don't have much time--

There he is. Louis steps out of the billowing smoke from the elevator shaft. His back is smoldering, horribly burned. Bruises and wounds abound. His hands are bloody from his climb. His pain is intense, but when he sees Baroni, all else is forgotten.

MOMO CRACKLES over the phone... Baroni is speechless. His brow wrinkles. There's that feeling again.. Who is this?

Louis stalks slowly toward Baroni, obsessed. He grabs a 2X4 with nails protruding from one end. Baroni drops the phone and begins to back up.

BARONI

Who are you? What do you--

Louis swings the club. Baroni manages to block the blow with his clipboard. The lethal nails hold tight in the clipbaord. Louis releases the club and attacks with his bare hands. Baroni falls to the floor, losing his glasses.

Louis is on him, playing with him, killing him, slowly. Baroni struggles valiantly, but is no match.

LOUIS

You'll not interfere with me again.  
Do you understand, Scholar. You  
WON'T! It's too improtant.

Angie and Pete appear on the stairs from the roof.

ANGIE

Michael, what's taking so long?  
You've gotta-- My GOD!

Angie makes a leap onto Louis' back, scratching, biting, kicking. Pete takes one look and runs off. Louis rolls off Baroni, trying to rid himself of the hellion on his back. He flings her away and heads back for the dazed Baroni. Pete reappears out of the smoke waving the old Samurai sword and jumps between Louis and his prey.

PETE

One more step and I'll eat your  
heart for breakfast!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Louis stops, not quite sure he heard correctly. He then becomes enraged and charges Pete. Damn! It always worked for Errol Flynn. Pete swings clumsily. Louis is relentless.

Baroni is GASPING, groping for his glasses. He finds them, puts them on, reconnoiters desperately. He is boxed in by Louis and Pete.

BARONI

Angie! Next to you. The phone.  
Give Momo the moves. They're on  
the clipboard.

Angie grabs the phone and begins reading the moves to Momo. She nods a couple of times, and continues. Suddenly she stops.

ANGIE

(desperate)

SHIT! It's dead. The phone is dead!

BARONI

Forget it. Put it down.

With fierce determination, Baroni charges behind Pete, narrowly missing a backswing from the sword. Louis is now armed with a piece of angle iron.

Baroni grabs the corner of a shroud and whips it off, revealing a bulky, primitive radio transmitter, sans casing. He turns some knobs. The tubes slowly glow into life.

Louis and Pete are in a deadly duel on top of Baroni's world. Pete is barely holding his own. Fire has broken out in the room.

BARONI

(into radio)

FOXBAT to FLANK-RUNNER... FOXBAT to  
FLANK-RUNNER...

VOICE (V.O.)

(over radio; scratchy)

FLANK-RUNNER ready to receive. Go.

INT. NON-DESCRIPT ROOM - NIGHT

Albert De Vito is at the controls of a similarly ancient radio. One SK keeps watch out the window, another stands by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DE VITO  
(to stand-by SK)  
Dial.  
(into radio; with fervor)  
Okay, Michael. We're with you, boy.

The stand-by MUMBLES into a phone and nods at De Vito.

BARONI (V.O.)  
(over radio; scratchy)  
Division nine to grid 398... Northern  
Virginia. Division six to grid 400...

De Vito writes the moves down while the SK WHISPERS them over the phone to Momo.

INT. WAREHOUSE - FIFTH FLOOR

The fire is beginning to menace Baroni's position...and the radio. Pete trips over the Ural Mountains on the globe. Louis lands a blow just as Pete regains his footing.

PETE  
Get outta here. I can't... do  
this...

Angie stands terrified. Baroni presses on.

BARONI  
(into radio)  
Maryland... Tactical nuclear strike...  
grid 399... That should do--

The radio EXPLODES from the heat of the flames. The speaker CRACKLES WITH STATIC as it dies.

PETE  
Get Angie outta here... I can't  
hold him off no longer...

BARONI  
I'm done. Let's go!

Baroni grabs Angie and they make for the stairs. The smoke is blinding.

Fire is leaping up everywhere. Pete and Louis continue their death-dance as the globe itself begins to burn. Electrical connections flash as the flames touch them. Louis lunges wildly at Pete who swings the sword in one, last desperate arc. Smoke billows around them. A SCREAM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angie and Baroni stop on the stairs at the sound of the scream. They look at each other; fear, guilt, remorse... Pete emerges from the smoke, GASPING, without the sword.

PETE

Who... was... that guy?

Relieved, Baroni and Angie drag their friend up the smoke-filled stairwell.

BARONI

I'm not sure... I felt him though...

(coughing fit)

He was the guy in the street the other night... the one the SK's beat up...

EXT. WAREHOUSE - ROOF - PRE-DAWN

They stumble out onto the roof, COUGHING and trembling, gulping for air. Not far away is the old cannon... half polished, almost ready for display.

Suddenly, from the stairwell, there is a SCREAM OF RAGE, chilling in its animal quality. Fire begins licking through the roof, casting an eerie light on the scene.

Louis struggles out from the stairs and faces them. Fire crackles on his body. Every step is painful. His left arm is gashed where Pete's last swing connected.

LOUIS

(almost unintelligible,  
shrieking)

The Scholar!... the Scholar... Broke  
the rules... Scholar must die...

Baroni gets that funny look again. Things are starting to connect. Pete, Angie and Baroni slowly back away from Louis as he advances. Baroni is fascinated.

BARONI

It's him... the weird guy... in the  
subway...

LOUIS

(still shrieking)  
Must kill... Scholar must die!

They have backed all the way to the cannon. Baroni stops.

BARONI

(as though to a child)  
Why do you want to kill me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LOUIS

(babbling)

The rules... The game... Scholar  
must die...

BARONI

What game? Armageddon?

LOUIS

(roaring)

NOOooo!... THE GAME... Beware the  
Scholar... I MUST FINISH THE GAME...

Waves of water begin to cascade down on the roof... from the  
fire trucks below.

BARONI

(trying to break through)

This is crazy. Look around. Look at  
yourself. No game is worth all this--

Baroni stops in mid-sentence. The realization sweeps over  
him. It all comes together... He has to stop playing, stop  
hiding from life. He's losing too much.

He needs to see Angie -- to share his discovery. He spins  
around. There she is. Baroni nods to her, connected...  
totally amazed.

Louis keeps stalking; ever closer, more obsessed. Baroni  
turns back to him.

BARONI

(excited)

You don't have to do this. I know!  
Just stop playing... Stop playing  
before it becomes real.

Angie smiles through her tears. Louis staggers toward  
Baroni, undeterred.

EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET - PRE-DAWN

Lockman and some of his men stand next to the mobile com-  
munications van, anxiously watching the roof for any sign  
of life.

Three figures back to the edge of the roof.

A sharp-shooter next to Lockman raises his rifle and takes  
careful aim at the figures. Lockman hesitates, a dilemma  
etched on his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He yanks the sharp-shooter's barrel off target at the last second. The man looks at Lockman, confused.

LOCKMAN

We don't even know who those  
people are yet.

The sharp-shooter shrugs and lowers his weapon.

INT. WAREHOUSE - ROOF - PRE-DAWN

The roof is starting to melt and give way. Louis is almost to the cannon when the roof under him starts to buckle and slide into the inferno. He claws at the cannon barrel for support... He grabs it, desperately holding on.

For an instant, he hangs above the flames. Then the cannon itself drops over the brink. There is one last horrible SHRIEK from Louis... and a GIANT EXPLOSION, deep in the bowels of the building.

Pete, Angie and Baroni stand hypnotized by what they have just witnessed and the ever diminishing roof on which they stand.

LOCKMAN (O.S.)

(over loudspeaker)

JUMP... ONE AT A TIME.

The huge, disembodied voice shakes them out of their trance. They look at each other, dazed, soaked to the skin from the cascading water. Pete looks down to the street and GASPS. Angie and Baroni follow his gaze.

THEIR POV -- Six stories never looked so far. Hundreds of people fill the street, watching them. Red emergency lights FLASH everywhere. Casualties on stretchers are being attended. Firemen hold a massive net at the base of the building.

LOCKMAN

(over loudspeaker)

One at a time into the net.

Pete lights up like a kid. Baroni and Angie look skeptical.

PETE

I've always wanted to do this!

BARONI

Then you should go ahead, Pete.

It's all the encouragement he needs. Pete takes off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETE  
(shouting)  
YAHOOoo...

Baroni sees Pete land safely in the tiny net. The crowd CHEERS. All eyes turn upward for the next jump.

Baroni turns to Angie. She balks.

BARONI  
(quietly)  
Go ahead, you'll be fine...  
(no response)  
You've been haranguing about wanting  
to leave this place... I'd say now  
is a good time to do it...  
(smiles)  
Besides, I think I'm ready to go too.

Angie looks at him and smiles. She holds her nose and jumps.

EXT. WAREHOUSE STREET - DAWN

Angie lands in the net and crawls off. Lockman meets her.

LOCKMAN  
Is the person on the roof the last one  
up there?

ANGIE  
(suddenly wary)  
Yeah.

LOCKMAN  
Is that... FOXBAT?

ANGIE  
Yeah... Why?

Lockman looks down at the ground, struggling with his orders, confounded by his humanity. He nods to himself.

LOCKMAN  
I just heard from Atlantic City...  
FOXBAT won...

Angie LAUGHS... a deep laugh of relief and irony. She grabs the microphone from Lockman.

ANGIE  
(on loudspeaker)  
Michael! There's a guy in a uniform  
down here who says FOXBAT won.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

The crowd, gang members, neighborhood people, De Vito, etc., all start to CHANT.

CROWD  
FOXBAT... FOXBAT... FOXBAT...

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - DAWN

As the CHANT BUILDS, we glimpse General Phillips sitting in his command chair, alone in the room. His expression is unreadable. The CHANT CONTINUES.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOF - DAWN

Baroni looks down at Angie. He smiles, then laughs with her. It is a private laugh for them alone. The crowd keeps CHANTING.

Baroni leaps with all his might into the air... free. Free from his obsession. Free to know himself. But mostly free to join the human race.

THE END