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Gloves Off

written by

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BLACKNESS

Static-laced AM radio message

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

5. 4. 3. 2. 1.

ATOMIC EXPLOSION

NEWS ARCHIVE FOOTAGE

Newsreel footage and report of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan at 8:15 on the morning of August 6, 1945.

SECOND ATOMIC BOMB EXPLOSION

Continued news footage of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945.

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

Three days later, a second atomic blast destroyed the city of Nagasaki. It is estimated that more than 284,000 people were killed as a result of the two blasts.

INT. UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON CLASSROOM -- FALL, 1988

In a dimly lit classroom, a college class is watching news archive reports of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan.

ANGLE ON MARIA KNAPP

MARIA KNAPP (21), short, petite, is trying to concentrate on the news footage.

ANGLE ON LEE THOMAS

LEE THOMAS (22), average height, is concentrating on watching Maria.

The archived reports end.

FULL SHOT CLASSROOM

Professor Leonard Gambrell (40), long early 70's style hair, teaches this class.

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Lights please.

The lights come on.

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL (CONT'D)

Now, as you know, the Cold War began shortly after the end of World War 2, as the United States and the new Soviet Union embarked upon a dangerous race, an arms race. This race would never be run. It was a race where there could be no winners, only losers.

MARIA KNAPP

Professor Gambrell?

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Yes, Maria.

MARIA KNAPP

Is it true that between the Soviet Union and the United States, we have enough nuclear weapons to blow up the whole planet 500 times or more?

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Well, Maria, according to the latest public reports, the Soviets have about 37,000 nuclear warheads. The United States has about 24,000. So, put together, yes, I'd say that was a fair statement.

MARIA KNAPP

(sarcastically)

Makes me feel safe with President Jelly Bean in charge.

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Well, he'll only be in office another few months. His time is up in January.

EXT. UW MADISON LECTURE HALL -- SUNNY AFTERNOON

Surrounded by other students also leaving the building, Maria is walking out the doors of the lecture hall. Distracted for a moment by the

SOUND of a low flying AIRPLANE overhead.

Maria bumps into Lee Lee in the crowd of students.

MARIA KNAPP

Oh, excuse me.

LEE THOMAS

Oh, excuse me.

MARIA KNAPP

I'm sorry.

LEE THOMAS

Are you okay?

MARIA KNAPP

Oh, yes, I'm fine.

LEE THOMAS

You certainly are. Hi, I'm Lee.

MARIA KNAPP

Maria.

The crowd of students dissipates. Maria and Lee begin to walk together.

LEE THOMAS

I saw you in class.

MARIA KNAPP

Professor Gambrell's poli sci class?

LEE THOMAS

United States and the Cold War.
Yep. So what do you think?

MARIA KNAPP

About?

LEE THOMAS

About the Cold War and the United States. And what was that remark about "President Jelly Bean?" Don't you like Reagan?

MARIA KNAPP

Movie actor turned President? I don't think so. Besides, everyone knows he's just an old man playing another role. His advisors have to tell him what to do.

LEE THOMAS

Wow. I guess you are from Madison, then?

MARIA KNAPP

Stoughton.

LEE THOMAS

Close enough.

MARIA KNAPP

So where are you from?

LEE THOMAS

A little town way up in the sticks. Probably never heard of it. Sayner. It's a big tourist area in the summer. Our big claim to fame is that the snowmobile was invented there.

MARIA KNAPP

I think I might have heard of it.
Don't they have some sort of big
outdoor sporting event or something
up there every year?

The two stop walking, and stand beneath the shade of a large
tree.

LEE THOMAS

Yeah, lots of 'em. Fishing
tournaments, ice fishing contests,
snowmobile races. If you can do it
outdoors, you can do it in Sayner.

MARIA KNAPP

Sounds like you're an outdoorsey
kind of guy.

LEE THOMAS

Guess it just worked out that way.
When you grow up surrounded by
something, you can't help but absorb
the nuances of your environment.

MARIA KNAPP

Well, I guess I should be getting
back to my dorm. I'll see you in
class Wednesday?

LEE THOMAS

See you in class then.

Maria begins to walk away.

MARIA KNAPP

Okay. Bye.

Lee leans against the tree, just watching Maria walk away.

INT. POLI SCI CLASSROOM -- 2 DAYS LATER

Professor Gambrell plays another archived news clip for the
class.

RONALD REAGAN

"General Secretary Gorbachev, if you
seek peace, if you seek prosperity
for the Soviet Union and Eastern
Europe, if you seek liberalization:
Come here to this gate!
Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate!
Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Now, does anyone think that simple message last year made any impact at all in the Kremlin? Anyone?

An awkward moment of silence in the classroom.

Finally one LIBERAL STUDENT (of nondescript ethnic background, but definitely not Caucasian) speaks up (with no trace of any accent in his voice)

LIBERAL STUDENT

He was just delivering another line somebody wrote for him.

Another moment, while that observation sinks in.

LEE THOMAS

I disagree. I think President Reagan really meant it.

LIBERAL STUDENT

You think that old fool even knew what he was saying?

LEE THOMAS

Not only did he know what he was saying, he knew that saying that line, at the Brandenburg Gate, would also show the Germans America stands by our word.

LIBERAL STUDENT

(dismissive)
Blah, blah, blah

LEE THOMAS

Why do you think the Iranians let the hostages go the very day President Reagan was sworn in?

LIBERAL STUDENT

Because George Bush made a secret trip to ensure they'd hold the hostages until after the election.

LEE THOMAS

They let the hostages go because they knew President Reagan wouldn't stand for Americans to be held as hostages. He knew, you can't negotiate with terrorists.

PROFESSOR GAMBRELL

Okay, guys. Let's get back to the Cold War. Now in 1978 ...

EXT. UW MADISON LECTURE HALL -- LATER

The afternoon crowd of students is streaming out of the building. Lee is storming out, an angry look on his face.

Maria comes out a second later, trying to catch Lee.

MARIA KNAPP

Lee? Lee! Wait!

Lee looks back and sees Maria chasing after him. He stops.

LEE THOMAS

Hi Maria.

Maria catches up, and the two of them begin to walk again.

MARIA KNAPP

What's wrong?

LEE THOMAS

Oh, that damn jerk in class.

MARIA KNAPP

Who, Rick?

LEE THOMAS

Is that his name?

MARIA KNAPP

Yes, Rick Dean. He's president of the student body, you know.

LEE THOMAS

He's a liberal idiot. Damn guy doesn't know the first thing about international politics.

MARIA KNAPP

I take it you like Reagan?

LEE THOMAS

I'm proud to call him my President.

MARIA KNAPP

So you're voting for Bush this year?

LEE THOMAS

Don't tell me an intelligent girl like you is voting for Dukakis?

MARIA KNAPP

What's wrong with Dukakis?

LEE THOMAS

(laughs)

Oh, Maria, we have to talk.

SHORT MONTAGE OF MARIA & LEE GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- sitting under a tree together
- walking along the lake shore
- sharing a picnic
- riding in a row boat on a lake (Lee rowing, Maria sitting
In the back of the boat, facing him)

EXT. BEACH -- NIGHT

Maria is laying in Lee's arms, on a large blanket, watching stars in the nighttime sky.

LEE THOMAS

I'm surprised we can actually see
the Big Dipper tonight, even with
all these city lights.

MARIA KNAPP

The constellation, right?

LEE THOMAS

Yeah. And if you follow the pattern
along the handle

He traces the path of a horizontal line across the nighttime sky with his finger

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

You can find the North Star.

MARIA KNAPP

Hmm, nice handle.

LEE THOMAS

Will you be serious for a minute.

MARIA KNAPP

(demurely)

I'm very serious.

Lee looks directly at Maria. She smiles at him, and gives him a naughty, flirtatious giggle.

MARIA KNAPP (CONT'D)

Hee hee hee.

They embrace. They kiss. And they begin to caress and fondle one another.

LATER

They lay there, wrapped in the blanket, and in one another's arms.

MARIA KNAPP

Lee, there's something I have to tell you.

LEE THOMAS

Sounds serious.

MARIA KNAPP

Lee, I've been accepted into the student exchange program for next semester. I'm going to Paris.

LEE THOMAS

Paris? Paris? Why Paris? What's in Paris?

MARIA KNAPP

I've wanted to see Paris since I was a little girl. It's such a romantic city.

LEE THOMAS

Romantic city. And you're going alone, without me.

MARIA KNAPP

Lee, it won't be like that.

LEE THOMAS

I won't be there.

MARIA KNAPP

Lee, please don't do this.

LEE THOMAS

And just how am I supposed to react to this?

MARIA KNAPP

Be happy for me.

LEE THOMAS

I'm happy. I'm thrilled. What I am is an idiot. I thought you cared for me.

MARIA KNAPP

I do.

LEE THOMAS

And now you're off to Paris, the city of romance.

MARIA KNAPP

You could come with me.

LEE THOMAS
 Maria, we'll never have Paris.

MARIA KNAPP
 Well, I won't have to leave for
 another three months.

Lee ponders that thought for a moment.

LEE THOMAS
 Three months, huh?

They kiss.

INT. CHICAGO O'HARE AIRPORT -- JANUARY, 1989 - MORNING

At the international ticket counter, Maria is waiting in line. Liberal student Rick Dean is just behind her. Rick notices Maria from behind. He takes a lingering glance at her behind, then strikes up a conversation.

RICK DEAN
 Hi Maria.

MARIA KNAPP
 Rick. What are you doing here?

RICK DEAN
 I'm off to Czechoslovakia for a
 semester or two.

MARIA KNAPP
 I didn't know you were in the student
 exchange program.

RICK DEAN
 I'm not. I'm going on my own, to
 study abroad, at Prague's Czech
 Technical University.

MARIA KNAPP
 Why Czechoslovakia?

RICK DEAN
 My Grandfather came from a town called
 Kladno. It's a little west of Prague,
 from what I could tell by looking at
 a map.

MARIA KNAPP
 You do know this flight is going to
 Paris.

RICK DEAN
 I know. I have to change planes 2
 more times to get there.

MARIA KNAPP

Have you ever been overseas before?

RICK DEAN

Oh, yes. I have an uncle who is a diplomat in Berlin. My family usually goes over there every few years or so.

MARIA KNAPP

I've always wanted to travel to Paris. It seems like such a romantic city.

RICK DEAN

It's pretty cool. We got to go there when I was 18.

MARIA KNAPP

Cool.

The RESERVATION TICKET AGENT (29) finishes with the CUSTOMER in front of Maria. The Customer leaves.

RESERVATION AGENT

Next.

Maria finally gets to the counter. Rick keeps his eye on Maria, watching her, a mischievous look on his face.

MARIA KNAPP

Hi. One please, to Paris. There should be a reservation under Knapp, Maria.

RESERVATION AGENT

Can I see some identification, please?

Marie produces her ID for the agent.

RESERVATION AGENT (CONT'D)

There you are, Miss Knapp. You're all set.

The agent hands Maria her paperwork, tickets, boarding passes.

RESERVATION AGENT (CONT'D)

Here is your boarding pass. And here are your tickets for your baggage. If you could, please set them up through this opening. Thank you. Have a nice flight.

Maria struggles with a very heavy overfilled bag. Rick jumps to offer her a friendly helping hand.

RICK DEAN

Here, let me help with that.

Rick hefts her bag through the baggage opening in the counter.

MARIA KNAPP

Thanks Rick. See you on board.

RICK DEAN

Okay. I'll be along in a few minutes.

Rick watches, as Maria walks toward the boarding area.

RESERVATION AGENT

Next.

Rick turns to the ticket agent.

RICK DEAN

Is the seat next to her still available?

EXT. BRANDENBURG GATE, GERMANY -- AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 11, 1989

News footage of crowds helping to attack and tear down the Berlin Wall. One of the people in the brief images sort of resembles Rick Dean.

EXT. SECRET SOVIET NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX, KIEV, UKRAINE -- DAY, NOVEMBER, 1989

Meanwhile, over in the Ukraine, an aging secret weapons plant is badly disguised as the Polytechniche Engineering Institute of the Ukraine. It's a dilapidated complex, suffering from lack of Soviet funding, very little maintenance, and an uncertain future.

A long line of exhaust spewing Russian Lada and Volga automobiles arrive, ferrying in the next shift of technicians. The employees park their cars and head into the complex, all attired in their white lab coats and hard hats.

INT. SOVIET NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX -- MOMENTS LATER

The plant's employees, all in identical white lab coats and matching white hard hats, are clocking in. They shuffle off to their individual work stations, with very grim expressions on their faces.

Two of these employees are physicist NADIA PERVUSHINA (35) and her engineer husband KARL VLYASHEV (35). They clock in, and head off down a long corridor, to their research lab.

RESEARCH LAB

Inside the research lab, the door handle CREAKS as it's turned. The door does not open. With an audible THUD, Karl puts his shoulder to the lab door, forcing it open. Karl stumbles slightly.

Karl and Nadia enter the lab. With effort, Karl closes the door behind them.

[This couple speaks to one another in Russian. Fortunately for those of us who don't speak Russian, English subtitles somehow appear on screen, interpreting their conversation.]

KARL VLYASHEV

This place is falling apart.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

I tell you, Karl, I don't feel safe working here any more.

KARL VLYASHEV

But Nadia, where else can we work? It's not like there's a big demand for nuclear engineers these days.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

I'm tired of building bombs. I want to raise a family while I'm still young.

KARL VLYASHEV

And we will have a family. And a house of our own in the country. I have a plan.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

What? Your plan to sell a nuclear bomb? Who is crazy enough to buy such a thing?

KARL VLYASHEV

There are some very crazy people in this world.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

And most of them are in the KGB.

KARL VLYASHEV

Give me a hand with this.

They pull a trunk out of storage. They place the trunk on a flat hand cart. Nadia unlocks the lock on the trunk's hasp, and opens the lid.

Donning heavy duty safety gloves, Karl picks up two containers, which have all the appearances of five pound coffee cans - except the white labels on the cans read, in large black numbers, 235 and 238.

Karl carefully loads these coffee can containers into the trunk. Nadia grabs some more component parts from around the lab, and puts them into the trunk. Nadia carefully closes the trunk lid.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

Are you sure you want to go through
with this, Karl?

KARL VLYASHEV

Nadia, what choice do we have? We
have no money, our paychecks are
worthless. This is the only currency
we have.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

But can you trust these people?

Karl takes a large Russian Makarov pistol from a desk drawer
and slips it into the waistband of his trousers. His lab
coat conceals the pistol.

KARL VLYASHEV

I trust no one.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

Karl, please be careful.

KARL VLYASHEV

Don't worry, Nadia. After this,
we'll be able to leave forever, and
start a real family of our own, far
away from this life of despair and
death and destruction. We'll finally
be able to go some place safe.

They embrace, and she kisses him.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

For luck.

KARL VLYASHEV

I'll see you soon.

Karl tries to open the door. It's stuck. He puts his
shoulder to the door and tries again, twisting the door handle
with his efforts. Still no luck.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

Mind if I try?

Amused, Karl steps away from the door.

KARL VLYASHEV

Be my guest.

Nadia steps to the door. She pulls on the handle. The
stubborn door CREAKS again. Nadia gives it one more good
pull, and the door swings inward, open.

NADIA PERVUSHINA

Remember to pull, not push this door.

Embarrassed, Karl just hangs his head.

NADIA PERVUSHINA (CONT'D)
It's a good thing you're good at
other things, my absent-minded
husband.

KARL VLYASHEV
Thank you, my darling wife.
Let's try this again.

Karl pushes the trunk-laden cart out the door.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING, WASHINGTON DC -- DAY, SEPTEMBER 9,
2001

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)
Brenda, can you please get me the
Pentagon switchboard.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Lee Lee is sitting at a desk in a cluttered Capitol office.

BRENDA (O.S.)
Lee. The Pentagon, line 3.

LEE THOMAS
Thanks, Brenda.

Lee picks up a phone handset.

PENTAGON OPERATOR (O.S.)
Pentagon.

LEE THOMAS
Is this the switchboard?

PENTAGON OPERATOR (O.S.)
Yes it is.

LEE THOMAS
This is Lee Thomas, with Congressman
Green's office. I'm trying to locate
a Maria Knapp, in the office of the
International Nuclear Weapons
Assessment team.

PENTAGON OPERATOR (O.S.)
Can you please hold?

LEE THOMAS
Yes, I'll hold.

Lee waits, listening to ELEVATOR MUSIC while he's on hold.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Nuke weapons Assessment, this is
Miss Knapp.

LEE THOMAS
Maria? It's Lee.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Lee? Lee who?

LEE THOMAS
Maria, it's Lee Thomas.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Oh my God! Lee! How are you? Where
are you? How did you get this number.

LEE THOMAS
I'm great. I'm over in the Capitol,
Congressman Green's office. He's on
Defense appropriations, so I have a
little access to some information.
Heard you were working in town, and
I wanted to see if I could find you.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Looks like you found me. Hidden
here in my little cubicle in the
Pentagon. What are you doing for
Congressman Green?

LEE THOMAS
Sort of an unofficial advisor, but
officially I'm his Administrative
Assistant.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
A.A., huh? Impressive.

LEE THOMAS
And what about you? You made the
INWA team. Not bad for a liberal
from Madison.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Stoughton, remember?

LEE THOMAS
I remember.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
I can't really talk now, but we should
get together later.

LEE THOMAS
How's tomorrow night for you? Do
you like seafood?

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Love it. Nothing special on my
schedule, so far.

LEE THOMAS
Great. It's a date. See you then.

Lee hangs up his phone, and shouts to Brenda.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)
Brenda!

BRENDA (28), tall, long dark hair, seductively dressed in a short skirt and button-straining blazer, appears in the office doorway.

BRENDA
Got another hot date?

LEE THOMAS
No. This is different. Dinner with
an old friend. What's a good seafood
restaurant in town?

BRENDA
Old friend, huh?

LEE THOMAS
Yes. Honest.

BRENDA
Phillips on Water Street serves a
nice seafood buffet.

LEE THOMAS
Phillips is a pretty big place. I'd
like something a little more intimate.

BRENDA
Ashby's is nice. It's in the Hilton,
on Connecticut Ave. One of my
personal favorites.

LEE THOMAS
In the Hilton? That's handy. No
wonder it's one of your favorites.

BRENDA
But probably not your style. You're
from Wisconsin, right? You'd probably
like the Starfish Cafe, on 8th.
Steak and seafood menu. Try their
beer battered shrimp. But get her
either the broiled trout, or the
poached salmon.

LEE THOMAS

Can you make me reservations for tomorrow night, say 8-ish.

BRENDA

Reservations for two? Want some company?

LEE THOMAS

Normally, Brenda, you know I'd jump on an offer like that. But not this time. Just two.

BRENDA

Why, Mr. Lee. You do have a soft romantic side after all.

(reassuringly)

I'll take care of it for you.

LEE THOMAS

Thanks, Brenda.

Brenda disappears. Two seconds later Lee has another thought, and shouts to Brenda.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

What about a florist?

EXT. WASHINGTON DC EXPRESSWAY, WISCONSIN AVENUE -- NEXT MORNING, SEPTEMBER 10, 2001

A beaming Lee is battling late morning traffic, on his way to the Capitol. Not even the morning commute can dampen his spirits today.

INT. CAPITOL BUILDING, CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE -- DAY

Lee arrives at his Congressional office.

BRENDA

Well, don't you look happy this morning.

LEE THOMAS

Brenda, nothing is going to spoil my day today.

BRENDA

Sounds like a challenge.

LEE THOMAS

No, just a statement. How's the schedule?

BRENDA

Pretty light.

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

A few constituent visitors. The usual floor speeches. Mark won't be back until this afternoon.

LEE THOMAS

Okay. I'm going to try to get some work done today.

BRENDA

Good luck.

Lee goes into his office, and closes the office door behind him.

LEE'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Lee comes in, turns on a radio for background noise, and sits at his desk. He goes through the motions of trying to get his work done, but just can't concentrate. He keeps looking out the window, his mind a thousand miles away, or at least, across the river, in the Pentagon.

Lee looks at the CLOCK. 9:48.

LEE THOMAS

What am I going to do for 10 hours?

He searches his computer files in an attempt to keep his mind on his work.

LEE THOMAS

Let's see. Defense appropriations.

Defense appropriation. Here we go.

(quietly, to himself)

Report of the Committee on

Appropriations, to accompany H.R.

3338, together with additional views.

TIME PASSES

There is a soft KNOCK on Lee's door. He looks up from his computer.

LEE THOMAS

Yes?

Brenda enters the office.

BRENDA

Hey, sport. It's quitting time.

You better go get ready for your big date.

LEE THOMAS

Oh, Jeez. Is it that late already?
Thanks Brenda. I just want to finish
this up.

BRENDA

You don't work hard, but when you
do, it's frightening. See you
tomorrow, bright and early?

LEE THOMAS

I have a feeling I might not be in
too early tomorrow.

BRENDA

Does that mean I can take the morning
off, too? Nothing much happens most
mornings around here any way.

LEE THOMAS

Sure, why not. How about if we make
it noon?

BRENDA

Great. Thanks, Lee.

LEE THOMAS

Night, Brenda.

Brenda leaves, happy. Lee finishes what he's been typing.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

... a baseline of \$30 million, with
recurring annual appropriations and
adjustments.
Finished!

Lee checks his watch. He straightens the clutter on his
desk, stands up, and takes a long look out his window, at
the Washington skyline, admiring the view. After a few
seconds, he turns, and leaves.

EXT. PENTAGON -- EARLY EVENING

Lee arrives at the Pentagon employee parking lot in his black
SUV. Maria is just coming out of the building. She spots
him, and waves.

Maria is almost on clouds, a light spring in her step, as
she walks to Lee's SUV. She opens the passenger door, and
playfully jumps in.

INT. LEE'S SUV

MARIA KNAPP

Hi, stranger. Long tome, no see.

She leans over and gives Lee a soft kiss on the cheek.

LEE THOMAS

Well, hello yourself. It has been a long time.

MARIA KNAPP

Twelve years, eight months, two days.

LEE THOMAS

You are an analyst, aren't you?

EXT. PENTAGON PARKING LOT

Lee begins to drive, exiting the parking lot.

INT. LEE'S SUV

As they drive, they catch up on old times.

LEE THOMAS

So tell me what you've been up to?

MARIA KNAPP

So what have you been up to?

LEE THOMAS

I'll start. After Madison, I came to Washington as an intern for Senator Kohl. Worked for him for a few years, learned the city, and how things work around here. Did a little consulting for a think tank in town. Fella I knew back in Madison told me he was running for Congress, and asked me to be on his staff when he got to town. How about you?

MARIA KNAPP

Well, after Madison and Paris, I went out to Stanford and got my Masters in Poli Sci.

LEE THOMAS

Stanford. Figures. Ever have Condi as a prof?

MARIA KNAPP

Actually, I did. And even though I disagree with her views, I liked her professionalism. And, actually

LEE THOMAS

Yes?

MARIA KNAPP

She helped me get this job on the INWA team.

LEE THOMAS

Really?

MARIA KNAPP

When she came to Washington, she needed to bring a few people along with, to help her fill some national security advisory positions. She remembered me, and said she liked my views on the Soviet bloc states. So here I am. In this town, it's all about who you know, you know?

LEE THOMAS

A liberal from Madison advising the national security advisor on the Russians. Wonderful.

MARIA KNAPP

I told you, I'm from Stoughton.

INT. STARFISH CAFE, WASHINGTON DC -- LATER

Lee and Maria are enjoying their dinner. Laughing.

MARIA KNAPP

Oh, God, no. Did he really do that?

LEE THOMAS

Swear to God it's true.

MARIA KNAPP

But how in the world did he ever come up with something like that?

LEE THOMAS

I have no idea, but he tried it and nobody ever questioned him about it.

MARIA KNAPP

That's brilliant.

LEE THOMAS

I guess when you act like you know what you're doing, no one wants to look like a fool and actually ask you about your credentials.

MARIA KNAPP

How funny. Scary, but funny.

INT. LEE'S SUV -- LATER

Lee and Maria are driving through the streets of Washington.

LEE THOMAS

The night's still young. What would you like to do?

MARIA KNAPP

Believe it or not, I've never seen the monuments at night.

LEE THOMAS

The monuments it is.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC LANDMARKS -- NIGHT

Lee and Maria take their own tour past the famous Washington monuments, all fully illuminated for a fantastic night view. After passing the Washington Monument, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, they stop in front of the Jefferson Memorial.

INT. LEE'S SUV

LEE THOMAS

Maria, this has been a very wonderful night.

MARIA KNAPP

I really enjoyed myself with you tonight.

LEE THOMAS

And...I really don't want this night to end.

Maria looks at him.

MARIA KNAPP

It doesn't have to.

Lee turns, to look directly at Maria. They both lean toward one another, and kiss. And embrace. They begin to make out. Passions, pent up for more than 12 years, are unleashed in a flurry of hands, arms, legs, as old lovers find one another again.

MARIA KNAPP

(breathless)

I feel like I'm back in college.

LEE THOMAS

This isn't exactly Lake Monona beach.

MARIA KNAPP

I haven't made love on a beach in years.

LEE THOMAS

Me either. Feel up to it?

MARIA KNAPP

(chuckles)

No! I end up pulling sand out of my underwear for days after.

LEE THOMAS

You've started wearing underwear?

(laughs)

Good. Actually, I was hoping you'd say something like that.

How about my place instead?

MARIA KNAPP

(nodding)

Yes. Can you drive?

LEE THOMAS

Give me a second to catch myself.

I'll be okay to drive. And I know a shortcut from here, too.

INT. LEE THOMAS'S GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Maria and Lee are in one another's arms, kissing passionately as they enter Lee's living room. Entangled in one another, they fall to the couch together, resuming the passion begun minutes earlier in the SUV.

LEE'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Lee's bedroom is illuminated with numerous flickering candles. The bedcover is messed, out of place, and the corner of a sheet hangs to the floor.

Lee and Maria lie in one another's arms, naked beneath the bedding, reflecting.

LEE THOMAS

I don't know about you, but I think that was better than Lake Monona beach.

MARIA KNAPP

I think I could agree with that.

LEE THOMAS

No sand in these sheets, either.

MARIA KNAPP

Silk sheets. Very nice.

LEE THOMAS

Thanks.

MARIA KNAPP

I'm curious.

(MORE)

MARIA KNAPP (CONT'D)

Lee, how can a Congressional A.A. afford to live in Georgetown, in a townhouse like this?

LEE THOMAS

I could tell you, but I'd have to kill you.

MARIA KNAPP

It's okay. I have security clearance.

LEE THOMAS

So do I, so there.

MARIA KNAPP

I have a Q clearance.

LEE THOMAS

Big deal. That's not so hard to get.

MARIA KNAPP

What do you mean? I had to go through six months of interviews, background checks, psych tests to get mine.

LEE THOMAS

Well, like you said earlier, in this town, it's all about who you know, you know? I got mine in a week.

MARIA KNAPP

You have a Q clearance?

LEE THOMAS

Yep. And it's legit, too.

MARIA KNAPP

What are you doing with a Q clearance?

LEE THOMAS

Congressman Green's on the intel committee. I do a lot of his research, and have to read through a lot of classified material.

MARIA KNAPP

Okay, okay. So explain this townhouse.

LEE THOMAS

A couple years ago a bunch of us lowly clerks were sitting around, commiserating about something or another.

(MORE)

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

We started to wonder how all these Senators and Congressmen were living in these multi-million dollar mansions around here, on their salaries.

MARIA KNAPP

Some of them have been here a long time.

LEE THOMAS

That still doesn't explain it. These guys could work a lifetime on a \$150,000 Congressional salary and still not make what some of these places cost.

MARIA KNAPP

So how do they do it then?

LEE THOMAS

Connections, and knowing where the money is, where it comes from and where it goes. And they write the laws that direct where it goes, through appropriations.

MARIA KNAPP

That's what the Constitution says.

LEE THOMAS

Yeah, right. If any of these clowns ever bothered to actually read the Constitution, they'd be out of business. Lucky for them, no one else reads the Constitution, either. But that's where the secret lies.

MARIA KNAPP

What, in the Constitution? I've never read anything in there about making money.

LEE THOMAS

You have to learn to read like a Washington bureaucrat.

MARIA KNAPP

What do you mean?

LEE THOMAS

Like I said, when we were all sitting around commiserating, we realized that we do most of the work. It's like any organization. The staff does all the work, the boss takes all the credit.

MARIA KNAPP

That is the way it usually works.

LEE THOMAS

Well, we decided to make the system work for us for a change. Ever actually read any of the legislation that gets passed around this town?

MARIA KNAPP

Not really, just what I have to once in a while.

LEE THOMAS

Exactly. No one around here ever really actually reads this stuff. Just watch C-SPAN sometime. You hear all these "unanimous consent" requests and "dispense with reading of the bill" requests all the time. No one reads the bills.

MARIA KNAPP

And you guys did or something?

LEE THOMAS

Better. We actually inserted a few lines in some very special bills, and we were all set.

MARIA KNAPP

You inserted a few lines in some bills? How?

LEE THOMAS

I told you. I spent some time learning how this town actually works. We were the clerks, the staffers, who ended up typing up the bills themselves. So we took a couple big bills, the appropriations bills that get passed every year, and added funding for the American Strategic Defense Education Retirement Fund.

MARIA KNAPP

The American Strategic...

LEE THOMAS

...Defense Education Retirement Fund. Sounds pretty catchy, huh? Covers education, defense, social security, programs no one would have the political balls to ever cut.

MARIA KNAPP

And what does this fund do?

LEE THOMAS

It funds a couple scientific educational think tanks around the country.

MARIA KNAPP

Which in turn...

LEE THOMAS

Which in turn fund a research think tank here in Washington. We make annual tax free endowments and grant fellowships to bright, deserving scholars here doing research.

MARIA KNAPP

Would I happen to be in bed with one of those bright young scholars right now?

LEE THOMAS

Why, as a matter of fact, yes you would.

MARIA KNAPP

You must be crazy. How can you get away with something like that?

LEE THOMAS

It's all legal. The money is appropriated by Congress, signed into law and everything. The research think tanks are registered just like any other think tank in town. There's a provision in the tax code that makes them tax exempt.

MARIA KNAPP

Which you also "inserted?"

LEE THOMAS

(chuckles)

Actually, no. It was already there. We just followed it's provisions.

MARIA KNAPP

Wasn't that convenient.

LEE THOMAS

We even have one gal who has her teaching license from some little podunk college of education somewhere. One guy's a licensed attorney. We have people from a dozen offices around town, strategically placed to keep us all aware of current

(MORE)

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)
 regulations.
 We're completely legal.

MARIA KNAPP
 So how much do you make from all
 this?

LEE THOMAS
 Well, in this fiscal year, we received
 an appropriation of \$30 million.
 And there are a dozen of us. You do
 the math.

MARIA KNAPP
 Two and a half million dollars a
 year!?! Each of you?

LEE THOMAS
 Something like that. We do have a
 few expenses for overhead and staff.

MARIA KNAPP
 And it's tax free?

LEE THOMAS
 Yep.

MARIA KNAPP
 I'm on the wrong end of town. Are
 you hiring?

LEE THOMAS
 We might be able to work something
 out.

He reaches under the covers and starts to tickle Maria.

MARIA KNAPP
 Oh! You! You want to play games,
 huh? You're asking for it now.

They resume their playfulness in bed.

NEXT MORNING, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Lee and Maria, still in bed, awaken just after dawn. The
 bright sunshine filtering through the bedroom curtains.

LEE THOMAS
 Mmm, morning.

MARIA KNAPP
 Mmm, good morning.

LEE THOMAS
 How'd you sleep?

MARIA KNAPP
Wonderfully. And you?

LEE THOMAS
I really didn't get much sleep myself.

MARIA KNAPP
Well, if you mean sleep sleep, neither did I then.

LEE THOMAS
How's your schedule today?

MARIA KNAPP
Pretty light. And yours?

LEE THOMAS
I sort of made arrangements to come in late today.

MARIA KNAPP
You plan to do something this morning?

LEE THOMAS
Not really planned...but hopeful.
When's the last time you played hooky?

MARIA KNAPP
The last time we did this.

LEE THOMAS
You're overdue.

MARIA KNAPP
I think you're right. I just need to use your phone, okay?

Maria gets up, naked, finds a phone nearby, and makes a call.

MARIA KNAPP
Hi Elaine. It's Maria. I'm not going to be in the office this morning. Something...came up. I'll be in...

She looks at Lee, checking with him.

MARIA KNAPP (CONT'D)
This afternoon?

Lee nods.

MARIA KNAPP (CONT'D)
So I'll see you this afternoon. Bye Elaine.

She hangs up and bounces back into bend.

MARIA KNAPP

Now that that's taken care of...

LEE THOMAS

Commere, you.

MARIA KNAPP

Hee hee hee.

The bedspread makes a big billowy tent as they pull it up and over themselves. Maria and Lee pick up where they left off last night.

LATER

A loud EXPLOSION rattles the bedroom windows. Almost immediately, both Lee and Maria sit straight up in bed, fully alert, curious to see what just happened in the city.

MARIA KNAPP

What was that?

LEE THOMAS

Sounded like an explosion to me.

MARIA KNAPP

That's not good.

LEE THOMAS

Stay here.

MARIA KNAPP

You stay here. I'm going to find out what just happened.

Lee and Maria both scramble out of bed. They find their clothes, and dress quickly. They take a moment to look out the bedroom window, together.

They can see a rising column of black smoke to the southeast.

Lee grabs his phone, and makes a call

LEE THOMAS

Hi Mark. It's Lee. Yeah. What's happening? The Pentagon?

MARIA KNAPP

Oh, God.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

Jesus. And New York, too?
I'm on my way.

MARIA KNAPP

How bad?

LEE THOMAS

Come on.

Lee grabs Maria's hand and they dash out the bedroom door.

LEE'S LIVING ROOM

With a sense of urgency, Lee and Maria head for the front door.

LEE THOMAS

Looks like we've been attacked. New York. Washington.

Lee makes a slight detour.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

Wait a sec.

Lee goes to a large walk-in closet beneath his living room staircase. He comes back out in seconds, carrying two large, filled backpacks.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

We might need this stuff.

MARIA KNAPP

What is that?

LEE THOMAS

Haz mat gear. Respirators. Heavy gloves. First aid kits. Some other gear.

MARIA KNAPP

Now why do you have two backpacks loaded with that kind of gear here?

LEE THOMAS

Long story. Part of that think tank stuff I was doing, on urban preparedness and survival.

MARIA KNAPP

Why, you Boy Scout, you.

LEE THOMAS

I was never a Boy Scout. But I like to be prepared. C'mon, let's go.

EXT. LEE THOMAS'S GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Lee and Maria come out of his townhouse, carrying the survival backpacks. They put them in the back of Lee's SUV. Lee and Maria get into the SUV, and head toward the rising column of black smoke.

INT. LEE'S SUV

Lee snaps on the radio as they drive toward the rising black smoke.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
... has hit the Pentagon. We have reports of a fourth plane that has gone down in a field in Pennsylvania.

MARIA KNAPP
Fourth plane?

LEE THOMAS
Shhh, listen.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Both World Trade Center towers in New York are on fire at this time.

LEE THOMAS
We've been hit.

MARIA KNAPP
Are you okay?

LEE THOMAS
Not us. Us. The United States.

MARIA KNAPP
Oh, God.

LEE THOMAS
Should we keep going, or would you like to try to get out of town?

MARIA KNAPP
No. Keep going. If we're really under attack, this is where I want to be.

LEE THOMAS
Good girl. That's how I feel too.

Maria finds her cell phone in her purse.

MARIA KNAPP
I'm going to try to call the office.

She dials her office number. An automated recording answers.

PLEASANT PHONE RECORDING (V.O.)
We're sorry, but due to unusually heavy call volume, your call cannot be completed at this time. Please hang up, and try your call later.

Maria snaps her cell phone shut.

MARIA KNAPP

(sarcasm)

Heavy call volume. I wonder why.

LEE THOMAS

If a plane hit the Pentagon, all the circuits there are probably out.

MARIA KNAPP

I just hope it's not too bad.

LEE THOMAS

Well, you might get a few days vacation out of it.

MARIA KNAPP

Always the optimist, aren't you?

LEE THOMAS

Someone has to be.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The White House is being ordered evacuated at this time. The President is in Sarasota, Florida. Vice-President Cheney is in Washington.

LEE THOMAS

They'll probably order the Capitol evacuated next. Guess I have the day off too.

MARIA KNAPP

Looks like it might be a long weekend for all of us.

LEE THOMAS

I have a feeling our world just changed.

MARIA KNAPP

I think you're right.

EXT. PENTAGON

STOCK NEWS FOOTAGE of the Pentagon on fire, immediately after the attacks. People scrambling for cover. Fire trucks and ambulances arriving. Rescue workers doing their jobs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LEE THOMAS'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- AFTERNOON,
SEPTEMBER 14, 2001

Lee and Maria are trying to relax, sitting on the couch,
together, watching President Bush on television.

MARIA KNAPP

He went to New York to see the damage
first hand.

LEE THOMAS

Turn it up just a bit.

Maria points a remote at the tv and turns up the volume.

On tv, President Bush appears to be addressing a crowd with
a bullhorn.

NEWS FOOTAGE

PRESIDENT BUSH

I can hear you.

The tv crowd applauds.

PRESIDENT BUSH (CONT'D)

I can hear you. The rest of the
world hears you.

The tv crowd applauds again.

PRESIDENT BUSH (CONT'D)

And the people who knocked these
buildings down will hear all of us
soon.

The tv crowd erupts in thunderous applause.

Maria turns the tv volume down again.

LEE THOMAS

I have a feeling we're going to war.

MARIA KNAPP

Dr. Rice said she thinks it's some
radical Islamic faction from the
Middle East.

LEE THOMAS

Somebody like that tried bombing the
Towers in '93, remember?

MARIA KNAPP

The same group? Eight years later?

LEE THOMAS

They have a different perspective on time than we do.
What kind of an analyst are you again?

MARIA KNAPP

Nuclear weapons assessment. We don't handle terrorism.

LEE THOMAS

You might have to before all this is over.

MARIA KNAPP

You think these guys have nukes and the missiles to deliver 'em? We'd detect a missile launch...

LEE THOMAS

They don't need missiles. They can use suitcase nukes these days?

MARIA KNAPP

What are suitcase nukes?

Surprised at that comment, Lee looks directly at Maria.

LEE THOMAS

Are you serious? You've actually never heard of suitcase nukes?

MARIA KNAPP

Rumors, yes. Actual evidence, no.

LEE THOMAS

Funny. We actually developed 'em in the 80's. The Soviets stole the designs and started their own program. My sources tell me they built more than four hundred of the damn little things, and they can't account for almost a fourth of 'em now.

Maria is now very interested in this tale.

MARIA KNAPP

How big are we talking here?

LEE THOMAS

There's a reason they're called suitcase nukes. The whole works can be packed into a big suitcase.

MARIA KNAPP

I meant how powerful? Are we talking kilotons, megatons, what?

LEE THOMAS

If they use uranium as a fuel, low megaton range. Plutonium multiplies the effects.

MARIA KNAPP

I know the difference between fissile uranium and plutonium yields. And I know the effect is more widespread if it's an air burst rather than a ground detonation.

LEE THOMAS

You know, if you think about it, it wouldn't be that hard to do, actually. If you had the components, the fuel, and a real death wish, a determined fanatic could do some real damage.

MARIA KNAPP

Just look what they did with just aviation fuel.

LEE THOMAS

Exactly. Now, think about this.

INT. SECRET SOVIET NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX, KIEV, UKRAINE -- DAY, NOVEMBER, 1989

As Lee Lee describes a crazy plan, our desperate Ukrainian nuclear bomb engineer Karl Vlyashev is wheeling his trunk full of material to a waiting van in the bomb factory complex parking lot.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

If you could find one of the Soviet scientists who built these things in the first place, and he was desperate enough, and you could offer him enough, you could conceivably buy yourself your very own little nuclear bomb.

EXT. SECRET SOVIET NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT COMPLEX, PARKING LOT

Two Middle Eastern looking THUGS help Karl load the trunk into the waiting van. Once it's loaded, they show him a briefcase full of money. All three men nod in approval. Karl closes the briefcase. The men close the back of their van.

The men climb into their van and drive away. Karl pushes the empty flat cart back into the building, carrying the briefcase with him.

INT. NONDESCRIPT WAREHOUSE -- LATER

The mysterious van arrives, with the two thugs and the trunk. They are met inside by THREE OTHER NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MEN. The thugs climb out of the van and open the van's back doors. They unload the trunk, and carry it over next to a pile of wooden crates.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

Once you have the bomb, you have to figure out a safe way to transport it.

MARIA KNAPP (V.O.)

Without being detected.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

Yes, without getting detected.

MARIA KNAPP (V.O.)

Both uranium and plutonium give off a pretty good amount of radiation.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

Lead shielding.

One of the nefarious looking men opens the trunk lid with a crowbar. He carefully reaches inside, and gently lifts the bomb components out, one piece at a time.

MARIA KNAPP (V.O.)

Lead's pretty heavy for transportation purposes.

The thugs open a few more wooden crates, and take out several glass tables.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

But a leaded glass table top isn't quite so heavy. You get five or six heavy leaded glass tables and use the tops to line a big crate or box, sides, top and bottom.

The thugs assemble their bomb-carrying crate, lining the bottom and sides with the glass table tops.

Meanwhile, the one nefarious looking man seems to be assembling the bomb components. One piece at a time, he assembles the whole thing. Finally, he opens one of the white coffee cans, and uses a pair of tongs to grab a round heavy ball of metal from inside the can. He places this metal ball into the core of the bomb, then steps back to wipe the beads of sweat from his brow.

LEE THOMAS (V.O.)

Put your bomb inside, set the triggering mechanism, and it's all set to go.

The four remaining men all strain to lift the bomb into the carrying crate. As the bomb is being lowered into the carrying crate one man slips, briefly, and the bomb tilts precariously. The man recovers immediately, and they succeed in their task of putting the bomb in the crate, without blowing themselves up in the process.

When the bomb is in the crate, the men take one more glass table top, and place it on top of the bomb. Then they put the crate's wooden top in place, and nail the crate shut.

INT. LEE THOMAS'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- PREVIOUS SCENE

LEE THOMAS

Course, you would have to be crazy to even think of such a thing, and suicidal to ever try to actually do something like that.

MARIA KNAPP

After what's happened, there are definitely some crazy people in this world.

LEE THOMAS

Not all of them are from the Middle East either. Remember Oklahoma City? Those guys were Americans.

MARIA KNAPP

You think those guys were smart enough to even think about using a nuclear bomb?

LEE THOMAS

Doesn't matter how smart they are. All you'd need is someone crazy enough to deliver it.

MARIA KNAPP

It would be a suicide mission.

LEE THOMAS

For someone with nothing to live for, it wouldn't matter. Or anyone with a messiah complex, some loser who wanted to make a name for himself.

MARIA KNAPP

Himself? Why does it always have to be a man? It could be a woman, too.

LEE THOMAS

I kinda doubt it.

Maria pretends to be offended. She raises her arm, playfully preparing to strike Lee for that remark.

MARIA KNAPP

Why, you sexist...

LEE THOMAS

Take it easy. I just meant I don't think most women are dumb enough to fall for the whole virgins in heaven line.

MARIA KNAPP

Maybe one of these militant dykes?

LEE THOMAS

(laughs)

I know a few.

MARIA KNAPP

Me, too. He he he

LEE THOMAS

Why...you naughty girl.

EXT. HARBOR, DOCKYARD, PORT CITY OF ADEN, YEMEN -- PRESENT DAY

Ships of many nations are being loaded in a foreign harbor. Cranes lift large shipping crates aboard a large cargo ship.

INT. ANOTHER NONDESCRIPT DOCKSIDE WAREHOUSE, PORT CITY OF ADEN, YEMEN -- CONTINUOUS

A medium size delivery truck arrives in the dockside warehouse. Our three nefarious-looking men get out of the truck and open the back door of the truck. One of the men gets a nearby forklift, and uses it to unload half a dozen large wooden crates from the back of the delivery truck.

One of the men holds a clipboard. Using the directions on the clipboard, he instructs the third man to label the six crates with destinations.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1

(with a thick foreign
accent)

Long Beach.
Newark.
Baltimore.
Boston.
Seattle.
Chicago.

The crates are labeled in black stenciled letters, each with a different destination.

After each crate is labeled, it gets loaded with the forklift into six different large shipping container.

The crate labeled LONG BEACH gets loaded into a shipping container with very distinctive (sponsor's) markings on it's sides and doors.

EXT. HARBOR, DOCKYARD, PORT CITY OF ADEN, YEMEN -- NIGHT

The six large shipping containers are each loaded by cranes onto a different ship, along with other large crates and shipping containers, all bound for the U.S.A.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC -- DAWN, PRESENT DAY

The sun rises over the White House, as the surrounding trees cast long shadows over the lawn.

INT. WHITE HOUSE -- MORNING

The (unidentified) President gets his morning briefing from his (anonymous) security advisors.

PRESIDENT

Okay, bring me up to date. What's happening today?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President, we lost another dozen men overnight in Iraq. Looks like it was another suicide attack. We also had 18 other casualties. It was a lone suicide bomber. Had a backpack full of explosives in a car disguised as having mechanical problems. Blocked the road, and when our guys went to see if they could help, he set off the explosives.

PRESIDENT

These damn extremists. They'll stop at nothing.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes Sir.

CIA DIRECTOR

Mr. President, we have picked up more chatter about suicide attacks here in America.

PRESIDENT

Anything specific? What are your CIA folks hearing?

CIA DIRECTOR

Nothing specific yet. But the chatter seems to have spiked in the last 12 hours. And we've picked up something new. Several of these same transmissions have also been to entities at the U.N.

PRESIDENT

See if you can identify who at the U.N. is getting these transmissions. Maintain surveillance and keep me informed if anything happens.

CIA DIRECTOR

Will do, Sir.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President, I may have something along those lines as well.

PRESIDENT

Go on.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Sir, one of our agents thinks he has a lead on those missing LYAW's.

PRESIDENT

The suitcase nukes?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Yes, Sir. The low yield atomic weapons.

PRESIDENT

Did we ever admit to building those things?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

No, Sir. The yields were too low to be considered for practical tactical deployment.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President, our agent has managed to track a couple of these weapons, to the port of Aden, Yemen.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

That's between the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

PRESIDENT

Thanks. I know where it is.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
If those things made it to a ship,
there's no telling where they're
going next. As your national security
advisor, I'm advising you...

CIA DIRECTOR
It would be prudent to assume they're
heading here.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR (CONT'D)
I am advising the President that
that is exactly what we believe.

PRESIDENT
We can't assume anything at this
point. All we can do is be prepared.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
Prepared. For a nuclear attack?

PRESIDENT
Relax. Prepared to defend against a
nuclear attack.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
All our nuclear strategies are
predicated upon an attack from a
hostile nation. Mutually Assured
Destruction doesn't work as a
deterrent if the other side doesn't
care about dying.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
So we get them before they can get
us.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
And just who are you going to get?
We can't stop everyone from coming
into the country.

CIA DIRECTOR
Maybe not. But we sure can keep an
eye on those U.N. bastards. Maybe
they'll give us more information.

PRESIDENT
Now let's just all calm down. We're
not doing anything different unless
we can specify our enemy. I'm not
going to order yet another terror
alert and get everyone all riled up
over nothing. The chicken little
syndrome isn't good for my re-elect
numbers.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

I still think...

PRESIDENT

Anything else today? Good. We're adjourned.

The President gets up. Everyone else rises to their feet as well. The President and almost everyone leaves the room. The National Security Advisor sighs, and sinks back into a chair, frustrated at the President's lack of interest in the latest rumor of a threat.

EXT. SHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS -- DAY

One of the ships that was being loaded in Yemen cruises along on the high seas.

INT. SHIP ON THE HIGH SEAS -- CONTINUOUS

In the hold of the ship, packed into our very distinctive large shipping container, sits one of the wooden crates from the warehouse in Aden, Yemen. In big black stenciled letters, it is labeled LONG BEACH CALIF USA.

EXT. UNITED NATIONS BUILDING, NEW YORK CITY -- DAY

Exterior shot of the U.N. building, gleaming in the sunlight.

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL -- CONTINUOUS

In the main assembly auditorium, the ambassador from North Korea is in the middle of an impassioned speech. Over his speech in Korean, we hear the voice of the English language translator.

TRANSLATOR (O.S.)

...and as the official representative of my government of North Korea, I must inform this body that my government strongly objects to the continued occupation of the Korean peninsula by armed forces of the United States.

The North Korean ambassador is by this time very animated. In a scene reminiscent of the October 13, 1960 admonishment by Nikita Khrushchev, the North Korean ambassador removes his right shoe, and bangs it on the podium for emphasis.

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

We warn the United States. If their forces attempt to cross the 38th parallel, we will be forced to defend our country...by whatever means necessary.

The North Korean ambassador storms away from the podium.

The reaction from the assembled delegates is one of low murmurs, growing louder by the second.

The United States' ambassador walks to the podium, and addresses the assembled delegates.

U.S. AMBASSADOR

I would like to thank my esteemed colleague for his impassioned words. Let me assure him, and this august body, that the United States has no intentions of invading North Korea. But we would reiterate our position, to defend the nation of South Korea from invasion. We would also caution other States that we are prepared to defend our interests around the world. While we are committed to the liberation of the Iraqi people, that struggle only necessitates the deployment of a small portion of our forces. We remain ready and able to defend our interests, wherever they may be.

The assembled representatives react even more loudly to those remarks. Loud murmurs echo through the auditorium.

INT. WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC -- LATER

The national security team is again assembled for a morning briefing.

PRESIDENT

I'm asking you, as my Secretary of Defense. Do we have enough troops in Korea to do the job?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President, we currently have 37,000 troops stationed in South Korea.

PRESIDENT

Do we have enough to do the job if we have to?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President, the North has an army of a million men. If they attack, we will have two options. Pull out...or full retaliation.

PRESIDENT

Pulling out is not an option.

EXT. PENTAGON -- DAY

The sun is shining brightly on the repaired Pentagon building.

INT. MARIA KNAPP'S PENTAGON OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Maria's "office" is little more than a large cubicle in an open room, full of similar cubicles. The open room is the suite of the International Nuclear Weapons Assessment team.

Maria is on the phone, talking to Lee.

MARIA KNAPP

They finally got my office back to working order. You're going to have to come by on an "official" visit one of these days.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

I think the Intelligence Committee just might have to do that, in the interests of seeing what the taxpayers' money is paying for.

MARIA KNAPP

It's a little crowded, but at least I can finally get back to doing my job.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

How's that going? Has your team had any luck tracking those suitcase nukes?

MARIA KNAPP

We had an agent that managed to verify their existence. Seems the Russians didn't have the money to keep their program going after the Soviet Union broke up. A couple of their scientists decided to see if they could sell the designs on the black market.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

Any ideas on potential customers?

MARIA KNAPP

They had no problem finding eager customers, with ready cash.

Maria reaches for a report, and flips through it for information.

MARIA KNAPP (CONT'D)

Looks like there were at least half a dozen sold to a front group calling itself the Libere' Islamic Freedom Expirea.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

Any idea what they paid?

MARIA KNAPP

Plenty. European bank records show several large cash withdrawals over the past few years, totaling more than \$9 million.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

Sounds like they got a bargain. Did you know the Manhattan Project in World War 2 cost us about \$2 billion? And we only got four atomic bombs for that price.

MARIA KNAPP

Yes. But we also had to pay for the R & D costs. The Soviets just stole the designs from us and went into production for themselves.

LEE THOMAS (O.S.)

International nuclear chess game. Just make up the rules as you go along.

MARIA KNAPP

The rules have changed.

EXT. HARBOR, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA -- AFTERNOON

The cargo ship carrying the ominous wooden crate slowly eases into the Long Beach harbor.

EXT. AIRPLANE FLYING ABOVE LONG BEACH HARBOR -- CONTINUOUS

A small plane flies over the harbor. It drops a bit lower, circling over the cargo ship as the ship enters the harbor.

INT. AIRPLANE FLYING ABOVE LONG BEACH HARBOR -- CONTINUOUS

The PILOT looks through binoculars as he circles, looking at the arriving cargo ship below. When he lowers his binoculars, the pilot turns out to be Rick Dean, the former liberal college student from Madison.

EXT. AIRPLANE -- CONTINUOUS

After circling the cargo ship, the plane returns to cruising altitude, and makes a slow survey flight over the greater

Los Angeles area. It flies east, over Disneyland, then turns north and heads toward the Studio City area. Making a very large circle, the plane finally heads back south, cruising the coastline, above the crowded California beaches below.

EXT. LONG BEACH DOCKS -- LATER

A crane lifts large cargo containers out of the hold of the ship, setting them on semi trailer frames on the docks.

An official-looking CUSTOMS AGENT, wearing a "CUSTOMS" jacket and white hard hat, makes a cursory inspection of a few of the cargo containers. Checking his clipboard, he waves at several of the DOCK WORKERS to get their attention.

CUSTOMS AGENT
 (whistling for
 attention)
 Hold it! Just a second, there.

RALPH, DOCK WORKER
 Problems, inspector?

CUSTOMS AGENT
 Might be, Ralph. I got a notice a few days ago to check cargo containers from the Middle East. These came from Yemen, right?

RALPH DOCK WORKER
 That's what the manifest says.
 (faking a Jamaican
 accent)
 Ya, Men.

CUSTOMS AGENT
 No. Yemen.

RALPH DOCK WORKER
 (continuing to fake
 the Jamaican accent)
 Dat's what I said. Ya, Men.

CUSTOMS AGENT
 I know you're from East L.A., Ralph,
 so cut out the accent.
 Any fruit, vegetables or animal
 products inside?

The dock worker checks his manifest list.

RALPH DOCK WORKER
 Nope. Just furniture.

CUSTOMS AGENT
 I better check, just to make sure.

The two walk to a random cargo container. The one they pick sits right next to the by now recognizable container carrying the ominous wooden crate.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Let's see what's in this one. Open it up.

RALPH DOCK WORKER

Whatever you say, inspector.

The dock worker opens the doors of the shipping container. It's full of stacked wooden crates, with the recognizable names of several large furniture chains labeling the crates.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Furniture, right?

RALPH DOCK WORKER

Looks like furniture to me.

The Customs Agent makes a few ticks on his check list.

CUSTOMS AGENT

No fruits. No vegetables. No animal products. Check. Okay, Ralph, close it up.

The dock worker closes the doors of the shipping container.

RALPH DOCK WORKER

You wanna check any more of 'em?

The Customs Agent checks his clip board, then looks at the line of cargo containers. He looks at his watch, pauses for a second, and shakes his head.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Nah. Looks like they're all listed as furniture. I'll let you get back to work. Pretty close to my quitting time any way.

ALPH DOCK WORKER

You government guys sure have a rough job. Night, Sam.

CUSTOMS AGENT

Somebody's got to do these things. Wouldn't want to let anything bad slip in unnoticed. Night, Ralph.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE, MIDDLE EAST TOWN -- DAY

A small house set somewhere in the dry desert of the Middle East.

INT. SMALL HOUSE, MIDDLE EAST TOWN -- CONTINUOUS

Inside the dimly lit house, our three Nefarious Looking Men are looking at a large wall map of the United States. The map has large red triangles over six cities: Los Angeles. New York City. Washington DC. Boston. Seattle. Chicago.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2
(with a thick accent)
When do they arrive?

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1
They should be arriving this month.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2
And when do we strike? Allah commands us...

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1
Patience. We will wait for our friends in Pyong Yang to make their move first.

The men turn to face a second wall. On this wall is a large wall map of the Korean peninsula. Military placements are detailed on the map, on both sides of the 38th parallel. Just north of the 38th parallel, on the North Korean side, is another red triangle.

Nefarious man #1 points to the red triangle.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1
The Americans will be crushed.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2
It is Allah's will. Allah akbar.

EXT. SEAL BEACH, CALIFORNIA, CONDO -- AFTERNOON

Rick Dean drives his Mustang convertible through the neighborhood. He slows, and turns into a driveway.

DRIVEWAY

Rick gets out of his Mustang. He opens his trunk, and takes out several long rolled cardboard tubes. Rick carries them into his condo.

INT. RICK DEAN'S CONDO -- CONTINUOUS

Rick enters his condo. He sets the long cardboard tubes on his kitchen table.

Rick checks his watch. He disappears down the hallway of the condo. Seconds later, he returns, carrying a rolled up mat.

Rick unrolls the mat and lays it on his living room floor. Rick takes his shoes off, and kneels on the mat, facing east. Bowing to the floor, Rick begins to chant an Islamic prayer.

INT. WHITE HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

The President and his security team are again assembled, evaluating the latest developments.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I tell you, Mr. President. Those Korean commie bastards are up to something. I just know it.

PRESIDENT

You just know it? How, may I ask, do you "just know it?"

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I've been involved in intelligence for over thirty years. From Special Forces to the Pentagon to the CIA. I can tell when something's about to happen, and, take my word, Mr. President, something's about to happen.

PRESIDENT

But what? From where? Here or overseas? Damn it, I need specifics, not hunches.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Or speculation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

It's not speculation. As for where, somewhere along the 38th parallel. Those bastards are massing along the border, and they're getting ready for something.

PRESIDENT

The North Korean Ambassador says they're just simulating war games. Hell, we do the same thing all the time.

CIA DIRECTOR

Mr. President. Perhaps the Secretary is correct. We have been intercepting a larger than usual number of coded transmissions from Pyong Yang to their field commanders.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

I thought we had their codes broken?

CIA DIRECTOR

Oh, we do. We can understand what they're saying...but we still don't have the full context figured out yet.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

It's like the coded messages during World War 2. They might say something like "My Mother is sick" but without the code book, we can't put it into context.

CIA DIRECTOR

And there have been a lot of just those such messages lately.

PRESIDENT

All right. If you're correct, what do you recommend?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President!

PRESIDENT

There's always a chance they could be right this time. We don't want to get caught with our shorts around our ankles again.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

(stifled snort of amusement)

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Something funny?

PRESIDENT

Inside joke. We found pictures of one guy who used to have my job in, shall we say, a "compromising position."

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

So that's why he resigned. Guess his wife wasn't so sick after all.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

From what I saw, he was the sick one.

PRESIDENT

Okay, okay, what are we going to do about the Pyong Yang situation?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President, if you'll authorize it, I'd like to send another armored battalion over. We could say they're going over to replace the guys who've been stationed there for the last year. A troop rotation.

PRESIDENT

Sounds reasonable. Make preparations to do that in the next 30 days.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes, Sir, Mr. President.

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL -- LATER

The North Korean Ambassador is making another grandiose speech before the assembled delegates. The English language translator interprets for us.

TRANSLATOR (O.S.)

...and we renew our objections to the United States presence on the Korean peninsula. Their numbers have escalated and they've now sent another entire battalion of heavily armored forces to the region. We can only assume that the United States is preparing to use this battalion, forcing my government to fortify our defensive positions along the 38th parallel.

The North Korean Ambassador points directly at the United States Ambassador.

TRANSLATOR (CONT'D)

If you do not remove your forces at once, we shall not be responsible for the actions which may follow.

INT. LEE'S OFFICE -- DAY

Lee is hard at work. He calls to his secretary through the open office door.

LEE THOMAS

Brenda. Can you bring me the file on the latest deployments in Korea?

BRENDA (O.S.)

You want the North or the South?

LEE THOMAS

Both. I want to see just how bad this situation might get.

Seconds later, Brenda brings in a large stack of files, and plops them on Lee's desk.

BRENDA

You sure you want to go through all of these?

Brenda plops herself down in one of Lee's office chairs, directly across the desk from Lee.

LEE THOMAS

Yeah. I have to find out what's going on over there.

BRENDA

The news people say we're just doing war exercises.

LEE THOMAS

Brenda. You should know by now not to believe everything we feed to the news people.

BRENDA

I know, I know. It just seems like a lot of reading for you to do.

LEE THOMAS

I've already read most of it. Hell, I wrote most of it. I just want to refresh my memory on a few points.

BRENDA

Hey. How are things with you and what's-her-name?

LEE THOMAS

Maria. It's going great. She's moving in with me next week. And thanks for the restaurant recommendation. The Starfish Cafe was great.

BRENDA

Well, thank you for the idea to take that morning off. You know, you probably saved my life.

LEE THOMAS

I just wish we could have done more. Maria and I spent hours at the Pentagon that day, pulling people out of the debris.

BRENDA

God, that was awful.

LEE THOMAS

If we all do our jobs, and keep our eyes and ears open, we won't get caught with our shorts around our ankles again.

BRENDA

(laughs)

You saw the pictures, too?

LEE THOMAS

Sometimes an intelligence clearance has it's privileges.

BRENDA

I just feel sorry for the guy.

LEE THOMAS

Which one?

BRENDA

The President. Former President now.

LEE THOMAS

I thought maybe you were referring to his boyfriend.

BRENDA

I think I might have dated him once. Nob wonder he was so lousy in bed.

Brenda stands up, and begins to walk out of the office.

LEE THOMAS

Guess you just weren't his type, Brenda.

BRENDA

Honey, I'm every man's type.

LEE THOMAS

You just keep on teasing me, and see where it gets you.

BRENDA

Yeah, yeah. Promises, promises.

Lee pauses for a moment, looking at the large stack of files sitting on his desk. Lee sighs, and reaches for the top file folder.

His PHONE RINGS. With a quick

LEE THOMAS

Whew.

He answers it.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)
Hello, Lee Lee.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Hi. It's me.

LEE THOMAS
Hi, Maria. I'll be over at your
place right after work. We should
be able to bring another load or two
over to my place before dark.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
I...might not be able to make it.

LEE THOMAS
Oh? Maria, what's the matter?

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Something's come up. At work.

LEE THOMAS
How serious is it this time?

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
It's serious.

LEE THOMAS
Can you give me any details?
Remember, I do have clearance.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
I know. I can't. This line isn't
secure.

LEE THOMAS
I understand.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
And I might be late tonight.

LEE THOMAS
Do what needs to be done. And I'm
going to check with the Congressman
on this end of things.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Remember you didn't hear anything
from me.

LEE THOMAS
Course not. Love you.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)
Love you, too.

LEE THOMAS

Love you more.

MARIA KNAPP (O.S.)

Oh, cut it out already.

LEE THOMAS

Okay. See ya.

Lee hangs up.

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

Brenda! Find out where Mark is.
Tell him something's going on, and I
think he should get back to Washington
ASAP.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Is it serious.

LEE THOMAS

Could be.

BRENDA (O.S.)

I'm on it. Mark's supposed to be at
a listening session back home this
afternoon.

LEE THOMAS

(to himself)

Oh, great. Another listening session.

Brenda appears in the office doorway.

BRENDA

I heard that.

LEE THOMAS

I can't stand those stupid things.

BRENDA

Mark seems to get a real kick out of
those meet 'n' greets.

LEE THOMAS

That's why he's the Congressman, and
I'm the A.A.
Shouldn't you be on the phone?

With a wave of her hand, Brenda turns and disappears from
the doorway

BRENDA (O.S.)

I'm on it.

INT. WHITE HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The President is in his briefing room again. His security team hurries in, and are seated.

PRESIDENT

Okay, fill me in. What's happened?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President, as you know, we've been conducting war games in Korea, on our side of the border.

PRESIDENT

I know. Operation Yellow Veil.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Well, it seems

EXT. GUNNERY RANGE, SOUTH KOREA -- DAY

Military men and vehicles are maneuvering, conducting live fire war game exercises.

FOXHOLE

A pair of camouflaged FORWARD OBSERVERS are looking through laser sights at a LARGE TARGET.

OBSERVER'S P.O.V.

The target is seen through the binoculars, with a laser-painted cross in the middle of the target.

OBSERVER (O.S.)

Gopher to Kestrel. Target is painted. Show me what ya got.

EXT. FA-18 FIGHTER AT 10,000 FEET

PILOT (O.S.)

Roger Gopher. Target is acquired. Enjoy the show.

A missile is launched from the fighter.

FOXHOLE

The observer is still looking through his targeting binoculars. Suddenly, he sneezes.

OBSERVER

Ahh, ahh, ahh-Chooo!

When he sneezes, he knocks the targeting laser askew. It points up, down, left, right, in all directions.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (V.O.)
 One of our fighters launched a missile
 at a target. The missile's navigation
 sensors malfunctioned. It went off
 course...and crossed the border.

INT. WHITE HOUSE -- PREVIOUS SCENE

PRESIDENT
 Shit. And?...

EXT. AMMO DUMP

Archive footage of a large stockpile of ammunition, exploding.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (V.O.)
 The missile hit an ammo dump ... a
 North Korean ammo dump.

The initial explosion sets off a series of larger explosions,
 in a cascading effect that destroys the entire ammo dump.

INT. WHITE HOUSE -- PREVIOUS SCENE

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
 (incredulously)
 An ammo dump? Great.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
 It was an accident.

PRESIDENT
 Casualties?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
 Unknown at this point. Probably.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
 Probably? Probably quite a few.

The President picks up his desk phone, and speaks to his
 secretary.

PRESIDENT
 Get me the North Korean Ambassador.
 Right away.

CIA DIRECTOR
 Mr. President. There is something
 else. Our satellites have picked up
 a radiation signature coming from
 the North side of the border.

PRESIDENT
 Radiation signature? What does that
 mean? Hold it.
 (MORE)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Try to reach him over at the U.N.
He seems to be spending a lot of
time there lately.

The President hangs up the phone.

CIA DIRECTOR

We believe they have succeeded in
developing a bomb.

PRESIDENT

A bomb. As in...

CIA DIRECTOR

Yes.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Any idea how big it might be?

CIA DIRECTOR

Our INWA team thinks it's in the
kiloton range, probably about 30 or
40 kilotons, from the amount of
radiation we're seeing.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

That's twice as big as either
Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Mr. President.
Those were only 15 to 20 kilotons.

PRESIDENT

(sharply)

I know that. I did take history in
high school. When they actually
taught history in high school.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

(to the CIA Director)

But they don't have a means of
launching it, right?

CIA DIRECTOR

Doesn't look like they plan to launch
it. They're moving it south, by
flatbed truck.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

So what? Do they think they're going
to just drive it all the way to Seoul?
If that thing crosses the border, my
men will

PRESIDENT

Your men will do what I tell them to do. They haven't crossed the border yet, and until they do, we will continue to monitor the situation. Closely.

CIA DIRECTOR

We have one of our black satellites in geosynchronous orbit in the area. I've already told our INWA team to keep a close eye on that radiation signature, and notify me immediately when it gets within 20 miles of the border.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

If it's 40 kilotons, nearly everything within that 20 mile radius will be destroyed. The radiation would be deadly for about a thirty mile radius.

PRESIDENT

Keep an eye on it. A sharp eye. I want to know where that thing is at every moment. If it gets within...five miles of the border...

The President looks at the Secretary of Defense

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

Cancel Yellow Veil. We're on high alert as of this moment. We won't initiate anything. But...if your men witness a hostile act...I am authorizing them to return fire.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes, Sir, Mr. President.

EXT. DIRT ROAD, NORTH KOREA -- DAY

In a cloud of dust, an old 1950's era flatbed truck heads down the road. In the bed of the truck is something large, covered by a canvas tarp.

EXT. AIRPLANE FLYING ABOVE LOS ANGELES AREA -- DAY

Rick Dean is flying his same pattern over the greater Los Angeles area. When he reaches the Studio City area this time, he drops to a lower altitude

INT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

Rick looks through his binoculars at several motion picture studio lots.

EXT. STUDIO LOT -- CONTINUOUS

On one of the studio back lots, a film crew is trying to get a shot on a Western set. The

SOUND of Rick Dean's overhead PLANE

Interrupts the shot

DIRECTOR

Cut! Cut! Somebody tell that damn pilot we're trying to film a movie down here!

EXT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

Rick's plane returns to it's cruising altitude, and again heads south, along the coastline, over the beaches.

EXT. PENTAGON -- AFTERNOON

Meanwhile, back at the Pentagon

INT. MARIA KNAPP'S PENTAGON OFFICE

Maria is at her desk. She's studying satellite imagery of the Korean peninsula on her computer screen. The borders of both North and South Korea are clearly visible, as is an ominous BLIP near the southern edge of North Korea.

Maria stands up and announces to the INWA team members in the large room

MARIA KNAPP

OK, guys. I think it's time we move to the operations room.

Half a dozen people emerge from their cubicles. All of them head to the back of the large room.

There, Maria removes a brass key from around her neck. She uses the key to unlock a hidden panel in the wall. A security pad is revealed, and Maria enters the secret code.

A section of the wall slides back, revealing an elevator door. The elevator door opens. The INWA team members all crowd into the elevator. The door closes, and the secret panel closes, returning the wall to it's indistinctive appearance.

INT. ELEVATOR

The INWA team members face the door, and patiently wait, as the elevator makes it's descent.

SOUND of an anonymous FART

INWA TEAM
(collectively)
Awwwww!

One anonymous woman's voice identifies the culprit

KIM
(hidden among the
team)
Jeez, Bob. You had to have onions
with your lunch again?

Moments later, the elevator door opens, revealing a large OPERATIONS ROOM, fully outfitted with large wall display screens that monitor the world and give instant feedback to the INWA team.

INT. INWA OPERATIONS ROOM

The team exits the elevator, and the members find their individual duty stations in the room. Maria finds her desk, and enters a code on the computer there.

One of the large wall screens changes, and displays the same map of the Korean peninsula that was on her office computer. The ominous BLIP is still there, slightly closer to the line that is the border between the two Koreas.

EXT. DIRT ROAD, NORTH KOREA -- DAY

The old flatbed truck slows down, and turns up a dirt path. The truck makes it's way slowly up the dirt path, to the top of a very high hill.

HILLTOP

The hill overlooks the North Korean border with South Korea, several miles distant. FOUR NORTH KOREAN ARMY SOLDIERS get out of the truck. One of the soldiers has a pair of binoculars. He looks south through his binoculars, toward the border.

NORTH KOREAN SOLDIER'S P.O.V.

The soldier can plainly see American military forces moving along the border. Trucks, tanks, jeeps, Humm-v's, armored personnel carriers, even artillery pieces. He zooms in, as he spots an enemy American soldier looking back at him through binoculars of his own.

FULL SHOT HILLTOP

The four North Korean soldiers grab shovels from the back of their flatbed truck. They begin to dig a large hole, near the edge of the hilltop that is closest to the distant border.

INT. INWA OPERATIONS ROOM -- LATER

The International Nuclear Weapons Assessment team is busy at work, monitoring the data coming in from all over the world.

Maria is focused on the images from the Korean peninsula.

MARIA KNAPP

Kim. Can you take a look at the Sat B412 images and tell me what you think? Looks like that thing's stopped moving to me.

KIM WILLE (36), voluptuous, one of the INWA members, comes over to Maria's console and peers over Maria's shoulder.

KIM

Show me a time lapse from the last four hours.

The same images show up on both Maria's computer and the large wall screen. They show the same basic satellite image, with the ominous BLIP remaining stationary over the time lapse images. But that's the only thing that stays motionless.

Also visible on the images are armed forces movements, on both sides of the border. Both sides appear to be moving men and equipment closer to the border.

KIM

I'd say somebody is trying to start a war.

MARIA KNAPP

I hope those guys remember to think before they do something stupid.

KIM

Per-positioning an atomic bomb isn't exactly thinking with a rational mind.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM -- LATER

The national security team is back in the briefing room, with the President.

PRESIDENT

They've done what?

CIA DIRECTOR

My INWA team says it looks like they've per-positioned that device, about two miles north of the border.

The President looks directly at the Secretary of Defense, pointing a finger at the Secretary to emphasize his point.

PRESIDENT

You make damn sure your commanders in the field know that thing is out there.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

And we know the Korean President is crazy enough to use it, too.

PRESIDENT

Right. That s.o.b. is a lunatic. How he ever got that job is beyond me.

CIA DIRECTOR

He was elected, same as you were.

PRESIDENT

Bullshit. That wasn't a fair election. It was rigged, and everybody knows it.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Our boys know what they're up against. We can handle it.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

If they set that thing off, your men won't be able to handle anything. They'll be vaporized at that range.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We can handle it.

INT. LEE'S OFFICE

Lee is on the phone.

LEE THOMAS

Yes, operator. The INWA team offices. I know there's no answer there. Can you please connect me with their operations center? Yes. As I said, I'm Congressman Green's A.A., Lee Lee. I'm calling from Congressman Green's office. What do you mean, no calls accepted? No. No. No.

(MORE)

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

Thank you, operator, you've been most helpful.

Frustrated, Lee hangs up the phone. He sits there for a few seconds, staring at the phone. He turns his head slightly, and looks at MARIA'S PICTURE, in a frame on the corner of his desk.

EXT. LEE THOMAS'S DRIVEWAY -- EVENING

Lee pulls into his driveway, and slowly gets out of his SUV. Tired, he shuffles himself into his townhouse.

INT. LEE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lee enters. He closes the front door. He grabs a remote control and turns on his tv, tuned to the Fox News Channel. The station is in commercial break.

Lee checks his answering machine for messages.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(computer voice)

You have one message. Message one.

MARIA KNAPP (V.O.)

Hi Lee. I won't be home tonight.

That's all I can say for now.

I love you.

ANSWERING MACHINE

End of messages.

Lee opens his refrigerator door...and just stares blankly at the contents inside. After a few seconds, he closes the door. He walks slowly down the hallway, and disappears into a room.

The sound of RUNNING WATER is heard, coming from that room, the bathroom.

The tv resumes news programming. Unable to see the screen, we only hear the audio.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This is a Fox News breaking event.

DONNA FIDUCIA (V.O.)

Fox News. I'm Donna Fiducia.

This just in to the Fox News desk.

North Korean forces have crossed the border into South Korea, in what sources are calling a massive human wave attack.

Lee nearly runs out of the bathroom, into the living room, dressed in only his underwear. He has a towel draped around his neck.

On television, stock footage of military maneuvers is shown.

DONNA FIDUCIA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Initial estimates say more than 100,000 North Korean troops have crossed the border, clashing with combined forces from South Korea and U.S. forces patrolling the border area. Both sides sustained heavy casualties.

The television image changes to a head shot of the news reporter.

DONNA FIDUCIA (CONT'D)

We will continue to monitor this event, and we hope to bring you a live report from the area soon. Stay tuned to Fox News Channel.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This has been a Fox News special report.

LEE THOMAS

It's started.

EXT. KOREAN BATTLEFIELD -- DAY

A MONTAGE of images from the battlefield, showing heavy fighting.

The North Koreans advancing in massive human wave attacks. Small pockets of American soldiers returning fire, mowing down wave after wave of North Korean soldiers. Americans taking casualties. Artillery fire from both sides.

In one American foxhole, between bursts of gunfire, a soldier radios for help.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

(into radio)

They just keep coming. Wave after wave. We're running short on ammo. Request re-supply.

COMMANDER (V.O.)

(voice on radio)

Negative. Cannot re-supply at this time. Orders are to pull back to defensive positions.

AMERICAN SOLDIER

Roger. Out.
 (shouting to his
 comrades)
 C'mon, guys. We've been ordered to
 pull back.

Simultaneously, several American soldiers emerge from their foxholes, and stage a retreat backward, firing at the advancing North Korean forces as they pull back.

The American Commander's voice crackles over the radio.

COMMANDER (V.O.)
 All units. Pull back to defensive
 position Echo. I repeat, Echo.
 Let's let Arty earn his pay today.

The battlefield that was just vacated by the American forces begins to be overrun by North Korean forces.

The WHOMP WHOMP WHOMP of artillery shells being fired is heard. Seconds later, the battlefield erupts in explosions as the artillery shells burst on impact.

Bodies litter the smoking landscape.

A loud CHEER erupts from the American forces. Tasting victory, the Americans launch a counter-attack.

COMMANDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 OK men. That took the fight out of
 'em. Let's hit 'em back, hard.
 Make 'em know they just tried fucking
 with Uncle Sam and his boys.

The American forces launch their counter-offensive, as everything from foot soldiers to tanks and armored personnel carriers advance slowly but steadily northward. They run over enemy bodies en route, and even run right over enemy soldiers taking cover in fox holes.

The American forces advance, and cross the border, into North Korean territory.

Over the radio, one soldier asks a question of his commander.

ANONYMOUS SOLDIER (V.O.)
 We just crossed the border, Sir.
 How far we goin'?

COMMANDER (V.O.)
 Keep going until you're ordered to
 stop.

INT. INWA OPERATIONS ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The team is still monitoring satellite imagery from the Korean peninsula.

KIM

Our forces just crossed into North Korea.

MARIA KNAPP

Don't they know what's waiting for them?

KIM

Guess somebody didn't get the word in time.

MARIA KNAPP

Or they just don't care.

KIM

I'd care about an atomic bomb waiting to go off.

MARIA KNAPP

But you're not a general. Some of those guys think they're on a holy crusade of their own.

KIM

Why does everyone always think God is on their side?

EXT. KOREAN BATTLEFIELD -- CONTINUOUS

The American forces are advancing, more rapidly now. The North Korean forces are in full retreat.

COMMANDER (V.O.)

Pour it on, boys! We got 'em on the run now! Lookit those little commie bastards run!

The North Korean forces pull back. One squad splits off, and heads for the hilltop.

HILLTOP

In minutes, they're in position. They look out over the advancing American forces.

FULL SHOT KOREAN BATTLEFIELD

A FLASH of BRILLIANT WHITE LIGHT

Instantly, the battlefield is engulfed in an atomic blast. Men briefly turn to x-ray images of themselves, before being

vaporized. Vehicles, people, the land, everything is blown away.

A telltale mushroom cloud begins to rise over the battlefield.

INT. INWA OPERATIONS ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The BLIP of an image on the wall screen suddenly bursts into a much larger circle of white light.

MARIA KNAPP

Oh God!

KIM

They set it off. Those crazy bastards actually set it off.

Kim and Maria look at one another, dumbfounded. They both begin to cry.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The mood in the room is subdued.

CIA DIRECTOR

Mr. President. They set it off.

PRESIDENT

How bad did we get hit?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Not as bad as it could have been, Mr. President. We estimate our losses at about 12,000.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

12,000 men vaporized in an instant. And you said you could handle it?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We still have over 20,000 men on the Korean peninsula. They're ready to go, Mr. President, just give the word. We'll march right into Pyongyang and

PRESIDENT

No. We are not going to try to overrun North Korea with 20,000 men.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President

PRESIDENT

No.

An uncomfortable moment of silence.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

You know, we do have a couple weapons of our own. We could use 'em, instead of just letting them sit around.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Are you suggesting nuclear retaliation?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes I am.

PRESIDENT

No. I won't order that. No.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

But Mr. President...

PRESIDENT

I said no. No.

INT. SMALL HOUSE, MIDDLE EAST TOWN -- DAY

Our Middle Eastern terrorists are quite happy.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2

12,000 infidels vaporized. Allah will be pleased.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1

That is only a taste of what the American dogs are in for. The time has arrived. Send word to our agents. The winds of Mohammed shall blow.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2

The winds of Mohammed shall blow!

INT. RICK DEAN'S CONDO -- DAY

Rick comes home and checks his answering machine. A voice with a thick accent tells him

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #2 (V.O.)

The winds of Mohammed shall blow.

RICK DEAN

The winds of Mohammed shall blow. Allah be praised.

INT. LEE THOMAS'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Lee and Maria are laying on the ouch together. In the background, an old movie, Dr. Strangelove, is playing on the tv.

MARIA KNAPP

I don't know about you, but I've had a long week. These last three days have been a nightmare.

LEE THOMAS

No argument here. That Korean incident has this whole town going batty these days.

MARIA KNAPP

Korean "incident?" Lee, they set off an atomic bomb and killed 12,000 Americans.

LEE THOMAS

I'm just glad they did it over there, and not here.

MARIA KNAPP

Always seeing the bright side, huh?

LEE THOMAS

Whenever possible, yes.

MARIA KNAPP

And how did you remember Dr. Strangelove was my favorite movie?

LEE THOMAS

I remember everything you tell me. Your favorite color is blue, the deep blue of the Caribbean. Your favorite flavor is chocolate.

MARIA KNAPP

That's not a hard one to remember. I think most women would tell you that one.

LEE THOMAS

You liked it in Wisconsin, but not the winters. And even though I love going to Disney World, you still don't appreciate it. You just come with to enjoy the Florida sun. And the ocean when we go to Cocoa Beach.

MARIA KNAPP

Speaking of Cocoa Beach...

She gives Lee a mischievous look.

LEE THOMAS

Oh, you're a bad girl.

Maria gets up, and reaches her hand toward Lee.

MARIA KNAPP

Care to join me?

LEE THOMAS

You don't have to ask me twice.

Lee playfully chases maria down the hallway. On the tv, Slim Pickens is riding his ICBM to earth.

INT. LEE'S BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

There is a large hot tub in the corner of the bathroom. Lee and Maria are relaxing in the tub, as the water and soap suds bubble around them.

MARIA KNAPP

Mmm, this is nice.

LEE THOMAS

I'm glad you like it.

MARIA KNAPP

I like this, too.

Maria begins to get playful.

LEE THOMAS

You do, huh? Two can play at that game.

Maria and Lee start to splash around in the hot tub, as they tickle and tease one another. It doesn't take long before they are making love in the bubbling water.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM -- MORNING

The national security team has a new problem this morning.

PRESIDENT

Okay. What's so God damned important that we had to come in at 5 a.m.?

CIA DIRECTOR

Mr. President, please listen to this.

The CIA director plays an audio tape.

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1 (V.O.)

I am the Messenger of Mohammed. The United States infidels continue to spread their reign of terror throughout the Islamic world. They insist on establishing colonies in the Middle East, colonies that practice their unholy lifestyles in direct defiance of Allah's strict

(MORE)

NEFARIOUS-LOOKING MAN #1 (V.O.) (CONT'D)

commandments.

The corrupt American lifestyle is corrupting our women and condemning our children to the fiery depths of Hell for all eternity.

Our warnings to the United States to halt their aggression in the region have gone unheeded for too many years. Now, we are forced to defend ourselves, our way of life, our very souls.

We issue this last warning.

America must withdraw completely from all activities in Muslim lands. America must recall it's military forces at once. All American businesses must cease their corrupting activities in Muslim lands.

Heed my words.

The Federation of Islamic Republics will not sit idly by while America continues it's hostile actions in the region. Withdraw your forces from our lands, or we will be forced to strike you with a force 1,000 times greater than that which we used to destroy your monuments to capitalism. The winds of Mohammed shall blow, and you shall know the word of Allah. Allah akbar.

The CIA director shuts off the tape.

PRESIDENT

Explain that.

CIA DIRECTOR

That tape was broadcast over Al Jazeera television six hours ago.

PRESIDENT

Any idea where it came from?

CIA DIRECTOR

This appears to be a new group. This Messenger of Mohammed sounds like the same voice that claimed credit for the original attack on the Trade Center in '93.

PRESIDENT

What about this, what did he call it, the Federation of Islamic Republics?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

It would appear that there is some sort of alliance forming between ten predominantly Muslim countries, five in the Middle East and five former Soviet Republics.

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Oman, Yemen, and the Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan.

PRESIDENT

Why does every country over there have to call itself something-istan? Do we have a map of the area?

The Secretary of Defense unrolls a large map on the table. The named countries are highlighted.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We've outlined the countries on this map, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

Have we contacted the ambassadors of these countries?

CIA DIRECTOR

The Secretary of State was notified of this a few hours ago. He is in the process of contacting the last of the ambassadors. So far, they have all denied knowledge of any new alliance or federation.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

They claim they've never heard of this Messenger of Mohammed fellow. Personally, I don't trust the lying sons of bitches.

PRESIDENT

That's why I didn't pick you for State. What was that last thing the message said, something about winds of Mohammed. What do you make of that?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

We...think they might be referring to nuclear.

PRESIDENT

What? You mean they might have a bomb?

CIA DIRECTOR

It...might be a possibility, Sir.

PRESIDENT

Can we detect something like that?
What about delivery systems? I
suppose they have that, too?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President. The Koreans showed
us what they could do without a
delivery system.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

If they tried that here my men would

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Your men would meet with the same
fate here as they did in Korea.
Along with innocent civilians, too.

PRESIDENT

Could we detect it if they had one?

The question hangs in the air, for what seems like an
eternity.

CIA DIRECTOR

The best I can say is maybe.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Mr. President. The armed forces of
the United States stand ready to
defend this country, no matter what
the cost.

PRESIDENT

I just pray the cost won't be too
high.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Freedom is never free, Mr. President.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Would you please stop with the
recruiting rhetoric.

PRESIDENT

Will you two please stop your little
feud. God, you're worse than my
kids.

NATIONAL SECURITY
ADVISOR

I will if he will.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I will if she will.

The President just looks at them, sternly, and shakes his head.

PRESIDENT

Let our people know, we are not withdrawing any troops from any deployments. America has given her word to stand for Liberty throughout the world. We will not break that promise. America does not bow to threats.

INT. LEE'S OFFICE -- AFTERNOON

Lee is typing on his computer. Brenda appears in the doorway.

BRENDA

Are you working on Mark's floor speech for tomorrow?

LEE THOMAS

Yeah. What's another word for allegiance?

BRENDA

Steadfastness. Fidelity. Loyalty.

LEE THOMAS

Loyalty works. Thanks.

BRENDA

Lee. Do you think that message from that terrorist was real? They couldn't really hit us with a nuclear bomb, could they?

LEE THOMAS

Well, it's possible, I guess. We don't have the space shield working yet, so a missile could get through.

BRENDA

But I thought the latest intel says they don't have missile technology?

LEE THOMAS

That's right. You been reading classified reports again, Brenda?

BRENDA

A gal's gotta do something to keep busy around here. But what about those suitcase nukes? Can't they just smuggle one of them in and set it off?

LEE THOMAS

You've been watching too many movies again. The likelihood of that happening is remote, at best.

BRENDA

So I shouldn't worry about it?

LEE THOMAS

What's there to worry about? If it hits, you won't have anything to worry about. We'll all be vaporized in a millisecond. No time to worry.

Brenda is truly relieved. She comes over and gives Lee a big hug.

BRENDA

Oh, thank you. I was so worried.

Brenda steps back.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I'll sleep much better tonight, knowing that.

LEE THOMAS

After that hug, I'm not sure I'll be able to sleep tonight.

BRENDA

Like I told you before, I'll be happy to come over any time.

LEE THOMAS

I don't think Maria would appreciate that.

With a sheepish grin

LEE THOMAS (CONT'D)

But I'll ask her.

BRENDA

Do that.
You going to watch the President's address tonight?

LEE THOMAS

Yeah. It's part of the job.

BRENDA

I'm curious to hear what he's going to say about that tape from Al Jazeera

LEE THOMAS

I thought you were reading the briefings. He's said we're not pulling out, not backing down anywhere.

BRENDA

Good. I never liked it when America tucked her tail between her legs and went home early, before the fight was finished.

LEE THOMAS

I think a lot of people share your sentiments.

BRENDA

Back to work. See you later.

Brenda leaves. Lee resumes his typing.

LEE THOMAS

Let's see.
...we must not fear. We must not falter. We must not fail.

INT. LEE THOMAS'S TOWNHOUSE, LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Lee and Maria are laying on the couch, snuggled in one another's arms. The tv is on, but muted.

MARIA KNAPP

And how was your day? Anything fun happen at the office?

LEE THOMAS

Well...now that you mentioned it...

MARIA KNAPP

Yes? What?

LEE THOMAS

Brenda was feeling kind of scared. Worried. I told her not to worry about anything. She came over and gave me a big hug.

MARIA KNAPP

I'll bet you loved that. I always thought you two had something going on.

LEE THOMAS

Oh, we flirt back and forth all the time. But we've never acted on it.

MARIA KNAPP

Would you want to?

LEE THOMAS

No. Well, maybe. If I didn't have you.

MARIA KNAPP

Maybe you should invite her over some evening.

LEE THOMAS

Are you serious?

MARIA KNAPP

Sure. Why not. I think it would be fun. She's a beautiful woman.

LEE THOMAS

No arguments there. Really?

MARIA KNAPP

Sure. She can cook, right?

LEE THOMAS

I don't think she ever has to do much cooking. Okay. I'll see what she thinks of it. Just for dinner, right?

MARIA KNAPP

Dinner? Right. Just dinner.

LEE THOMAS

You know, you are a naughty woman, Maria.

MARIA KNAPP

Hee hee hee. I know.

LEE THOMAS

Shhh. The President's coming on.

Lee points the remote at the tv. The audio comes up.

FULL SHOT TELEVISION IMAGE

The Presidential Seal fills the screen. It is replaced by a shot of the Presidential podium.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

The President takes his place at the podium.

PRESIDENT

Good evening.

Thirty days ago, American armed forces, while defending the Liberty of the Republic of Korea, were savagely and deliberately attacked by forces from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This attack by the North Koreans was successfully repelled, but the price we paid was the loss of some 12,000 of our brave young men and women.

The North Koreans detonated a small atomic device, two miles inside their own border, in a cowardly display of their government's disregard for human life. We are pursuing every means of Justice for that cowardly act, and we will see Justice served.

Two weeks ago, the self-proclaimed Messenger of Mohammed broadcast a message on Al Jazeera television, threatening to strike the United States if we did not withdraw our armed forces from the Middle East.

Let me assure you, the American People, we have no intention of doing that. America does not bow to threats.

My national security team has assured me that America's defensive capacity is more than ready and able to defend us against any such threats.

Please join me tonight, and pray for the safety of our men and women in uniform, the men and women who stand ready to defend us from evil.

America will not bow to terrorist threats. America has given her word to stand for Liberty throughout the world. We will not break that promise.

LEE'S LIVING ROOM -- PREVIOUS SCENE

LEE THOMAS

I think we're going to be putting in some long days at work from now on. I hear he says he's taking the kid gloves off next time.

MARIA KNAPP

Guess we better enjoy our time away from the office then.

LEE THOMAS

You just can't get enough, can you?

MARIA KNAPP

What can I say?

LEE THOMAS

C'mere, you.

INT. RICK DEAN'S CONDO -- MORNING

Rick is kneeling on his prayer mat, chanting his morning devotions.

When he is finished, he gets up, and carefully rolls up his mat and puts the mat away in a corner, Rick then gets himself a glass of water. He drinks the water, then notices a PICTURE on his counter. The picture is of an elderly woman.

A tear runs down Rick's cheek.

RICK DEAN

Forgive me, Mother. I must obey the will of Allah.

EXT. RICK DEAN'S CONDO -- MOMENTS LATER

Rick walks out of his condo, carrying something large in his arms. The object is wrapped in a beach towel. When Rick reaches his parked Mustang, he sets the object down, while he opens his trunk.

A gust of wind blows the towel aside, revealing a device that seems to be an atomic bomb, the same bomb that was assembled by the Middle Eastern terrorists in Yemen.

Rick quickly grabs the towel, and covers the bomb. He loads it into his trunk, and closes the trunk lid. Rick climbs into his Mustang, backs out of his driveway, and heads down the road.

EXT. LONG BEACH AIRPORT -- LATER

Rick stops at the security gate. A SECURITY OFFICER recognizes him.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD

Morning, Mr. Dean. Fine morning for a flight.

RICK DEAN

It certainly is, John.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD

Just need to sign you in.

The security guard hands Rick a clipboard, with official papers. Rick signs the top paper, and hands the clipboard back to the security officer.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD

Thank you, Mr. Dean. You have a safe flight.

RICK DEAN

Will do, John. Thanks.

AIRPORT SECURITY GUARD

See you later.

Rick drives past the security gate, and pulls right up next to his parked plane.

Rick gets out of his Mustang, and opens the trunk. He loads the towel-covered bomb into his plane, and closes the trunk lid of his car. He takes a minute to put the top up on his car, and roll up all the windows. He locks his car, and climbs into his plane.

INT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

Rick starts the plane's engine. He goes through the safety check list, then revs the throttle.

EXT. LONG BEACH AIRPORT

Rick's plane taxis out to the runway. He calls the control tower for clearance.

INT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

RICK DEAN

Daugherty Field, this is Cessna 9200, requesting clearance.

CONTROL TOWER (V.O.)

Roger Cessna 9200. You taking another pleasure cruise around the area, Rick?

RICK DEAN

Roger, control. How's traffic today.

CONTROL TOWER (V.O.)

Kinda heavy, Rick. Be sure to watch your altitude and location up there today.

RICK DEAN

Roger. Will observe the 10,000 foot rule.

CONTROL TOWER (V.O.)

Cessna 9200, you are clear for take-off. Runway 12/30. Have a good flight, Rick.

RICK DEAN
Runway 12/30. Roger control.

EXT. LONG BEACH AIRPORT

Rick's plane taxis down the runway. Within seconds, he's airborne.

EXT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

Rick flies his usual route. He heads east, toward Disneyland. Using the castle as his reference point, Rick banks the plane left, and heads northwest.

Rick follows his usual route, banking left again once he's reached the Studio City area. Only this time, he doesn't go all the way to the coast. He turns south, staying inland as he flies southward.

INT. RICK'S AIRPLANE

He sets the auto pilot.

RICK DEAN
Altimeter 5,000 feet. Course 180
degrees.

Rick activates the auto pilot, and climbs into the rear of the plane. There he goes about arming the bomb. He sets the timer for 30 seconds. He activates it, and it begins to count down. 30. 29. 28. 27.

Rick climbs back into the pilot's seat, and turns off the auto pilot.

RICK DEAN
Allah akbar. Allah akbar. Allah
akbar. Allah akbar....

EXT. LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

An elderly couple is cruising slowly down the street in their antique 1950 convertible. They have an oldies radio station tuned in, listening to the

Song: We'll Meet Again by Vera Lynn, from 1939.

Rick's plane can be seen in the sky overhead. Seconds later, it turns into a flash of brilliant white light, as the nuclear bomb onboard detonates over the skies of Los Angeles.

The elderly couple momentarily turns into an x-ray image of themselves, before they are vaporized, along with more than a million of their Los Angeles neighbors.

EXT. LOS ANGELES SKYLINE -- CONTINUOUS

A telltale mushroom cloud begins to rise over the still boiling landscape that seconds earlier was downtown Los Angeles.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM -- LATER

A somber mood clouds the room.

PRESIDENT

They hit Los Angeles.

CIA DIRECTOR

We've received another tape.

PRESIDENT

Oh, good. What's on this one?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

They claim to have planted similar nuclear devices in five additional U.S. cities.

PRESIDENT

Where?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

New York, Washington, Boston, Seattle, and Chicago.

PRESIDENT

Do we have confirmation?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Now that we know where to look, we can detect them, yes.

PRESIDENT

But do we have confirmation?

CIA DIRECTOR

My people are already working on it. We think we've already located three of them.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

And that information is being coordinated with our people in the field. We have teams on their way to all five cities.

PRESIDENT

What about Los Angeles?

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President, there's nothing we can do for Los Angeles. That explosion leveled most of the downtown area, and the radiation either has or will kill everything within a forty mile radius. The fallout downwind will kill thousands more in the next few weeks, or months.

PRESIDENT

I suppose a declaration of national emergency is in order. We'll also declare the entire Southern California area a disaster area, make it eligible for federal financial assistance.

CIA DIRECTOR

Mr. President, there'll be no one left there to file for federal assistance.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Even if they could, out Los Angeles offices were destroyed. There's no one to certify the paperwork requirements, either.

PRESIDENT

We have to do something to help.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Mr. President, there's nothing that can be done for Los Angeles.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

We better focus our attention on those five cities.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

What about evacuation?

PRESIDENT

Evacuate? To where? Do you think all those people, all trying to get out at the same time, would be able to? The traffic jams would trap more than they would save. No, we will concentrate our efforts on finding those five bombs, and neutralizing them before it's too late.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

I hope you're right, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

If you believe in God, start praying.

EXT. CONSTITUTION AVENUE, WASHINGTON DC -- DAY

A large DELIVERY VAN is parked along the side of the street. Suddenly, federal agents are swarming around the van. Hand held geiger counters are going off. The federal agent leading this team alerts his supervisor by radio.

FEDERAL AGENT

Blue team leader to base. We found the item. Preparing to assess and neutralize.

FEDERAL SUPERVISOR (O.S.)

(over the radio)

Roger. Use extreme caution.

FEDERAL AGENT

(to himself)

No shit, Sherlock.

(to his team)

The Boss says we should use caution. Remember that.

The agents open the rear doors of the van. There is a large wooden crate inside. On the side of the crate is the word BALTIMORE stenciled in large black letters.

INT. INSIDE THE BACK OF THE DELIVERY VAN

The agents use a crowbar to pry off the crate's lid. Then they pry away the sides of the crate, revealing another nuclear bomb, with the timer counting down, from 588. 587. 586.

As the timer continues it's countdown, one agent carries a small toolbox to the van and climbs inside. Once inside, the agent opens the toolbox and takes out a small wire cutter.

ANGLE ON THE BOMB

The agent reaches for a wire on the bomb. He positions the wire cutter, and hesitates. He cuts the wire, and the timer counts backward even faster. 32. 31. 30. 29. The countdown is accelerating.

In near desperation, the agent prepares to cut another wire. But which one? The agent moves the wire cutter from one wire to the next, positioned, but does not cut. 12. 11. 10. 9.

In one final motion, the agent selects a wire, hesitates, and cuts it.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM -- LATER

The Secretary of Defense is talking on his cell phone.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Right. You got 'em all then? All five? Good job. Tell your people well done.

He hangs up the cell phone.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (CONT'D)

Mr. President, we got 'em all. All five nuclear bombs have been found, and neutralized.

PRESIDENT

Thank God. Good work. By God, good work.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

What now, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

Now? Now we show these bastards and the rest of the world the price they will pay for fucking with the United States of America.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

It's about goddamned time, too.

PRESIDENT

Take it easy. I want to coordinate this with our allies. And a few of our enemies, too. Mr. Secretary, we do know who's responsible, correct?

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Yes, we did trace the original device through that damn country.

CIA DIRECTOR

We better let Russia and China know. And India and Pakistan, too.

PRESIDENT

I want to personally speak with the leaders of the rest of the nuclear nations. They must know the United States is not launching an attack on them. I want this to be a contained response. This will not escalate out of control. But know this.

(MORE)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

I'm taking the kid gloves off. Now that we know the country responsible, tell our people to get out. All the way out.

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL -- 1 WEEK LATER

The United States Ambassador is addressing the assembled dignitaries from the world community.

U.S. AMBASSADOR

I want to assure my fellow delegates and the rest of the world that the United States is not engaging in another nuclear arms buildup. I think we all learned our lessons during the Cold War. I know my colleague from Russia shares my position, as does my colleague from China on this matter. The United States will find the criminals who attacked Los Angeles. We will find them, and we will bring them to justice.

I would also like to announce that I wish to meet privately with the Ministers from the following countries immediately after I finish here today. Iran, Iraq, Syria, Oman, Yemen, and the Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Azerbaijan.

INT. UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR -- MOMENTS LATER

The Ministers from the ten nations arrive at the office of the U.S. Ambassador.

U.S. AMBASSADOR

Gentlemen. Come in, come in.

The Ministers enter the office.

U.S. AMBASSADOR (CONT'D)

My President has asked me to extend a personal invitation to each of you, to join the President aboard Air Force One, for a tour of the United States. If you are agreeable, we will leave in a few minutes.

The Ministers are puzzled by this offer, but eagerly accept, nodding their heads in agreement.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, AIR FORCE ONE -- DAY

A line of black limousines arrives at the base, and are escorted almost right up to Air Force One.

The Ministers get out of their limousines, and board Air Force One.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE -- CONTINUOUS

The President is onboard, and greets his guests.

PRESIDENT

Gentlemen. Welcome aboard. I am so glad you were able to make it on such short notice. If you'll take your seats, we will be airborne shortly.

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE, AIR FORCE ONE

Air Force One begins to taxi away. It thunders down the runway, and is airborne in seconds.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE -- LATER

The plane flies across America. Occasionally a Minister or two looks out the windows, to see some of America's natural wonders.

Over the intercom, the

Song: God Bless America by Ray Charles is playing.

They cross the Appalachians. They cross the Mississippi. They cross the Rockies. They fly over the Grand canyon.

Minutes later, they are flying over the devastated landscape that once was Los Angeles. The plane circles, giving the passengers a good view of the devastation.

PRESIDENT

I wanted you Gentlemen to see just what has happened to my country. We have been attacked. And now we are planning our retaliation.

The plane continues it's westward flight, crossing the Pacific.

Hours later, Air Force One approaches the Korean coastline. The plane again circles a devastated landscape, so that the passengers can get a good look.

PRESIDENT

That, Gentlemen, is what remains of the Korean de-militarized zone.

Air Force One again turns westward, and flies over the Indian Ocean. Soon, another land mass appears on the horizon.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Ambassador. Do you recognize your country below?

ONE OF THE MINISTERS

Yes, Mr. President. I recognize it. That is my country below.

The President looks the Ambassador directly in the eye.

PRESIDENT

Good. I wanted you to be here to see this, to witness it first hand. Gentlemen, my country has learned that the Ambassador's country was instrumental in the attacks on the United States. His country facilitated the purchase of the weapons on the black market. They arranged to smuggle the weapons into the United States. And they gave safe harbor to the criminal terrorists who planned and coordinated the attacks.

And now, you will be here to witness first hand the penalty the Ambassador's country will now pay for their cowardly attacks on the United States of America.

The President opens a locked briefcase. He removes a sealed FLAT PLASTIC PACKAGE, and breaks it open. The President removes a CARD from the package, and reads the card.

The President then takes a seat at a control panel. He keys a microphone.

PRESIDENT

This is Golden Eagle. We are in position. Red Baron X-ray Yalu. Gloves off. Gloves off. Authentication 5-4-2-9-8-7-2. Execute.

The President sits back in his chair.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, I would advise you to find a pair of sunglasses. In four minutes it's going to get pretty bright up here.

In the background, the

Song: Courtesy of the Red, White & Blue by Toby Keith

Begins to play

OUT THE WINDOW OF AIR FORCE ONE -- FOUR MINUTES LATER

Slow motion

The country visible in the distance is turned into a boiling cauldron of fire and smoke, as six nearly simultaneous NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS reduce the country's major cities to ashes.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE

The President looks at the shocked Ministers, and informs them

PRESIDENT

Nobody fucks the United States and
gets away with it!

OUT THE WINDOW OF AIR FORCE ONE

Six nuclear mushroom clouds continue to boil and rise high into the atmosphere.

FADE OUT: