

A HOUSE OF DYNAMITE

Written by

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BLACK SCREEN

SUPER:

AT THE END OF THE COLD WAR, GLOBAL POWERS REACHED THE
CONSENSUS THAT THE WORLD WOULD BE BETTER OFF WITH FEWER
NUCLEAR WEAPONS. THAT ERA IS NOW OVER.

FADE OUT.

SUPER:

INCLINATION IS FLATTENING

FADE IN:

1

EXT. FT. GREELY MILITARY BASE - FT. GREELY, ALASKA - NIGHT

120 miles south of the Arctic Circle. Gusting winds sweep a frozen tundra in the shadow of jagged, snow-covered mountains. Ringed by a barbed wire fence and halogen lights - a cluster of concrete buildings and white radar domes.

SUPER: **49th Missile Defense Battalion | Fort Greely, Alaska**

MAJOR DANIEL GONZALEZ (36) huddles in a doorway, shielding his phone from the howling -

MAJ. GONZALEZ (INTO PHONE)
I'm not trying to start problems
with you. I'm just saying -

The woman on the other end interrupts him. We don't hear her clearly, but her tone is annoyed. So is his.

MAJ. GONZALEZ (CONT'D)
All you had to do was wait six
months, and I would've been there
to help you.

A long silence. OVER THE PHONE - a ROOSTER crows. Wherever the woman is, it's morning already.

MAJ. GONZALEZ (CONT'D)
I-I gotta go. Listen, tomorrow we
can...we can figure this out. We
can handle this whole situation -

But she's not impressed.

MAJ. GONZALEZ (CONT'D)

Hello?
 (beat)
 Hello?

But she's already hung up. A beat.

Shivering, he gazes up at the moon in the clear sky, then heads inside.

CUT TO:

2

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

2

Five soldiers sit side-by-side, in combat fatigues and headsets, facing a bank of monitors.

Above them hang the seals of: The United States Army. The Alaska National Guard. The Missile Defense Agency.

And the 100th Missile Defense Brigade.

Maj. Gonzalez's Fire Direction Team is an hour into their shift. Right of center - **CAPTAIN WILL KAGAN (29)**, his second-in-command, and **SERGEANT ALI JONES (23)**. To the left - **SERGEANT MARY NOLAN (24)** and **LIEUTENANT DAN BUCK (25)**.

The clatter of keyboards as the grunts work quietly. Punctuated by the CRUNCH of Cpt. Kagan eating a bag of CHIPS.

CPT. KAGAN
 Sergeant, you didn't get my email?

SGT. NOLAN
 No, sir.

Cpt. Kagan jots a note on a PAD OF PAPER.

CPT. KAGAN
 Well, there's an update from the top...

SGT. NOLAN
 Yeah. He's coming in right now.

CPT. KAGAN
 ...For today, of the utmost importance.

He holds up the pad: HAVE A NICE DAY =)

CPT. KAGAN (CONT'D)
(with a smile)
That's an order.

A small laugh.

SGT. NOLAN
Alright, sir. Think you'll keep
making that joke every three weeks?

CPT. KAGAN
If you keep smiling, I'll keep
making it.

Maj. Gonzalez enters and eyes Cpt. Kagan. Annoyed -

MAJ. GONZALEZ
You know - regs say no food or
drink.

Cpt. Kagan holds out the bag -

CPT. KAGAN
You want one, just ask.

But Maj. Gonzalez isn't joking. He grabs the bag and tosses
it.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
Breaks are every four hours. Next
time, you can wait.

CPT. KAGAN
(confused)
What's up your-

MAJ. GONZALEZ
-And clean up your workstation.
It's covered in grease and chips
and shit.

As Maj. Gonzalez takes his seat in the center chair -

CPT. KAGAN
Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - WALKER RESIDENCE - ALEXANDRIA, VA - NIGHT

An armada of space ships painted over a child's empty bed. On the floor -- **CAPTAIN OLIVIA WALKER (39)**, in pajamas, cradles her son, **LIAM (3)**, surrounded by little toys. She rests her cheek on his sweaty forehead - still warm to the touch.

CPT. WALKER

Look at the dinosaur coming in the way.

Cpt. Walker places a tiny TOY DINOSAUR onto the track of a toy train set. The toy train CHOO-CHOOs into frame.

BEN (O.S.)

Guys, guys, guys.

Her husband, BEN, stands in the doorway.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's 3:30 in the morning.

Cpt. Walker turns off the train set.

CPT. WALKER

I'm sorry. Hi.

BEN

Hi.

(to Liam)

How you feeling, conductor?

(to Cpt. Walker)

How's he doing?

CPT. WALKER

Fever's gone up to 102.

BEN

Oh, gosh. Come on, buddy, let's get some shut-eye.

Cpt. Walker hands Liam over to Ben.

CPT. WALKER

Here we go. Go to Daddy. I love you. Okay. I love you. Mommy's got her phone.

Liam hands her the toy dinosaur.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

Oh, I can have him? He's with me today?

LIAM

Mmmhmm.

CPT. WALKER

Thank you.

Cpt. Walker kisses the dinosaur and then kisses Ben.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

(to Liam)

I love you.

(to Ben)

I love you.

As Cpt. Walker heads out -

BEN

(noting her pajamas)

You wearing that to the White House?

CPT. WALKER

Yeah, it's, uh, casual Friday today.

BEN

Thought so.

And with a loving smirk -

CPT. WALKER

Goodbye.

CUT TO:

4

I/E. BUS - WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

4

The *hiss* of hydraulics as a bus pulls away from the curb. A sprinkling of overnight shift WORKERS nod off on their commute home. A HOMELESS MAN is sprawled out in back.

SENIOR CHIEF PETTY OFFICER WILLIAM DAVIS (27) sits alone and apart. AirPods in, head high, erect posture.

ON HIS IPHONE - the time reads: **4:03AM**. The phone's background: A GIRL playfully blowing a kiss at the camera.

SCPO Davis quickly SWIPES through a series of pics: The same Girl, posing with him on a beach. On horseback. Over a candle-lit dinner table.

The bus turns a corner. Out the window - the Washington Monument framed against the pre-dawn sky.

CUT TO:

5 INT. SECURITY KIOSK - WHITE HOUSE - DAWN 5

Cpt. Walker slips off sneakers for heels. Then puts her bag on the x-ray machine and walks through the magnetometer.

She slips on a heel and feels something press against her foot. She reaches down and digs out Liam's dinosaur.

A small smile as she steps through the turnstile.

CUT TO:

6 INT. WEST BASEMENT - THE WHITE HOUSE 6

Cpt. Walker descends a staircase, past an empty maître d' stand, to -

7 INT. NAVY MESS - WHITE HOUSE 7

- a small, formal dining room, where oil paintings of 19th Century Naval Vessels line the mahogany walls. All the tables - set with "White House Mess" china - sit empty. But there's a short line at a walk-up window.

A man we'll meet much later - **KEN CHO (42)**, Special Agent in Charge (SAIC) of the Presidential Protective Detail - grabs a cardboard take-out box from the chef, **WINSTON (63)** -

SAIC CHO

Thanks, Winston.

(then)

Morning, Captain.

- and walks past Cpt. Walker. In front of her in line is **ABBY JANSING (25)** - bright-eyed, pep in her step.

ABBY

Egg white omelet, please!

Winston nods, mildly annoyed, and looks past her to Cpt. Walker -

WINSTON

Usual?

CPT. WALKER

Thanks.

Abby smiles, friendly. Cpt. Walker clocks the PRESS ID hanging around her neck.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

When'd you start?

ABBY

A week ago. How'd you-

CPT. WALKER

(with a friendly smile)

-Egg sandwich or oatmeal. Anything else holds up the line.

Winston reaches past Abby to hand Cpt. Walker a premade, foil-wrapped sandwich. Cpt. Walker leaves Abby, still waiting, and crosses the hall -

8

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY - SITUATION ROOM - WHITE HOUSE

8

- where a WATCH OFFICER sits under a massive Presidential Seal, etched in slate gray marble.

This is the nerve center of the White House - The Situation Room.

Cpt. Walker opens a wooden cabinet next to the entrance. Inside are locked, numbered DRAWERS.

She takes out her phone and types: "Text after doc. Kiss Liam <3"

Then she locks her phone in a drawer and pockets the KEY.

9

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

9

Three rows of adjustable, standing desks face a massive wall of MONITORS. The desks are manned by **DUTY OFFICERS** from every MILITARY BRANCH and SPY AGENCY, along with DOD, STATE, and HOMELAND SECURITY.

On the WALL MONITORS: DRONE, SATELLITE and SURVEILLANCE.

VIDEO, MAPS of the world, a CABLE NEWS network, and even SOCIAL MEDIA feeds, stream non-stop.

CLOCKS read out the time in: LONDON, TEL AVIV, TEHRAN, MOSCOW, BEIJING, and "POTUS", which is: **4:47:12 AM.**

Our ALERT STATUS is: **DEFCON 4**

At every desk, NIGHT and DAY SHIFT DUTY OFFICERS swap places -

DUTY OFFICERS

They say when?/I left word but try
again in an hour/Draft's in your
inbox/Six miles in the park/You're
fucking nuts...

Cpt. Walker finds her station on the Floor, where a placard
IDs her as: "Senior Operations Officer".

Her overnight mirror, **COLONEL GREG MARSHALL**, gathers his
things and reports -

COL. MARSHALL

Quiet night...

CPT. WALKER

For you, maybe.

COL. MARSHALL

You're kidding. Little guy again?

SUPER: The White House Situation Room | Washington, DC

CPT. WALKER

Bad run of luck. He'll be fine.

COL. MARSHALL

PLA exercise in an hour.

CPT. WALKER

(surprised)

I thought they'd call it off. Try
to lower the temperature.

Col. Marshall shrugs.

COL. MARSHALL

I guess they like it hot.

CPT. WALKER

Anything from Pyongyang?

COL. MARSHALL

Nothing since the last test.

CPT. WALKER

Saber rattling or silence. Not sure
which worries me more.

COL. MARSHALL
Well, add to it...NSA is itchy
about an uptick in chatter between
Tehran and their proxies. They want
it flagged in the Morning Book.

CPT. WALKER
Consider their asses covered.

And now she notices -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
And that is...

Col. Marshall follows her gaze to one of the Monitors:
Somewhere still dark, a RAGING WILD FIRE.

COL. MARSHALL
Butte County. Over 100,000 homes at
risk.

Suddenly, the image flickers. Before she can ask -

COL. MARSHALL (CONT'D)
It's not the feed. Same monitor was
acting up yesterday. We called
Systems.
(beat)
See you, Olivia. Hope the boy feels
better.

Col. Marshall heads out, and now Cpt. Walker turns to the man
settling in next to her --

CPT. WALKER
Petty Officer Davis.

- SCPO Davis, who we met on the bus.

SCPO DAVIS
Mornin, ma'am.

CPT. WALKER
Status update?

SCPO DAVIS
On...

CPT. WALKER
Operation Don't Fuck This Up.

SCPO Davis smiles.

SCPO DAVIS
Picking up the ring tonight.

CPT. WALKER
Bravo Zulu, sailor. Took you long
enough.

Then she shouts to address the room -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
Alright, everyone - the Book pushes
in two hours. Let's get to it.

CUT TO:

10 **EXT. C STREET/NATIONAL MALL - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY** 10

The sun is now up, the world come to life.

TOURISTS, FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, FOOD and SOUVENIR VENDORS crowd
the sidewalks lining the Mall.

CATHY ROGERS (40) steps out of the Metro escalator, in a
hurry, phone to her ear -

CATHY (INTO PHONE)
He says the prenup is 'ironclad'.
That's the word he used...

She rounds the corner down C Street -

CATHY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
(CONT'D)
I know... I know... Well, of course
not...

And enters-

11 **INT. LOBBY - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC** 11

-- the lobby of FEMA headquarters ...

CATHY (INTO PHONE)
Well, I don't have time to find
another lawyer. Not if I wanna keep
my job...

**SUPER: FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
Washington, DC**

CUT TO:

12

INT. CNN CUBICLE - BRIEFING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE

12

Abby sits in a closet-sized cubicle, her egg white omelet half-eaten on her desk. She presents to a Conference Call -

ABBY (INTO PHONE)
That's right, it's a light schedule today. At 0930, the President visits a WNBA clinic for kids. Then the signing of the Defense Omnibus Bill with Hill leaders in the Roosevelt Room - we're pool for that - and then three hours of "Executive Time"...

Chuckles from those listening -

ABBY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
The new Irish Ambassador is expected to stop by around 1600, so there may be an Oval spray. After that, it's a full lid.

SUPER: The Press Briefing Room | The White House

MADELEINE (OVER PHONE)
Thanks, Abby. Courtney's source at the UN says the White House may push for more sanctions on Moscow?

Abby hesitates, embarrassed she doesn't know this -

ABBY (INTO PHONE)
Haven't heard that yet. But I'll ask around.

CUT TO:

13

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

13

Maj. Gonzalez's crew at work at their stations when a gentle PING interrupts them.

SGT. JONES
(surprised)
We got a Quick Alert, sir.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
From where?

SGT. JONES
 Pacific.
 (beat)
 Track on scope...

Maj. Gonzalez refocuses on his screen, as Sgt. Jones picks up her phone.

SGT. JONES (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
 SBX-1 detects a ballistic launch.
 Vector 42.710, 137.14. Launch
 azimuth - 9.25 degrees. Elevation
 angle - 66.79 degrees. Standby for
 possible intercept.

CUT TO:

14

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

14

Cpt. Walker on the other end of the line.

CPT. WALKER
 Copy that.

Cpt. Walker hangs up and glances at the CLOCKS on the wall of the Watch Floor and calmly orders SCPO Davis-

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
 Log the time.

SCPO DAVIS
 The time is 09-33.

CPT. WALKER
 Initiate a National Security
 Conference Call.

She's standing, and we won't see her sit all morning.

SCPO Davis puts on a headset and dials his phone, as do the three **COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALISTS** next to him in his row.

Cpt. Walker glances to the glass-enclosed office at the back of the room. **ADMIRAL MARK MILLER (58)**, WHSR Director, now wanders to his open door and peeks out, curious.

ADM. MILLER
 What's going on?

CPT. WALKER
 StratCom's tracking a launch over
 the Pacific.

ADM. MILLER
Second time since Christmas.

CPT. WALKER
Third.

ADM. MILLER
Right.

He holds up a thick stack of forms -

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)
Quarterly reviews. I'm drowning.
Shout if the world's gonna end.

As he ducks back into his office, back to -

SCPO DAVIS (INTO HEADSET)
Yessir, Mr. Chairman. Adding you
now.

On SCPO Davis's DESKTOP SCREEN - and Cpt. Walker's - a VIDEO CONFERENCE CALL is populating. A grid of heads - the **CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS (CJCS)** now appearing.

Cpt. Walker looks at the large MONITOR WALL -- a MAINTENANCE TECH, oblivious, works to repair the glitching TV.

CUT TO:

15 **EXT. SBX-1 RADAR STATION - SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC - NIGHT**

A massive WHITE RADAR DOME sits atop a FLOATING OIL PLATFORM, which bobs gently in the calm, empty sea.

SUPER: Sea-Based X-Band Radar | Afloat | Somewhere in the Pacific

CUT TO:

16 **INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA**

16

Maj. Gonzalez's team is all focused, but calm.

CPT. KAGAN
Point of origin?

Lt. Buck types the question over the secure chat. A beat -

LT. BUCK
StratCom says "indeterminate". DSP
satellites missed the launch.
(MORE)

LT. BUCK (CONT'D)
Floating rig picked it up mid-flight.

CPT. KAGAN
Say again, DSP missed the launch?

It's a bit odd - but not their problem.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
Doesn't matter who launched it.
Only that we knock it down.

SGT. NOLAN
Doesn't look like we'll have to.
TPY-2, Japan, reports - flight
vector is consistent with previous
DPRK tests.

Cpt. Kagan rolls his eyes -

CPT. KAGAN
Another yo-yo. Winslow's crew was
on when the last one popped off.
Says they were filling out
paperwork for a week.

CUT TO:

17

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

17

The National Security Conference fills up - Cpt. Walker's screen now filled with more faces in uniform - the **NORTHCOM COMMANDER, PACCOM COMMANDER, STRATCOM COMMANDER, COMMANDER US FORCES KOREA.**

Cpt. Walker - and we - can only hear the ongoing Conference when her headset is on, and she's dialed in.

Right now, she listens to the small-talk-

STRATCOM COMMANDER
Did you see that ball game last night? You believe that Lindor? I mean...

Next to Cpt. Walker - SCPO Davis dials another phone number.

SCPO DAVIS (INTO HEADSET)
Mrs. Holland? This is the Whizzer.
(beat)
Sorry, the White House Situation Room. Is your husband there?
(MORE)

SCPO DAVIS (INTO HEADSET) (CONT'D)
(long beat)
Right. I see. Yes, ma'am.

SCPO Davis turns to Cpt. Walker, covering his mic -

SCPO DAVIS (CONT'D)
Apparently, the National Security
Advisor just took a healthy hit of
propofol. Colonoscopy.

CPT. WALKER
Lucky him. Call the Deputy.

As SCPO Davis scrolls through his call list, on Cpt. Walker's
screen - **GEN. ANTHONY BRADY (55)**, STRATCOM COMMANDER,
addresses the group.

GEN. BRADY
Gentlemen, pleasure to see you all
again. We ready?

The CJCS looks around at the assembled faces --

CJCS
Where the hell's Holland?

Cpt. Walker unmutes herself.

CPT. WALKER (INTO HEADSET)
Dr. Holland is indisposed, sir. But
we've got Deputy National Security
Advisor...

She glances at SCPO Davis's monitor for the name -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
...Baerington, will be on in a
moment.

GEN. BRADY
Well, this'll be over by then. I'm
going to start.

CJCS
Go ahead, Tony.

Cpt. Walker mutes herself again.

GEN. BRADY
Approximately three minutes ago, we
detected an ICBM over the Pacific.
(MORE)

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)

At this time, we haven't determined if the launch was land or sea-based, but the object's trajectory is consistent with previous tests and we expect splashdown somewhere in the Sea of Japan.

CUT TO:

18

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

18

Sgt. Nolan leans forward at her terminal-

SGT. NOLAN

That can't be right.

MAJ. GONZALEZ

What is it, Sergeant?

SGT. NOLAN

Clear Radar acquired our object.

MAJ. GONZALEZ

And?

SGT. NOLAN

(bad news)

Rate of ascent is slowing.
Inclination is flattening.

MAJ. GONZALEZ

Velocity?

SGT. NOLAN

(worse news)

Steady. Six kilometers per second.

MAJ. GONZALEZ

(points)

Wait, wait...is Cheyenne Mountain seeing this?

CUT TO:

19

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

19

ON SCREEN - a jostling feed of **DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR JAKE BAERINGTON (33)** - walking down a sidewalk, visibly sweating - joins the Conference.

Cpt. Walker watches over SCPO Davis's shoulder -

CPT. WALKER
 Are you fucking kidding me, guy's
 big break and he's out for a walk?

SCPO Davis shrugs -

SCPO DAVIS
 Says he's a block away.

CPT. WALKER
 Not good enough.

Cpt. Walker shakes her head, amused. She addresses the room -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
 Let's be working the phones,
 everyone. If this is another test,
 I want a Note within the hour
 summarizing regional reaction.

The hum of activity kicks up a notch.

SCPO Davis watches his screen as - Gen. Brady now seems to
 abruptly stop speaking. He steps out of the frame.

SCPO DAVIS
 (concerned, to Cpt.
 Walker)
 Ma'am. I think you'd better get
 back on?

Cpt. Walker raises her headset in time to hear -

GEN. BRADY
 Um. Sorry 'bout that. It seems we
 have an update.
 (matter-of-fact)
 Current velocity now indicates the
 object will go sub-orbital.
 (beat, disbelief)
 Current flight trajectory is
 consistent with impact somewhere in
 the continental United States.

And just like that, the world has changed.

At first, for a long beat, only silence. No one sure how to
 react. And then -

PACCOM COMMANDER
 What's your level of confidence on
 that, Tony?

Gen. Brady confers with someone off-screen.

GEN. BRADY

I'm told, high, Tom. We have dual
phenomenology on the track.

(beat)

Roughly nineteen minutes to impact.

Cpt. Walker glances at the POTUS Clock. Five minutes have
passed since the launch. It's 9:38:43 AM.

SCPO DAVIS

Ma'am? I don't think I understand.

CPT. WALKER

Add SecDef and POTUS to the call.

SCPO Davis is now SPRINTING to the White House.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

Now, Davis.

He starts to dial.

Cpt. Walker removes her headset and hurries to the back of
the room. As she steps into Adm. Miller's office doorway -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

Were you listening to that?

ADM. MILLER

I was.

CPT. WALKER

Yeah?

ADM. MILLER

Yeah, get to it.

Cpt. Walker returns to her station.

On the largest WALL MONITOR, from this point forward -

The **ICBM's FLIGHT PATH**, arcing toward the United States.

An enormous circle - the **ESTIMATED ZONE OF IMPACT** - right now
covering most of North America - slowly shrinking as the
estimate grows more precise.

And the **TIME TO IMPACT** - 18:38...18:37...18:36 - always
inexorably counting down.

CUT TO:

20

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

20

A clatter of keyboards, a thick nervous energy, that same image of the ICBM's arcing flight path on their DESKTOP SCREENS.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
Authenticate.

Sgt. Jones reads, a slight tremor in her voice -

SGT. JONES
Oscar-Foxtrot-Four-Niner-One-Seven.
(beat, stammering)
I mean *Six*...sorry
(beat)
Four-Nine-One-*Six*...

Cpt. Kagan glances at Maj. Gonzalez - after what happened earlier, expecting him to scold him. But-

MAJ. GONZALEZ
You're doing fine, Sergeant. We've trained for this a million times.

CPT. KAGAN
Oscar-Foxtrot-Four-Niner-One-*Six*.
(beat)
Order is authentic.

MAJ. GONZALEZ (INTO HEADSET)
I'm sorry, say again?
(to crew)
We have weapons release authority to launch our GBIs.

SUPER: Ground Based Interceptor

Lt. Buck hangs up his line.

LT. BUCK
Confirm Defcon 2.

CPT. KAGAN
Holy shit.

CUT TO:

21

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

21

There are no sirens or flashing lights, but on the wall, the Alert Status silently updates to: **DEFCON 2**

The Maintenance Tech stops working on the glitching monitor - as every phone on the Watch Floor now begins to RING.

He watches and listens as - the Duty Officers confer with their neighbors in hushed, urgent tones. Their faces - a mix of disbelief, fear, confusion.

The Maintenance Tech turns to the closest Duty Officer -

MAINTENANCE TECH

None of my business, I know. But something going on?

Before he gets his answer, Adm. Miller emerges from his office, projecting confidence-

ADM. MILLER

Everyone relax. A rounding error and this is still a commercial satellite launch. Some billionaire forgot to file the right paperwork.

SCPO Davis reports -

SCPO DAVIS

POTUS is off campus, but Mr. Watts has been notified.
(beat)
SecDef is joining now.

And now the **NSA DUTY OFFICER** announces -

NSA D.O.

SIGINT indicates Moscow is aware of the launch.

The **ARMY DUTY OFFICER** adds -

ARMY D.O.

Atypical DPRK activity along the DMZ. Could be an unannounced rotation, but they're not picking up the Batphone.

CPT. WALKER

Any chance this is connected to the PLA exercise?

NSA D.O.

(gallows humor)
Maybe Davis staged it so he can put off proposing one more night.

No one laughs. The **CIA DUTY OFFICER** answers Cpt. Walker-

CIA D.O.

Exercise was expected to be surface warfare only. No SSBNs...

And finally, the **NAVY DUTY OFFICER** -

NAVY D.O.

USS Ford reports, multiple J-15s now launching from the Fujian. We expect *that*?

ADM. MILLER

We ever know what the Chinese are doing? A car just backfired so everyone's spooked. I'd be more worried if they weren't.

But the speculation doesn't stop-

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

What else?

CIA D.O.

Exercise could have been a cover for a preemptive strike -

NSA D.O.

-by sending one warhead at us? That's like suicide by nuclear cop...

ADM. MILLER

-That's enough.

Adm. Miller shuts it down. Firm, but steady-

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

We're not here to solve a puzzle. We find the pieces and send them up the chain. Principals need hard facts right now, not speculation. You dig up any of those, say so.

The room settles. Cpt. Walker directs his attention to her
SCREEN -

CPT. WALKER

(quietly)

Signature analysis. That kind of exhaust plume-

Off Adm. Miller's reaction - it's not good news.

ADM. MILLER
We've done this a thousand times.
We run it like a drill.

CPT. WALKER
You want to get it up?

ADM. MILLER
Let's put StratCom on the wall.

On the largest WALL MONITOR, from this point forward -

The **ICBM's FLIGHT PATH**, arcing toward the United States.

An enormous circle - the **ESTIMATED ZONE OF IMPACT** - right now covering most of North America - slowly shrinking as the estimate grows more precise.

And the **TIME TO IMPACT** - 16:23...16:22...16:21 - always inexorably counting down.

A beat, as Cpt. Walker absorbs it all. Interrupted by -

SCPO DAVIS
Keep dialing, then!

- SCPO Davis orders the row of Communications Analysts, all frantically working the phones. He explains to Cpt. Walker -

SCPO DAVIS (CONT'D)
Russian line is busy. Chinese too.

CPT. WALKER
Embassies?

SCPO DAVIS
Nothing but tone.

CPT. WALKER
You try the UN missions?

SCPO DAVIS
Of course.

CPT. WALKER
Whole world's calling each other at the same time.
(reassuring)
Keep trying the alternates.

SCPO DAVIS
Yes, ma'am.

SCPO Davis reaches to dial again. He stops. Notices - his hand is trembling.

CUT TO:

22 **EXT. SILO FIELD - FT. GREELY, ALASKA - PRE-DAWN** 22

A 7x2 GRID of snow-capped MISSILE SILOS. Slowly, the snow shakes off the first two as they begin to gently vibrate. And then OPEN - revealing the GBI INTERCEPTS within.

PA SYSTEM
SHELTER IN PLACE. SHELTER IN PLACE.

CUT TO:

23 **INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA** 23

Up on the monitor, Maj. Gonzalez's team watches in disbelief as the shells open.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Confirming. Clamshells open.

LT. BUCK
Showing launch status green.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Showing launch status green.

Cpt. Kagan pulls off his headset, Maj. Gonzalez stays locked on his screen.

CUT TO:

24 **INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE** 24

On the WALL MONITOR - the Zone of Estimated Impact is quickly shrinking around the MIDWEST - centered on Cincinnati.

Cpt. Walker notices on her SCREEN - **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, REID BAKER** has joined the Conference. She raises her headset to listen-

SECDEF BAKER
Do we have COG responsibility here?
(beat)
My understanding was we initiate on launch. Get people moving.

CJCS

I'm not sure that's right, Reid. In fact, I'm damn near certain COG are the President's call.

SECDEF BAKER

Well, I'm issuing the order. Plenty of time to sort it later, and if we gotta start moving people, I don't wanna be caught with our pants down.

General Brady interrupts the spat-

GEN. BRADY

I've got an updated impact estimate?

SECDEF BAKER

Go ahead, Tony.

GEN. BRADY

Low probability - Louisville, St. Louis. Medium - Chicago, Indianapolis. High - Cleveland, Columbus. That's primary, of course. Still assessing the prevailing winds.

NORTHCOM COMMANDER

Jesus Christ.

SECDEF BAKER

(faint)

Did you say Chicago...?

GEN. BRADY

Yes. In the "medium" bucket.

Before Cpt. Walker hears anyone answer, next to her - SCPO Davis suddenly raises his hand, triumphant - near-shouting on another line -

SCPO DAVIS (INTO HEADSET)

Yes, the *White House*. Hold on...

(beat, to the room)

I need a Mandarin translator!

Amidst the low din of chaos, it's not clear anyone noticed.

CPT. WALKER

State?!

The **STATE DEPT. DUTY OFFICER** doesn't turn around -

STATE DEPT D.O.
 (annoyed)
 I heard him...I've got my hands
 full here...

SCPO DAVIS
 Well, I've got the Vice Premier of
 China on hold!

CUT TO:

25

INT. OFFICE, CENTRAL LOCATOR SYSTEM - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

At FEMA, still another day at the office. Cathy sits at her desk, ZILLOW open, clicking through ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENTS.

From outside her door - her assistant, **ISABEL**, asks -

ISABEL
 We're ordering SweetGreen today.
 You want?

CATHY
 (distracted)
 Nah. I think I'm gonna go out.

And then - her phone BUZZES. She ignores it, lost in her real estate dream. It BUZZES again. She glances at it.

ON SCREEN: "Initiate COG protocol - JEEP. Standby Tier One sites for the Devolution of Authority"

CATHY (CONT'D)
 Huh?

She slowly stands up, and walks out to her assistant.

CATHY (CONT'D)
 Izzie - anyone say anything about a
 drill today?

ISABEL
 Not that I know of.

CUT TO:

26

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

26

SPC Nolan counts down to the launch of the Ground-based Intercepts. A MAJOR rushes in -

MAJOR
Missile field is clear!

MAJ. GONZALEZ
Copy.

SGT. NOLAN
Target is coming into the intercept
window in...three...two...one.
Activate launch.

A beat - and then, on their SCREENS - TWO **INTERCEPTS** appear -

CPT. KAGAN
GBI-2 and GBI-4 are airborne.

- and begin moving from Alaska toward the ICBM's flight path.

CPT. KAGAN (CONT'D)
EKV release in three minutes,
seventeen seconds.

Maj. Gonzalez nods - visibly relieved.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
Good work.
(beat)
Standby for course adjustment.

CUT TO:

27

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

27

Cpt. Walker watches the Intercepts now moving toward the ICBM. Adm. Miller puts a reassuring hand on her shoulder. It's going to be okay.

Cpt. Walker glances at her desktop, where a black box with no video now says "POTUS". He's finally joined the Conference.

She keys back in time to hear -

POTUS
(angry)
Is there anyone on this call who
can do better than shot-in-the-dark
guesses?! We're not handicapping
the fucking Army-Navy Game!

JAKE
Mr. President?

POTUS

Who's that?

JAKE

Jake Baerington, sir. We actually met briefly before the G8 last year... If someone could... if we could reach Ana Park? She's the National Intelligence Officer for the DPRK. She'll have a more informed view on North Korean intentions and capabilities-

POTUS

Well how do I talk to *her* then?

SCPO Davis interrupts Cpt. Walker -

SCPO DAVIS

-Ma'am - I have FEMA operations?

CPT. WALKER

FEMA, now?

Cpt. Walker patches herself over, and answers -

INTERCUT -

28

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

28

FEMA'S control room, home of the "**CENTRAL LOCATOR SYSTEM**" (**CLS**) - a massive MAP of DC populated with several hundred GREEN DOTS, each with a small ID NUMBER. A cluster are on CAPITOL HILL. Some at the WHITE HOUSE. More at each CABINET BUILDING. Every VIP to be saved in case of calamity.

Cathy huddles over a speaker phone with **MIKE BROWN**, FEMA OPERATIONS DIRECTOR and several **STAFFERS**.

CATHY (OVER PHONE)

This is Cathy Rogers, with the Office of National Continuity Programs. I'm trying to reach someone who can tell me what the hell is going on.

CPT. WALKER

How so, Ms. Rogers?

CATHY

Well, we received instructions to initiate our Joint Emergency Evacuation Plan.

CPT. WALKER

And?

CATHY

And what? You expect the Speaker of the House to make a run for it without asking a few questions?

CPT. WALKER

I don't-

CATHY

-Are you telling me we're at war all of a sudden?!

(beat)

With who?!

A longer beat. Cpt. Walker can't answer. Instead -

CPT. WALKER

I can only confirm the JEEP order is authentic. Thank you.

Cpt. Walker hangs up, as --

29

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

29

- A COMMOTION.

TWO SECRET SERVICE AGENTS barge onto the Watch Floor.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1

Admiral Miller?

Several heads swivel.

ADM. MILLER

That's me.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2

We need to move you to the PEOC, sir.

More eyes watching, Adm. Miller working to stay calm -

ADM. MILLER

Well, we can't just walk out of here. We'll need to make an orderly transition and get the flyaway team to Raven Rock.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1

-Not everyone.

(beat)

Just you, Gordon, Calwell and
Stern. Those are the names I have
on the COG list.

Everything quiets. The Presidential Emergency Operations
Center (PEOC) is a hardened bunker under the East Wing.

All eyes on Adm. Miller. TIME TO IMPACT: **13:45...**

ADM. MILLER

(to the SS Agent)

Give me a second.

A beat, Adm. Miller struggling with it.

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

This is ridiculous.

Finally, he steps closer to Cpt. Walker.

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

Liv - you should go. Just in
case...

He trails off. For a moment, every ounce of Cpt. Walker wants
to say yes and bolt for the door. And she's grateful for the
gesture. But -

CPT. WALKER

We both know that's not how this
works, sir. When the President
calls that bunker, he expects you
to answer. He couldn't pick me out
of a police line-up.

Adm. Miller knows she's right. But he still doesn't move. She
tries to assuage his guilt -

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

We'll be fine here. Besides, GBIs
will take this thing out. If it's
even real. Didn't the Soviets
mistake a flock of birds for ICBMs
once?

ADM. MILLER

It was the sun. In '83. Reflecting
off high-altitude clouds.

CPT. WALKER

Well...it's a sunny day, isn't it?

They both force a smile.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
Sir, I have instructions to
physically escort you.

CPT. WALKER
(to Adm. Miller)
I've got it. Okay?

Adm. Miller offers a grateful nod to Cpt. Walker. As he and the others now follow the Secret Service out -

A clatter of tools and the Maintenance Tech bolts for the exit too.

A beat - everyone remaining eyes each other, wondering if someone else will make a run for it.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
That it?

No one moves. Slowly, they get back to business. The din resumes.

And Cpt. Walker picks up the landline on her desk and dials.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
Everyone, let's stay focused and do what we do best. The President still needs us.

CUT TO:

30 **INT. WAITING ROOM - DR. LEVY'S OFFICE - BETHESDA, MD** 30

Sick, screaming kids are the backdrop as Ben, holding Liam, negotiates with the RECEPTIONIST -

BEN
It's just we've been waiting for almost an hour -- Hold on--

Ben reaches for his phone, which is buzzing.

31 **CALLER ID: "UNKNOWN"** 31

Annoyed, he silences it and turns back to the desk-

BEN

Sorry. If the doctor can't see him,
can he just call in a prescription?

CUT TO:

32 INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

32

BEN'S VOICEMAIL (OVER PHONE)

You've reached Ben. Please leave a
message.

Cpt. Walker slams down the phone in frustration.

CUT TO:

33 INT. PRESS CUBICLES - WHITE HOUSE

33

From her desk, Abby looks out the window and sees - the
Maintenance Tech runs toward the South Lawn gate.

A beat, intrigued, and she dials "CAP HILL".

ABBY (INTO PHONE)

Hey, hon -- just wondering if
anything's going on up on there?

(beat)

I don't know. Anything unusual?

CUT TO:

34 INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

34

ON SCREEN - Just beneath the Arctic Circle, the two
Intercepts race toward the ICBM.

CPT. KAGAN

Standby, EKV release...

SGT. NOLAN

...three, two, one. Release.

A SERGEANT enters -

SERGEANT

What the fuck is going on? Sir?

MAJ. GONZALEZ

You saw what happened - we just
launched our GBIs! Your ass should
be in the bunkers!

ON SCREEN - ONE of the Intercepts now breaks into TWO pieces. Its BOOSTER falls to earth, and its "Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle" (EKV) speeds toward the ICBM.

But the second Intercept remains intact.

Maj. Gonzalez shoots Cpt. Kagan a concerned look.

CPT. KAGAN
EKV status?

SUPER: Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle

SGT. NOLAN
Standby.

A tense beat.

SGT. NOLAN (CONT'D)
Three, two, one... First EKV released. Velocity, 10 kilometers per second, closing on target.

ON SCREEN - the second Intercept veers off wildly.

SGT. NOLAN (CONT'D)
Second EKV has failed to separate.

Not great news, but there's no time to dwell on it.

CUT TO:

35

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

35

All around Cathy, a buzz of activity. FEMA Staffers working the phones. On the CLS - many of those Green Dots are beginning to move out of Washington.

CATHY
I'm sure it is a mistake, Mr. Leader. And we'll turn you around right away, as soon as we confirm that.

CUT TO:

36

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

36

The entire Watch Floor watches, rapt, as the remaining EKV closes on the ICBM. SCPO Davis turns to Cpt. Walker -

SCPO DAVIS
Why didn't they launch more?

CPT. WALKER
Fewer than 50 GBIs in our *entire*
arsenal. We'll need 'em if someone
fires more missiles at us.

SCPO DAVIS
If someone fires more, aren't we
all fucked anyway?

Cpt. Walker can't help but smile.

CPT. WALKER
The kinetic energy of just a single
EKV colliding with an incoming
warhead is over 100 million joules.

SCPO DAVIS
(reassured)
That's enough to vaporize it.

CPT. WALKER
This will be over in a minute. Then
you'll be on your way home with a
stop at the jewelry store. And when
you look back, all this drama will
be the *second-most-exciting* thing
that happened to you today.

CUT TO:

37 **INT. PRESS CUBICLES - WHITE HOUSE**

37

Abby's phone rings - CAP HILL calling back - and she answers.

ABBY
(beat, intrigued)
The Senator just got up and left?
In the middle of the hearing?

CUT TO:

38 **INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA**

38

The remaining EKV is nearly on top of the ICBM now.

CPT. KAGAN
EKV adjusting course.

SGT. NOLAN (O.S.)
 Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five.
 Four. Three. Two. One.

44

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

44

ON SCREEN - the two objects seemingly collide. Maj. Gonzalez takes a breath.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
 Confirm impact.

LT. BUCK
 Standby, confirm.

The longest beat imaginable.

MAJ. GONZALEZ
 Come on! What are you waiting for?

And then -

LT. BUCK
 Negative.
 (beat, disbelief)
 I...
 (beat)
 Negative, impact.
 (beat)
 Object remains inbound.

45

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

45

Cpt. Walker stands in stunned silence. All around her, the world is seemingly frozen.

Except the clock, still ticking downward.

TIME TO IMPACT: 8:01...8:00...7:59...

46

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

46

Maj. Gonzalez's crew now panics as they watch the EKV fall uselessly to the ground - and the ICBM continues its arcing path toward the United States.

CPT. KAGAN
 We did everything right, right?
 (beat, slams headset)
 We did every fucking thing right!

Maj. Gonzalez's empty chair. On his SCREEN -

Alert Status - **DEFCON 1**

StratCom Map - the ICBM closing on Chicago.

TIME TO IMPACT - **6:32**

The rest of his team sits there helpless.

47

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

47

As it updates on Cpt. Walker's screen -

GEN. BRADY

Mr. President - confirming Defcon
One, sir.

CUT TO:

48

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

48

Sgt. Jones is silently struggling to contain her emotion.

CPT. KAGAN

(desperate)

Major, confirm the release of two
additional GBIs to intercept...

(beat)

Major... Danny. We got to launch
again, right?

Maj. Gonzalez doesn't answer.

SGT. NOLAN

Target is past apogee and entering
terminal phase.

And now the gut punch -

LT. BUCK

I have an updated flight
trajectory.

(beat)

Chicago.

CUT TO:

49

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

49

Cathy hangs up another call-

CATHY

That's right. Thank you.

- and looks across the room for her colleague, Mike. She approaches - just as he also puts his phone down.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Most of the Iron Gate list is on the move, but none of them are happy. Any word on what the hell is going on?

A beat, as Mike just looks at her, visibly rattled from the call he just ended.

CATHY (CONT'D)

Mike? Who was that?

MIKE

What's our casualty estimate for a nuclear strike on Chicago?

CATHY

What? Seriously? This is really pissing me off now -

MIKE

-Goddamnit - what is it, Cathy?!

Taken aback, by rote -

CATHY

10 million primary, another 10% downwind.

Off the reality sinking in -

CUT TO:

50

EXT. FT. GREELY MILITARY BASE - FT. GREELY, ALASKA - SUNRISE

The sun is finally beginning to rise over the frozen tundra. The barren landscape bathed in a gentle glow.

A steel door swings open and Maj. Gonzalez stumbles outside.

He drops to his knees and throws up in the snow.

CUT TO:

51

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

51

On the WALL MONITOR - The ICBM fast approaches. The Estimated Zone of Impact is now a dot on Chicago. The phone rings, and SCPO Davis answers.

SCPO DAVIS (INTO HEADSET)
White House Situation Room.
(beat)
Hold on, sir.

He turns to Cpt. Walker, covering his mic.

SCPO DAVIS (CONT'D)
Russian Embassy, finally. They have the Foreign Minister for the President.

Cpt. Walker nods - and SCPO Davis starts dialing to connect. While he does, Cpt. Walker picks up the line -

CPT. WALKER (INTO HEADSET)
Sir - this is Captain Olivia Walker, the ranking officer on duty. We're connecting you with the President.
(beat)
Understood, sir.

But SCPO Davis looks back at her, ashen.

SCPO DAVIS
I can't merge the calls.

CPT. WALKER
What? Why?!

SCPO DAVIS
POTUS is on the NC-3. Russia's on the hotline. He'd have to drop off, then we'd have to dial him in.

He'd need to drop off, dial back in-

CPT. WALKER
-So?!

SCPO DAVIS
-we'd risk losing contact. He's on the move... plus the time it takes...

And now the real reason he looks ill --

SCPO DAVIS (CONT'D)
StratCom is asking him for launch
instructions for retaliation. Like,
right now.

A beat as it hangs there. Cpt. Walker unmutes the Russian FM.

CPT. WALKER (INTO HEADSET)
Sir? We're having a technical
issue with the President. But I'm
going to get you someone who can
speak for him, right now. Please
hold.

She mutes the Russian FM again and hands SCPO Davis the key
to her cell phone locker.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
I want you to go outside and get my
cell. Get yours too.

But SCPO Davis doesn't move.

SCPO DAVIS
Why are we launching?

She doesn't answer.

SCPO DAVIS (CONT'D)
Ma'am?

CPT. WALKER
Billy - just go. *Quickly.*
(beat)
I'll handle this.

He gets up and heads for the exit. Cpt. Walker dials the
PEOC.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)
Who's in charge there?
(beat)
Fine - put him on.

52

INT. FIRE DIRECTION CENTER 3A - FT. GREELY, ALASKA

52

Maj. Gonzalez's empty chair. On his SCREEN -

Live Impact Projections:

METROPOLITAN POPULATION - **9,262,825**

PROBABILITY OF IMPACT - 100.00%

Alert Status - **DEFCON 1**

StratCom Map - the ICBM closing on Chicago.

The rest of his team sits there helpless.

Lt. Buck abruptly gets up and exits the room. Seconds later, he returns with his cell.

LT. BUCK

(into phone)

Hey, mom... Yeah, no no, I'm good.
I promise you. I'm doing great...
I'm working hard... I'm doing my
best... No, I just-I wanted to call
you and tell you I love you.

(beat, coming apart)

I'll call you later. I gotta go.
They're calling me right now...

CUT TO:

53

INT. OPERATIONS CENTER - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

53

A heated argument - a large group of Staffers now gathered -

STAFFER #1

Issue the E-A-S! That's what the
playbook says.

MIKE

Forget the playbook! We need to
avoid creating a panic! If this is
real, they've got five fucking
minutes.

How far is anyone gonna get?

STAFFER #2

They can at least shelter-in-place-

STAFFER #3

-you think hiding under their desks
is gonna help them?!

Cathy says nothing. Isabel approaches and motions for her attention.

ISABEL

There's a car outside. Driver says
you're on some kind of list? "Hasty
Access"...?

Mike still under siege from the Staffers, looks for help -

MIKE

Cathy? You wanna weigh in here? I
just don't see what we gain by
lighting up everyone...

CATHY

Sorry...what?

She's distracted, still processing what Isabel said.

CATHY (CONT'D)

(back to Isabel)
He's downstairs, now?

MIKE

Who's downstairs?

ISABEL

Some guy is here to take Cathy.

Everyone's focused on this now. A beat, then -

CATHY

(realizing)
I'm a D-E, Mike.

A beat. Mike remembers. But Isabel's still confused.

ISABEL

What does that mean?

MIKE

'Designated Evacuee'...
(bitter)
It means she gets to ride out
whatever-this-is at Raven Rock.

CATHY

(defensive)
You chose me as your alternate!

They all look at her. An awkward, loaded moment.

CATHY (CONT'D)

There's no threat to DC! There
might not even be a threat to
Chicago!

And then, cracking -

ISABEL

She's barely done her job for a month! Why does she get to be rescued?!

CUT TO:

54

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY - SITUATION ROOM

54

SCPO Davis exits the Watch Floor and hurries to the phone locker.

UPSTAIRS in the West Wing - the sound of FOOTSTEPS running.

Fumbling with a key, SCPO Davis unlocks a drawer. Just as - Winston wanders out of the Mess -

WINSTON

What's going on up there? Where's everyone going?

SCPO Davis tries to ignore him, staring at the phone he's retrieved at the picture of the girl he was planning to propose to, but he can't -

SCPO DAVIS

Go home.

He gazes up the stairs leading to the building's exit.

CUT TO:

55

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

55

SCPO Davis's seat is still empty. Cpt. Walker glances at the door - no sign of him returning. Not really surprising.

On the WALL MONITOR - the ICBM is crossing over Canada toward Chicago, TIME TO IMPACT - **4:32** and counting...

More DUTY OFFICERS report -

DIA D.O.

DPRK TELs are on the move...

CIA D.O.

Beijing Station reports the PSC has convened in Emergency Session-

Cpt. Walker's phone rings. The PEOC is calling.

CPT. WALKER (INTO HEADSET)
White House Situation Room, Walker.

JAKE (OVER PHONE)
Put me back on the NSCC.

CPT. WALKER
Is it Russia's?

JAKE
He denied it - says maybe it was
Pyongyang but swears they have
nothing to do with it...

CPT. WALKER
Then why are they mobilizing-

JAKE
-Because they're seeing half our B-
52s go airborne! Add me back to the
fucking Conference!

Cpt. Walker takes a breath - the first sign of real fear in
her eyes. She transfers the call.

CUT TO:

56 INT. CATHY'S OFFICE - FEMA - WASHINGTON, DC

56

Cathy rushes back into her office, glancing nervously over
her shoulder. But no mob is following her.

She grabs her purse and her coat - and runs to the elevator.

CUT TO:

57 INT. BRIEFING ROOM - WHITE HOUSE

57

Abby stands in a scrum of frustrated REPORTERS, shouting
questions at a **DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY** -

<p>ABBY</p> <p>You don't <i>know</i> why he bailed in the middle of an oversight hearing or you won't <i>say</i>?</p>	<p>REPORTER #1</p> <p>Is the President still in Washington?</p>
---	---

REPORTER #2

We're hearing about Hazmat teams in
the Metro--

DEPUTY PRESS SECY

I told you, I'm working on it -

- the Deputy Press Secretary backs into the West Wing -

REPORTER #3

And what's up with the fucking goon
squad?!

- and the door is blocked by a **SECRET SERVICE CAT OFFICER** in full tactical gear.

Outside - the sound of an approaching HELICOPTER. More CAT OFFICERS running across the South Lawn.

Most of the Reporters now disperse, frantically dialing their phones. Abby stands frustrated, unsure what to do next.

She and the CAT Officer lock eyes. He seems anxious, muffled traffic on his earpiece. And then -

WH CAT OFFICER

(quietly, to Abby)

You should leave if you can.

Off her reaction -

58

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

58

Time to Impact: 3:45...

The **AIR FORCE DUTY OFFICER** turns around and hands Cpt. Walker a piece of paper.

On it - HANDWRITTEN NAMES and 10-DIGIT NUMBERS.

AIR FORCE D.O.

Raven Rock is asking for names and serial numbers of everyone still here on duty. Socials for the civilians. In case...

(beat)

If it's just Chicago, it's just Chicago.

But if we do fire back, and then everyone else...

CPT. WALKER

They want a dead list.

Before the Duty Officer can respond -

SCPO DAVIS

Here.

- SCPO Davis hands Cpt. Walker her cell phone, and slides quietly back into his seat.

A beat as she looks at him, absorbing the fact that he came back. The slightest nod of gratitude. He returns it.

On her CELL - the wallpaper is a picture of her, Ben, and Liam, smiling on their front steps.

CUT TO:

59

EXT. PARKING LOT - DR. LEVY'S OFFICE - DAY

59

Ben carries Liam to their car, opens the door and dips him into the car seat.

BEN

Watch your head, bud. Watch it...

LIAM

I wanna do it by myself, not you.

His phone rings - CALLER ID: "Olivia". He answers, surprised and annoyed -

BEN

Hey -

INTERCUT -

60

INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE

60

On the WALL MONITOR - TIME TO IMPACT - 2:22.

Cpt. Walker takes a breath, no good way to say this.

CPT. WALKER

Ben - you need to take Liam, get in the car, and start driving.

BEN

What? Where? What are you talking about?

CPT. WALKER

West, as fast you can. Right now. As far away as you can get from any urban center.

Ben has stopped in the parking lot, truly terrified.

BEN

Liv - what the fuck?! What's going on there?

CPT. WALKER

I'll call you. I love you. Can you kiss Liam for me?

(beat)

Just kiss him.

(beat)

Bye. Bye. Bye.

She hangs up. Wipes a tear. Steels herself. Looks ahead.

CPT. WALKER (CONT'D)

Okay.

CUT TO:

61 **EXT. FEMA HEADQUARTERS - NATIONAL MALL - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY**

Cathy rushes out of the building to a waiting SUV and SECRET SERVICE AGENT. Helicopters circle overhead.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Ms. Rogers?

CATHY

Yes.

She enters and the car pulls away.

CUT TO:

62 **INT. WATCH FLOOR - WHITE HOUSE**

62

Cpt. Walker slowly sits down for the first time all morning.

She reaches into her pocket, feels something - Liam's dinosaur. It breaks her all over again.

Tries to gather herself.

The room has slowed, grown almost quiet. All eyes on the WALL MONITOR. The ICBM nearly on top of Chicago.

TIME TO IMPACT - 0:00:49.

Nothing left that this group can do, but hope -

DIA D.O.
Any chance it just lands in Lake
Michigan?

AIR FORCE D.O.
A lot of the time, they don't even
detonate. The warheads...

Cpt. Walker and SCPO Davis sit side-by-side, watching the
decision-makers on their screens.

SCPO DAVIS
They'll wait, right? See what
happens before we retaliate?

Only one way to find out. Cpt. Walker puts her headset back
on.

She reaches her hand out, SCPO Davis takes it. They listen
as -

GEN. BRADY (O.S.)
Your order, Mr. President?

SLAM CUT TO
BLACK.

SUPER:

HITTING A BULLET WITH A BULLET

FADE IN:

63

EXT. BEACH - SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC - NIGHT

63

Gentle waves lap onto an empty, moonlit beach. Lying on his
back, just offshore - **CAPTAIN JON ZIMMER (28)** bobs with the
surf.

SUPER: **Indo-Pacific Command | Undisclosed Location**

A final moment of relaxation, and then he turns over and
swims to shore.

Folded neatly in the sand - his gray PTUs. He dresses.

CUT TO:

64

EXT. STRATCOM PARKING LOT - OFFUTT AFB - NEBRASKA - DAY

64

Halfway around the world - an ordinary GLASS OFFICE BUILDING. A sprawling parking lot. It could be the headquarters of an insurance company.

It is Strategic Command, just outside Omaha, Nebraska.

SUPER: STRATCOM | Home of America's Nuclear Force | Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska

GEN. BRADY, behind the wheel of his FORD F-150, Darius Rucker on the radio, pulls into a spot. He steps out, extra-large DUNKIN COFFEE in one hand, gym bag in the other.

Gen. Brady sees - **MAJOR GENERAL STEVEN KYLE (51)** - the "J3" - Director, Global Operations, getting out of his own truck, a few spots over-

GEN. BRADY
Helluva game last night.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
You let the boys stay up?

GEN. BRADY
Yours give you a choice?

As they walk inside together -

65

EXT. DANIEL LADY FARM - GETTYSBURG, PA - DAY

65

Serene, rolling green fields dotted with 19th CENTURY CANNONS and STONE MONUMENTS - as far as the eye can see. Crowds of TOURISTS set up picnic chairs and file into temporary BLEACHERS as, nearby, BEARDED MEN in UNION ARMY UNIFORMS affix bayonets to their muskets.

Across the field -- CONFEDERATE GRAYS in equal numbers.

SUPER: Battle of Gettysburg 162nd Reenactment

The time: **9:33:00 AM**

ANA PARK (39) and her son **AIDAN (10)** climb to their seats in the bleachers as a TOUR GUIDE on the grass explains -

TOUR GUIDE
On the morning of Day Two, Stuart's cavalry had yet to arrive and so General Lee still lacked a clear picture of the Union forces...

As they finally settle into their seats, Aidan stares stares out in awe at the still-assembling REENACTORS. A beat, then -

AIDAN
Thanks, mom. This is awesome.

ANA
50,000 deaths in three days.
'Awesome' is one word.

The Tour Guide drones on -

TOUR GUIDE
...when he did finally appear on the morning of July 2nd, Lee bitterly remarked, 'Well, General Stuart, you're here at last.'

CUT TO:

66

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM COMMAND & CONTROL FACILITY (C2F)
OFFUTT AFB - NEBRASKA

Two tiers of semicircle stations, staffed by **OFFICERS** in blue-gray camo, face a large MONITOR WALL.

The ICBM has just begun its flight over the Sea of Japan.

**SUPER: U.S. Strategic Command | Battle Deck | Depth:
Classified | X Floors Underground | Home of America's Nuclear
Force**

It is **9:36:11 AM**

STRATCOM ANNOUNCER (OVER SPEAKER)
This is the DDO with the National Military Command Center with a top-secret SCI National Security Conference for missile launch indications. All conferees, please stand by.

OFFICER
Attention on deck!

Gen. Brady enters.

GEN. BRADY
Morning, everybody. Please take your seats.

Gen. Brady sits in the center of the top deck.

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
What's the situation?

STRATCOM WATCH OFFICER #1
Sir, we have missile launch indications in the Pacific Theater. The DDO is standing up a National Security Conference.

GEN. BRADY
Did you see that ball game last night? You believe that Lindor? I mean... He is unbelievable.

STRATCOM WATCH OFFICER #1
Impressive.

CUT TO:

67

I/E. UBER/DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

67

Honking horns - gridlocked traffic. **LILY BAERINGTON (34)** sits in the back of an Uber on the phone -

LILY (INTO PHONE)
Yep. It's good news. You can kind of see her face now, right?

She's visibly pregnant, holding a PRENATAL SCAN.

LILY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Ok. I'll tell him. Love you.

Her husband **JAKE** - who we've only seen on a screen so far - is next to her.

LILY (CONT'D)
My mom wants to know if you're going to Helsinki next week. She must have heard about it on The View or something...

JAKE
(bitter)
The briefing I wrote will have a first class seat.

LILY
If you're that unhappy, I told you, I'll talk to Marty about the Committee.

JAKE
 (dismissive)
 Staff Director is a lateral move.
 Plus, going back to the Hill-

LILY
 -is what?

Jake stops himself. Tries to dig himself out -

JAKE
 ...is a bad idea...because of how
 distracting it would be to work in
 such close proximity to my radiant
 wife.

She turns back to the scan -

LILY
 You think she'll inherit your
 capacity for ass-kissing bullshit?

Before Jake can answer, his phone RINGS.

JAKE (INTO PHONE)
 This is Jake.
 (beat, tensing)
 Sure...yeah...of course I can.

CUT TO:

68

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM COMMAND & CONTROL FACILITY (C2F)-

Gen. Brady listens, casually, to the National Security
 Conference Call via the camera mounted on his desktop.

NORTHCOM COMMANDER
 ...the DSP satellite system is
 generally reliable but that will
 obviously be a focus of our after-
 action.

CJCS
 So the launch could have been land
 or sea-based?

USFK COMMANDER
 The DPRK don't have an SSBN
 capability-

GEN. BRADY
 -that we know of.

Gen. Brady stifles a yawn and raises his now-empty Dunkin cup to a passing AIRMAN, signaling for a refill.

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
Eight sugars, please.

The AIRMAN takes his cup.

PACCOM COMMANDER
Beijing's been wanting to test their Jin-class boats. And we've been tracking three Borei-class subs out of Vladivostok since last week.

CJCS
On top of their push into the Atlantic? I can't see them risking *more* sanctions.

JAKE
Sir, on the North Korean front?

And now Gen. Brady notices -

GEN. BRADY
Who's that?

69

EXT. SIDEWALK - PENNSYLVANIA AVE - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

69

Jake hurries toward the White House, AirPods in, phone jostling.

JAKE
Jake Baerington, sir. Dick Holland's deputy?

GEN. BRADY
There's a reason I didn't join the Navy, son. All that bouncing around's making me seas sick.

JAKE
I'm sorry. I'm almost at the White House. I just wanted to say - we do know the DPRK have been chasing a sub capability. And previous leaps - in booster design and TELS - have gone undetected until roll-out.

Jake waits for a response. A beat of awkward silence, then -

PACCOM COMMANDER
Mr. Baerington? All due respect -

-but the PACCOM Commander now freezes on Jake's phone, the signal cutting out.

JAKE
Fuck.

CUT TO:

70

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

70

Seated next to Gen. Brady - Maj. Gen. Kyle studies his desktop with a growing look of concern.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
Sir?

But Gen. Brady is speaking on the call -

GEN. BRADY
I do think we need to upgrade our salvage operations. We're leaving potentially valuable intelligence on the ocean floor with every test--

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
(insistent)
--Tony...!

Gen. Brady stops his address.

GEN. BRADY
(to the Conference)
Excuse me a moment.

He mutes himself. Glares at his subordinate.

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
(to Maj. Gen.)
What?

Maj. Gen. Kyle just points at his monitor

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
No way that's right.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
Northcom confirms. Ft. Greely is preparing to launch GBIs.

Gen. Brady studies the screen another beat. Turns back to the Conference.

GEN. BRADY

Um. Sorry 'bout that. It seems we have an update.

(matter-of-fact)

Current velocity now indicates the object will go sub-orbital.

(beat, disbelief)

Current flight trajectory is consistent with impact somewhere in the continental United States.

It's **9:38:43 AM**.

PACCOM COMMANDER

What's your level of confidence on that, Tony?

Gen. Brady turns to Maj. Gen. Kyle, who gestures to the monitor in front of him.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE

It's not an error. We're tracking it on multiple radar systems now.

Gen. Brady turns back to the group.

GEN. BRADY

I'm told high. We have dual phenomenology on the track.

On the Stratcom Wall - that now-familiar display. The **ICBM's FLIGHT PATH**, arcing toward the United States. The **ESTIMATED ZONE OF IMPACT**. And the **TIME TO IMPACT** - 19:00, 18:59...

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)

Nineteen minutes to impact.
Confirming Defcon 2.

Next to him - Maj. Gen. Kyle rises and addresses the room -

MAJ. GEN. KYLE

We have a confirmed hostile launch, everyone. Initiate Phase One, OPLAN 8044, Revision 25. Standby all commands.

CUT TO:

71

INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER

Cpt. Zimmer stands at his locker, dressing in his flight suit. At the next locker, pulling on his own gear, is **LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK BELCHER.**

LTC. BELCHER
You gonna bring something back
every time we forward deploy?
Because you're creating an
expectation.

In Cpt. Zimmer's locker - a large stuffed "Pororo" PENGUIN, the popular South Korean cartoon character.

CPT. ZIMMER
He's three. He has no expectations.

Ltc. Belcher shakes his head.

LTC. BELCHER
Exactly. Sometimes he wakes up and
Daddy's gone. Sometimes Daddy's
home.

Coming off his shift, relaxing on a nearby couch is another pilot, **MAJOR DAN STEVENS.**

MAJ. STEVENS
Listen to him, kid. That's the
benefit of two marriages talking.

LTC. BELCHER
Third time's the charm!

CUT TO:

72

INT. SECURITY KIOSK - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

72

Jake anxiously gets in line behind several STAFFERS waiting to pass through magnetometers and enter the White House.

He looks down at his shirt - now stained with sweat.

SECDEF BAKER (OVER PHONE)
...with no warning whatsoever. We
need to speak with someone - anyone
- who can--

The woman in front of Jake turns with a friendly smile -

WAITING STAFFER
Hey! How's Lily feeling?

Jake covers his phone, forces his own smile -

JAKE
Great, thanks.
(gesturing to the phone)
Sorry - conference call...

WAITING STAFFER
(apologetic, whispering)
Oh! Well, tell her I said hi...

As Jake nods, returning to the call, INTERCUT -

73

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

73

GEN. BRADY
Of course, Mr. Secretary. Sit Room
is already working on that. In the
meantime, we've raised our alert
status.

As you know, after last month's test launch, we forward-
deployed a number of B2's so we'll be well-positioned to
operationalize any--

JAKE
--I'm sorry - sir?

Jake interrupts him.

JAKE (CONT'D)
I got disconnected for a minute,
but I think we should reconsider
that, sir.

GEN. BRADY
(annoyed)
Reconsider what exactly?

JAKE
Well...by moving to Defcon 2, we're
risking a spiral of alerts--

SECDEF BAKER
--a spiral of what?
(recognizing his voice)
Jake? Where the hell's Dick?

JAKE
--of alerts, Mr. Secretary. Dick's
out of pocket...
(beat)
(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

When we increase our readiness, all our adversaries tend to do the same, believing we're preparing to take *offensive* action ourselves. We need to communicate with them, explain our intentions--

GEN. BRADY

--then *communicate*. That's your job, not mine.

(beat)

You have someone you can call who will tell us what the hell's going on, don't let us hold you back.

In the WHITE HOUSE - Jake has reached the front of the Security Line. The Secret Service Agent instructs him -

UNIFORMED USSS AGENT

Phone in the tray.

JAKE

Yeah - one sec.

On the Conference -

GEN. BRADY

I don't have 'one sec'!

JAKE

I'm sorry, General. I wasn't talking to you. General Brady's had enough -

GEN. BRADY

Then who the hell were you talking to?!

The Conference moves on -

PACCOM COMMANDER

We have an ETA for POTUS yet?

SCPO DAVIS

I'm told imminent...

SECDEF BAKER

It occurs to me... do we have a COG responsibility here?

Jake's interrupted again by -

UNIFORMED USSS AGENT

Sir?

Jake reluctantly puts his phone in the tray and hurries through the magnetometer. As he now waits for his phone --

74

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

74

A flurry of activity as SUPPORT STAFF surge into the room. On the Conference screen -

SECDEF BAKER

My understanding was we initiate on launch. Get people moving...

(to someone off screen)

Can we get a legal opinion on that?

Not his domain, Gen. Brady mutes the Conference, and gestures for Maj. Gen. Kyle to push back from the deck and privately confer -

GEN. BRADY

What do you think?

MAJ. GEN. KYLE

I'd be guessing.

(off his look)

North Koreans? Crop failures, fuel shortages...maybe they're more desperate than we thought.

Gen. Brady looks skeptical.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE (CONT'D)

Or it's Moscow. And they want us to *think* it's the North Koreans.

GEN. BRADY

(still not buying it)

Moscow *knows* we'll retaliate.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE

Do they?

Trying to reason it out, testing the argument -

MAJ. GEN. KYLE (CONT'D)

Assassinating dissidents anywhere they please. Imprisoning Americans. Ukraine and what...? We confiscate a few of their yachts in Saint Tropez?

(beat)

A single, unattributed strike like this sows chaos. Puts us on our heels. Gives them an opportunity

(MORE)

MAJ. GEN. KYLE (CONT'D)
to see if they can get away with
worse.

Gen. Brady thinks. Not dismissing it. The weight settling -

GEN. BRADY
Gives everyone that opportunity.

A long silence. Both deep in thought.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
Or some fucking sub captain woke
up, found out his wife left him,
and snapped. I told you - guessing.

TECH SGT.
-Sir?

They're interrupted by a TECHNICAL SERGEANT, who hands Kyle a
printout. He reviews it, then hands it to Gen. Brady.

A beat as Gen. Brady absorbs the grim news.

GEN. BRADY
(to Maj. Gen. Kyle)
Greely better not fuck this up.

Gen. Brady closer to his desktop and unmutes the Conference-

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
I've got an updated impact
estimate?

SECDEF BAKER
Go ahead, Tony.

CUT TO:

75

INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER

Maj. Stevens stands up from the couch, focused on his phone.

MAJ. STEVENS
When are we home again?

Cpt. Zimmer is fully dressed in his flight suit now, about to
close his locker -

CPT. ZIMMER
1700 next Tuesday.

MAJ. STEVENS

You think I can meet this girl at
the Applebee's before they close?

Ltc. Belcher closes his now-empty locker and follows them.

CPT. ZIMMER

You take your dates to Applebee's?

MAJ. STEVENS

She works there, dumbass.

And then - a RED LIGHT on the wall turns on. A beat - they
all stare at it. And a KLAXON ALARM begins to blare.

CUT TO:

76

INT. WEST WING HALLWAY - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

76

Jake walks briskly, brushing past colleagues, towards his
office.

SECDEF BAKER

Did you say Chicago?

GEN. BRADY

Yes. In the "medium" bucket.

SECDEF BAKER

(matter-of-fact)

My daughter lives in Chicago.

A beat - silence on the Conference. Jake slows to a stop.
Trying to reassure him -

NORTHCOM COMMANDER

Sir, our GBIs will be airborne
momentarily. This is what we do.

SECDEF BAKER

Jake? You still there?

JAKE

Yes, sir.

SECDEF BAKER

What are the chances this works?
Knocking it down...

Jake hesitates, chastened by his previous attempts to speak.

JAKE

General Brady should answer that.

SECDEF BAKER
I'm asking you.

JAKE
But-

SECDEF BAKER
-I know what he's gonna say and I
want the truth!

JAKE
It's best I stay in my lane... I
mean, it depends on the
circumstances. When we test...we
can't control-

SECDEF BAKER
-Cut the bullshit, damn it!

Jake reconsiders his response. Decides to be honest.

JAKE
Once the kill vehicle separates,
our midcourse intercept system has
a success rate of sixty-one
percent.

SECDEF BAKER
(disbelief)
So it's a fucking coin toss...?

Another beat of awkward silence - no one sure what to say.

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
That's what *fifty billion* dollars
buys us?!

An explanation, not an excuse -

JAKE
We're talking about hitting a
bullet with a bullet.

And then the muffled sound of background SIRENS, followed by--

POTUS
Hello? Can anyone hear me?

SECDEF BAKER
(relieved)
Mr. President. Let us get you up to
speed.

CUT TO:

77 **EXT. RUNWAY - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER - NIGHT**

At the edge of a dark runway. The doors of a massive HANGAR slide open, REVEALING -

A **B2 STEALTH BOMBER.**

78 **INT. HANGAR - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER** 78

Ltc. Belcher and Cpt. Zimmer jog across the hangar to their B2's boarding ladder.

Ltc. Belcher climbs into the cockpit first. Cpt. Zimmer hesitates. He stands transfixed as -

AVIATION ORDNANCEMEN push a rack of B-61-12 NUCLEAR BOMBS under the plane's bat-like wings and begin loading them.

CUT TO:

79 **INT. WEST WING HALLWAY - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC** 79

And now Jake rounds a corner.

He brushes past ABBY - the journalist from earlier - head down, texting, walking briskly in the opposite direction.

And he finds a man standing in the doorway of his office.

JAKE
(to the man)
Excuse me?

Another SECRET SERVICE AGENT turns around.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
This your office?

JAKE
Yeah-

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
-I need you to come with me, sir.

CUT TO:

80 **EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING - DAY** 80

Lily exits her car and heads for the Capitol.

CUT TO:

81 **INT. HALLWAY - CAPITOL BUILDING - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY** 81

Late, Lily hurries to work. She's almost to her office when -
 SENATOR MARTIN CLANCY - her boss - bursts out of a Hearing
 Room, flanked by CAPITOL POLICE OFFICERS. They jog right past
 her, toward the building's exit.

Lily stands, startled. And then -

LILY
 Sir? Everything okay?

Sen. Clancy finally pauses at the exit and looks directly at
 Lily.

Fear in his eyes.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Marty? Where are you going?

Sen. Clancy doesn't answer. The Capitol Police usher him
 outside.

A beat, Lily stands there unsettled. Then she notices -- her
 phone is vibrating.

She fishes it from her purse just as it stops ringing. A
 MISSED CALL - from Jake -

82 **INT. HALLWAY - BASEMENT - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC** 82

- who stares at his phone, frustrated. He's about to dial
 again, but -

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
 Now, sir.

- stands impatiently waiting. Reluctantly, Jake steps into -

83 **INT. PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER (PEOC) - WHITE
 HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC**

- a small, cramped conference room. The ceiling is low, the
 furniture functional but spartan.

A dozen "essential" WHITE HOUSE STAFFERS stand around a large
 table, where several LAPTOPS and LANDLINE phones are set up.

Everyone looks stunned, unsure what to do. Several are out of
 breath from running.

SUPER: Presidential Emergency Operation Center

Jake's shirt is soaked through almost completely. He moves closer to the table, where the Conference continues on
SPEAKER PHONE -

POTUS
(incredulous)
So it could be a *mistake*?

CJCS
On our end or theirs?

POTUS
Who the hell are 'they'?!

NORTHCOM COMMANDER
Not ours, Mr. President. An object is definitely inbound.

POTUS
(exasperated)
What I'm asking is... what are the odds this is an *intentional* strike?

A beat of silence.

NORTHCOM COMMANDER
The odds? I'd put them at seventy-five percent, sir.

PACCOM COMMANDER
I'd say eighty percent.

CJCS
All due respect. I'm closer to fifty-fifty.

POTUS
(angry)
Is there anyone on this call who can do better than shot-in-the-dark guesses?! We're not handicapping the fucking Army-Navy game.

Jake steps forward -

JAKE
Mr. President?

POTUS
Who's that?

JAKE

Jake Baerington, sir. We met briefly, before the G8 last year.

Impatient silence. No one cares.

JAKE (CONT'D)

If someone could... if we could reach Ana Park? She's the National Intelligence Officer for the DPRK. She'll have a more informed view on North Korean intentions and capabilities-

POTUS

Well how do I talk to *her*, then?

JAKE

We're getting her for you, Mr. President.

And now Admiral Miller steps inside the PEOC. The reenforced STEEL DOOR closes behind him. And - WHOOSH - the air seal closes.

A beat of silence as it sinks in - they're locked in a tomb for their own protection.

CUT TO:

84

EXT. DANIEL LADY FARM - GETTYSBURG, PA - DAY

84

The Reenactors line up, checking their MUSKETS and BAYONETS one last time. Aidan watches, captivated by the spectacle, then notices -

His mom isn't paying attention. She's staring at her phone.

ANA

(confused)

I think I have to call the office.

And then -- Ana's phone RINGS in her hand. It startles her, and she answers -

ANA (CONT'D)

Hello?

- and takes Aidan's hand, as the muskets begin to FIRE, pulling him back to his feet -

AIDAN

Mom!

- and leads him out of the bleachers again, jostling annoyed, seated Tourists as they go.

INTERCUT -

85

INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

85

JAKE

Ana - it's Jake.

ANA

Jake...I just got a JEEP alert -

JAKE

-you're on an NSCC with the President.

POTUS

Ms. Park, they tell me you're the expert.

JAKE

There was a launch, Ana.

Jake checks the closest monitor.

JAKE (CONT'D)

About ten minutes ago. Not a test. We need answers. Starting with... Could the DPRK have an SSBN capability we don't know about? And how likely is it that the regime would initiate a strike like this?

Tripping over other people's legs, dragging Aidan behind her, Ana is still struggling to process -

ANA

A strike? Mr. President... I'm sorry... Jake? I'm off today...I'm not even--

JAKE

--Ana. Please. This is real.

Ana and Aidan are finally out of the bleachers. She lets go of his hand and he runs to watch the ongoing reenactment from the grass a few feet away.

Another BOOM! - as more cannons fire.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Ana?

It's enough to focus her.

ANA
Right. Sorry.

She walks a few steps farther away from the mayhem to a quieter clearing so she can hear the call.

ANA (CONT'D)
I can't answer either question with certainty. But they've absolutely been *seeking* a sea-based launch capability. They deployed a modified Romeo-class sub, two years ago, carrying ten short-range cruise missiles.

POTUS
But why? *Why* would they do this?

ANA
The regime's primary motivation is self-preservation.

POTUS
Well wouldn't *that* discourage them?

JAKE
Mr. President - they may think they can survive a retaliatory strike -

ANA
- which given their dispersed command and control and mobile launch systems - is entirely possible -

JAKE
-and then negotiate relief for themselves. No more launches in exchange for aid.

POTUS
They think they can blackmail us?

ANA
If you're losing a board game, you might as well topple it over.

As this sinks in, INTERCUT -

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

GEN. BRADY

Ms. Park, this is General Brady at Stratcom. Last I checked, Moscow's not exactly winning the 'game' either.

ANA

You're not wrong, sir. The Russians are stretched and cornered. They've been coordinating more closely with Beijing. And they've grown far more aggressive with their sub deployments.

(thinking)

Where, exactly, in the Pacific did the launch originate?

A long pause, no one answering.

GEN. BRADY

We can't be precise, ma'am.

(beat)

The DSP satellite missed it.

ANA

You're fucking kidding.

Jake's rattled too.

POTUS

Why the hell does that matter?
We're tracking it now, aren't we?

JAKE

We are. It's just...blinding a DSP satellite could indicate we've been compromised. A cyber penetration of our command and control systems.

GEN. BRADY

Which would strongly suggest a sophisticated, coordinated assault that is only just beginning.

Backtracking, as he sees where this is going -

JAKE

There's no hard evidence. We'd need more information...

Now just spitballing -

ANA

The Chinese Navy's been experimenting with AI-assisted launch systems? This could be a technical mishap?

Frustrated, dismissing her -

POTUS

Alright, that's enough of this. This is a waste of time.

JAKE

Mr. President, a cyber expert could-

POTUS

-Then find one!

GEN. BRADY

-EKV-Lead has separated from the first GBI.

(beat)

One minute to intercept.

87

EXT. DANIEL LADY FARM - GETTYSBURG, PA - DAY

87

Ana scans the crowd for her son.

ANA

Aidan!

From around the corner, with a wide grin on his face -

AIDAN

Boo!

On Ana's phone only - the Conference now goes silent and -

SCPO DAVIS (OVER PHONE)

Ma'am? I'm disconnecting you.

ANA (INTO PHONE)

Oh. Ok - Wait...

(beat)

What do I do now?

A beat.

SCPO DAVIS (OVER PHONE)

If you've received a JEEP Alert, you should get moving.

AIDAN
 (off Ana's reaction)
 Mom, what happened?

A VOLLEY of CANNON BLASTS as hundreds of Reenactors charge toward each other across the field.

CUT TO:

88 **INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA** 88

Gen. Brady and Maj. Gen. Kyle rise as everyone on the Battle Deck watches the EKV close on the incoming ICBM.

Over the speaker, SPC Nolan's voice from Ft. Greely -

 SGT. NOLAN (O.S.)
 Nine. Eight. Seven. Six. Five.

89 **INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC** 89

Jake, Adm. Miller and the other staff listen also -

 SGT. NOLAN (O.S.)
 Four. Three. Two. One...

- as ON SCREEN - the two objects seemingly collide.

90 **INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA** 90

Gen. Brady and Maj. Gen. Kyle listen as -

 MAJ. GONZALEZ (OVER SPEAKER)
 Confirm impact.
 (beat)
 Confirm impact!

 LT. BUCK (OVER SPEAKER)
 Standby, confirm.

 MAJ. GONZALEZ (OVER SPEAKER)
 Come on, what are you waiting for?!

Close on Gen. Brady and Maj. Gen. Kyle for the longest beat imaginable. And then -

 LT. BUCK (OVER SPEAKER)
 Negative.
 (beat, disbelief)
 I...
 (MORE)

LT. BUCK (OVER SPEAKER) (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 Negative, impact.

Gen. Brady shrugs, ever so slightly. Not indifferent, but not surprised either.

GEN. BRADY
 Like Baker said. Coin toss.

CPT. KAGAN (OVER SPEAKER)
 We did every fucking thing right!

And then -

GEN. BRADY
 Mr. President - confirming Defcon
 One, sir.

CUT TO:

91 **INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC**

91

In the bunker, several Staff are in a state of shock and disbelief.

ON SCREEN - The Estimated Zone of Impact is now a dot on Chicago.

TIME TO IMPACT: 8:02...8:01...8:00...

JAKE
 What now, sir?

ADM. MILLER
 There is no Plan B.

CUT TO:

92 **EXT. RUNWAY - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER**

92

The matte black B2s - barely visible against the night sky - take off, side-by-side.

93 **INT. FLIGHT LOUNGE - UNDISCLOSED LOCATION - PACIFIC THEATER**

The flight lounge is empty. Klaxon still blaring. Red light spinning. On the floor -

The discarded stuffed Penguin.

CUT TO:

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

Gen. Brady tries to focus the President.

POTUS (O.S.)
Why's that book out?!

GEN. BRADY
Mr. President, significant time and expertise was devoted to designing these options. You'll find a range - Select, Limited and Major - depending on the scale of the response you feel is warranted.
(beat)
I suggest you allow Lt. Commander Reeves to brief you.

But, now, from the front of the Battle Deck -

STRATCOM WATCH OFFICER #1
Gadzhiyev appears to be emptying!

On a small WALL MONITOR - a SATELLITE IMAGE of a PORT, several long PIERS jutting into the Arctic waters. The adjacent RUSSIAN SUBMARINES all departing...

STRATCOM WATCH OFFICER #2
Longpo too! Three 055 Renhai-class Destroyers on the move.

An IMAGE of another PORT - several Chinese vessels exiting into the South China Sea.

STRATCOM WATCH OFFICER #3
Jesus Christ... I've got action at Khorramabad too! Sirens in Tel Aviv...

A RED ICON flashes over a MISSILE BASE in southwest Iran.

And now, Gen. Brady studies the largest IMAGE on the WALL:

A MAP OF THE WORLD - MULTI-COLORED SYMBOLS denoting ENEMY ARMORED DIVISIONS, AIRCRAFT, NAVAL VESSELS - a frenzy of movement in every hotspot, all over the world - from the Taiwan Straits to the Red Sea.

Gen. Brady takes in the chaos, grimacing.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
Everyone knows we missed.

Maj. Gen. Brady nods and gets back on the Conference -

GEN. BRADY

Mr. President, we're seeing some concerning activity from our adversaries on a number of fronts.

POTUS

More concerning than a goddamn nuclear launch?!

Gen. Brady stays calm. Glances at another update on his screen.

GEN. BRADY

Sir, the USS *Virginia* reports it's just lost contact with its shadow, one of *four* hostile Russian submarines we're tracking in the north Atlantic, each presumed to be armed with 16 SLBMs.

(beat)

Until we know otherwise, we have to assume this may get worse.

POTUS

General Brady - I know everyone's trying to do their jobs here, but we need to slow the fuck down.

A beat, no one sure how to respond. Jake tries to help -

JAKE

The President's right, General. There's no way he can make informed decisions under these circumstances.

Gen. Brady takes a breath for patience. He looks at the Wall Monitor where the ICBM closes on Chicago. And he paves the road to Armageddon

GEN. BRADY

With all due respect, Mr. President...Mr. Baerington... slowing down is the one luxury we regrettably don't have. These are the circumstances.

(beat)

In little more than seven minutes, we will lose the city of Chicago.

(beat)

I can't tell you why.

(MORE)

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)

Or why we are seeing North Korea, Russia, China, Pakistan and even Iran, raising their alerts and mobilizing across air, land and sea. They *may* - as Mr. Baerington suggested earlier - be simply and innocently, responding to *our* posture.

(beat)

It is also possible they've seen our homeland is about to absorb a catastrophic blow, and they are readying to take advantage of that. Opportunistically. In whatever corner of the globe they can.

(beat)

Or maybe this is *all* a phased, coordinated assault, and everything we're seeing now is part of a master plan, with far worse to come.

(beat)

I simply don't know.

(beat)

What I do know is this: If we do not take steps to neutralize our enemies - *now* - we will lose our window to do so. We can strike back, preemptively, to eliminate the threat, or risk another hundred ICBMs soon launching our way, at which point, we will have already lost the war.

A beat as everyone processes this.

POTUS

And if there is no 'war'? If this is it?

GEN. BRADY

I think we'd all welcome any indication of that. As unfathomable as it was just five minutes ago, I'd accept the loss of ten million Americans if I could be absolutely certain it stops there.

(beat)

Of course, in the absence of that certainty, we can say a prayer and rely on the goodwill of our adversaries to keep us safe.

(beat)

(MORE)

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)

Or, we can hit their command centers, silos, and bombers while they're still on the ground - before they can take further action against us.

(beat)

We've already lost one American city today. How many more do you want to risk?

A long beat of silence on the Conference.

POTUS

What kind of a fucking question is that? This is insanity.

GEN. BRADY

No, sir. This is reality.

CUT TO:

95

INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

95

Jake's head is bowed, overwhelmed by it all. And now - Adm. Miller taps him on the shoulder, urgent -

ADM. MILLER

Jake, Sit Room has the Russian Foreign Minister. They can't merge the call.

(off Jake's confused look)

You need to pick up and take it.

Jake hesitates - looking around the room for anyone else who outranks him.

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

It has to be you.

Jake eyes the landline, gathering himself. Adm. Miller puts a hand on Jake's shoulder.

ADM. MILLER (CONT'D)

The President needs a reason not to retaliate. Get him one.

(beat)

You ready?

Jake nods, acknowledging the stakes. He picks up -

JAKE

This is Jake Baerington. I'm the Deputy National Security Advisor.

The connection is spotty, but comprehensible.

RUSSIAN FM (OVER PHONE)
You are authorized to speak for the
President?

Dodging the question -

JAKE
I-...I'm authorized to do
whatever's necessary to deescalate
the situation.

And now INTERCUT -

96

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - KREMLIN - MOSCOW

96

The **RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER** hovers over a SPEAKERPHONE.
Standing around him in a cavernous room are several uniformed
RUSSIAN OFFICERS, including a **GENERAL**.

RUSSIAN FM
Is that why your strategic bombers
are all airborne? What kind of de-
escalation is that?

JAKE
Mr. Foreign Minister. You must
understand that's only a
precaution. Our country is about to
be hit by an entirely unprovoked
and unprecedented attack.

A beat - as the Russian Foreign Minister looks at the General
for guidance. The General nods for him to proceed.

RUSSIAN FM
Which we had nothing to do with.

Jake jumps on that -

JAKE
Do I have your word on that? Can I
assure the President that Russia is
not behind this launch and won't
seek to capitalize on it?

RUSSIAN FM
And do I have your word, that you
won't? Use this as an excuse to
wipe us out?

JAKE
That's ridiculous-

RUSSIAN FM
-Is it? You may tell your President
that if your forces do not stand
down, we will be compelled to
respond in kind.

Grasping... Adm. Miller writes on a NOTE PAD: SSBN Atlantic
Coast. Need it to surface.

JAKE
(acknowledging the note)
You have a sub off our coast. It
just slipped its shadow.

RUSSIAN FM
So?

This is the game-

JAKE
-Order it to surface. Now.
To identify its location. As a show
of good faith...

RUSSIAN FM
So you can blow it out of the
water?!

Jake fears he's losing him, erupts -

JAKE
Listen to me. *Please!* We are
running out of time!
(beat)
My wife is six months pregnant.

The Russian Foreign Minister is silent. The General is
clearly unmoved.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Look - I'm sorry. But if we get
this wrong, none of us are going to
be alive tomorrow.
(beat, calmer)
If you didn't do this - and I
believe you - I can promise we will
not hit any Russian targets. Can
you promise me you will stand down
your long-range, strategic assets?
Call your subs back to port?

The Russian General shakes his head in disgust. But the Foreign Minister tries -

RUSSIAN FM

Better there be no retaliation at all-

JAKE

-I agree, and I'll push for that. But that's not my decision.

RUSSIAN FM

If you do retaliate, can you guarantee your response will not infringe on our airspace?

Jake looks to Adm. Miller, Adm. Miller nods.

JAKE

Our bombers, yes. Of course.

RUSSIAN FM

And your missiles? If you determine China is responsible?

Jake pauses, knows his answer could determine the outcome. Knows he has no choice but to be honest.

Adm. Miller covers the phone.

ADM. MILLER

Tell the truth.

JAKE

We both know there would be some overflight. There's no way around that-

RUSSIAN FM

-And you expect us to simply trust the warheads flying over our heads are not destined for our cities?

JAKE

(pleading)

Hopefully there won't be any warheads. But if there are, yes. I am asking you to trust me.

The Russian Foreign Minister looks at the General, who offers no encouragement. Another long beat.

RUSSIAN FM

Trust...

(beat)

I will talk to my President.

JAKE

What if-

OFF JAKE, as the line goes dead...

CUT TO:

97

INT. COCKPIT - B2 - OVER THE PACIFIC - NIGHT

97

Instrument lights dance off the helmets of Ltc. Belcher and Cpt. Zimmer, seated side-by-side.

LTC. BELCHER (INTO RADIO)

Darkstar, this is Ghost 1.

Approaching loiter position.

The combat controller from a nearby AWAC answers -

AWAC (OVER RADIO)

Ghost 1-1, Darkstar, picture clean.

(beat)

Standby mission data package.

A beat - and the onboard console populates with a Mission Data Package (MDP).

Cpt. Zimmer scrolls through the list of coordinates - SIXTEEN TARGETS to be hit with one of their nuclear gravity bombs.

CPT. ZIMMER

(disbelief)

Jack, is this right?

But Ltc. Belcher is focused -

LTC. BELCHER (INTO RADIO)

Darkstar, Ghost, MDP confirmed.

AWAC (OVER RADIO)

Ghost, Darkstar, standby execution order.

CUT TO:

98

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

98

Maj. Gen. Kyle reports to Gen. Brady -

MAJ. GEN. KYLE
 Forward-deployed B2s are at loiter
 position.

Gen. Brady takes in the WALL one more time:

Alert Status - **DEFCON 1.**

StratCom Map - the ICBM is nearly on top of Chicago.

Global Map - absolute chaos.

TIME TO IMPACT - **4:02...4:02...4:00...**

Gen. Brady rejoins the Conference -

GEN. BRADY
 Mr. President, we're going to need
 your decision. Lt. Commander Reeves
 is your Strike Advisor and can walk
 you through the authentication
 process. Then you'll need to read
 aloud an Attack Option Designation.

POTUS
 Yeah, I understand all that...
 (beat)
 Reid? I need...
 (beat)
 What do you think, Reid?

But there's no reply from the Defense Secretary.

POTUS (CONT'D)
 Reid??
 (beat)
 Did we lose him?

Then, in the background, commotion followed by -

WOMAN
 (hysterical)
 Oh, god! Oh, god!!!

- and the connection to that line severs.

POTUS
 What the hell was that?

Before anyone can answer -

JAKE
 Mr. President?

- Jake rejoins.

POTUS

Yeah?

INTERCUT -

99

INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

99

All eyes are on Jake.

JAKE

It's Jake, again. Baerington.

(beat)

I just spoke to the Russian Foreign Minister. He denied responsibility for the launch. Said he spoke to the Chinese and doesn't think it was them, either.

(beat)

I believed him, sir.

POTUS

You did? Are they going to back down?

Jake hesitates - he knows he has to tell the truth. But that whatever he says could determine the fate of humanity.

JAKE

I think they want to. If we can guarantee we won't retaliate. I think I - I mean we - can convince them.

POTUS

(impatient)

What does that mean?

JAKE

We stand down first. We don't launch. Against anyone. For now.

POTUS

So we just sit back and watch Chicago incinerate? Are you fucking kidding me? You think the American people will go for that?

JAKE

I don't know-

(grasping)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

-The warhead could still malfunction - they do sometimes...

POTUS

-Did he commit to those terms? We do nothing, they'll back off for certain?

JAKE

More or less-

POTUS

-More or less?!

A tense beat of silence after the outburst. And then, softer-

POTUS (CONT'D)

Jake?

JAKE

Yes, sir.

POTUS

I want you to take a breath.

JAKE

I'm breathing just fine, sir.

POTUS

My job is to make this decision. I wish it weren't. And yours is to tell me *exactly* what this guy agreed to, no bullshit. Can you do that?

JAKE

He didn't agree to anything. He said he needed to talk to his President first.

Saying it aloud, even Jake realizes how little reassurance it provides.

GEN. BRADY

Sounds to me like we know nothing new.

JAKE

Wrong, General.

(beat)

If we do what he's asking...if we hold back... there's at least a chance.

Another beat. Then Gen. Brady fills the silence -

GEN. BRADY
Two minutes, thirty seconds.

POTUS ignores the General.

POTUS
Jake? I do what you're suggesting...let whoever did this, just get away with it... How's that different from surrendering?

JAKE
No- I...
(beat)
If you want to look at it that way...

Jake trails off. Then realizes there's no way around it -

JAKE (CONT'D)
I'm telling you your choice is surrender, or suicide.

A long silence. And then, exhausted -

POTUS
Hold on. I need a minute.

100

INT. PEOC - WHITE HOUSE

100

POTUS puts his connection on hold. The Conference is silent.

Jake sits in a daze. He turns to Adm. Miller, who's been beside him, listening.

Jake nods his appreciation, but there's never been more empty praise.

JAKE
What now?

ADM. MILLER
(on auto-pilot)
I call Ft. Belvoir. Put the Army Corps of Engineers on standby in case the White House gets hit and they need to dig us out of here.

JAKE
Seriously?

ADM. MILLER
That's what the plan says.

JAKE
There's a plan for this?

CUT TO:

101

INT. COCKPIT - B2 BOMBER - OVER THE PACIFIC

101

The B2 banks as it circles, maintaining position. Cpt. Zimmer stares down at the ink-black ocean below, seemingly lost in thought.

LTC. BELCHER
If this order comes through...

Cpt. Zimmer finally looks away from the water.

CPT. ZIMMER
I know my job, sir.

CUT TO:

EXT. 341st MISSILE WING - WARREN AFB - MONTANA - DAY

A field of Minutemen III LAUNCH SILOS. The ground rumbles as all 50 begin to open.

**SUPER: 341st Missile Wing | Air Force Global Strike Command |
Malmstrom Air Force Base | Montana**

CUT TO:

103

INT. COMMAND CENTER - USS NEVADA - SOMEWHERE IN THE PACIFIC

Together, using their thumbs and forefingers, TWO SAILORS both grip an EMERGENCY ACTION MESSAGE (EAM), the size of a plastic playing card. Facing each other, walking sideways, they carry it across the crowded conn to -

The CAPTAIN and EXECUTIVE OFFICER, who stand waiting with an open CODEBOOK. The Captain takes the EAM and compares it to the contents of the book. The Executive Officer does the same.

**SUPER: USS Nevada | Continuous At-Sea Deterrence Patrol |
Somewhere in the Pacific**

SUB CAPTAIN
Romeo, Bravo, Juliet, Whiskey,
Delta, Foxtrot, Echo.
(MORE)

SUB CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

(beat)

Missilization order is authentic.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Romeo, Bravo, Juliet, Whiskey,
Delta, Foxtrot, Echo. I concur with
missilization. I concur with
missilization.

ARMED SAILORS stand watch as the Captain now reaches for one of the dozen COLORED KEYS hanging from his hip. The Executive Officer does the same.

As they both insert the keys into adjacent consoles -

SUB CAPTAIN

Three, two, one, turn.

They do.

WEAPONS OFFICER

Sir, standing by for fire order.

CUT TO:

104

INT. BATTLE DECK - STRATCOM C2F - NEBRASKA

104

The Battle Deck is a frenzy of activity. On the WALL MONITOR, the ICBM is nearly on top of Chicago.

TIME TO IMPACT - 0:49...0:48...0:47...

Gen. Brady and Maj. Gen. Kyle stand side-by-side, waiting.

MAJ. GEN. KYLE

Sir, your nuclear forces are ready.

(beat)

What if he doesn't get back on...?

Gen. Brady is calm, entirely focused on procedure.

GEN. BRADY

Decapitation Event. We find the Vice President. And if we can't reach him, the Speaker. Right on down the list.

But that won't be necessary. On the Conference -

POTUS

Ok. I'm here...

Gen. Brady waits.

POTUS (CONT'D)
November, Delta, Oscar, one, one,
one, seven.

GEN. BRADY
November, Delta, Oscar, one, one,
one, seven.
(beat)
National command authority
confirmed.

Gen. Brady steps forward, ready -

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)
Your orders, Mr. President?

SLAM CUT TO
BLACK.

SUPER:

A HOUSE FILLED WITH DYNAMITE

FADE IN:

105

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY - OVAL OFFICE - WHITE HOUSE - DAY

105

The formal sitting area just outside the Oval Office. A sharp contrast to the staff offices we've seen previously. Silence, but for the clack of a keyboard as **BETTY (46)**, the President's Assistant, slowly types a scheduling memo. Slowly, because Betty's eyes keep drifting to -

The **BLACK BRIEFCASE**, in the lap of White House Military Aide waiting across from her. **LIEUTENANT COMMANDER ROBERT REEVES (34)**, sits at attention. She notices that *he's* noticed - she's staring.

Betty looks away from the briefcase, self-conscious.

BETTY
You sure you don't want a coffee?
Water?

Lt. Commander Reeves smiles, trying to put her at ease.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
No thank you, ma'am.

SUPER: **Reception Oval Office | The White House**

She types another line, but her eyes can't help return to that briefcase. Lt. Commander Reeves is about to say something when -

The Oval Office door swings open - and a half-dozen AIDES pour out, deep in discussion. They walk past Betty and Lt. Commander Reeves without acknowledging their presence.

Lt. Commander Reeves glances back toward the Oval, where - *in our first glimpse of him* - POTUS is now visible, reading a document at the Resolute Desk.

And then - **BRUCE BLAIR (48)**, the President's Chief of Staff, steps into the doorway. He barks -

BRUCE
(to Betty)
Get us the Majority Leader. Quick.

And closes the door again. Betty checks the time - **8:43 AM** - and, annoyed, begins to dial -

BETTY
(under her breath)
Already forty-five minutes late...

Lt. Commander Reeves sits there, expressionless, and goes on waiting.

CUT TO:

106

EXT. 6TH FAIRWAY - COLUMBIA COUNTRY CLUB - BETHESDA, MD - DAY

THWACK! - Secretary of Defense Reid Baker strikes a perfect 9-iron shot.

He watches his ball arc across the clear blue sky and land on the edge of a perfectly manicured green.

It's a great shot, but he seemingly takes no pleasure in it, silently handing the club to his CADDY.

CADDY
That's looking more like it!

SecDef Baker just nods and starts walking, soaking in the early morning quiet, not another soul on the course.

His cell vibrates in his pocket and he answers.

SECDEF BAKER
No - I'm out playing nine...

He chuckles, whoever's on the line finally making him smile.

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)

It's going, I guess. Last time I was around all these uniforms, I was a private. They're *still* full of shit...

A longer response this time - SecDef Baker's expression growing somber as he listens, his pace slowing as he walks.

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)

Well, thanks, George. I appreciate that. We were lucky to have thirty-three great years. Meant the world you and Sheila came for the funeral.

(beat)

Right. Talk soon.

SecDef Baker hangs up and arrives at the green.

He stands next to his ball, a sadness settling over him. The only sound - early morning songbird.

The Caddy approaches, places a gentle hand on his shoulder and hands him his putter.

CADDY

Let's knock this in now?

SecDef Baker nods, grateful for the compassion, and lines up over the ball.

107

EXT. SEGERA RETREAT - KENYA - DAY

107

A small Safari camp in the Kenyan savannah. A convoy of jeeps idle, prepping to depart on a game drive. A TV crew films while the **FIRST LADY** speaks to a REPORTER.

The Reporter turns to the TV Crew who nod that they have enough footage.

The First Lady wanders away and takes a SATELLITE PHONE from her SECRET SERVICE AGENT who waits nearby. She dials and gazes out on the vast expanse of unspoiled wilderness. The call connects -

POTUS (OVER PHONE)

I was hoping I'd catch you.

FIRST LADY (INTO PHONE)
I wish you were here to see this.
Puts it all in perspective.

SUPER: **Laikipia, Kenya**

POTUS (OVER PHONE)
So it's going well?

FIRST LADY (INTO PHONE)
They say anything that raises
awareness helps.
(beat)
You sound tired.

INTERCUT -

108

INT. OVAL STUDY - WHITE HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC

108

POTUS is alone in the private alcove next to the Oval. He
leans back, truly exhausted.

POTUS
I'm fine.

FIRST LADY
My husband...the only politician
who can't lie to save his life.

POTUS smiles.

POTUS
Okay. I'm fucking beat. Didn't
someone promise we'd get used to it
after awhile?

FIRST LADY
Not me. I remember 'worse than the
campaign'. I think they said it
would break us, actually.
(beat)
Speaking of...we need to talk about
my mother. The doctor's saying she
needs full-time help.
(beat)
Hello? Are you there? It's not just
me, it's the doctor.

POTUS sighs.

POTUS

When you're back. Not fair for you to have the "saving-the-elephants" high ground.

FIRST LADY

I always have the high ground and don't you forget it, buddy.

POTUS

(changing the subject)

You all right, though? You okay?

The connection starts to fade.

FIRST LADY

Fine. Yeah. I'd like to do s-- thing --out the schools in the c-- p. Could Deirdre help?

POTUS

I didn't c-tch ----. But whatever you need, I'm sure---

He cuts off.

FIRST LADY

Hon? You there? Can you hear me?

The call disconnects. POTUS calls out to -

POTUS

Bruce, what do we have now?

Bruce enters the Study.

BRUCE

Basketball, sir.

POTUS

Oh. That's the, um...Angel Reese thing??

BRUCE

Yeah, with the kids.

(beat)

You ready for that?

POTUS

Of course.

BRUCE

Been shooting around a little bit?

POTUS volleys back to Bruce.

POTUS
You got a jump shot?

BRUCE
Do I have a jump shot?

POTUS
Yeah.

BRUCE
Little one...maybe.

POTUS
Show me.

Old friends joking around.

BRUCE
You want to see it?

POTUS
No.

POTUS gets up and takes off his shoe.

POTUS (CONT'D)
Hey Betty, can you ask the guy to
put the insole in this thing?

BETTY (O.S.)
What happened? It slipped out
again?

She comes running in. POTUS hands her the shoe.

POTUS
I don't know what's going on with
it...

CUT TO:

109 **EXT. PARKING LOT** 109

The Presidential Motorcade pulls out of a parking lot.

110 **EXT. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - STREET - DAY** 110

The PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE led by several MOTORCYCLES, sirens
blaring.

Behind them - blacked-out SUVs and three VANS carrying the SECRET SERVICE COUNTER-ASSAULT TEAM, Electronic Countermeasures and Communications Gear.

In the center of the procession - the armored PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - aka "The Beast".

111

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - SPORTS ARENA - DAY

111

Ken Cho, SAIC of the Presidential Protection Detail, rides in the back, across from a yawning POTUS. (*We met SAIC Cho briefly, earlier, in the Mess.*)

POTUS

What's the name of the school? The class?

SAIC CHO

The Jump Shot Girls' Basketball Camp, sir.

POTUS

How's your jump shot, Ken?

SAIC CHO

It's not bad, sir. How about yours?

POTUS

I don't have the knees.

CUT TO:

112

INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - DAY

112

SecDef Baker enters his office, followed by his own Chief of Staff, LINDSAY WATTS (34), who briefs him on the schedule -

LINDSAY

After the budget signing, I've slotted some prep time for the hearing next week.

SECDEF BAKER

Which one is that?

LINDSAY

House Oversight, Red Sea Shipping Task Force?

SECDEF BAKER

Right. Sure.

SUPER: Office of the Secretary of Defense | The Pentagon

SecDef Baker sits behind his desk. He glances at a photo of himself, middle-aged, and his LATE WIFE, in Hawaiian shirts at a fancy resort. And another - him, much younger, a LITTLE GIRL on his lap.

He lingers on the Little Girl. And then refocuses -

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
Ok. Whose ass am I kissing first?

LINDSAY
Senator Cunningham, Democrat,
Connecticut. He's supported the
additional funding from the start.

SecDef Baker picks up the phone -

SECDEF BAKER
This is Secretary Baker.

CUT TO:

113

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - SPORTS ARENA - DAY

113

SAIC Cho raises his wrist radio and reports -

SAIC CHO
Icon arriving.

POTUS
How's my tie?

SAIC CHO
It's good, sir.

- and the motorcade comes to a stop.

114

EXT. PARKING LOT - SPORTS ARENA

114

SAIC Cho exits The Beast and opens the door for POTUS, who emerges and waves to a small crowd as he walks toward the building.

Just a few steps behind - Lt. Commander Reeves exits the next SUV back, that briefcase fastened to his wrist, and follows POTUS.

115 INT. HALLWAY - SPORTS ARENA

115

POTUS walks the long tunnel from the locker rooms to the court. Secret Service and local Police line the walls.

The sound of the waiting crowd grows louder, and REPORTERS shout -

REPORTERS

Mr. President!/How's it going today?/You think you can take her?

POTUS

I don't know about that.

116 INT. COURT - SPORTS ARENA

116

- as he finally emerges onto a basketball court where KIDS run dribbling drills under the tutelage of WNBA star, **ANGEL REESE (23)**. LOUD CHEERS from the PARENTS AND FANS and watching as -

ANGEL

It's an honor to have you, Mr. President.

POTUS

Great to be here! I came to play.

He playfully holds up his hands, asking for a pass, and she tosses him a ball. He takes a shot - and shanks off the backboard. The Kids laugh.

POTUS (CONT'D)

Hey! I'm just warming up!

More laughter, as all eyes are now on him - and he takes another shot and sinks it. The crowd goes crazy.

POTUS (CONT'D)

(to the kids)

How great is it, to be missing a morning of school?

Another cheer, POTUS really turning on the charm -

CUT TO:

117 INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

117

SecDef Baker finishes his call -

SECDEF BAKER (INTO PHONE)
That sounds great. I'll have my
office call over with some dates.
Thanks, Senator.

Lindsay appears in the doorway.

LINDSAY
Sir, whizzer's on the line.

SecDef Baker sits up a little straighter. On his desk is a
SECURE VIDEO-CONFERENCE MONITOR. (*It will display the
Conference and the familiar visuals of the countdown clock
and map.*) He reaches to turn on the Monitor -

LINDSAY (CONT'D)
SAS card?

SECDEF BAKER
Shoot. That's right...

SecDef Baker reaches into his coat pocket and takes out a
GOLD CARD - twelve RANDOM NUMBERS and LETTERS printed across
it.

Then he turns on the Conference-

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
This is Secretary Baker.

SCPO DAVIS (OVER MONITOR)
Authenticate, sir?

As SecDef Baker now reads off the card -

SECDEF BAKER
Bravo-One-Nine-Four-One-Six...

CUT TO:

118

INT. COURT - SPORTS ARENA

118

POTUS
Now, they tell me that means I've
gotta teach you something. And as
you just saw, it's not gonna be how
to shoot. But if you don't mind,
I'm gonna bore you with a story
about how sports helped change my
life. Unlike Angel here, I wasn't
athletic...

SAIC Cho and Lt. Commander Reeves stand just outside the gym, waiting with other AIDES.

SAIC CHO
I hear you're rotating out next month?

Lt. Commander Reeves nods -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
Back to Omaha.

A loud LAUGH from inside the gym, POTUS on a roll.

SAIC CHO
Bet you're gonna miss this...
Standing around backstage while the star performs?

Lt. Commander Reeves shrugs, noncommittal.

SAIC CHO (CONT'D)
He's my third. They're all chronically late narcissists. At least this one reads the newspaper.

CUT TO:

119

INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

119

Lindsay listens with concern as SecDef Baker declares -

SECDEF BAKER
My understanding was we initiate on launch to get people moving, I don't wanna be caught with our pants down.
(beat)
Go ahead, Tony.

And then, she watches SecDef Baker physically deflate as he listens -

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
(faint)
Did you say Chicago...?
(beat)
My daughter lives in Chicago.

CUT TO:

120

INT. HALLWAY - SPORTS ARENA

120

Lt. Commander Reeves feels his phone vibrate in his pocket. With the hand not holding the case, he takes it out.

SAIC Cho clocks this. Watches as Lt. Commander Reeves steps away, answering the phone -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

Hello?

- and the WH Chief of Staff, Bruce, comes jogging around the corner, also with a phone to his ear.

BRUCE

(to SAIC Cho)

We need to pull him.

They both glance at POTUS in the gym, still entertaining the large crowd.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Quickly, if we can.

SAIC Cho glances at Lt. Commander Reeves now huddled on his phone, and at Bruce, barely veiled panic on his face.

SAIC CHO

What the hell's going on?

And then - over SAIC Cho's radio -

VOICE

Initiate Ivy Post.

Repeat, Ivy Post.

121

INT. SPORTS ARENA - COURT

121

Another loud CHEER, and POTUS looks out over the crowd. Dozens of Kids and Parents captivated, smiling back at him. A beat, as he takes it in, soaking up the moment.

POTUS

You know, if we're going to fix this country's problems...if we're going to fix the *world's* problems...it's gonna mean working together. Teamwork, like you're learning today...

And then - from the corner of his eye POTUS sees -

SAIC Cho runs toward him.

It's too odd to fully register. On autopilot, POTUS continues -

POTUS (CONT'D)

I think--

But before he can finish that thought -

SAIC CHO

Go! Go! Go!

- he's lifted by the elbows, off his feet, by two closer SECRET SERVICE AGENTS. The Crowd GASPS.

POTUS

What the-

And Secret Service Agents haul him toward the exit.

A knot of people block their path. They charge right through, knocking Parents, Fans and Reporters to the ground.

They step over several children.

SAIC Cho is right behind them, as they charge -

122

I/E. LOADING DOCK - SPORTS ARENA - DAY

122

- into a loading dock, where The Beast screeches to a stop right in front of them. The Secret Service Agents open the door and shove POTUS into the back seat.

A beat - and Lt. Commander Reeves also bursts outside, trailing only by a second.

Lt. Commander Reeves jumps into the backseat of the Beast with POTUS, SAIC Cho right behind him.

123

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - STREETS - WASHINGTON, DC

123

POTUS is thrown back as The Beast now accelerates out of the loading dock. He looks across Lt. Commander Reeves, to SAIC Cho on the opposite window, but SAIC Cho is on the radio -

SAIC CHO

Negative. That's twenty minutes to the South Lawn. We'll go to Andrews.

POTUS takes a breath, trying to gather himself. Then erupts --

POTUS
What the fuck, Ken?!!!

Before SAIC Cho can answer, POTUS now sees -

Lt. Commander Reeves has the suitcase in his lap. And it's open.

INSIDE - "The Football"- A SECURE PHONE. And the "Black Book"
- a 9x11 BINDER.

Both SAIC Cho and POTUS stare as Lt. Commander Reeves calmly dials the Secure Phone and explains -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
I'm connecting you to an NSCC. The
United States is under attack, sir.

CUT TO:

124

INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

124

SecDef Baker hangs his head in stunned disbelief...

SECDEF BAKER
So it's a fucking coin toss? That's
what fifty billion dollars buys
us...

On his Monitor - the StratCom Map is now mirrored, as is -

TIME TO IMPACT - 14:32...14:31...14:30

POTUS
Hello, can anyone hear me?

SECDEF BAKER
Mr. President, let's get you up to
speed.

A beat, and he mutes the call. Thinks, then turns to Lindsay, who still stands frozen in front of his desk.

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
Lindsay! Where's the closest base
to Chicago?

LINDSAY
I'm not sure there is-?

SECDEF BAKER
-Any place that has a helicopter!

Lindsay takes out her phone, starts Googling -

LINDSAY
Maybe there's National Guard...

SECDEF BAKER
We need to find Carrie. Have her
picked up. They're saying it's
fifteen minutes...

Even he realizes it's absurd. Impossible. But Lindsay clocks
the desperation in his eyes.

LINDSAY
I'll try. I'll call them right
now...

Lindsay turns away and starts to dial. SecDef Baker
overhears -

POTUS
Reid? You still there?

REID
Yeah.

- now realizing, he unmutes the Conference. Barely disguising
his distraction -

SECDEF BAKER
Yeah... I am...

INTERCUT -

125

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - STREETS

125

POTUS sways in his seat as The Beast weaves through traffic
at breakneck speeds, the streets not pre-cleared.

POTUS
What do you make of all this?

SECDEF BAKER
I'm really not sure.

POTUS
You're not? You're running the
fucking Pentagon!

An awkward silence.

POTUS (CONT'D)

I had one briefing when I was sworn in. *One!* They told me that's the protocol--

SECDEF BAKER

They told me the same thing--

POTUS

--I got a whole fucking binder for when a Supreme Court Justice dies. Replacements. Replacements for when the replacement drops out. What to do if the original guy crawls out of his own fucking grave and wants his job back!

SECDEF BAKER

We focus on more likely scenarios. Things we might actually have to deal with...

POTUS

Well we're dealing with *this!*

SECDEF BAKER

Best I can remember, we're following procedure. We just follow the steps...

And then -

ANA

Hello?

JAKE

Ana - it's Jake.

ANA

Jake...I just got a JEEP alert -

JAKE

-you're on an NSCC with the President.

POTUS takes a breathe, more calmly -

POTUS

Ms. Park, they tell me you're the expert.

JAKE
There was a launch, Ana...

CUT TO:

126

INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

126

SecDef Baker mutes again. Takes out his cell phone and finds the contact for CAROLINE. He dials. It RINGS - once - goes straight to VOICEMAIL.

SECDEF BAKER
Hi...please don't send me to voicemail. It's your father. It's an emergency. Call me.

SecDef Baker then TEXTS: "Emergency. CALL ME. PLEASE."

To Lindsay -

SECDEF BAKER (CONT'D)
Did you reach someone?

LINDSAY
I'm on with Naval Station, Great Lakes. They're trying to get me whoever's in charge there.

SecDef Baker is grasping -

SECDEF BAKER
Maybe they can trace her phone? If she doesn't answer?

Before Lindsay can respond -

A **CID OFFICER**, the head of SecDef Baker's Protective Detail, steps into the doorway -

CID OFFICER
Your transport's ready. Let's go, sir.

SECDEF BAKER
Go where?

CID OFFICER
NMCC's initiated Ivy Post. Helo's inbound.

SECDEF BAKER

I didn't ask for that- What about this call? Aren't I supposed to stay on this call?

The CID Officer isn't sure how to respond.

LINDSAY

(into phone)

Yes! Thank you. Hold on one sec-
(to CID Officer)
What's happening here?

CID OFFICER

The Secretary needs to evacuate.

LINDSAY

Can I speak to you in the hallway please?

CUT TO:

127

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - STREETS

127

POTUS shakes his head in frustration -

POTUS

This is a waste of time.

JAKE

Mr. President, a cyber expert could-

POTUS

Then find one!

Suddenly - The Beast tilts - straddling a curve, sending POTUS into Lt. Commander Reeves as it now rides the shoulder.

GEN. BRADY

-EKV-Lead has separated from the first GBI. One minute to intercept.

POTUS

This better fucking work.

SECDEF BAKER

How will we know, Tony?

GEN. BRADY

Gimme a second. I'm going to put you all on speaker with the 100th MDB at Fort Greely.

THUMP! - The Beast comes off the curb, level again.

POTUS takes a breath and lowers the phone. SAIC Cho takes the opportunity to inform him -

SAIC CHO
Four minutes from the LZ.

POTUS looks out the window at all the oblivious DRIVERS in the CARS they're passing. One WOMAN is laughing. A MAN is playing AIR DRUMS along to music. Another WOMAN is smiling up at an INFANT in her rear-view mirror.

Inside The Beast, the only sound - SIRENS and HONKING HORNS as they now weave off the HIGHWAY, careening across a MEDIAN.

POTUS raises the phone again. In time to hear -

LT. BUCK
Standby, confirm.

The longest beat imaginable. And then -

LT. BUCK (CONT'D)
Negative.
(beat, disbelief)
I...
(beat)
Negative, impact.
(beat)
Object remains inbound.

There is silence on the Conference.

GEN. BRADY
Mr. President - confirming Defcon
One, sir.

POTUS
Confirming.

A beat, and now Lt. Commander Reeves calmly removes the Black Binder from his suitcase and opens it. Physically recoiling -

POTUS (CONT'D)
Why the hell is that book out?

Lt. Commander Reeves doesn't answer. Over the Secure Phone -

GEN. BRADY
Mr. President, significant time and
expertise was devoted to designing
these options.
(MORE)

GEN. BRADY (CONT'D)

You'll find a range - Select, Limited and Major - depending on the scale of the response you feel is warranted.

(beat)

I suggest you allow Lt. Commander Reeves to brief you.

With that, Lt. Commander Reeves opens the Binder. And recites from memory -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

Mr. President, per the provisions of OPLAN 8044, Revision 25, the NMCC requests authority to initiate a counterstrike.

Lt. Commander Reeves indicates each 20-page section divided by -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES (CONT'D)

Green tab are SAOs. Yellow, LAOs. Red, MAOs. Within each section, your options are organized by region.

He flips through the binder, stopping on LAO-23: A MAP of IRAN, major CITIES and MILITARY INSTALLATIONS marked by RED.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES (CONT'D)

On each page you'll find a designation number, both a map and list of targets, along with enemy casualty estimates.

On this one, the CASUALTY ESTIMATE reads: 16M.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES (CONT'D)

Where would you like to begin, sir?

POTUS just stares at Lt. Commander Reeves in disbelief. They're interrupted by -

GEN. BRADY

Mr. President, we're seeing some concerning activity from our adversaries on a number of fronts.

POTUS erupts -

POTUS
 More concerning than a goddamn
 nuclear launch?!

CUT TO:

128 INT. SECDEF'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

128

SecDef Baker sits at his desk in an apparent stupor. On his

SCREEN:

Time to Impact - 7:30...7:29...7:28...

StratCom Map - the ICBM closing on Chicago.

Eyes vacant, SecDef Baker reaches for his personal cell.

He dials CAROLINE again. It rings. And this time - she
 answers.

INTERCUT -

129 INT. CAROLINE'S APARTMENT - CHICAGO - DAY

129

CAROLINE (30), sharply dressed, in the bedroom of a well-
 appointed apartment, right in the heart of downtown Chicago.

CAROLINE
 Please stop.

SECDEF BAKER
 Carrie-

CAROLINE
 -I told you I need space.

SECDEF BAKER
 I know. I-
 (beat)
 Where are you?

A beat.

CAROLINE
 I'm not doing this-

SECDEF BAKER
 -Carrie, please!

The urgency of his tone cuts through.

CAROLINE
I'm home. About to leave for
rehearsal.

The last vestige of hope is gone. That she was traveling,
anyplace else.

On the StratCom Map - the ICBM inches closer.

Time to Impact - 7:10...7:09...7:08...

SecDef Baker is quiet.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
Look, can I call you later? My
therapist actually thinks...

She trails off.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I know we have to talk at some
point. With mom...It's just been a
lot, okay?

SECDEF BAKER
I know.

OVER CAROLINE'S PHONE, in the BACKGROUND -

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
You coming, hon? We're gonna be
late...

Caroline covers her phone. Shouts to the kitchen -

CAROLINE
(to the Man)
One minute!
(back to SecDef Baker)
Sorry.

I really have to go.

SECDEF BAKER
Who is that?

CAROLINE
A friend.

And then, for some reason, she decides to be honest.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)
I'm seeing someone.

SECDEF BAKER

You are?

The thought of this seems to lift his spirits.

CAROLINE

Yeah.

SECDEF BAKER

Is it serious?

Caroline laughs.

CAROLINE

C'mon...

SECDEF BAKER

Well is it?

CAROLINE

Yeah. I think so.

SecDef Baker checks the screen again. The clock keeps ticking. Time to Impact - **7:01...7:00...6:59...**

SECDEF BAKER

He's going with you to work?

CAROLINE

We walk together. It's in the same direction.

At least she won't be alone.

SECDEF BAKER

Good. That's good.

CAROLINE

You're being strange. And I think it's making me uncomfortable.

(beat)

I'll call you when I can, okay?

SECDEF BAKER

I love you, Carrie.

A long beat.

CAROLINE

Goodbye, Dad.

CUT TO:

130

I/E. PRESIDENTIAL LIMOUSINE - STREET OUTSIDE JBA - DAY

130

POTUS listens as Gen. Brady demands -

GEN. BRADY

We've lost one American city today.
How many more do you want to risk?

POTUS

What kind of fucking question is
that?!

A long beat of silence on the Conference.

POTUS (CONT'D)

This is insanity.

GEN. BRADY

No, sir. It's reality.

POTUS turns to Lt. Commander Reeves.

POTUS

What's your name, man?

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

Lieutenant Commander Reeves, sir.

POTUS

How old are you, man?

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

Thirty-two, sir.

POTUS

You got a family?

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

I have a wife, sir.

And with that - The Beast finally screeches to a stop -

131

EXT. JOINT BASE ANDREWS - MARYLAND - CONTINUOUS

131

- fifty yards from MARINE ONE, which waits, idling on the
tarmac.

SAIC Cho opens the door of The Beast.

POTUS - holding the Binder - and Lt. Commander Reeves -
holding the Secure Phone - step into the deafening roar of
the helicopter's downwash.

SAIC Cho takes POTUS by the arm and they jog to Marine One, where a CREW CHIEF waits in the doorway.

The Crew Chief ushers POTUS onboard, and then Lt. Commander Reeves.

SAIC Cho stays on the tarmac.

POTUS looks back at SAIC Cho, realizing - he's not coming with them.

POTUS tries to shout something - but it's drowned out by the rotors. The Crew Chief slams the door closed.

And SAIC Cho steps back, watching Marine One rise above him.

CUT TO:

132

I/E. MARINE ONE - OVER WASHINGTON - DAY

132

From the quiet, noise-cancelled cabin, POTUS looks back down at SAIC Cho, alone, disappearing beneath them. Then he looks down at the Binder in his lap, and tries to focus.

POTUS flips through the pages, settling on LAO-4. A MAP of the PACIFIC THEATER - inclusive of NORTH KOREA, eastern CHINA and RUSSIA, covered in TARGETS. Casualty Estimate: 10M.

From the seat next to him, Lt. Commander Reeves explains -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

Eighty-nine targets. Mostly military installations and leadership sites.

(beat)

As of last month, we have a B2 squadron forward-deployed. We'll also employ our Ohio-class subs, each with 24 Trident II D5, MIRV-equipped ballistic missiles. This option calls for a dozen Minutemen, as well, out of Warren.

Trying to process it -

POTUS

How does this make sure we won't be hit again? When I woke up this morning, everyone was *certain* the North Koreans couldn't launch from a sub. Now maybe they can. What else have we fucked up?

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
 The plan assumes our target list is incomplete. But by taking out the most critical command and control centers, it significantly lowers the chance of another strike.

POTUS
 Or it *provokes* one.

Lt. Commander Reeves hesitates. POTUS just stares at him.

POTUS (CONT'D)
 Right?

A rehearsed response -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
 My job is to explain your options and execute your orders. I'm not qualified to advise, sir.

POTUS
 You're not? You carry this fucking book around all day! I've never seen it before!
 (beat, breaking)
 It's like a fucking diner menu...

Lt. Commander Reeves doesn't know how to react. Getting nothing, POTUS looks away, to himself -

POTUS (CONT'D)
 I'm asking for your help, son!

A beat of silence. And then -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
 We actually call 'em 'rare', 'medium', and 'well done'...

POTUS turns back to Lt. Commander Reeves. Finally letting down his guard -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES (CONT'D)
 It's sick, I know.

POTUS softens. Grateful for the human moment.

POTUS
 It captures the point, I guess.

He takes a breath, looking for reassurance -

POTUS (CONT'D)
I sit still. Do nothing for now?

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
You can. Hope it's a fluke, or a one-off. That whoever did this, just stops.

POTUS forces a thin smile.

A beat, as they ride in silence. The familiar monuments of the Capital visible out the window. Then POTUS notices - Lt. Commander Reeves crossing himself and silently mouthing a prayer.

POTUS
God give you any answers??

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
I'm not looking for one. I just - sorry, sir -

POTUS
Don't apologize. I go to church. Haven't been for a while.

Lt. Commander Reeves nods, appreciating the attempt at levity.

POTUS (CONT'D)
I always thought...having you follow me all the time with that book...Weapons like that...Just being ready was the point. Keeps everyone in check. Keeps the world straight. Because, if they know we're this prepared, no one *starts* a nuclear war, right?

Lt. Commander Reeves take a long beat to consider his answer.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
Like you said before - it's insanity.

POTUS
But *someone* just did. Which means nothing makes sense.

A beat as it sinks in. Still wrestling with it -

POTUS (CONT'D)
Unless it was an accident.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
 Better, I guess. But the genie's
 out. We do nothing and the bad
 guys see they can get away with it.

POTUS considers this. And then -

POTUS
 I heard a podcast once...a guy said
 it was like we'd all built a house
 filled with dynamite. Making all
 these bombs, and all these plans.
 The walls were just ready to blow.
 But we kept on living in it.

A beat. And Lt. Commander Reeves now reaches for the Binder
 and flips to the Red section.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
If you're going to hit back, sir?
 (beat)
 MAO-7 or MAO-9.
 (beat)
 End it now, once and for all. Best
 chance some of us survive this.

CUT TO:

133

INT. STAIRWELL - PENTAGON

133

SecDef Baker silently marches up the stairs, flanked by
 Lindsay and the CID officer.

He stares ahead blankly, lost in his own anguish.

CUT TO:

134

EXT. ROOF - PENTAGON - DAY

134

SecDef Baker follows the CID Officer and Lindsay out onto the
 roof of the Pentagon.

A BLACKHAWK waits, rotors running.

SecDef Baker holds a secure phone at his side, the Conference
 transferred, but he's no longer listening. He walks, in a
 daze, toward the helicopter.

CUT TO:

135

I/E. MARINE ONE - OVER WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

135

POTUS stares at the Major Attack Options in front of him.
Over the Conference -

GEN. BRADY

Mr. President, we're going to need
your decision. Lt. Commander Reeves
can walk you through the
authentication process and then
you'll need to read aloud an Attack
Option Designation.

POTUS

Yeah, I understand all that...
(beat)
Reid? I need...
(beat)
What do you think, Reid?
(beat)
Did we lose him?

136

EXT. ROOF - PENTAGON - DAY

136

But SecDef Baker doesn't answer. He hands the secure phone to
Lindsay -

LINDSAY

Sir?

- and calmly walks to the edge of the roof.

A moment, as he looks out over Washington.

And then he JUMPS.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

(hysterical)
Oh, god! Oh, god-!

She drops the phone and rushes to look over the edge.

CUT TO:

137

I/E. MARINE ONE - OVER WASHINGTON, DC

137

- and the connection to that line severs.

POTUS

What the hell was that?

Before anyone can answer -

JAKE

Mr. President? It's Jake, again.
Baerington.

(beat)

I just spoke to the Russian Foreign
Minister. He denied responsibility
for the launch. Said he spoke to
the Chinese and doesn't think it
was them, either.

(beat)

I believed him, sir.

POTUS

You did? Are they going to back
down?

POTUS's eyes searching out the window. His knee bobbing up
and down.

JAKE

I think they want to. If we can
guarantee we won't retaliate. I
think I - I mean we - can convince
them.

POTUS

(impatient)

What does that mean?

JAKE

We stand down first. We don't
launch. Against anyone. For now.

POTUS

So we just sit back and watch
Chicago incinerate? Are you fucking
kidding me? You think the American
people will go for that?

JAKE

I don't know-

(grasping)

-The warhead could still
malfunction - they do sometimes...

POTUS leans forward.

POTUS

-Did he commit to those terms? We
do nothing, they'll back off for
certain?

JAKE

More or less-

POTUS
-More or less?!

Lt. Commander Reeves remains still. Motionless. Eyes straight ahead. POTUS, more calmly -

POTUS (CONT'D)
Jake?

JAKE
Yes, sir.

POTUS
I want you to take a breath.

JAKE
I'm breathing just fine, sir.

POTUS
My job is to make this decision. I wish it weren't. And yours is to tell me *exactly* what this guy agreed to, no bullshit. Can you do that?

JAKE
He didn't agree to anything. He said he needed to talk to his President first.

POTUS clasps his hands together, not quite praying, but close.

GEN. BRADY
Sounds to me like we know nothing new.

JAKE
Wrong, General.
(beat)
If we do what he's asking... if we hold back... there's at least a chance.

Another beat. Then Gen. Brady fills the silence -

GEN. BRADY
Two minutes, thirty seconds.

POTUS ignores the General.

POTUS
Jake? I do what you're suggesting...
(MORE)

POTUS (CONT'D)
 let whoever did this, just get away
 with it... How's that different
 from surrendering?

JAKE
 If you want to look at it that
 way...

Jake trails off. Then realizes there's no way around it -

JAKE (CONT'D)
 I'm telling you your choice is
 surrender, or suicide.

CUT TO:

138

EXT. SEGERA RETREAT - KENYA - DAY

138

Truly, the middle of nowhere. ELEPHANTS traverse the golden
 savannah. At a safe distance -

The **FIRST LADY** watches, awestruck, with the Ranger. And then-

Her Secret Service Agent waves her over, the look on his
 face, urgent. She tells the Ranger -

FIRST LADY
 It's extraordinary. Excuse me -

- and walks to the Secret Service Agent, who holds out the
 Satellite Phone -

SECRET SERVICE AGENT
 It's the President. It sounds
 urgent.

The First Lady takes it, tensing immediately -

FIRST LADY
 Hon? Is everything okay?

But the connection is even worse than earlier.

FIRST LADY (CONT'D)
 A what? Did you say 'nuclear'?

Dan overhears this.

The First Lady begins to tremble.

FIRST LADY (CONT'D)
 What-what can I do?

POTUS
 They want me to retaliate. They say
 if I don't, we ----- .
 (beat)
 What do I do?

The First Lady tries to gather herself. Begins to answer -

FIRST LADY
 I don't know. I think -

But -

CUT TO:

139

I/E. MARINE ONE - OVER WASHINGTON, DC

139

- the connection drops, and all POTUS hears is an eerie
 silence.

POTUS
 You think what?
 (beat)
 Are you there?
 (beat)
 Allison?!!

Her name echoes. The line is dead. A beat, as POTUS stares at
 the handset, his connection with his wife severed.

Then he looks out the window, just as Marine One passes over
 the Pentagon, where -

A CROWD gathers around SecDef Baker's body in the parking
 lot.

POTUS takes the Secure Phone back from Lt. Commander Reeves.

POTUS (CONT'D)
 Ok. I'm here...

A beat. And then -

GEN. BRADY
 Your orders, Mr. President?

Lt. Commander Reeves reminds him -

LT. COMMANDER REEVES
 You'll need your SAS card, sir.

POTUS
 Right...

POTUS pats his left coat pocket. Then his right. They're empty. Did he lose it? Then he remembers -

POTUS (CONT'D)

Oh - right.

He reaches into his back pant pocket. A thick YELLOW RUBBER BAND holds a Driver's License, Credit Cards, and a wad of cash. Off Lt. Commander Reeves's reaction, POTUS shrugs -

POTUS (CONT'D)

Reminds me of when I was in college.

He rifles through the credit cards and finds the GOLD CARD with his AUTHORIZATION CODE.

LT. COMMANDER REEVES

You need to read it aloud.

POTUS

November-Delta-Oscar-One-One-One-Seven.

GEN. BRADY

November-Delta-Oscar-One-One-One-Seven. National Command Authority, confirmed.

(beat)

Your orders, Mr. President?

Slowly PUSH IN on POTUS - entirely alone, the cabin silent. He takes a breath, about to say something. But stops himself. He squints, agonizing. Takes another breath.

Off POTUS, as he finally begins to speak -

POTUS

My orders -

SLAM CUT TO
BLACK.

FADE IN:

140

EXT. SERVICE ROAD - FAIRFIELD, PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

140

A country road, lined with pine trees.

In the distance, the sound of an approaching HELICOPTER. A line of CARS approaches.

An ALARM blares.

Gridlock traffic and chaos follow. A frenzied crowd exits cars and cabs, to run toward a large METAL GATE, where the road dead-ends.

In the crowd are Ana and Aidan - several yards trailing behind is Cathy.

They hurry toward the gate, where POLICE OFFICERS check IDs to let government staffers on board awaiting buses.

Slowly, instinctively, they all look up. Overhead, two FALCONS ride the thermals, then glide off.

Signs warn: RESTRICTED AREA - NO PHOTOGRAPHY - NO DRONE ZONE

Behind the gate - a recessed TUNNEL is carved into the mountain. Closed CONCRETE BLAST DOORS block the entrance.

SUPER: Raven Rock Mountain Complex | Site R | Self-sufficient Nuclear Bunker | Adams County, Pennsylvania

As they make their way in line, Ana turns and looks into the nearby glade. Dappled light filters through the trees.

CUT TO:

141 **EXT. FT. GREELY MILITARY BASE - FT. GREELY, ALASKA - DAY** 141

Maj. Gonzalez kneels in the snow, staring over the horizon.

FADE TO BLACK.