

Red Flag

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FADE IN:

EXT. MILITARY BASE GUARDHOUSE - NIGHT

TITLE: NOVEMBER 17

Late night at the front gate of Camp Blanding, Florida. A bored SENTRY dozes in the guardhouse. Another smokes a cigarette and watches the blue smoke rise.

The WOMAN comes into view under the harsh lights that illuminate the guardhouse area. She shuffles along, her clothes in disarray, her panty-hose torn in gaping holes at the knees, her make-up in ruins. Her appearance shocks the young soldiers.

GUARD 1  
Ma'am... you ok?

She falls in a heap at his feet. Not knowing quite what to do, the guard flips on his radio and speaks into the microphone pinned beneath his right shoulder.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)  
Lieutenant, it's Cromwell, front gate. I think you'd better get down here, sir.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S BEDROOM

MC BRIDE, the duty officer, opens his eyes, stares into the darkness and mutters a profanity under his breath. This is the third time since midnight that the 'war' has disturbed him, and it's only 2 a.m.

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE  
If this ain't World War III, you're on report for waking me up.

He listens to the voice on the other end of the line.

GUARD 1 (O.S.)  
There's a civilian out here. She's hurt pretty bad, sir.

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE  
Shit.

The word falls softly from his lips. He pauses as he tries to shake off his weariness.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

All right. Find out who she is. Advise the provost marshal and the Doc that we might have a problem.

He takes a moment before straightening up out of bed.

EXT. GUARDHOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The Lieutenant jumps out of the Hummer and heads towards the group that has gathered around the woman.

The sergeant has covered her with his Kapok. He sees the officer of the day out the corner of his eye, approaches him and speaks out of the woman's earshot.

SERGEANT

She's an attorney sir, Catherine Spruance.

Pointing to the plastic cardholder, he hands over the wallet. The lieutenant shifts his glance from the wallet to the woman.

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE

Well I ain't losing my ass over this one, Sergeant. If she's a lawyer, we'd better do it right. No shower, no change of clothing, no nothing, until she's been examined by the M.O.

He motions to the sentries to put her in the Hummer.

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE (CONT'D)

Get on the horn to the duty WACO. We'll need a woman up there.

SERGEANT

Yes, sir.

They exchange salutes and the lieutenant heads over to the jeep where the victim sits, sobbing softly. He opens the door and peers into the back.

LIEUTENANT MCBRIDE

Ma'am, I'm Lieutenant McBride. We're gonna take good care of you. You're in the safest place in the state of Florida.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

As they drive up the main drag of the base towards the command headquarters - nerve center of the base defense force - it is obvious that everyone has gotten the word. The Hummer is waved through various levels of security.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

A SENTRY waves them through the double-door security into H.Q. where they are greeted by the duty operations officer Colonel HAL GATELY and WAC Lieutenant SARAH SIMMONS, who manages to make the woman feel a bit more at ease in the strange place.

LIEUTENANT SIMMONS

Can I get you anything? Some water?

The woman shakes her head but appears to have calmed somewhat.

MAJOR CORREIRO, the Medical Officer, has joined them in the hall and is introduced by Lt. SIMMONS.

LIEUTENANT SIMMONS (CONT'D)

This is Major Correiro. He's a very good doctor and he's going to take a look at you, make sure you're ok. Is that ok?

The woman nods and is taken by Simmons into an anteroom off the main passageway. Gately half-turns to Correiro.

COLONEL

I want a full report on this one, Major. Last thing I need is a problem with a woman lawyer. Full documentation, samples, the works.

MAJOR CORREIRO

Yes sir.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The doctor nods and enters the room, leaving Gately outside. The victim is standing in the center of the room. Despite years of experience as a military man, rape makes him uncomfortable.

MAJOR CORREIRO

Are you ok?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She nods weakly.

MAJOR CORREIRO (CONT'D)

Please, sit down. I'm going to take a look at you, take some samples. I'll try to make this as easy as possible.

WOMAN

I understand. Mind if I smoke?

The doctor glances at the no-smoking sign on the wall.

DOCTOR CORREIRO

Go ahead.

He looks down at his clipboard of procedures as she rummages through her purse. She finds her cigarettes, but not before pressing a button on the side of a small transmitter.

EXT. AIRFIELD

On the far side of the airfield, a beep in twelve earpieces interrupts the silence.

MAN (O.S.)

They bit. She's inside. All units go.

At strategic places around the base, hidden hands make ready, boots begin running toward fences.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - 15 MINUTES LATER

The doctor enters the operations room.

DOCTOR

She's been raped all right, sir. Extensive bruising all over her body and semen in and around the genital area. I've taken Polaroids, four smears and a dozen hair samples. You'll have my notes in 30 minutes.

He holds up a small sterile container and a buff envelope.

COLONEL

Thanks, Doc. Just sign the pictures, seal the slide samples and you're out of here.

He turns to the WAC Lieutenant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COLONEL (CONT'D)  
OK to call 911, Lieutenant. This one's a  
civilian problem, not ours.

As she turns to make the call, all hell breaks loose in the  
Command Center. Alarms sound, lights flash. A RADIOMAN runs  
up to the Colonel.

RADIOMAN  
Sir - indication that the perimeter has  
been compromised in sector 7.

COLONEL  
Get me the guardhouse, Corporal.

RADIOMAN  
Yes sir.

EXT. GUARDHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A man in black is holding a pistol to one of the guards we  
saw in the first scene, the telephone buzzing away  
unanswered. Two other men in black are seen running up the  
drive toward the complex.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Another soldier approaches the Colonel in a hurry.

SOLDIER  
Sir! Surveillance cameras knocked out in  
sectors 3 & 4. We're blind, sir.

Gately is visibly agitated.

COLONEL  
That's it. Sound the alarm. Gentlemen,  
we are under attack.

The men start to move in many directions at once. In the  
midst of the activity, the woman has come into the center of  
the control room, looking anything but the rape victim. She  
produces a Walther PPK pistol that she now holds to a radio  
operator's cheek, his face ashen as the pressure of the  
pistol distorts his features.

HOLLIS  
Operation Safeguard! Nobody move!

In her other hand is the transmitter. She speaks into the  
small microphone on her jacket lapel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

The Command Center is secure, Colonel.  
Come on in.

At the incident board, a soldier reaches for his telephone, but freezes as the woman starts yelling instructions.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

I wouldn't try that, soldier. (She repeats) Operation Safeguard! This base is compromised. Under the rules of the exercise, all in this room are my prisoners.

At that, the soldier realizes it's over and lowers his hand. Suddenly, a band of four men in burglar black storm into the room with automatic weapons at the ready.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

I need the senior ops officer, now!

COLONEL

That's me.

Gately, who by this time knows the play, walks toward her with his hands in the air in mock arrest.

HOLLIS

OK, get this out over the PA.

She hands Gately a typewritten memo, which he accepts with a mixture of dread and resignation. One of the men in black takes off his watch cap and walks over to Hollis. It is COLONEL BOYD MITCHELL. He lets her finish the operation on her own.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

And make sure you get the word to remote units. Then I need you to contact the C.O. and inform him that Colonel Boyd Mitchell will require a conference of all heads of departments in 30 minutes in the main briefing room.

Gately takes the memo, skims it, and then hands it to his radio operator with a nod that says 'go.' The radio operator begins reading the prepared text into the microphone.

RADIOMAN

Safeguard, Safeguard, Safeguard. All units stand down from first degree of readiness...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

At various locations around the base, loudspeakers broadcast the announcement. Soldiers return weapons to the armory, etc.

RADIOMAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Platoon commanders return weapons.  
 Security revert to normal state of  
 readiness. All departments stand down  
 from exercise stations.

Within minutes, the "terrorist attack" is over.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The President of the United States, PETE MARTIN, slams a bound paper report on the desk.

PRESIDENT  
 Damn it, Frank! If we can't protect an  
 Army base in the goddam state of Florida,  
 how can I tell the American people this  
 administration is winning the war against  
 terrorism?

His Chief of Staff, FRANK HURLEY, takes the President's outburst in stride.

FRANK HURLEY  
 That's what they do, Mr. President. Red  
 Flag unit. It's our guys sneaking up on  
 our guys: they know all the procedures,  
 all the tricks. No terrorist could ever  
 get away with that.

PRESIDENT  
 The Republicans are going to be all over  
 this like a cheap suit. It happened on  
 our watch, goddammit.

The four men in the Oval Office are silent for a few moments. The PRESS SECRETARY pipes up, though a bit hesitantly.

PRESS SECRETARY  
 There's another way to look at it, Mr.  
 President.

PRESIDENT  
 What?

PRESS SECRETARY  
 You could also see it as proof how well  
 Red Flag unit does its job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESIDENT

Great...

PRESS SECRETARY

...and how much the Administration is committed to improving security at our domestic military installations.

The President considers this for a moment.

FRANK HURLEY

(catching on)

...and how much money you can demand for additional military spending to heighten domestic security and...

PRESIDENT

(catching on)

...how much support we'll get from defense contractors, unions, blah blah blah.

The tension in the Office clears noticeably. The President assumes his Presidential face - the one the camera sees for the State of the Nation.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

What I said all along. It is not enough to secure the nation's airports and postal system. We have to take a searching look at every front, including the fences in our own backyard. We have got to avoid the kind of crap that went on under the last administration. That's why Red Flag unit has responded to our mandate - find holes in the net so we can fix them.

The room becomes more upbeat as the staff begins to see Pete Martin back in the saddle.

FRANK HURLEY

Exactly what we told them, Mr. President.

PRESS SECRETARY

Should I schedule a press conference, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

Soon as possible, before Henderson gets his hands on this one.

He drops the bound report.

INT. HART BUILDING OFFICE - DAY

In his Hart Building office, Senator MASON HENDERSON is picking up a bound report - similar to the one the President just dropped.

HENDERSON

Somebody explain to me how the Republican National Committee got possession of an internal Administration document?

SENATOR'S AIDE

(sarcastically)

Fell off the back of the truck?

HENDERSON

(smiling)

Fine. I don't need names. Just keep up the good work. This is the kind of stuff we need to stick it to Pete Martin.

One man in a dapper double breasted suit steps forward. It is Henderson's CAMPAIGN MANAGER, and he is smelling blood.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

I can see it on TV now: "Three years of Pete Martin and the state of Florida is under siege." We can run with that one clear until November.

HENDERSON

No. It's something, but not much. Martin is slicker than chicken shit on linoleum. He'll spin right out of it and we'll just look like muck rakers. Senator?

Henderson is asking for the opinion of the other US Senator in the office, Senator CLAY RAWLINGS a middle aged Black conservative.

RAWLINGS

Agreed. Our campaign needs to take the high road. Above corruption, above scandal, and above petty campaign tricks.

HENDERSON

(agreeing)

Right. We need a lot more dirt to go on. (to his Aide) Is our guy in the White House reliable?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SENATOR'S AIDE

Was.

HENDERSON

Was?

SENATOR'S AIDE

These things are getting very expensive the higher the stakes get. And we can't throw legit campaign funds for... well... this kind of electoral research, sir.

Henderson cuts to the chase.

HENDERSON

What kind of money are we talking about?

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

The entire system could run into the millions, Senator. It has to be oiled... thoroughly and frequently.

The men in the room see a side of Henderson they'd rather not have to look at often - the hard side.

HENDERSON

(thundering)

Oiled? Oiled? I want a reliable source inside the Martin campaign in every major state within two weeks. And whoever we have in the goddam White House needs to start filing some goddam reports on a regular basis.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

That kind of intelligence is going to cost a lot of money, Senator.

HENDERSON

I'll give you oil...

From his leather arm chair, Clay Rawlings watches the master at work.

INT. TACTICAL SECURITY COMMAND, CAMP LEJEUNE - DAY

Brigadier General CECIL HOFFER is reading Colonel Mitchell's report of the Camp Blanding operation.

HOFFER

Outstanding Mitch... as always. The rape victim bit... who came up with that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL

The lady herself. Lieutenant Hollis Gannon, sir.

HOFFER

Son of a bitch.

Mitchell throws his hat on the desk and settles in a chair in front of Hoffer's desk.

MITCHELL

It's getting harder and harder to penetrate fenced compounds, as you know. We're forced to get pretty creative these days. Frankly, we were running out of ideas, until Lieutenant Gannon suggested the rape thing.

HOFFER

This report... the photographs. The bruises were real...

MITCHELL

She's our hand-to-hand combat instructor. Bruises come with the territory.

Hoffer laughs.

HOFFER

What about the semen? You never would have gotten past Hal Gately with fake semen.

Now, Mitchell's smiles.

MITCHELL

Sir, I only regret I have just a hundred million little lives to give for my country.

HOFFER

You son of a bitch. Pity about Gately though. He's a good man. Should have had her searched.

MITCHELL

He'll do better next time.

HOFFER

There won't be a next time. To save a President's face, a head has to roll. That's the game, huh Mitch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mitchell is stunned that Gately just lost his job.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Hey! Next time you pull this stunt, let me in on the ground floor. I have a couple million lives to give myself.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Boyd Mitchell and Hollis Gannon prove to be more than compatriots. They have been making love when Mitchell abruptly stops and rolls over.

HOLLIS

What's up, Colonel?

Mitchell sits up on the bed. He doesn't speak for a moment, then:

MITCHELL

You did good yesterday...

HOLLIS

So did you.

MITCHELL

So did Colonel Gately.

HOLLIS

Mitch...

Mitchell gets up and walks to the window. He looks out.

MITCHELL

We're supposedly on the same side. Now we get a commendation, and Gately is history.

HOLLIS

It's part of the deal. If we can't go for it every time we test security, than how can we make sure our bases are really secure?

MITCHELL

He did exactly what I would have done.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

The President is pacing. The door opens and Frank Hurley walks in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK HURLEY

It's late, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

Let's just hope it's not too late.

FRANK HURLEY

I don't...

PRESIDENT

Look, Frank. You and I both know the score. The polls suck. And if I'm out of a job next January, so are you.

FRANK HURLEY

So we're going to pull an all nighter...

The President lights a cigarette. Frank stifles a yawn.

PRESIDENT

You know something... If the American people saw me smoking this cigarette, I'd drop 10 points in a fucking millisecond, you know that?

FRANK HURLEY

And your point is...

PRESIDENT

What they see is what counts. What they don't see doesn't mean jack.

FRANK HURLEY

Tell me you're not going to quit smoking.

PRESIDENT

This Red Flag thing is perfect, but it needs more punch. I need to knock off a much bigger prize than a crummy little Army base in Florida. If Red Flag does its job, we come in big against terrorism. Democrats can't fault us for that, and the Republicans just lost the fattest plank in the platform.

FRANK HURLEY

OK. First thing in the morning. (to himself) It *is* first thing in the morning...

PRESIDENT

Thanks Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK HURLEY

Good night.

Frank is almost out the door.

PRESIDENT

Uh Frank... we already picked on the Army. What's next?

FRANK HURLEY

(reciting from the TV commercial)

Army... Navy... Air Force... Marines...  
Uh, Navy, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT

Navy. Make it so.

FRANK HURLEY

(dully)

Navy.

He shuts the door behind him.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICES - MORNING

A busy morning in the core of the executive office building. Self-important yuppie staffers - one of the hallmarks of the Martin administration - flutter around with briefs and stacks of Xerox copies.

In an office cubicle, one young man is playing with pencils when the phone rings. He listens to the brief orders coming through the line.

BRAD COX

Yessir. The Navy sir, I absolutely understand. (pause) That's the one with the boats, yes, I know. (pause) Ok. Leave it to me.

He starts to write something down on a post-it. His pencil breaks.

BRAD COX (CONT'D)

... uh, just a sec.

He grabs the other pencil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRAD COX (CONT'D)  
 ... ok. Shoot. (he writes) Got it.  
 Something big. Yessir. I'll tell them.  
 Count on it, sir.

Puffed up by his first significant assignment since coming aboard, Brad Cox dials the number.

INT. CLUB - NIGHT

An exclusive leather and mahogany club inside the Beltway.

Mason Henderson walks in, nodding to the maitre d' like a regular, and goes to a table in the corner. He sits down across from an old acquaintance. It is Brigadier General Hoffer.

HENDERSON  
 Good to see you, Cec. Sorry I'm late.

He extends a hand across the small round table. A waiter is immediately there and the Senator nods as if to say "bring me the regular."

HOFFER  
 Comes with the territory, huh Senator?

HENDERSON  
 You're looking well.

HOFFER  
 How long has it been?

HENDERSON  
 A long way from Saigon, I'll tell you that. How's Stephanie?

HOFFER  
 She's fine. Happily married. So I hear.

HENDERSON  
 Sorry, Cec.

Hoffer takes a long sip from his rocks glass.

HOFFER  
 What's on your mind, Senator?

HENDERSON  
 Just wanted to check in. See how the Army is treating you. See if there's anything I can do...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOFFER

You can do? Don't you want to know what I can do for you?

HENDERSON

Now, c'mon, Cec...

HOFFER

Skip it, Senator. Skip the part about everything you did for me, saved my life, saved my reputation, got me my stars... What is on your mind.

Henderson doesn't flinch.

HENDERSON

Tell me about Red Flag.

HOFFER

(smiling)

Ahhh. Red Flag. Something your staffers couldn't crack huh? You want to know what Red Flag does?

HENDERSON

I know what the hell Red Flag does. Who do you think put you in charge of the goddam unit.

HOFFER

(deflated)

Of course. I should have known.

HENDERSON

Fact is, you're doing a better job than I thought you would. The Camp Blanding operation was beautiful. This Hollis Gannon is quite the fireball. And your team leader - what's his name?

Hoffer can't hide a hint of pride at his job well done.

HOFFER

Colonel Boyd Mitchell.

HENDERSON

Tremendous. Good work, Cec. The weaker our military bases look, the weaker this fucker Martin looks on terrorism. What's next?

HOFFER

Next?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENDERSON

The next operation. What is Red Flag up to next?

Hoffer laughs.

HOFFER

It's a joke.

HENDERSON

What?

HOFFER

No, I got a call from this asshole in the White House. Says the President has a wild hair up his ass about security at military sites...

HENDERSON

(interrupting)

He ought to...

HOFFER

..and how he wants to make a big statement to make Congress take notice. "What kind of statement," I ask.

HENDERSON

And?

HOFFER

"I don't know, rob the Enterprise," he says.

Hoffer laughs out loud. Henderson joins him, but still in control.

HENDERSON

The air craft carrier!?

HOFFER

Only one I know. Unless he was talking about the star ship.

Henderson is intrigued.

HENDERSON

So what are you going to do?

HOFFER

Oh, we'll come up with something, maybe take on the soft underbelly of the Air Force.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOFFER (CONT'D)

But the Enterprise is out of the question. For one thing, she's too easy a hit. When strike carriers are alongside the wall about to go operational, they're notoriously easy targets for infiltration.

Henderson is still intrigued.

HENDERSON

Is she worth robbing?

HOFFER

You kidding? The Big E, loaded for bear on the eve of float, has millions. US dollars, foreign currency... With a good team, you could get over the side with, conservatively, 10, 15 mil in cash.

HENDERSON

Why all that cash?

HOFFER

Provisioning in foreign ports, money for crew on shore leave... 5 thousand guys in 30 ports of call. If you think about it, it's really not that much for a small city floating around the world for six months.

HENDERSON

Do it.

HOFFER

Wha...?

HENDERSON

I want you to rob the Enterprise, just like you were ordered.

HOFFER

They couldn't have been serious...

HENDERSON

Do it, Cec. You've owed me one since Viet Nam. Just follow orders from the Commander in Chief. That's all I'm asking you to do.

Their conversation continues, Hoffer worried and Henderson calming. But it sounds different, amplified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

As we pull away from the corner table, the tinny conversation seems to be coming from the earpiece of a tall, well dressed black man, RICHARD LUCAS, seated across from an elegant BLACK WOMAN. They are at a table 50 feet away. He is transfixed, but not on her.

BLACK WOMAN

Hello? Have you heard a thing I've said?

He recovers quickly.

LUCAS

Every word.

INT. GYMNASIUM, FORT MEAD - DAY

Major Hollis Gannon in uniform - camouflage pants and t-shirt - is conducting a hand-to-hand combat class with some recruits. Hollis stands face to face with a 19 year old recruit literally twice her size on a mat in the center of the gym. About 40 other recruits, 75% male, are circled around, watching.

HOLLIS

So is that what you're going to tell the enemy?

RECRUIT

Ma'am?

HOLLIS

When you come across the enemy in a hand-to-hand situation...

RECRUIT

I...

HOLLIS

...you're going to say, "I don't hit women?"

The recruit stands dumbly, unable to develop the proper response.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

Well, I have news for you. There are women in the armed forces of the world. Or haven't you noticed?

RECRUIT

Yes, ma'am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS  
 (correcting him)  
 Yes, Major. And some of them may attack  
 you first.

With that, she delivers a flurry of blows and a martial arts  
 throw that leaves the recruit on the mat. Some of the  
 onlookers twitter nervously. The women drink it up.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
 On your feet.

He gets up. Beyond the circle of recruits, Boyd Mitchell has  
 entered the gym. He watches, but Hollis doesn't notice him.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
 Ready?

He nods. This time he tries to defend himself somewhat, but  
 winds up back on the mat in about 2 seconds.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
 On your feet.

This time, as he is getting up, the recruit rushes at Hollis  
 in an attempt to knock her down. She easily turns his attack  
 into an attack of her own, and he winds up on the mat. Now  
 the male recruits are rather quiet while the female recruits  
 are openly laughing.

Hollis addresses the group, seemingly uninterested in the  
 recruit who slowly gets up off the mat behind her.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
 Hand-to-hand combat is a skill. It is  
 learnable by anyone. Employed  
 proficiently, it levels the field. Size  
 no longer matters. Neither does sex.

She turns and lends a hand to the big guy on the mat.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
 Dismissed.

EXT. SIDEWALK, FORT MEAD - DAY

Hollis, a white towel draped around her neck, is walking side  
 by side with Mitchell. Around them, small drill teams work  
 the boot camp soldiers.

MITCHELL  
 Remind me not to piss you off at dinner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS

There's a good time to piss me off?

MITCHELL

But I still don't think it's fair. I got all the way through boot camp without having to smack a girl.

HOLLIS

The heart and soul of Red Flag unit complaining about fair? What is the world coming to...

MITCHELL

The latest?

HOLLIS

Yeah?

He stops her beneath a large oak and looks around to make sure they are beyond anyone's earshot.

MITCHELL

They want us to rob an aircraft carrier.

She waits a moment for him to start laughing at his own joke. He doesn't.

HOLLIS

What, and steal a couple of Harriers?

MITCHELL

Money. There's \$15 million in cash in the safe... for shore leave, provisioning... The President wants to make a statement about weak perimeters and Red Flag is the speech writer.

HOLLIS

You're serious.

MITCHELL

Serious as cancer. I meet with Hoffer at 1400 tomorrow. The Enterprise is readying for float at San Diego next Thursday and we'll be aboard.

HOLLIS

(still unbelieving)  
The Enterprise.

MITCHELL

"The Big E."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOLLIS

It's not even a challenge. I could walk a Little League team on board on the day of a float. It's not fair.

Mitchell starts them walking again.

MITCHELL

Now who's talking about fair. Besides, the hard part isn't getting aboard. It's getting off with \$15 million in currency. That's a wad of cash.

HOLLIS

Got a plan, Colonel?

MITCHELL

I was hoping to talk to you about that over dinner, Major.

HOLLIS

OK, but don't piss me off.

EXT. NAVY WHARF - DAY

TITLE: MARCH 6

The activity on the wharf beside the huge ship is dizzying. Cranes swinging huge pallets of provisions from the wharf to the deck of the aircraft carrier Enterprise. Four gangways are buzzing with human traffic up and down, like ants crawling on and off the ship from stem to stern.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ENTERPRISE

On the bridge, CAPTAIN SEAN BENYON, United States Navy, with a million things on his mind, is handed something else to think about, by his yeoman. He tries to brush it back to the Yeoman who insists.

YEOMAN

It's a priority message, sir.

He takes the message and reads it.

CAPTAIN BENYON

Red Flag. Who is Red Flag?

BRIDGE OFFICER 1

Red Flag. Army unit deployed to test military installation perimeters, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN BENYON

It's a goddam Taceval?! A tactical evaluation on the eve of float?

He passes the notes to Officer 1 with a gesture to read it aloud.

BRIDGE OFFICER 1

The ship will "stand to" under threat of attack from unfriendlies operating in the area.

The message is met with groans from every man on the bridge.

BRIDGE OFFICER 2

Sir, if we slow down the line, we'll never make the midnight tide.

CAPTAIN BENYON

I have no intention of missing the tide, mister. Pass the word, Enterprise goes to condition Bikini Red effective immediately. Get the XO up here, tell him I want the marines to set up checkpoints at all dockyard access roads within a perimeter of half a mile.

Men start moving in various directions.

BRIDGE OFFICER 1

Don't worry captain, nobody is getting inside the Lady tonight.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE WHARF - CONTINUOUS

The shore patrol - two PETTY OFFICERS from the local provost marshal's office - arrive at the forward brow with a disheveled man in uniform. He is very drunk, quiet, and handcuffed to one of the Petty Officers. They salute the quarterdeck then salute the Officer of the Deck (OOD).

OOD

Sorry gentlemen, I need to see some ID. We're under a Taceval.

As they are pulling out their official ID's.

PETTY OFFICER

On the eve of float?! What a pain in the ass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OOD  
Tell me about it.

He seems satisfied with the Petty Officers and their ID. He motions to the drunk they are escorting.

OOD (CONT'D)  
What about him?

PETTY OFFICER  
(TO OOD)  
One of yours sir. Thought we'd bring him in before he missed the ship.

OOD  
ID?

PETTY OFFICER  
If he still had a wallet, it'd be empty by now.

PETTY OFFICER 2 prods of the sailor, who has doubled over as they stand there.

PETTY OFFICER 2  
Straighten up, sailor.

The Drunken Sailor does straighten up, but pukes as he does, nailing the shoes of Petty Officer 2.

PETTY OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)  
Oh, for Chrissake...

He grabs the Drunken Sailor roughly and starts him back toward the wharf.

PETTY OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)  
This son of a bitch is mine.

The OOD stops them.

OOD  
Hey guys, no reason to make him miss ship for a bad hangover. The last thing I need is a short crew on float.

Petty Officer 2 pauses.

OOD (CONT'D)  
(getting somewhere)  
I got two tickets to Sunday's Padres' game - can't use 'em anyway.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OOD (CONT'D)  
 Why don't you just deliver him to the  
 brig on board.

The Petty Officers look at each other, then back at the OOD.

PETTY OFFICER  
 Got em with you, sir?

The OOD reaches in his wallet and pulls out the tickets.

OOD  
 Right here.

PETTY OFFICER  
 Deal.

PETTY OFFICER 2  
 (to the Drunken Sailor)  
 And you owe me a fucking shoe shine.

OOD  
 (relieved)  
 Thanks, guys. Back aft on six deck, port  
 side.

The two Petty Officers and the Drunken Sailor disappear into the ship. Three Red Flag operatives have made it aboard the Enterprise.

EXT. WHARF - MOMENTS LATER

A shiny red late model pick up truck has pulled up to a brow amidships, blasting rock music. Out gets a CIVILIAN MAN and NAVY WOMAN wearing fatigues. Once the man has swung her bag out of the truck bed, the two start kissing and fondling. This attracts the attention of leering sentries and sailers on the rail of the ship watching the show and whistling cat calls.

The lovers ignore the cat calls until a voice booms down from the ship, above the brow area. It's the drunk who had puked moments earlier, but now looking much refreshed, a complete makeover.

DRUNKEN SAILOR  
 Hey Clancy!

The Navy Woman turns and looks up. It is Hollis Gannon.

DRUNK SAILOR  
 You're due on the flight deck in five  
 minutes. Better get your ass up here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

One final grope and she grabs her bag and hurries up the gangway, past the applauding sentries. Red Flag member four is now aboard.

EXT. WHARF - MOMENTS LATER

Boyd Mitchell, wearing the uniform of a Navy chaplain and tiny round spectacles, arrives in a cab on the jetty. The DRIVER unloads several cartons and drives away. Mitch looks uncharacteristically helpless - a meek man with too much to carry.

A Navy SWABBIE come to the rescue.

SWABBIE  
Need a hand sir?

MITCHELL  
Yes, if you don't mind. I'm the new Catholic chaplain. First time at sea... I'm a bit nervous.

SWABBIE  
No sweat, Chaplain. It's just a big boat on a big lake.

He lifts one of the boxes and finds it very heavy.

SWABBIE (CONT'D)  
Jeez... Whatcha got in here, rocks?

MITCHELL  
Bibles. For the men.

SWABBIE  
(laughing)  
It really is your first time at sea. Bibles.

The Swabbie whistles a buddy over and the two help Mitchell with his "bibles" up the gangway and aboard the ship. Five Red Flags aboard.

EXT. WHARF - DUSK

Montage of a shots of the great ship getting underway.

## INT. BRIDGE OF THE ENTERPRISE

The bridge has regained much of its routine from the tension of the first notice of the TACEVAL. An Officer approaches Captain Benyon.

## OFFICER

Captain. No reports of attempts to penetrate by unfriendlies, sir. We're ready to go!

A small sigh of relief on the bridge and a smattering of applause.

## CAPTAIN BENYON

Very good, Mister Gorman. Slip and proceed. Maintain the sentry boats rigged for saboteur attack till we're well away.

The bridge quiets down.

## CAPTAIN BENYON (CONT'D)

Just in case.

## INT. SHIP'S PASSAGEWAY

Mitchell, his arms full with a box, is following the Swabbie below decks. They pass Hollis who seems to be on some official business at the other end of the ship. The Swabbie takes notice of Hollis' form in her deck suit. Mitchell does not.

## EXT. SAN DIEGO HARBOUR - NIGHT

The Enterprise loses its tugs and heads for open ocean.

## INT. ENTERPRISE BELOW DECKS

Once the ship is underway, the captain addresses the crew through the public address system.

## CAPTAIN BENYON (O.S.)

This is the Captain speaking. Crew members of the United States Ship Enterprise. If you didn't get the word, the Fighting Gray Lady was tested, tonight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN BENYON (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 In the midst of your outstanding efforts to meet our operational requirement, we were advised to expect a tactical evaluation of the ship's perimeter security. I am pleased to say we prevented any infiltration and sailed on time. Way to go Enterprise.

INT. SHIP'S HEAD

Even while the Captain's word is spread around the ship, the Red Flag team member who played the Drunken Sailor is wiping the stainless above a row of sinks.

INT. CREW'S QUARTERS

The two other Red Flag team members play cards across a table. They have lost their outer shirts and now appear to be ordinary seamen in t-shirts.

RED FLAGGER 2  
 Way to go, Enterprise.

RED FLAGGER 3  
 Gin.

He throws down his cards.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - LATER

From a PA speaker on deck...

VOICE (O.C.)  
 Now hear this...hands to flying stations...flight deck prepare to receive sixteen heavies.

Men start running in various directions.

INT. CREW'S QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The Red Flag team members nonchalantly put away their cards and leave the quarters.

INT. SHIP'S HEAD - CONTINUOUS

The third Red Flag team member tosses his rag in bucket and leaves the head.

INT. CATHOLIC CHAPEL, FOUR DECK - NIGHT

In the Catholic chapel, Mitchell, still dressed as a Navy Chaplain has emptied his boxes of 'bibles." Electronic equipment, heavy duty underwater salvage bags. He has a small mallet and punch and is tapping the side of a metal device. The door opens and the three men from his team enter. Mitchell looks at the mark he has made on the device before looking up.

MITCHELL

Little late for confession, isn't it?

RED FLAGGER 1

(Who played the part of the  
Drunk Sailor)

In Catholic School they taught us it was  
never too late...

MITCHELL

OK. Any problems?

RED FLAGGER 3

Cool breeze, Colonel.

MITCHELL

Hollis should be Downtown by now. Let's  
do it.

The four leave the chapel.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE PURSER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The four men, Mitchell in the lead, make their way down the deserted passageway to the door to the PURSER'S office. Mitchell half expects to find it locked, but it opens easily, as if automatic.

INT. PURSER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The "power" behind the opening door is Hollis Gannon, who had been waiting inside and who opened the door for them. She is all business.

HOLLIS

The F-18's should arrive in 15 minutes.

She checks her watch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

That gives us... 12 minutes before it gets loud upstairs and we can make some noise. Anybody got a deck of cards.

Mitchell pulls a key ring out of his pocket.

MITCHELL

Why wait?

He jingles the keys and goes to the door of the safe. He easily opens the door.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

The beauty of robbing your own side is that they give you the keys.

RED FLAGGER 2

This is too easy.

They enter the safe.

INT. SAFE

The room looks like a safe deposit box room with signs for each brand of currency - from French francs to Cambodian riels.

RED FLAGGER 3

Jesus mother of God.

MITCHELL

Remember everybody, we're working for the government.

There is a rumble like thunder and an almost explosive sound coming from above. They glance upwards.

HOLLIS

Ahead of schedule.

MITCHELL

Let's move.

They spring into action.

EXT. FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

The awesome ballet of a carrier flight deck receiving fighter jets - made even more dramatic by the fact that it's a night operation.

INT. PURSER'S OFFICE - LATER

The team is dragging a number of large bags out of the safe. They are heavy.

RED FLAGGER 2  
Whatever happened to the cashless society.

They get the bags to the door to the passageway and then stop. Mitchell, who is dressed as an ordinary seaman now, peeks out the door and then shuts it. They have a bit to wait.

HOLLIS  
So one question, Colonel...

MITCHELL  
Yes?

HOLLIS  
If the White House could arrange the keys to the safe to make our job easier, why would they order a Taceval right when they knew we were trying to get on board?

MITCHELL  
Who said they did?

HOLLIS  
(understanding)  
You didn't.

MITCHELL  
(smiling)  
Drop a dime on myself? If we're going to try to embarrass these guys, they should at least be given a fighting a chance.

Another thump and roar from above. Hollis checks her watch.

HOLLIS  
That's the last one.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

From PA speakers throughout the ship, the officer's voice announces the completion of the flight operation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VOICE

Now hear this: recovery complete. Stand down from flying stations. The smoking lamp is lit. Trash may now be ditched. That is all.

The door to the purser's office opens and the five Red Flag team members emerge, dragging their bags.

INT. ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY

There is a noticeable increase in traffic down below now that flight deck operations have ceased, but the team attracts no attention with their bags full of trash.

They come to the end of the passageway, to the hatch that leads out to the cable deck, back aft of the ship.

INT. CABLE DECK

The partially open deck, where the huge hawsers and chains that the ship uses to dock or anchor, is also where garbage is launched down chutes into the sea. The Red Flag team carry their bags in, one after another. They catch their breath as one of the Red Flag team members reenters the passageway to stand guard.

MITCHELL

(to Hollis)

Time?

Hollis nods her head in the affirmative.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Turn 'em on.

One of the men helps Mitchell switch on electronic devices in each of the ten bags. The other man and Hollis strip from their Navy uniforms to reveal wet suits underneath. They stuff their clothes in one of the bags with the cash.

RED FLAGGER 2

Uh, Colonel...

Mitchell turns to the man with the device in his hand.

RED FLAGGER 2 (CONT'D)

This one won't go.

MITCHELL

Shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mitchell hurries over and tries to switch the initiator on.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

(to Hollis)

I thought you checked them all out at the shop.

HOLLIS

(annoyed)

Of course I did.

MITCHELL

Well it isn't working now.

RED FLAGGER 2

(indicating the bag)

We leave this one behind?

MITCHELL

(shakes his head)

They'll be on us as soon as they find it.

He only gives it a few seconds before swinging into action. He rips open the sea bag attached to the faulty initiator.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Open the other bags!

The team opens the other bags as Mitchell begins to pull money from the unusable one. The team grabs the cash that Mitchell pulls out as fast as they can and stuffs it in the other bags. A fair bit of money flies around the windy deck and must be chased down.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Grab it! C'mon people...

The man who went back into the passageway opens the hatch and calls out.

RED FLAGGER 1

Uh, Colonel? We got company.

He hurries onto the cable deck and shuts the hatch. Mitchell sees that Hollis and one of the men are down to their wet suits.

MITCHELL

Shit! Gannon and Stags, out you go!

HOLLIS

We need to stick together...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MITCHELL

Now! Go!

Hollis and Red Flagger 3 grab their swimming fins, pull themselves into the chute and let go. Mitchell secures one of the bags.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Slide them over here.

RED FLAGGER 1

All right, but if you ask me, we're throwing away our money.

The heave a few of the heavy bags to the chute opening.

EXT. HULL OF THE ENTERPRISE - CONTINUOUS

From an opening in the side of the huge ship, one of the Red Flag Team shoots out, holding her body in a pike position as she torpedoes into the open ocean.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A SEAMAN WITH TRASH is walking aft down the passageway with a bag of trash.

INT. CABLE DECK - CONTINUOUS

Red Flaggers 1 and 2 are quickly shedding their Navy clothes.

MITCHELL

(hushed)

Go, go, go...

They stuff their Navy clothes into the last open bag and climb into the chute.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Seaman with the trash is at the hatch to the cable deck. He opens it.

INT. CABLE DECK - CONTINUOUS

As the Seaman opens the hatch, only Mitchell remains on the Cable Deck, having just that instant sealed the last bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Seaman slides his bag over to where Mitchell stands. There are trash bags all over the deck.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
Lemme give you a hand.

MITCHELL  
Thanks.

The Seaman helps Mitchell slide the heavy bags to the chute.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
Man, this ship generates a lot of shit.

Mitchell smiles nervously, noticing a few stray bills spinning around in an eddy on the deck. He points to the other side of the cable deck.

MITCHELL  
Hand me that one, will you.

As the Seaman reaches over, Mitchell steps on one of the bills.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
Here you go.

MITCHELL  
I'll get the rest.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
All right.

The Seaman starts to go. Then he sees a bill on the ground and stoops to pick it up. Mitchell tenses up.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH (CONT'D)  
Whoa! A hundred bucks.

MITCHELL  
Hey! That's mine.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
Is it?

MITCHELL  
Just kidding. You found it.

SEAMAN WITH TRASH  
Oh yeah. My lucky day.

He goes. Mitchell sighs in relief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mitchell heaves the remaining bags into the chute, grabs his fins from behind a coil of line, then pulls himself into the chute. He glances one more time around the deck for anything left behind and sees another bill. He reaches over, grabs the bill, and pushes it up his wetsuit sleeve. Then he pulls the chute door closed as he lets himself go.

INT. TRASH CHUTE

The ride down the stainless steel chute is short and bumpy.

EXT. HULL OF THE ENTERPRISE

And then Mitchell is launched into thin air, falling 30 feet into the choppy water below.

EXT. OCEAN UNDERWATER

Mitchell hits the water and goes under a good ten feet. He sees two of the trash bags full of cash slowly sinking below him. He does not try to stop them from sinking.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE

Mitchell surfaces and looks around him. The huge Enterprise, the size of a civic center, is steaming away from him. He starts swimming slowly in the other direction, into the inky night.

EXT. ANOTHER AREA OF THE OCEAN

A fishing trawler is setting net under its powerful flood lights. In the distance, the Enterprise can be seen steaming away.

EXT. TRAWLER DECK

The men on deck are performing their fishing functions, pretending to be oblivious to the four people in the water on the port side, away from the view of the air craft carrier. The four Red Flag team members pull themselves aboard, being careful not to appear on the starboard side of the trawler.

INT. TRAWLER WHEELHOUSE

Four dripping Red Flag team members enter the fishing trawler's wheelhouse. They are greeted by the TRAWLER CAPTAIN, who is clearly more than a fisherman.

TRAWLER CAPTAIN  
Welcome aboard. Everything go well?

HOLLIS  
(out of breath)  
One more in the water. 5 minutes behind us.

The Trawler Captain turns to shout to his fishermen on deck.

TRAWLER CAPTAIN  
Coming left 90 degrees. Watch your lines.

EXT. TRAWLER

The boats turns in the water toward the retreating aircraft carrier.

EXT. TRAWLER DECK

A fisherman points from the bow with a powerful search light.

FISHERMAN  
Captain!

In the chop directly in front of them is Boyd Mitchell, swimming steadily towards them.

INT. BRIDGE OF THE ENTERPRISE - NEXT MORNING

Captain Benyon cannot believe what he's hearing from his XO.

CAPTAIN BENYON  
Robbed!?

EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Yes, Captain. The paymaster is doing an audit but we might be out over 10 million.

CAPTAIN BENYON  
I guess they got through, after all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Looks like it, Captain.

CAPTAIN BENYON

Alright, put together a small group who can keep their mouths shut and search the ship. That money didn't just go over the side. And get me Admiral Baker at Pearl.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Yes sir.

He starts to go.

CAPTAIN BENYON

Bill. Keep a tight lid on this. Just you, me and the paymaster.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Yes sir.

INT. TRAWLER BELOW DECKS

Coffee is being served in tin cups in the trawler's saloon. Mitchell and the group are seated or standing around the table. The Trawler Captain is there.

MITCHELL

Everybody sleep well?

RED FLAGGER 1

Like a baby.

MITCHELL

Where's Enterprise?

HOLLIS

320 nautical miles south west and opening.

MITCHELL

Great. Let's go fishing.

INT. TRAWLER WHEELHOUSE

The Trawler Captain is maneuvering the boat to a position on his instruments. He checks the GPS and is satisfied. He slows, then stops the engines.

EXT. TRAWLER DECK

The trawler is rocking in the morning sun. Mitchell has opened a suitcase with a transmitter device inside. He hands a cylindrical device to Red Flagger 2 who lowers it into the water by its connecting lead.

The Trawler Captain comes aft to where they are working.

TRAWLER CAPTAIN

So what's the theory here?

RED FLAGGER 2

My "theory" is that somebody threw out \$15 million bucks by mistake, and by international salvage law, finders keepers, right boss?

MITCHELL

(ignoring him)

It's a standard drug smuggling technique. They air-drop the goods from a low altitude just offshore. The bags sink to the bottom and the plane lands clean as a whistle. Later, a small fishing boat comes out and picks them up when the coast is clear.

RED FLAGGER 2

So to speak.

Mitchell is typing a few commands into the laptop.

MITCHELL

The technology is pretty basic. Inside the water-tight sea bags are compressed air cylinders. We transmit a pre-set frequency...

He presses a series of keystrokes.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

...which triggers the initiators to open the cylinders, the bags fill with air and..

RED FLAGGER 2

...come to momma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL

...they rise to the surface. They also start emitting a low level locator beacon which we will see on radar... in about...

Nothing is on the screen.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

...10 seconds...

Hollis comes in closer to take a look. There's nothing. With a head motion, Mitchell sends the others to look for floating bags from the deck. He repeats the keystrokes and stares at the blank screen. He looks out at the flat ocean. Nothing.

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

TITLE: MARCH 16

Brad Cox - the staffer who was instructed to contact Hoffer and arrange for "something big" in regards to a Red Flag operation against our own Navy - is floating on air as he struts along the hall. He passes a couple of female STAFFERS by the water cooler.

BRAD COX

Hey, Vanessa. Hi Gloria.

They are obviously not impressed with him.

VANESSA

Good morning, Brad. Canaries for breakfast this morning?

BRAD COX

Called upstairs to meet the big guy...

GLORIA

The President?!

BRAD COX

Must be a commendation for a project I was working on.

VANESSA

(condescending)

That *you* were working on? Like what?

BRAD COX

Classified, babe. It'll probably break on CNN in a couple of days. See ya.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He floats on down the hall.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

In the oval office, a very tense meeting is taking place. The President sits impassively behind his desk. At various places in the office are Frank Hurley, Secretary of the Navy Dallas Alms and the Army General Cecil Hoffer.

FRANK HURLEY

Mr. Secretary, the President would simply like to know what the hell is going on.

The Secretary of the Navy chooses to speak to the President, and not to Frank Hurley, who asked the question of him.

DALLAS ALMS

As I'm sure you're aware, Mr. President, we take internal security very seriously...

HOFFER

Not seriously enough, it seems...

DALLAS ALMS

(ignoring the interruption)  
...but while I take personal responsibility for the lax perimeter security under a Tactical Evaluation operation, I must protest the idea of robbing the safe...

FRANK HURLEY

That's not the issue here...

DALLAS ALMS

(losing his cool)  
I mean, for Chrissake, couldn't you have grabbed the ship's mascot or something?!

This last has been directed at Hoffer, the man in charge of Red Flag unit.

HOFFER

It wasn't my idea.

DALLAS ALMS

Your loose cannon operative... What's his name...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOFFER

If your people knew who was allowed on board a goddam aircraft carrier...

DALLAS ALMS

Mitchell! Colonel Mitchell. Jesus, Cec, did he have to rob the safe?!

Hoffer turns to the Chief of Staff.

HOFFER

Idea came from one of your White House weenies, didn't it Frank?

There is a thick silence. The President looks at Frank, who doesn't answer right away. A door to the office opens and an aide catches Frank's eye. Frank nods and the aide lets a young man into the office. It is Brad Cox.

FRANK HURLEY

Mr. President, you remember Brad Cox. Been with us since New Hampshire. It was Brad who was assigned to let General Hoffer know about our concerns for Navy perimeter security.

BRAD COX

Mr. President.

The President clearly has no recollection of Brad Cox from New Hampshire or anywhere else. Frank Hurley questions him.

FRANK HURLEY

Precisely, Mr. Cox, what instructions did you relay to General Hoffer?

It is not a friendly question the Chief of Staff is posing to Cox, who, finding himself so close to the President in such dubious circumstances, is becoming increasingly nervous.

BRAD COX

As instructed, I called General Hoffer and advised him of the President's concerns. The general was most receptive to an initiative that would focus Congress on the need to provide more funding for internal security by making a statement.

PRESIDENT

Did you tell him to rob the safe?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Immediately, Cox begins to perspire. This is not the kind of conversation he had anticipated with the Chief Executive when informed of the royal summons. The President has risen and is walking around the great desk.

BRAD COX

Mr. President, it was a good conversation. The general seemed most supportive of this effort. He asked me what we had in mind and I told him I felt the methodology was best left to the professionals.

PRESIDENT

Did you make any suggestions whatsoever?

BRAD COX

Well I suggested...

PRESIDENT

You told him to rob the fucking safe, didn't you?

The president's use of profanity puts Cox off balance. Having only ever heard the President speak on TV or at stump speeches, he imagines Pete Martin to be above the invective of the common man.

BRAD COX

Yessir... but it was just a suggestion to get the General thinking creatively.

PRESIDENT

Creatively? Who are we, Walt fucking Disney?

BRAD COX

I... he asked me, sir. I was just trying to get him kick started.

PRESIDENT

You got him fucking kick started, alright, with the impression that it was my personal wish to rob the fucking safe of the pride of the fucking navy!

Martin is finished with Cox, who catches the nod from Hurley and welcomes being excused from the worst meeting of his life. He half runs from the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Send him back to the DNC with instructions to perform a lobotomy at the earliest opportunity.

Hoffer raises his hand as a volunteer.

HOFFER

I studied a little neurosurgery in boot camp...

Martin sits back in his chair and stares out at the White House lawn. After several minutes of silence, he turns back to the room. His sudden fury at Brad Cox has passed and he is returning to Pete Martin the candidate.

PRESIDENT

We have to stay on message on this if it gets out. Even if the money isn't recovered. It's just more reinforcement of how bad military security really is. We've taken care of the airports, the skyscrapers, the borders and the postal service. Now it's time to shift focus.

The two men are relieved to see that the public Pete Martin has returned, that they have avoided the wrath of the Commander-in-Chief.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

That's all gentlemen.

HOFFER

(leaving)

We'll find the money, sir.

But the President has moved on already.

PRESIDENT

How are Brooke and the kids, Dallas?

DALLAS ALMS

The family is well, Mr. President. Thank you for asking, sir.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Frank Hurley has followed Hoffer out the door into the hallway.

FRANK HURLEY

General...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hoffer stops impatiently, ready to get back to work.

FRANK HURLEY (CONT'D)  
This man Mitchell. You have plans for  
him?

HOFFER  
What do you mean, 'plans?'

FRANK HURLEY  
Placement. Assignment. Plans.

Hoffer gets the gist quickly.

HOFFER  
Removal, you mean?

FRANK HURLEY  
I can't stress enough how sensitive the  
office of the presidency is right now.  
Should this mess ever wash up on shore,  
it needs to be clear that the White House  
responded quickly and appropriately by  
nipping a potential problem in the bud.

HOFFER  
Boyd Mitchell was following orders...

FRANK HURLEY  
The record shows no such orders. Someone  
on your end is going to take the hit on  
this on. It's up to you who it is.

HOFFER  
I see.

FRANK HURLEY  
Make the choice, General.

Hurley turns back to the Oval Office.

INT. SENATOR RAWLINGS'S OFFICE - DAY

Busy office. A FEMALE STAFFER leans over the Senator's desk.

FEMALE STAFFER  
Senator Henderson on 3.

Clay Rawlings picks up the phone.

RAWLINGS  
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENDERSON (O.S.)

Can you clear half an hour this afternoon?

Rawlings looks down at his desk without really checking anything. Two aides are waiting impatiently for his attention. Three phones are ringing.

RAWLINGS

Sure.

EXT. WAR MONUMENT, WASHINGTON DC - AFTERNOON

Clay Rawlings and Mason Henderson walk slowly together.

HENDERSON

Thanks, Clay. I need an ear.

RAWLINGS

No problem. Slow day.

HENDERSON

They're going to find the money if we air this one out.

RAWLINGS

The money is still down there?

HENDERSON

Nah. Hoffer disposed of it a couple of days after it was dropped. It was too dirty to have around.

RAWLINGS

\$15 million dollars. That's a lot of bumper stickers...

HENDERSON

Sure, we could have used it. But if we play it right, we'll get our money's worth.

RAWLINGS

So if the money's not there, how can Martin find it?

HENDERSON

I know Pete Martin. If it isn't there, he'll put it there. Raise an extra few mil from his closest friends and "find" it a few miles off course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAWLINGS

So we go public?

HENDERSON

You hate to waste the silver bullet so far from November, that's the problem.

RAWLINGS

And even if you leak the robbery today, how do you prove Red Flag didn't really recover the money?

HENDERSON

Which is why I think we help our friends in the White House keep this one under wraps. And when the time comes to come clean, they'll be guilty not only of botching the operation and losing \$15 million taxpayer dollars, they'll also be guilty of running a cover-up.

RAWLINGS

Only choice.

HENDERSON

I need your help, Clay.

Clay stops, unsure of what is coming.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

Can you talk to Admiral Baker at CINCPAC? You know him from 'Nam, I understand.

RAWLINGS

It's not a good idea, Mason. I had a run in with Baker a few years ago on a postumous Silver Cross I was trying to get for a constituent's son. Seemed like a race thing.

HENDERSON

Oh. That's too bad. Guess I'll have to call him myself.

RAWLINGS

He should be ok with it. Hell, the biggest casualty, if word gets out, is the reputation of the Navy. It would make Tailhook look like a frat party.

HENDERSON

Tailhook was a frat party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Henderson walks away from Rawlings, hiding his disappointment.

EXT. FORT MEAD SIDE GATE - DAY

Mitchell stops his black pick-up truck at a closed gate at Fort Mead. The sentry walks up to Mitchell's window. Mitchell nods to him as he has a thousand times.

MITCHELL  
Morning, Corporal.

SENTRY 1  
I'm sorry, sir. You can't enter here.

Mitchell eyes the sentry for a moment, waiting for the punch line. There isn't any.

MITCHELL  
All right...

Confused, Mitchell backs the truck up and pulls away from the gate.

EXT. FORT MEAD FRONT GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Mitchell drives up to the front gate. The sentry takes a couple steps out of the guard house and Mitchell waves to him for clearance.

But the sentry keeps moving, into the path of the truck. Boyd stops and rolls down the window. Another sentry approaches the truck window.

MITCHELL  
(identifying himself)  
Colonel Boyd Mitchell.

SENTRY  
(saluting)  
Yes, sir. Colonel. Orders to deny you entry, sir. Sorry, sir.

MITCHELL  
Deny... What the hell is going on here?!  
Why?

SENTRY  
I'm sorry, sir. Those are my orders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mitchell takes a moment to gather himself. He looks into the rear view mirror and sees the queue of cars behind him. A couple of soldiers on foot have stopped to watch. Evenly, he addresses the 18-year-old sentry, who is uncomfortably shifting his weight from foot to foot.

MITCHELL

Who is your CO?

From the guard shack, a couple other soldiers move toward the truck.

SENTRY

Captain Horgan, sir. I can give you his direct line if you'd like, sir. But I can't let you pass through.

MITCHELL

You can take his direct line and shove it up your ass.

SENTRY

(stiffening)

I'll have to ask you to turn around, sir.

Mitchell wheels the truck around in a screeching arc around the guard station and peels away.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Boyd Mitchell is jogging at a good clip. A black Ford Explorer pulls alongside him and the passenger window rolls down. Cecil Hoffer calls out.

HOFFER

Mitch!

Mitchell glances back. Then he turns ahead and picks up the pace a bit, turning into the next street. The Explorer follows.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Mitch! Would you stop for a minute?

Mitchell keeps jogging.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Hear me out. You at least owe me that.

At this, Mitchell stops abruptly, almost getting hit by the truck, and is in Hoffer's face in the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL

And what the fuck do you owe me? A word of support? A single ounce of loyalty after 7 years of doing this thing together?

Hoffer is shaken.

HOFFER

It has nothing to do with me, Mitch, you know that. All that would have happened is I would have gone down as well...

MITCHELL

God forbid...

HOFFER

...and then there would be nothing I could do for you.

MITCHELL

Go to hell, Cec. See if you can break into hell. I hear the perimeter is pretty weak.

Mitchell starts walking away from the truck. The truck wheels in front of him and two men hop out. They hem him in and stand ready for a fight. Hoffer gets out of the truck and stands face to face with Mitchell.

HOFFER

Ok, Mitch. Do what you want. But here's what you can't do. Do not go public with any of this. Do not make contact with anyone in Red Flag. Do not try to find out what went wrong on the Enterprise. Ever. I think you know what's at stake here.

Mitchell is ready to explode, but stands silently, staring into Hoffer's face.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

(softening)

If you need a hand - a contact, some money to get started, whatever - just call me. The Army will miss you, Mitch. I will miss you.

MITCHELL

Fuck you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He walks away. The MPs stand ready to pursue, but Hoffer waves them back in the Ford.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Mitchell has been up most of the night. He picks up the phone and dials.

MITCHELL  
 (into the phone)  
 Hollis? ... Sorry. I was waiting until morning...

He looks at the clock.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)  
 Early. Yes I know.

He listens for a while before going on.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)  
 Can you meet me somewhere? ... Whenever.  
 I seem to have a lot of time on my hands.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Hollis is dressed for work, Mitchell is in jeans and t-shirt.

MITCHELL  
 I'm out. Just like that. Something screwed up and somebody has to get screwed.

HOLLIS  
 I'm so sorry.

MITCHELL  
 The Army was my life. Pathetic as that may seem.

HOLLIS  
 What's pathetic is I understand.

MITCHELL  
 I give up trying to understand how the Army can drop me like a piece of shit. I know I'll never figure that one out. But this one thing I really have to answer: What do I do now? Hollis?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She doesn't answer.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I don't know how to do anything else.  
What do I do now?

She's quiet for a minute, but looks around nervously.

HOLLIS

Look, I got to go.

MITCHELL

Yeah. I'll see you.

HOLLIS

I'll see you, Mitch.

She leaves him at the table.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

TITLE: September 14.

The set of Larry King Live is being readied for air. Larry is getting final touches of make up on his face. Across his desk sits Pete Martin, President of the United States. Around them, technicians scurry about.

The stage manager counts off the seconds to air and cues Larry to camera one.

LARRY KING

Good evening. In two months time, pollsters say, about half of you will vote for my guest this evening for President of the United States. Half of you will not.

He turns toward Pete Martin.

LARRY KING (CONT'D)

Mr. President, what do you say to the other half?

PRESIDENT

Well, first of all Larry, I want to thank you for asking me to appear on the show. My staff told me it wasn't going to be easy to get a night with you...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LARRY KING

It wasn't. We had to bump Britney Spears.

PRESIDENT

But to answer your question, I don't think the pollsters are on target on this one. For one thing, there is a huge number of undecided voters out there tonight, voters who want to be reassured that the kind of renewed sense of security they've seen over the last four years will continue into our second term in office. That the United States will stand strong against outside aggression...

LARRY KING

(interrupting)

But Mr. President... Your opponent, Senator Mason Henderson, would say that the country's military installations have never been more vulnerable to terrorist attack than they have after four years of Democratic control of the White House.

PRESIDENT

Well, that simply is not true, Larry...

The President continues his rebuttal, but we are no longer in the studio.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

We are in the electronics department of a retail store. President Martin's close-up is on a row of television sets against a wall.

PRESIDENT (ON TV)

Our military installations around the country and abroad have never been stronger. Under my direction, the Army has spent the last 12 months evaluating and strengthening...

One man, who was watching the monitors for a moment, turns away. It is Boyd Mitchell in a leather jacket and jeans.

MITCHELL

(to the TV)

Spare me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mitchell wanders over to the racks of CD's and picks one up, looks at it as if to buy. He starts to put it back in the rack as a woman with a large handbag walks by. Turning at the right moment, Mitchell slips the CD into her hand bag.

He then goes straight for the video camera section, picks up an expensive model, and slips in a video cassette. Then he snips the cable that attaches it to the display and starts to videotape the area.

Meanwhile, the woman with the handbag walks out of the audio video area, through the electronic sensor. Of course, as soon as she does, the alarms go off.

Immediately, salesclerks rush to the woman to stop her from proceeding. In another moment, a store security guard is on the scene.

Videotaping as he goes, Boyd Mitchell walks through the same security sensor and out of the area. No one pays him any attention. The alarm, which had been whining the whole time, actually stops as Mitchell walks away from the area.

The woman is complaining hysterically as Mitchell strolls out of the store.

INT. STORE MANAGER'S OFFICE - LATER

Mitchell enters the office as a sales manager meeting is taking place. He unceremoniously interrupts the meeting, setting down the video camera on the manager's desk and pressing play so that the scene appears on its tiny screen and plays through the speaker throughout the scene.

MITCHELL

I've completed my evaluation of the security in your electronics department and am sorry to report that it sucks. For starters, I suggest a detection sensor that automatically resets after each trigger to prevent the type of multiple theft that took place today. For all intents and purposes, you lost a \$1500 camera while nabbing a \$15 thief.

The people on the room are speechless.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

With this report, I am terminating my contract with Mallards' Department store. You can mail my final check to this address.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He tosses a business card on the desk and starts out the door. He stops.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Oh... the lady on the videotape - you may want to offer her a nice gift certificate or something. I think she's pretty upset.

He doesn't shut the door behind him.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell is crossing the street. On the other side, he stops to light a cigarette. He looks back at Mallard's store and sees the woman he framed emerge from the front door in a huff.

INT. HART BUILDING OFFICE - EVENING

Mason Henderson is pacing. Rawlings and a few senior aides are in the room.

HENDERSON

Where are we?

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Depends on who you ask.

HENDERSON

I'm asking you, goddamit. Jesus, can't anyone get a straight answer around here?

The campaign manager consults a clipboard.

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

We're still good in the west, with the obvious exception of California. South is 50/50. Florida depends on who's counting, as usual. Martin definitely has New York and Massachusetts, but we'll probably pick up the rest of the northeast. Texas is still a big "if."

HENDERSON

Big picture?

CAMPAIGN MANAGER

Too close to call.

Henderson turns to his running mate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAWLINGS

I still say he's weak on homeland security.

HENDERSON

Son of a bitch looked strong on CNN.

RAWLINGS

Which is why it's time to leak the Enterprise.

HENDERSON

Think so?

RAWLINGS

We have to give voters enough time to register the cover-up. Plus, the closer to the first Tuesday we get, the more it looks like a set-up.

The men in the room wait expectantly while Henderson considers this advice.

HENDERSON

All right. But let's give it to the most liberal goddam rag we can find. Make it look like even his own people are shocked. And make sure we get full support on this from our buddies in arms.

RAWLINGS

What about Hoffer?

HENDERSON

I'll take care of Hoffer.

INT. WHITE HOUSE PRESS ROOM - DAY

Pete Martin is answering questions about the deteriorating situation in the Middle East. 75 press with note pads and cameras jam the room.

PRESIDENT

I think that's a fair question, and one that deserves an answer. Unfortunately, if I told you specifically what steps we are taking in that region this evening, we'd have to shoot you.

A weak twitter of laughter. Then the chorus of "Mr. Presidents" of the corps trying to be recognized.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Mr. Jaffey.

JAFFEY

Mr. President... The American people are concerned about all lives in the Palestinian situation. But they want to know first and foremost about their own sons and daughters in the armed forces. Will you risk American lives overseas in this operation?

PRESIDENT

First of all, I don't know what "operation" you refer to. There is no operation planned at this time. And secondly, we have no plans to put our armed forces in harm's way...

During this evasion, a small bit of activity among the ranks of the press. A junior staffer has rudely pushed his way through several rows of journalists to whisper something in the ear of a woman near the front. As the President finishes his last answer she is on her feet.

WECHSLER

Mr. President...

PRESIDENT

Yes, Ms...

WECHSLER

Wechsler, Mr. President. Boston Globe.

PRESIDENT

Yes, Ms. Wechsler.

WECHSLER

The Globe has just received a report that you and the White House staff were the architects of a botched security exercise, early this year, that resulted in the aircraft carrier Enterprise being robbed of approximately \$15 million dollars.

PRESIDENT

Wha...

The press corps, so accustomed to seeing Pete Martin in control, is hushed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WECHSLER

And, Mr. President, that you ordered a cover up in the interest of saving face for your administration? How do you respond sir?

There is a moment's pause before Martin recovers.

PRESIDENT

I'll have to get back to you on that one. Sounds like you've been watching too many movies.

Pandemonium breaks out as the president is hustled away by his people.

EXT. PEARL HARBOR NAVY YARD - DAY

Captain Sean Benyon is trying to walk along a Navy pier, a news crew keeping a couple of steps ahead of him.

CAPTAIN BENYON

I'm sorry, I cannot respond.

REPORTER

The safe on your ship was robbed under your nose and you have no comment?!

Benyon stops short.

CAPTAIN BENYON

My ship was on the eve of float. To stage a perimeter test in a known secure area is not my idea of a legitimate military exercise.

REPORTER

So you're saying the whole thing was politically motivated to give President Martin a boost in the polls.

CAPTAIN BENYON

No. That's what *you're* saying.

INT. PRESS ROOM - DAY

Hoffer is fielding a question into a bouquet of microphones.

HOFFER

Yes. The entire operation was ordered by the White House.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Red Flag unit was specifically instructed to gain entry to the USS Enterprise safe in order to demonstrate the need for increased security against terrorist infiltration.

A reporter leans forward.

REPORTER 2

What happened to the money, General?

A couple of cameras click photographs.

HOFFER

There was a failure of the initiator devices that should have risen the bags to the surface. We don't know what went wrong.

REPORTER 2

What happened to the money?

HOFFER

The money was not recovered.

REPORTER 2

Wouldn't it have been right where it was dropped?

HOFFER

That would be a reasonable assumption.

REPORTER 2

Then... Where did it go?

HOFFER

The money was not recovered.

REPORTER 3

Did the Army conduct a search?

HOFFER

The money was not recovered.

The room breaks out in a flurry of questions.

INT. SHOE STORE - DAY

Brad Cox is seated on a low stool, slipping a pair of red pumps on a late middle aged woman. He wears a name tag.

BRAD COX

How does that feel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHOE LADY

Does it come in "triple e?"

A young female newspaper REPORTER approaches from a rack of boots.

CUB REPORTER

Excuse me... Are you Brad Cox?

BRAD COX

Yes. Can I help you?

CUB REPORTER

*The* Brad Cox that worked in the White House?

BRAD COX

No. *That* Brad Cox died last March. *This* Brad Cox can help you find something sensible in a size... (he glances at her feet) 6 and a half.

She looks down at her feet.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - AFTERNOON

Mitchell turns the corner in his pick-up truck and sees the press mob on either side of the driveway to his small apartment building. There are news vans with microwave dishes, cameras on tripods and reporters all over the place.

When they see the pick-up approach, the crews jump into action, rushing to be closest to the path of the vehicle.

Mitchell leans on the horn in an effort to get the crews out of the driveway. Several people scatter as he continues forward without stopping. He rams into a camera and tripod, knocking it to the ground. He keeps going, not as one running from anything, but with the simple intention of parking in his regular spot no matter what gets in the way.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - CONTINUOUS

Mitchell wheels unhurriedly into his space, slips the truck into park and gets out. By the time he has locked the driver side door and walked away from the truck, the first reporters have caught up.

REPORTER 3

Colonel Mitchell? Tell us about Red Flag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER 4

Did the president order a cover up of your operation?

REPORTER 5

Colonel, did you go back to look for the missing money?

Mitchell keeps walking steadily for the door that leads to the building lobby. The swarm builds in front of him as he nears it. He slows to keep from knocking people over, but does not stop. The questions come from all sides.

REPORTER 6

Who gave the orders to rob the Enterprise?

REPORTER 7

Where's the money, Colonel?

Mitchell has succeeded in opening the door to the lobby and pushes his way inside. Just before he closes it on the crowd, one reporter shouts above the rest.

REPORTER 8

Colonel Mitchell! Why are you no longer with Red Flag? Did you resign from the Army voluntarily?

For a second it looks almost as if Mitchell is going to answer that question. The group falls quiet. Then he shoves away one cameraman who has his foot in the door and pulls the lobby door closed, disappearing inside.

INT. SENATE CHAMBER - DAY

Mason Henderson is speaking to the floor of Senate. It is a full house. He is in full swing of a rousing speech. He alternately reads from a paper before him, and ad-libs a few lines.

HENDERSON

...it is not for me to call for a thorough and impartial investigation into the Enterprise affair. You see, I don't claim to be impartial. Among friends - and I count about 51% of you among them - I can say I am not surprised that this affair surfaced so close to the election. I'm only surprised that this is the first scandal that's surfaced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There is a mixture of applause and murmuring on the floor.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

No, I am perhaps the most *partial* man in this room. If I thought, for a minute, that Pete Martin was the best man suited to lead the free world, I would not be applying for his job. But I don't, and I am.

Thunderous applause among the faithful. He goes back to his written speech.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

Therefore, I not only relinquish my position as chair of the Ethics Committee, but my treasured seat among you, as a member of this great and august body. Today, in the interest of impartiality, I resign from the Senate of the United States of America with the stern admonition to you all to be firm in your investigation of this affair. In your hands is the responsibility to preserve the integrity of the most powerful office on earth.

Applause as Mason puts down the piece of paper with his prepared remarks.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

Don't. Let. Him. Go.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

A large hall with 200 or more tables in formal setting. There are several people sitting and a number of small groups of men and women talking.

INT. A SMALLER ROOM AT THE BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

The President's handlers are all there, but the President himself is not. The three men and one woman sit silently, as if in the principal's office for throwing spitballs in class.

When the President enters, he is alarmingly calm, straightening his bow tie. For a while nobody says anything as the President grabs his tuxedo jacket and slips it on. There is a long, uncomfortable silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK HURLEY

Mr. President, I assure you we will find out how it got out. I have everyone looking into it as we speak...

PRESIDENT

And when you find the leak?

FRANK HURLEY

We'll plug it, sir.

PRESIDENT

Let me know when you do. I'll call Ms. Whats-her-name at the Globe and give her the bad news.

The silence returns.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

How are we doing out there tonight?

The smartly dressed campaign worker steps up.

CAMPAIGN WORKER

Pretty good, Mr. President. We've raised \$150,000.

PRESIDENT

(turning to Frank Hurley)

I thought the goal was half a million.

FRANK HURLEY

I...

CAMPAIGN WORKER

It's a tough call, sir. We haven't seen the bottom of their pockets yet.

PRESIDENT

Hedging their bets. Well, let's get this over with.

INT. BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

The voice comes over the PA system.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

"Hail to the Chief" is piped in as the President and handlers enter the room from a side door. There is polite applause as the standing guests find a seat.

The President makes his way to the dais and the microphone waiting there. It feeds back uncomfortably as he approaches. He sizes up the audience.

PRESIDENT

A guy gets a phone call from his doctor. The doctor says, "I've got bad news and I've got worse news." "OK," the guy says, "give me the bad news." "The bad news is that the tests have come back and it's as bad as we feared. You have 24 hours to live." "Wow," says the guy. "That's pretty bad. What news could be worse than that?" The doctor says, "I've been trying to reach you since yesterday."

Nervous laughter comes from those that laugh. Many of the evening's patrons are clearly in no laughing mood.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

So tonight I have some bad news, and some worse news. The bad news is we're taking it on the chin for the Enterprise affair - a military operation that was ordered by my office precisely to *improve* our military security around the world.

The audience members seem as uncomfortable as does the President.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

It's pretty bad, when fellow Americans take what was intended as a life-saving operation, and turn it into a scandal, all in the name of political gain. What news could be worse than that? Well, the worse news is that our own Party, our loyal followers, are defecting almost as fast. Sensing defeat, they flip flop over to the other side - as if there was nothing they really believed in about our Party and what it stands for in the first place.

An elderly, well-dressed couple in the middle of the hall quietly rises and heads toward the exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Many of you were with me in Sarasota two weeks ago. Seems so long ago. We looked like a team back then. Look at us now.

Some people stir their drinks. A woman folds her napkin back and forth.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

But there is some good news tonight as well. The good news? The patient isn't dead yet. The patient is alive and kicking! The patient is planning to win in November, no matter what it takes!!

Pete Martin's attempt to rouse the audience is only vaguely successful. To the side of the dais, Frank Hurley impassively watches the President bomb.

INT. HENDERSON CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

TITLE: NOVEMBER 12

The mood in the arena is festive, Henderson/Rawlings posters and placards line the walls. Straw hats and red white and blue bunting.

A big cheer goes up in the hall where thousands of Henderson supporters are hearing definitive news that their candidate has just been elected President. TV commentators are projected on huge screens around the arena.

In a "sky box" above the arena's floor, the President-elect is being congratulated by some of the inner circle.

Clay Rawlings, the senator from Ohio who is now the first Black Vice President-elect, shakes his hand.

RAWLINGS

Congratulations, Mr. President. You did it.

HENDERSON

We did it.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

TITLE: APRIL 24

He's eating Chinese food, the TV is on. Baseball. The apartment is neat and spare.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The telephone rings and the machine picks up. A fax tone starts the fax receive mode. Mitchell glances over as a sheet spits out of the slot. He eats another bite and watches the show.

Then his curiosity gets him out of the chair to look at the fax. It is the TV section from today's paper. A single listing is circled by hand - the program "20/20" at 8:00pm.

Mitchell looks at the station message header on the top of the fax. He presses the speakerphone button and dials the number - presumably the number from which the fax came.

RECORDED VOICE (O.S.)

We're sorry. The number you have reached is out of service. Please check the number and...

Mitchell closes the connection and looks at the fax.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - LATER

Mitchell slips a tape into the VCR and surfs to ABC. He presses record and watches the show. It is a special report, "Live from the Oval Office." President Mason Henderson is about to be interviewed by Barbara Walters. Walters does a studio introduction.

WALTERS

...I spoke with the President on the occasion of his first 100 days in office. We met in the Oval Office - the first time I personally have ever been inside.

The image on the TV cuts to the interview set up in the Oval Office

WALTERS (CONT'D)

Mr. President, I am simply in awe of this room where some many great men have sat, so many momentous decisions were made.

HENDERSON

Frankly, Barbara, so am I.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The interview is full screen, a wide shot showing the camera crews and lighting in the Oval Office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALTERS

But here we are.

HENDERSON

Here we are.

WALTERS

Did you ever think, Mr. President, when you were growing up as a boy in Roanoke, Virginia that one day this would be your office, that you would be President of the United States?

HENDERSON

No. I was always more focused on the things closer to my life - the firemen, the policemen. I always wanted to serve, I know that. But I was never that ambitious growing up.

WALTERS

Until...

HENDERSON

Until?

WALTERS

What happened? Was there a single event you can recall that instilled the kind of consuming ambition that it takes to rise to national office?

CUT TO:

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - LATER

The interview is continuing on the TV in Mitchell's apartment. However, Mitchell isn't watching. The sound of a running shower indicates he has lost interest.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Mitchell is nodding on the couch, the TV still on. The VCR clicks and blinks - the tape has been recording for two hours and has started to rewind. Mitchell sleepily picks up the remote control and presses play. The JAG re-run that's on screen is replaced by the taped interview in the Oval Office. Walters is asking a probing question as the camera zooms in on her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WALTERS

(on the TV screen)

Is it about winning at all costs? Do you have to do whatever it takes - forget friendships to take advantage of opportunities, trade loyalties for political gain...

HENDERSON

No, I don't think you have to do any of that. We've prided ourselves on standing behind the people who got us here. You see, unlike my predecessor, I'm an old military guy...

Mitchell switches off the tape, the TV and the light.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT - MORNING

He's cleaning up from the night before. He scrunches the fax up in one hand and pitches it into the trash. He looks at the trash for a moment. Then he pushes the videotape back into the VCR and switches on the TV. He looks at a couple of interchanges between interview and interviewee with the sound muted.

INT. HALLWAY AT NSA OFFICE - DAY

Mitchell is walking quickly down the hall with a former colleague, a nervous man of Indian origin.

PATEL

You realize, of course, that you have no clearance anymore.

MITCHELL

I realize that, Patel.

PATEL

None at all.

MITCHELL

Not an ounce.

PATEL

Not even to use the bathroom anymore...

MITCHELL

Nope.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATEL

I could get in very, very big trouble.

MITCHELL

I know that, Patel.

PATEL

Just *talking* to you...

MITCHELL

You're a true patriot.

They turn into a dark room.

INT. VIDEO LAB - CONTINUOUS

Patel switches on the lights to reveal a small video editing facility.

PATEL

(half to himself)

Not even the smallest, little bit of clearance...

He sits down and punches a couple of buttons to bring the monitors to life. He holds out his hand palm up.

Mitchell hands him the VHS tape and sits down behind him. Patel slides the tape into a machine and uses the computer to set it playing.

PATEL (CONT'D)

What is it we are looking for?

MITCHELL

I don't know. Something... out of place.

A shot shows Henderson droning on about education programs.

HENDERSON

(on the TV monitor)

....what we are talking about is restructuring our priorities. Telling our children that we really care about their futures...

PATEL

For this you didn't need special equipment. It's the same speech over and over...

Patel uses the controller to start fast forwarding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL

It's not him.

The tape zips into a shot of Walters asking the next question.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

It's her. Play it here.

Patel hits a key and the image slows to normal. It's the personal question that Mitchell had already seen Barbara Walters ask while he was taping the program.

WALTERS

(on the TV monitor)

Is it about winning at all costs? Do you have to do whatever it takes - forget friendships to take advantage of opportunit...

MITCHELL

STOP!

Patel freezes the motion on Walters in mid-word.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Can you zoom in on this frame?

Patel "grabs" the image and starts zooming in on her face.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

No, over her shoulder. What the hell is on the shelf behind her.

The technician zooms into the shelf behind her. It is pixelated beyond recognition.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Can you get it any clearer?

PATEL

It's VHS, man, what do you expect?

He tries anyway, with remarkable success. There is something on the shelf across the room, something that Mitchell recognizes without, at first, knowing why it's there.

MITCHELL

I'll be damned.

EXT. PARK BENCH - NIGHT

Mitchell is dialing Hollis' number on his cell phone. He listens to the phone ring, and to the answering machine on the other end.

HOLLIS RECORDING(O.S.)

Hi. Leave a message.

The machine beeps.

MITCHELL

Hollis. Please. Pick up. (pause) Look, I've got no friends left and 4000 free weekend and night minutes, so I'm gonna keep trying...

He waits a minute. The machine hangs up on him. He hits "end", then "send" to redial.

HOLLIS RECORDING(O.S.)

Hi. Leave a message.

MITCHELL

I need your help Hollis. I wouldn't call it wasn't important. I know what happened.

He waits for her to pick up, but she does not. The machine beeps dead. He presses "end". Dials again.

HOLLIS RECORDING(O.S.)

Hi. Leave a message.

INT. HOFFER'S OFFICE - DAY

The general is in session with a few uniforms when Hollis Gannon walks in unannounced. Hoffer is surprised at her entrance.

HOLLIS

Oh... Excuse me...

HOFFER

(recovering quickly)  
No, no. Come in.

The military men rise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOFFER (CONT'D)  
Gentlemen, Colonel Hollis Gannon.  
Commander of Red Flag Unit.

One man comes forward.

GENERAL STRAITHORN  
Of course. We're very impressed with  
your unit, Colonel. Nice work.

HOLLIS  
Thank you sir.

There is a brief silence.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
General, I just need a minute of your  
time.

He is somewhat embarrassed.

HOFFER  
Uh... Wait outside for me, will you  
Colonel?

HOLLIS  
Yes sir. Of course.

She leaves the office.

INT. OUTSIDE HOFFER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

There are a number of army pictures in the outer office.  
Hollis is looking at one posed shot in which a young  
Lieutenant Hoffer is standing next to a Major Mason Henderson  
and a couple of other soldiers. Mementos of Nam. Hoffer  
surprises her.

HOFFER  
Yes, Colonel. What can I do for you in  
about 60 seconds?

He is not altogether comfortable with her, but maintains a  
professional attitude.

HOLLIS  
General... I'm sorry to bother you...

HOFFER  
(rushing her)  
Really, Colonel, I've got to get back in  
there...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS

Yes sir. I got a call. Well, actually a few calls. Well, 19 calls to be exact, sir.

She pauses, and he raises his eyebrows in impatience.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

It was Boyd Mitchell, sir.

HOFFER

I see. Well I can't say I'm surprised. What did he have to say?

HOLLIS

I didn't talk to him. I screened.

HOFFER

I see.

There is another uncomfortable silence.

HOLLIS

When I took over Red Flag, my agreement was to avoid all contact with Boyd ... Colonel Mitchell. I'm asking for your recommendation, sir.

HOFFER

Well it doesn't sound like he's going away so easily.

He makes a quick decision.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Take his call. Find out what he wants. Then report back to me.

HOLLIS

Should I see him, sir?

HOFFER

If that's what it takes. Let's see what he's up to.

HOLLIS

Yes sir.

HOFFER

Colonel. Let's keep this between us, ok?

HOLLIS

Yes sir.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

A bright spring day. The cemetery is green with new growth, airy. Rows of headstones pattern the rolling meadow. Mitchell is walking among them.

Hollis pulls up in her car. She gets out and looks around for a moment before seeing him. She walks to where he has stopped, looking at a particular headstone.

HOLLIS  
Well. This is dramatic.

MITCHELL  
Yeah.

Mitchell doesn't look up at her. He stares at the headstone in front of him.

HOLLIS  
Friend of yours?

MITCHELL  
Nope. Just some guy. Gave his life for his country, that sort of thing. The usual...

HOLLIS  
What's up, Mitch?

MITCHELL  
...believed he was fighting for some cause, no doubt. Couldn't have had any idea that all you really get for your trouble is about two square yards in the world's most famous graveyard.

HOLLIS  
Look, I'm sorry about what happened.

He doesn't respond.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
Mitch?

Still nothing.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)  
You want to know the first thing that went through my mind when they offered me Red Flag?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

I thought, "How can I do this to Boyd Mitchell?" And then I thought, "What would Boyd Mitchell do in my shoes? Would *he* end his career for *me*?"

Mitchell finally looks up at her.

MITCHELL

And?

HOLLIS

No. He wouldn't. It was too important to him. *He* would have kept his loyalty to the oath he made to this country. Not to one single buddy. Or commander. Or lover.

MITCHELL

(nodding)

So. Congratulations on your promotion, Colonel.

He offers his hand.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

(softening)

I mean it, Hollis. If it had to be anyone in the Army, I'm glad it was you. They made the right choice.

She takes his hand. He gently pulls her to him, letting his hand run down her back. Perhaps he is checking for a wire.

HOLLIS

Thanks, Mitch. I really wanted to call...

MITCHELL

Forget it. Anyway, that's not what we're here for.

He starts them walking.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

What I'm about to tell you may change everything for you. So you have to decide whether or not you want to hear it.

HOLLIS

I don't understand. Change what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MITCHELL

If you suddenly knew about the people you're working for. If you found out how people really get ahead in this system.

HOLLIS

I'm not that green.

MITCHELL

Wanna hear? Yes or no.

HOLLIS

Yes.

They've walked to the side of his pick-up. He opens the passenger door for her.

MITCHELL

Hop in.

She does. He shuts the door and goes around to the driver side.

INT. TRUCK CAB - MOMENTS LATER

They are driving north away from the cemetery. Mitchell looks straight ahead as he speaks.

MITCHELL

What everybody stopped asking is the only question worth an answer. "What happened to the money?" Because whoever got the money was behind a plot to subvert a legitimate Army mission. If that person happens to be an American citizen, than you'd be able to make a case they committed treason.

The truck has turned onto the Arlington Memorial Bridge towards Washington DC.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

It was a question the press got tired of. One thing Washington does really well is kill a story. I, of course, was in no position to look for clues. To tell you the truth, I stopped long ago. After three or four store security jobs, you stop caring. But then I saw something.

The pick-up wheels onto Lincoln Memorial Circle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

You remember the initiators I chose for the Enterprise job? They aren't rare. Not the kind of thing you'd find on the shelf at Home Depot, but certainly available. Salvage divers use them for underwater recovery. But when I saw this particular one a couple of days ago, I couldn't for the life of me think of any good reason why it would be where it was, unless it was one of mine. Unless it had been attached to \$15 million in cash from the USS Enterprise.

Hollis looks at him for the first time.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

So if I could possibly prove the initiator was one of mine, then the person who had it was connected to the biggest political crime of the decade. With me?

HOLLIS

Yes.

MITCHELL

Still want to go on?

HOLLIS

Yes.

The truck has turned north onto 23rd Street.

MITCHELL

OK. There's one procedure I never told you about, that I always followed before a Red Flag mission. To make sure it was our guys who had infiltrated a friendly base - or in this case, ship - I always marked every piece of physical evidence with our insignia. A small scratch, but enough to show we were there, and not Al Qaeda or the IRA. Follow?

HOLLIS

(getting the picture)

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MITCHELL

So if my mark is on that initiator...  
Well, that would change just about  
everything, wouldn't it? And all we'd  
have to do is look.

HOLLIS

(half to herself)

Do I want to know where this initiator  
is?

MITCHELL

Do you?

HOLLIS

Yes.

Mitchell has stopped the truck just before the barrier on  
Pennsylvania Avenue.

MITCHELL

In there.

He motions to the White House.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Oval office.

INT. DARK PUB - LATER

They are in a corner booth with a couple of pints of beer.

HOLLIS

Even if Henderson did wind up with one of  
the initiators, why would he put in the  
Oval Office?

MITCHELL

Souvenir. They all do it. Gerald Ford  
had the ship's wheel from the *Mayaguez* in  
there. Clinton had a model of the bus he  
and Gore campaigned from. Kennedy had  
the coconut shell he scratched an SOS on  
when his PT boat was sunk.

HOLLIS

So what are you going to do?

MITCHELL

Get it. Look at it. Bring it to 'show  
and tell.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS

You can't break into the White House.  
And even if you could, you could never  
break out.

MITCHELL

The commander of Red Flag admitting there  
was someplace we can't get in and out of.

HOLLIS

It's the White House, for Chrissake.

MITCHELL

We had a file on the White House this  
thick. It was Mount Everest for us.

HOLLIS

It was a *joke*. Nobody ever intended to  
do the White House.

MITCHELL

Nobody ever had a good reason to.

HOLLIS

OK. Say you *were* serious about this.  
What do you want me to do?

MITCHELL

I can't do it alone. Every scenario we  
put together needed a team covering all  
the bases. Besides the fact that I  
didn't sleep with the chief of White  
House security.

HOLLIS

Oh please. That was one week, one year  
ago.

MITCHELL

Bet he remembers it fondly.

HOLLIS

You've been *spying* on me?!

MITCHELL

Common knowledge. The secret service has  
no secrets. So are you in?

HOLLIS

You're asking me to mutiny.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MITCHELL

Everything Red Flag did was mutiny on one level. But our *intention* was to protect and serve. It still is mine.

HOLLIS

And if it's not your device in there?

MITCHELL

We get out. I disappear. End of story.

She shakes her head.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

Just think about it. All I'm asking.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

TITLE: MAY 20

A meeting with the Joint Chiefs. The group has a few of the same faces that Pete Martin faced in the last days of his own presidency, including Dallas Alms and General Cecil Hoffer.

Henderson wears the presidency well by now.

HENDERSON

That's the most encouraging news I've had so far. What about Saudi Arabia?

ARMY GENERAL

Congress has approved funds for complete overhaul of security measures in Riyadh and Amman. In the meantime, Mr. President, we've tripled watches on all Middle East and Eastern European installations. A flea would have to crawl sideways to get through.

HENDERSON

Suicide fleas, I wouldn't be surprised. I want every American working abroad to be as secure as if they were sitting in this room.

The Joint Chiefs have finished their report. The President's secretary sticks his head in from the secretary's office.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SECRETARY

The Secretary of Labor is here, Mr. President. We're 7 minutes behind, sir.

HENDERSON

That's all, gentlemen. Keep up the good work.

The Chiefs file out of the Oval Office. Hoffer remains behind. He is at the inset bookshelf looking at the initiator device, which is set on a small stand next to other war memorabilia.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

(impatiently)

General?

HOFFER

I was wondering sir... Do you think it's wise to...

He doesn't go on. He is staring at the device.

HENDERSON

(smiling)

To what, General? Display a little memento from the road to glory?

Another moment passes.

HOFFER

It was meant as a *personal* gift, Mr. President.

HENDERSON

Ah, shades of the timid Lieutenant Hoffer. I remember him well.

Hoffer turns away from the device on the shelf and looks at the President with unmasked enmity.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

This is *my* office. I will put anything I goddam want in here. Unless that makes you squeamish... Lieutenant... Hoffer...

HOFFER

No, Mr. President. Not at all.

He turns and leaves the office.

INT. LIMOUSINE BACK SEAT - DAY

Hoffer is riding back to his Pentagon office, talking on the phone.

HOFFER

Nobody's seen her all week?

He isn't pleased with the response.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Colonel Gannon is not presently on field assignment. Which is why I expect her to be at her desk at Fort Mead.

He is getting less pleased.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

Then find her. Call me back as soon as you do.

He punches "end".

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Mitchell is at a computer terminal in a Washington DC public library. He is accessing the Internet. Hollis looks over his shoulder.

HOLLIS

What are we doing here?

MITCHELL

Anonymous access to the information superhighway. The God-given right of every American.

HOLLIS

And we're going to hack our way into the White House from the card catalogue?

MITCHELL

Nope. We don't need to hack in.

He types and clicks enter. The computer screen shows the Online Tour of the White House at [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). It has a schematic map of the entire building.

HOLLIS (O.S.)

This is a *tourist* site.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mitchell clicks on "Make Reservations".

MITCHELL

There's two difficult things about a Red Flag mission. Getting in and getting out.

He clicks on a form that allows the surfer to make a reservation for a walking tour of the White House.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

In this case, however, getting in is not going to be much of a challenge.

He types in the name "James Kirk".

HOLLIS

You're booking us on the White House tour?!

Mitchell calls up the cut-away map.

MITCHELL

I hear the China Room is very interesting.

HOLLIS

Do you have any idea how tight security is between the East and West Wings?! You might as well be a thousand miles away.

MITCHELL

That's why you'll be on the other side.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE TOURIST ENTRY - DAY

Mitchell, dressed as a tourist, is waiting in line with 50 others, snapping an occasional picture. Suddenly, the line starts to move and people begin to enter the East Wing of the White House.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE STAFF ENTRY - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Hollis is showing her ID to the guard at the sentry gate. As she steps through a metal detector, an aide comes forward to greet her.

AIDE

Colonel Gannon?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS

Yes.

AIDE

Right this way, Colonel.

He leads her into the West Wing entrance.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE EAST WING - CONTINUOUS

The White House tour commences as the group is led into the East Garden. A guide steps in front of the group.

GUIDE

Welcome to the East Garden, also known as the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden. The garden was designed by Rachel Lambert Mellon, a personal friend of the Kennedys, in 1961.

Mitchell looks around at the grounds, the colonnade toward the mansion, the windows. He takes a picture. The flash goes off.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry sir. Photography is not allowed on the White House grounds.

Mitchell puts his camera away in his belly bag.

INT. WEST WING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The aide has led Hollis to an office door which he opens. He motions her inside.

INT. SECURITY CHIEF OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A man in a dark blue suit, with insignia of the day on his lapel, rises from a desk to greet Hollis as she enters.

JANOSEK

Hollis. Good to see you...

He peeks at the chickens on her shoulder.

JANOSEK (CONT'D)

...Colonel. Congratulations.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS

Thanks, Paul. You've done pretty well yourself. Head of White House security.

JANOSEK

Not bad for an old grunt from West Virginia. You look great, Hollis.

He sits down with her on the couch on the far wall of the office.

HOLLIS

Thanks.

JANOSEK

Married?

HOLLIS

No thanks. Just had one.

JANOSEK

(laughs)

OK. What can I do for you?

HOLLIS

You remember the bit about the Enterprise and the missing money?

JANOSEK

Meet the new boss.

HOLLIS

Yeah. I work for the group that put on that show.

JANOSEK

(suddenly interested)

The...

HOLLIS

Red Flag group.

JANOSEK

Right. You're the guys that try to break through friendly security. We heard the unit was disbanded.

HOLLIS

No. Though it's nice to see our PR people leaked the right story for a change. Can we walk?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANOSEK

Yeah, sure.

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

HOLLIS

Over the years Red Flag has built a file on every sensitive area in the US military. Most CO's know about it and make sure they cover their bases.

JANOSEK

So to speak.

HOLLIS

Others, like Captain Sean Benyon of the USS Enterprise, aren't as vigilant. They're the ones that get burnt.

JANOSEK

Are you trying to tell me...

HOLLIS

I've always liked you, Paul. I'd hate to see you get tripped up by a Red Flag operation.

JANOSEK

The White House?! Who would try to break into the White House?

HOLLIS

The guy who scaled the fence in May 1995. The nut case with the sawed off shotgun in '84. How about the one who landed a private plane on the South Lawn in September, '94. The taxi driver in '76...

JANOSEK

Nobody even got close.

HOLLIS

50 yards is close. And none of them were Red Flag. Can we go outside?

JANOSEK

Uh, sure.

Janosek clears the way with security to exit out onto the south lawn.

INT. PENTAGON OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The General looks up at an aide entering the office.

ARMY AIDE

I think we've found her, General.

HOFFER

Colonel Gannon?

ARMY AIDE

Yes, sir. She's at the White House.

HOFFER

(growing alarmed)

The... What the hell is she doing at the White House? What the hell is she doing in Washington DC?

ARMY AIDE

Sir, I understand she is meeting with the Secret Service about security issues.

HOFFER

Get me a car.

He dashes out of the room.

INT. WHITE HOUSE EAST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The tour group is moving from the East Room to the Green Room on the tour.

GUIDE

Now, if you'll step this way, we'll enter the Green Room. The Green Room served as Thomas Jefferson's common dining room, and was James Madison's office where, it is believed, he signed the declaration of war against Great Britain in June 1812.

Mitchell hangs behind, seeming to examine the frame of one of the windows that opens to the south lawn. The tour guide sees him lingering and calls to him, obviously annoyed and just a little suspicious.

GUIDE (CONT'D)

Sir! Can I *please* ask you to stay with the group?!

Mitchell slowly turns away from the window.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Hollis and Janosek are standing together on the lawn looking up into the East Room. They see Mitchell examining the window casement, and then turning away.

HOLLIS

That's Colonel Boyd Mitchell. The best there is. He's retired, but we called him back on special assignment. He's the one who put together the White House file.

JANOSEK

(incredulous)

And you think he's figured out a way to get inside from the public tour?! C'mon Hollis. Give us a little more credit than that.

HOLLIS

Let's ask him.

JANOSEK

(resigned)

Fine.

He leads her back toward the building.

EXT. LIMOUSINE IN TRAFFIC - SIMULTANEOUSLY

The limousine that is carrying Hoffer is mired in midday traffic from Crystal City.

INT. LIMOUSINE BACK SEAT - CONTINUOUS

Hoffer is literally bouncing off the seats.

HOFFER

What the hell is going on?!

DRIVER

Sir, must be some kind of accident, sir.

HOFFER

Return to the motor pool, Private.

Hoffer opens the door and steps out into the traffic.

EXT. BUSY STREET - CONTINUOUS

On foot, Hoffer weaves in and out of the slow moving traffic. As he gets to the sidewalk he tries to make a phone call while walking briskly.

HOFFER

Get me security at the White House.

He is moving quickly toward the entrance to the Pentagon subway station.

HOFFER (CONT'D)

No, I can't hold...

He hits the steps at a fast clip and starts down.

INT. METRORAIL STATION - CONTINUOUS

He flashes his wallet at a transit cop, pulls open the exit door and rushes onto the platform. He is still trying to talk into the phone, but the signal is lost underground.

HOFFER

Hello? Damn.

He flips closed the phone. He leans over the track looking for the next train on the Blue Line.

INT. WHITE HOUSE MAP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The tour group has moved into another room. The Guide is beginning her talk.

GUIDE

The Map Room, used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt as a situation room from which to follow the course of World War II, now serves as a private meeting room for the President or the First Lady. It was decorated in 1970, and again in 1994, as a sitting room in the Chippendale style...

During this, Mitchell, apart from the group, pulls a rare framed map from the 18th century away from the map case it covers on the east wall of the room. The guide has been watching him from the corner of her eye and is immediately on him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUIDE (CONT'D)  
(calls out)  
Security! (then to Mitchell) Sir, I will  
have to ask you to stand right there and  
keep your hands to yourself.

Mitchell holds up his hands as if in mock arrest.

GUIDE (CONT'D)  
(calling into the next room)  
Security!

At that moment, Hollis and Janosek enter from behind the  
tour. Simultaneously, guards enter from the other door and  
move toward Mitchell. Janosek intercepts them.

JANOSEK  
I'll take care of this.

GUIDE  
He's been snooping around since the tour  
started...

JANOSEK  
Yes, ma'am. We'll look into it.

Janosek nods to the two security men and they move back to  
their stations.

JANOSEK (CONT'D)  
(to Mitchell)  
Very subtle.

MITCHELL  
Must be getting a little rusty.

The tour group moves into the next room leaving them alone.

HOLLIS  
Security Director Paul Janosek, this is  
Colonel Boyd Mitchell.

JANOSEK  
Your reputation doesn't do you justice.

HOLLIS  
So Colonel, what's your report.

MITCHELL  
Let me show you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Mitchell starts out of the room, but Janosek holds him back. Janosek then walks out of the room first, clearing their passage.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE SOUTH LAWN

The three of them are looking back at the White House.

MITCHELL

Security has been beefed up quite a bit since we started the file.

HOLLIS

So is it possible...

MITCHELL

You have to remember, we first started talking about the White House before 9/11, before Oklahoma City. In '95 you could drive right up to the front door.

HOLLIS

Mitch...

MITCHELL

Laser traps, biometrics... The only thing I can think of is if I could somehow make it onto the third floor balcony...

He indicates a trip up the side of the East Wing and across the balcony to the West.

JANOSEK

(shaking his head)

Video surveillance 24/7. Motion sensors. Shoot to kill protocol.

MITCHELL

Yeah. (to Hollis) They're pretty well covered.

They start to walk toward the West Wing.

HOLLIS

So there's no way you can see to get into the West Wing?

MITCHELL

Negative campaigning?

HOLLIS

I've never seen you give up like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANOSEK

He's not giving up so easily. We're not amateurs here. You won't get in.

INT. WHITE HOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They are continuing their walk back to Janosek's office.

JANOSEK

So I guess what I'm saying is 'give it a shot.' But try not to wind up dead.

HOLLIS

The Oval Office?

JANOSEK

What about it?

HOLLIS

Secure?

MITCHELL

Hollis, I think we pretty much beat this horse to death. Let the man get back to work.

JANOSEK

No, no. It's fine. The President is at Camp David. You want to see the Oval Office?

He turns down another hallway.

INT. WHITE HOUSE OVAL OFFICE

The door is opened by Janosek who lets Hollis and Mitchell in before following them. Janosek lets them look around a bit before saying anything.

JANOSEK

Nobody here but us chickens.

HOLLIS

If someone *had* gotten into the West Wing, is there another layer of protection to guard this room?

Mitchell looks around the perimeter of the room, glancing quickly at the inset shelf that holds the initiator device.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANOSEK

Well, right now the President isn't in the White House, so we're on reduced staff. When he's in the House, you can bet it's pretty well sealed off.

Hollis sneaks a glance at Mitchell, who tilts his head in the direction of the bookshelf. She sees the device.

MITCHELL

But when the President isn't here...

JANOSEK

...not much reason for anyone to want to break in. I mean, it's not like he leaves the keys to the nuclear arsenal in his desk drawer.

Hollis moves around to the windows behind the President's desk.

HOLLIS

Bulletproof?

JANOSEK

Bulletproof, soundproof, streak-proof...

Hollis bends down to look at the baseboard. She disappears behind the great desk.

HOLLIS

What's this?

Janosek comes to the side of the desk to see where she's indicating. At the same time, Mitchell, who has moved closer to the bookshelf reaches out for the initiator. He grabs it as Janosek speaks.

JANOSEK

Video patch. The Office is pre-wired so network crews don't have any reason to futz around down there.

Mitchell has been working the device to remove the top piece. It doesn't unscrew as easily as it once did. He has to palm it behind his back when Janosek turns toward him.

JANOSEK (CONT'D)

Find any gaping holes, Colonel?

MITCHELL

Tight as a drum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Hollis has come out from behind the desk.

HOLLIS  
I guess we better get out of your hair,  
Paul...

Mitchell stands behind Janosek in Hollis' line of site. He frantically indicates to her that he needs more time.

JANOSEK  
Does this mean you're calling off the  
operation?

HOLLIS  
Uh, one more question...

JANOSEK  
Shoot.

She walks toward a door on the far wall.

HOLLIS  
Where does this door lead?

Mitchell has the opportunity to spin off the head of the initiator and replace the casing on the shelf.

JANOSEK  
Monica Lewinsky's office.

Nobody laughs.

JANOSEK (CONT'D)  
That leads directly to the President's  
secretary.

HOLLIS  
And it's...

JANOSEK  
Secure. Wanna see?

Mitchell has the head of the device off and in his pocket. The body has been replaced on the shelf.

MITCHELL  
(to Hollis)  
Colonel, don't you think we're done here?

Hollis rejoins Mitchell in the center of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOLLIS

OK. OK. I can't promise we won't try it, but it looks like you run a pretty tight ship.

JANOSEK

Headquarters of the free world.

HOLLIS

Thanks, Paul.

JANOSEK

Thank you. Might have saved us all a lot of bad press.

EXT. 17TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Hoffer is pushing through a crowd of people coming out from the Farragut Square station. He dials his cell phone as he rushes onto the street.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE GUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

Hollis and Mitchell approach the gate from the West Wing.

INT. WHITE HOUSE GUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

The telephone is answered by the Marine on duty.

MARINE

West Gate.

He listens for a moment as he looks down at a clipboard.

MARINE (CONT'D)

Yes sir, General. I believe so.

EXT. 17TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Hoffer is at a jog.

HOFFER

Hold her there. I repeat. Do not let Colonel Gannon leave the White House grounds. Do you understand?

INT. WHITE HOUSE GUARD STATION - CONTINUOUS

MARINE

Yes sir.

The marine on the telephone calls to his partner standing just outside the shed. They confer briefly before looking up to see Hollis and Mitchell approaching from the West Wing.

2ND MARINE

There she is.

The 2nd Marine comes from the guardhouse to stop Hollis and Mitchell. Mitchell smells trouble right away and moves into action. He pulls Hollis toward him.

MITCHELL

Honey!

He holds her in a strong embrace and starts to kiss her. The Marine is confused.

2ND MARINE

Uh, Colonel Gannon, ma'am?

Hollis and Mitchell hold the kiss. The Marine gets closer.

2ND MARINE (CONT'D)

Colonel, I have... uh... you are supposed to...

Mitchell looks into Hollis' eyes and gives a tiny nod. She suddenly spins out of his embrace and into the Marine, taking him down to the ground in a split second. Another second and he is face flat on the ground, his sidearm gone from its holster.

In the same moment, Mitchell has sprinted to the other guard, who is by now on the phone. He shouts at the Marine.

MITCHELL

She's killing him! Help him for God's sake.

The Marine looks alternately at Mitchell and at the scene outside. He's frozen for just a second, but a second is all it takes. Mitchell kicks the Marine in the stomach and snatches the phone from his hand as he doubles over.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

They're headed to the East Gate!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He drops the phone and disarms the Marine in the guardhouse. Hollis has covered the distance to the gate and together they walk out at a normal pace.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

The alert has been sounded and Secret Service men are appearing all over, moving toward the East Gate of the grounds and securing the perimeter. The West Gate is sealed, but not before Hollis and Mitchell are walking hand in hand north on 17th Street.

EXT. CORNER OF 17TH AND H STREET - CONTINUOUS

At the corner, Mitchell calmly hails a cab driving east on H Street. It stops and they hop in.

Hoffer sees the two of them as he approaches from Farragut Square. He runs toward the cab as it pulls out. He can see the face of Hollis Gannon looking back at him through the rear window.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

As Hollis watches Hoffer recede from view, Mitchell calls up to the driver.

MITCHELL

Hey Bud, we're running a little late...  
If you can get us to Reagan Airport in 15  
minutes, there's an extra twenty in it  
for you.

The driver shrugs and pulls into traffic.

CAB DRIVER

15 minutes?! You should leave yourself  
more time, pal.

Mitchell turns to Hollis.

MITCHELL

How are we doing?

HOLLIS

(checking her watch)  
Tight. We can always make the 5:15 to  
Woodbridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The cab pulls up into a slower stream of cars on 14th street. There's a great deal of honking from behind them, and Mitchell turns to look out the rear window. He sees the secret service car a few lengths behind them. He shakes his head.

MITCHELL

Tumbleweed.

Hollis winces in the affirmative. Mitchell tosses a \$20 to the driver. The cab is moving at about 20 mph.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

We'll just get out here.

CAB DRIVER

What the...

EXT. WASHINGTON STREET NEAR JEFFERSON MEMORIAL

As the cab rounds the Jefferson Memorial, Mitch opens the door, tucks into a ball and rolls onto the grass alongside the sidewalk. Hollis rolls out after him. The cab door closes violently. As Hollis comes to a stop, Mitch is already running to her and pulls her quickly into the cover of the bushes. Just seconds after they reach cover, the secret service races past in hot pursuit of the cab.

A homeless man nearby has watched the whole scene.

HOMELESS MAN

Now, the bus don't always go right where you want it to, but least it comes to a full stop.

They dust themselves off and, with Hollis slightly limping, hail another cab. A cab stops and they jump in.

EXT. INTERSTATE 395 - MOMENTS LATER

The Secret Service Men have caught up with - and pulled over - the cab that Mitchell and Hollis had tumbled out of. They are already at the cabbie's window.

SECRET SERVICE 1

Where were you taking them?

CAB DRIVER

Reagan Airport. I told them they should leave at least half an hour...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Secret Service Man calls to his partner.

SECRET SERVICE 1  
Reagan National!

He starts away from the cab but stops when the driver speaks.

CAB DRIVER  
(puzzled)  
But then the lady said something about  
the 5:15 to Woodbridge. And that don't  
sound to me like a flight outta Reagan.

SECRET SERVICE 1  
Son of a bitch! They're taking the VRE!

The Secret Service Man runs back to his car, cell phone in hand.

EXT. UNION STATION - MINUTES LATER

A black SUV pulls up, and four suits wearing headsets jump out.

EXT. UNION STATION, ANOTHER ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Mitch and Hollis jump out of a cab at the train station, assuming they are free and clear, but taking no chances.

MITCHELL  
Here.

He hands her a cloth bag with the initiator in it. She takes it and drops it in her purse.

Mitchell looks up and sees a couple of Secret Service men pushing through the pedestrians.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)  
OK. Plan B.

HOLLIS  
See you upstairs.

EXT. UNION STATION, YET ANOTHER ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Another car full of agents rushes in another doorway into the station.

INT. DUNGEON STORE - DAY

With suits converging on his position from both sides, Mitchell slows his pace to that of an ordinary shopper and ducks into a heavy metal store with blaring thrash music. He's the oldest guy in the place by twice, but the sales help is much more interested in themselves to notice him anyway.

Mitchell pulls a studded leather jacket off a rack and checks the size.

INT. RETRO STORE - CONTINUOUS

Hollis is plunking down a credit card next to a pile of clothes and a pair of classic Ray Bans.

INT. STATION MALL - MOMENTS LATER

A duo of Secret Service men push through a throng of shoppers looking intensely at the faces all around.

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE MALL

Hollis, looking like Jackie O under wraps, window shops her way to the south exit of the mall.

EXT. MALL ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

A couple of Secret Service agents have rushed outside to look at the entrance of the mall.

Mitchell, punked out in leather and chains, bumps rudely into them, the Red Flag modus operandi for laying low.

MITCHELL  
(in character)  
Watch it, man.

One of the agents shoves him strongly to the side of the entrance, not even bothering to look closely at his face.

SECRET SERVICE 1  
Beat it, creep.

MITCHELL  
Hey, fuck you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mitchell blends in with the midday crowd as he slinks away from the agents and their manhunt.

INT. TRAIN PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

The Virginia Railway Express 5:15 local train to Alexandria. Hoffer has caught up with some of the Secret Service guys. They are frustrated.

HOFFER

Well?

SECRET SERVICE 2

They just disappeared, sir.

HOFFER

Nobody just disappears. Find them.

Other men start through the cars of the long commuter train.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

The door to the room opens. It is Mitchell, putting his card key back in his wallet as he pushes inside.

Hollis is brushing out her hair, the dark wig on the dresser before her.

HOLLIS

It's on the bed.

Mitchell goes to the king sized bed and picks up the device. He turns it over and looks closely for his mark. Hollis watches him in the mirror. As he looks up at her she nods.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

I looked.

He sits on the bed, turning the device over and over in his hands.

MITCHELL

So it was Henderson.

HOLLIS

Yup. It was Henderson. The only problem with that tidbit of information is what good it's going to do anybody. Did we ever talk about that?

She turns away from the mirror and looks at him directly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

You're out. I might be out now. And, assuming anyone will believe you, the President of the United States is out.

MITCHELL

That's not the point.

HOLLIS

What is the point?

He doesn't answer. She turns back to the mirror.

MITCHELL

(quietly)

If you don't know, Hollis, I can't tell you.

HOLLIS

Well tell me this. What are you planning to do now? Call the National Enquirer? Nobody's going to believe you.

Mitchell walks to Hollis and comes close to her without touching her.

MITCHELL

I think you know why we did this. Because when the wrong guy wins, we all lose. Pete Martin wasn't a saint, but he wasn't a thief.

HOLLIS

Mitch. Pete Martin would have done the same thing, given the opportunity.

MITCHELL

I need Hoffer's cell number.

HOLLIS

You really think he's going to talk to you?

MITCHELL

He'll listen. No matter what, Cecil Hoffer is an honorable man.

HOLLIS

C'mon. His loyalty is to the President.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MITCHELL

No. His *obedience* is to the President.  
His loyalty is to his people. You. And  
me.

HOLLIS

703-221-2445.

INT. GEORGETOWN BAR - NIGHT

Cecil Hoffer is out of place in his polo shirt and slacks, threading through spiked hair youths as he makes his way to the horseshoe shaped bar. Mitchell is there in the clothes he bought at the Union Station store.

HOFFER

You blend.

MITCHELL

That's what we do.

Hoffer sits on the stool next to Mitchell.

HOFFER

(shaking his head)

The White House. I knew you were good,  
Mitch, but I never would have given you  
the White House.

MITCHELL

Nothing is impenetrable. You taught me  
that.

Hoffer gestures to Mitchell's beer in response to the bartender's nod. The bartender goes for a bottle.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

I have the initiator. It has my mark on  
it.

HOFFER

So?

MITCHELL

I go public and the President goes down.  
You go with him.

HOFFER

Please. You think anyone is going to  
believe you waltzed into the Oval Office  
and swiped that thing off the President's  
desk?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MITCHELL

It wasn't on the desk.

HOFFER

It wasn't even in the room. *You* weren't in the room. Janosek has already been debriefed. The tour guide. The Marines. The Secret Service. You're way outnumbered.

MITCHELL

Not really. They don't know it yet, but about 20 million Americans saw it in the room, same as I did. Or are you planning to re-edit every copy of Barbara Walters 20/20? It was over her left shoulder on the *shelf*, by the way. Not on the desk.

HOFFER

(half shouting)

I *know* where the fuck it was. (regaining his composure) If you're so sure you've got it covered, why come to me?

MITCHELL

Because deep down, I think you hate this shit as much as I do.

Hoffer sips his beer.

HOFFER

What I like and what I don't like have very little to do with how I operate. I do what needs to be done. That's what soldiers do.

MITCHELL

Upholding the Constitution. Fighting for the right thing. I always thought *that* was what soldiers did.

They are quiet for a while. Mitchell signals for another beer.

HOFFER

You know what's the big irony here? You were the one that got beat. Not Sean Benyon. Not Pete Martin. Colonel Boyd Mitchell. Mr. Red Flag got beat.

MITCHELL

Is that right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOFFER

Did you ever figure out what went wrong - why you couldn't recover the bags?

MITCHELL

The initiators failed.

HOFFER

They were *switched*. You set the frequency in your shop so you could test it. Once on board, you knew you wouldn't have the opportunity to check that they still responded to your transmitter. So you set them up, and you trusted your crew. You *assumed* your own little operation was secure. And you got beat.

MITCHELL

I guess I don't understand why anyone would have done that.

HOFFER

Don't you? Let's see what happened: The money was lost. The White House had a big mess on their hands and prayed nobody would go public with it. Nobody did... till October and then it was too late. They were accused of covering up the loss, which they did, and the Presidency fell into Henderson's lap. And it was your lax security that we all have to thank.

Mitchell digests this for a moment.

MITCHELL

Which doesn't change the fact that I have the initiator.

HOFFER

OK. You have the initiator, though we still haven't determined whether it's worth a good goddamn. What do you want?

MITCHELL

A meeting.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICES - THE NEXT DAY

Hoffer is entering an office with a large mahogany door. He has a bit of attitude in his voice, as if he is here under duress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOFFER

You wanted to see me? Sir.

The office is the Vice President's. Clay Rawlings is seated behind a great desk. There is one other man in the room - Richard Lucas, Rawlings' aide whom we have seen hovering around the action throughout the story.

RAWLINGS

Thank you for coming, General. Have a seat.

HOFFER

No thank you, Mr. Vice President. I won't be staying long.

RAWLINGS

On the contrary, I think we have quite a lot to talk about.

He nods to Lucas who produces an MP3 player from his pocket. He presses a button. The conversation that begins to play was recorded during an earlier scene in the story, the first meeting of Henderson and Hoffer, which Lucas had recorded.

HENDERSON (ON TAPE)

Is she worth robbing?

HOFFER (ON TAPE)

You kidding? The Big E, loaded for bear on the eve of float, has millions. US dollars, foreign currency... With a good team, you could get over the side with, conservatively, 10, 15 mil in cash.

HENDERSON (ON TAPE)

Do it.

HOFFER (ON TAPE)

Wha...?

HENDERSON (ON TAPE)

I want you to rob the Enterprise, just like you were ordered.

Lucas presses stop. The room is silent for a moment.

HOFFER

I discussed an operation brought on by one of my units with a United States Senator. So what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RAWLINGS

Mr. Lucas?

The aide produces a series of aerial photographs that show, in a sequence that zooms in to a close up, a small ship with a smoking fire on the back deck.

LUCAS

These photos were taken on March 9 from an altitude of 65000 feet. The vessel in question was observed in a recovery operation and a subsequent controlled incineration at approximately 32°14' north, 118°40' west...

RAWLINGS

But then... you know exactly where these pictures were taken, don't you?

Hoffer looks through a couple of the photos and then tosses the pile on the desk.

RAWLINGS (CONT'D)

You're finished, General.

HOFFER

Are you firing me?!

RAWLINGS

I'd say unemployment would be about the best you could hope for.

HOFFER

Fine. Then maybe you can tell me what we're doing here.

RAWLINGS

Bartering for your future. Tell me about your meeting with Boyd Mitchell.

Hoffer takes a moment to add up all he's just heard.

HOFFER

(defeated)

He has the initiator - the device we used to raise the cash from the ocean floor. He isn't sure what to do with it. I don't think he necessarily wants to go public. But he's not going to let it go.

Hoffer pauses, waiting for some response. There is none, and he goes on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOFFER (CONT'D)

He wants a meeting with the President. I told him it was next to impossible, but I'd give it a try.

RAWLINGS

Have you spoken with the President?

HOFFER

Not yet.

RAWLINGS

That may be the one thing that saves you from a nice long jail term.

Rawlings nods to Lucas who rises and leaves the office.

RAWLINGS (CONT'D)

Tell Colonel Mitchell he'll get his meeting.

HOFFER

This man - Mitchell - he's a good man. I don't want...

RAWLINGS

General, I served with the Rangers in Vietnam. Nothing is going to happen to Colonel Mitchell.

EXT. BONNEVILLE SALT FLATS - DAY

A large military deployment unfolds: army troops by the dozen hopping out of trucks, spacing themselves in a huge curving arc on the wide open wasteland of Utah.

As the shot widens and rises, we see that the area the men are enclosing is a great circle against the awesome backdrop of the dried up lake basin.

Air Force jets fly by overhead.

EXT. BONNEVILLE SALT FLATS, ANOTHER ANGLE

At the center of the mile-wide circle created by the perimeter of soldiers stands Boyd Mitchell, all alone. He wears jeans and a tee-shirt, dark aviators. His hair begins to blow back as an Army helicopter comes in to land 50 yards from him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A couple of Secret Service men jump from the chopper as its rotors are still spinning and run toward Mitchell. They thoroughly pat him down by hand and scan him with detectors. Satisfied, they nod back to the chopper before returning to its lowered steps. They stand aside as President Mason Henderson steps down to the salt plain.

Henderson walks toward Mitchell as the helicopter revs up and takes off into the sky. After a while it is quiet. For a time they stare at each other.

HENDERSON

Congratulations, Colonel Mitchell. An appointment with the President of the United States. What do you do for an encore... audience with the Pope?

Mitchell smiles.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)

Well? What can I do for you?

MITCHELL

I was wondering, Mr. President, what happened in Khe Sanh in '68. What it was that you did for Cecil Hoffer that he'll end up paying for with his career and his dignity.

HENDERSON

What the hell are you talking about....

MITCHELL

Did he lose his nerve? Did he shoot women and children? What horrible crime did he commit in 'Nam...

HENDERSON

I don't...

MITCHELL

...because it must have been something really awful for a decent man to trade his honor for a scumbag like you.

HENDERSON

(laughs)

You think that's what this is all about? We *blackmail* our way around the Beltway?

MITCHELL

Correct me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HENDERSON

How could you *possibly* have an inkling of the way things work. You're buried in a trench somewhere fighting someone else's war. Too busy ducking bullets to see what's going on. I'll tell you how it works. You serve, or you fight, and you're really brave or really honest. And you know how far you get? City Controller. Mayor, maybe. (He points to Mitchell, as an example) Colonel. That's it. You want to climb higher? Then you begin to watch for opportunities. You trade. Make deals. You play your hand.

MITCHELL

You stack the deck. You cheat. You steal.

HENDERSON

(louder)

You play the game. That's how it's done. Sorry to burst your bubble.

MITCHELL

"There's no kind of dishonesty into which otherwise good people more easily and frequently fall than that of defrauding the Government." Know who said that?

Henderson shrugs.

HENDERSON

Ralph Nader.

Mitchell pulls out a bill from his pocket.

MITCHELL

Benjamin Franklin.

He holds up a well-worn one hundred dollar bill.

MITCHELL (CONT'D)

See, I've been keeping a little souvenir from the USS Enterprise. The only money that made it back to shore, as it turns out. I thought about spending it on rent after I was bumped out of the Army for supposedly screwing up the operation, but, well... you wouldn't care about that, would you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HENDERSON

You lost the game.

MITCHELL

We all lost. The day you traded your decency for office. The day people in Washington started believing that taking advantage of a crime was fine as long as it wasn't they themselves who committed it. But you, you were a soldier once. From the record, it seems like a pretty good one. You even risked your life to save others. Now? You risk the lives of others for yourself. What happened along the way, Mr. President?

HENDERSON

(irate)

How dare you question my record? I have served my country well and I continue to serve. Who are you to pass judgement on me?!

MITCHELL

Just a lowly Colonel.

HENDERSON

(cooling down)

Retired.

MITCHELL

Retired. By the way, if it's all the same to you, I'd like to hold on to the hundred bucks... Just a little keepsake.

HENDERSON

Be my guest.

Mitchell puts the bill back in his pocket.

MITCHELL

Speaking of keepsakes... one more question: How could you have been so arrogant as to leave *your* little souvenir in the Oval Office?

HENDERSON

I don't know what you're talking about.

MITCHELL

It's over, Mr. President. I'm out, but I'm taking you with me. You lost the game.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

He turns and walks away, toward the perimeter of soldiers.

HENDERSON  
 (shouting after him)  
 What are talking about? What the hell is  
 this all about? Where are you going?  
 I'm not finished with you.

Mitchell keeps walking. Henderson turns to shout for somebody, but the circle of soldiers is half a mile off in every direction.

HENDERSON (CONT'D)  
 Stop that man!

Mitchell keeps walking.

FADE OUT.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE NORTH ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

The highest leaders of the land have gathered in the North Entrance Hall of the White House for a solemn ceremony. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court lifts a leather bound bible towards Clay Rawlings, the Vice-President. Rawlings places his hand on the Bible, raises his right hand, and takes the Oath as directed by the Chief Justice.

CHIEF JUSTICE  
 I, Clay Wardell Rawlings do solemnly  
 swear....

RAWLINGS  
 I, Clay Wardell Rawlings do solemnly  
 swear....

EXT. WASHINGTON HOSPITAL CENTER - INTERCUT

An ambulance pulls into a hospital emergency bay. A host of news crews are held back by cops and barricades.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE NORTH ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

CHIEF JUSTICE  
 ...that I will faithfully execute the  
 Office of the President of the United  
 States...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RAWLINGS

...that I will faithfully execute the  
Office of the President of the United  
States...

EXT. AMBULANCE - INTERCUT

A gurney is rolled up to the waiting ambulance. It carries  
Mason Henderson. There is a doctor and two nurses with him,  
and a rolling IV. He is not dead, but he doesn't very look  
healthy.

CHIEF JUSTICE (O.S.)

...and will, to the best of my ability...

RAWLINGS (O.S.)

...and will, to the best of my ability...

News cameras edge in against the barriers to get a shot of  
the soon-to-be-former President.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE NORTH ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

CHIEF JUSTICE

...preserve, protect and defend the  
constitution of the United States.

RAWLINGS

...preserve, protect and defend the  
constitution of the United States.

CHIEF JUSTICE

So help me God.

RAWLINGS

So help me God.

There is a smattering of applause among the few gathered  
there, among them Richard Lucas.

CHIEF JUSTICE

Congratulations, sir.

RAWLINGS

Thank you.

His Aide moves forward to shake President Rawlings' hand.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

The doctor is wrapping a blood pressure cuff around Henderson's arm, but the ex-President, confident that they are safely away from the hospital and the prying eyes of the press, shakes him off.

HENDERSON  
Get the hell off me.

DOCTOR  
My orders are...

HENDERSON  
I know what your goddam orders are. And after my miraculous recovery in 6 months your goddamn orders are going to take you to the goddamn South Pole...

EXT. WASHINGTON DC STREET - CONTINUOUS

The ambulance drives off into the night.

INT. HOLLIS' APARTMENT - NIGHT

The TV news is wrapping a story about the low-keyed inauguration of the new President of the United States. There is a reporter in the frame. In the background, the White House North Entrance Hall.

TV REPORTER (ON TV)  
... less than five months after the inauguration of the last President, America has a yet another new Commander-in-Chief. I'm Renee Rosado, Eyewitness News.

The news program switches back to the studio where a local anchor introduces the next story.

ANCHOR (ON TV)  
Thanks Renee. Now let's go to Brian Dowling who's standing by at Washington Hospital Center with an update on the condition of President Henderson. Brian?

The shot switches to the scene at the hospital emergency bay where Henderson's ambulance has just pulled out. The reporter is, in fact, standing by.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV REPORTER 2 (ON TV)  
Thanks, Jim. Just moments ago...

The TV switches off.

Hollis and Mitchell are lying, fully clothed, on her bed.

HOLLIS  
I guess this changes all the rules.

MITCHELL  
I wouldn't bet on it.

HOLLIS  
Next thing you know there'll be a woman  
in the White House.

Mitchell turns his head to look at her.

FADE TO BLACK.