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WarGames

By Lawrence Lasker

Replacement team's here, sir.
Right.
Come on through.
20 minutes and we were gonna
start looking for you.
Yeah. It's really something out there.
- You look a mess, sir.
- Yeah?
Your turn next, Ginsburg.
OK. I'll see you in 24.
See you tomorrow.
What was that you were you saying?
You used to hear her chant
all night long. Om mahneypod me om.
- Om mahneypod me om.
- Over the plants?
She'd cup her hands over those seeds
and chant by the hour.
She grew the most beautiful
wandoos you ever saw, man.
Primo stuff. Resin city.
Stand clear.
The commander's been worried
about you. The roads must be a bear.
- What roads?
- Visibility.
Visibility? Bullshit. You guys haven't
been on time for the last six months.
- I wrote you guys up in the logbook.
- Yeah. You're a prince, Bevan.
Good night, gentlemen!
So, that was like sinsemilia, right?
Sinsemilla. This grass made
Thai stick taste like oregano.
Lay you out flat, man.
- Got a red light, sir.
- What on?
Number eight. Warhead alarm.
Give it a thump with your finger.
Alarm reset.
Skybird, this is Dropkick with
a Red dash Alpha message in two parts.
Break. Break. Red dash Alpha.
- Stand by to copy message.

- Standing by.
Romeo OscarNovember Charlie
Tango Tango Lima Alpha.

Authentication:

Lima.
I have a valid message.
Stand by to authenticate.
I agree with authentication also, sir.
- Enter launch code.
- Entering launch code.
- Launch order confirmed.
- Holy shit!
Target selection: complete.
Time on target sequence: complete.
- Yield selection: complete.
- Begin countdown. Tminus 60.
- All right. Let's do it. Insert launch key.
- Stand by.
- Launch key inserted.
- Roger.
On my mark... rotate launch key to Set.
Three... two... one...
- Mark.
- Tminus 50.
Roger. At Set.
- Sir?
- Tminus 40.
- Enable missiles.
- Number one enabled. Two enabled.
- Three enabled.
- Get somebody on the goddamn phone.
Seven... eight...
Nine...
Ten. All missiles enabled.
- Get me Wing Command Post. Direct line.
- That's not the correct procedure.
- Try SAC Headquarters on the HF.
- That's not the procedure.
I want somebody on the goddamn phone
before I kill 20 million people.
T minus 20.
I got nothin' here! They might
have been knocked out already.

Right.

On my mark,

rotate launch keys to Launch.

Roger. Ready to go to Launch.

- Fourteen...

- Thirteen... twelve...

Eleven...

Seven... six...

- Five...

- Sir, we have a launch order.

- Three... two...

- Put your hand on the key, sir.

One... Launch!

- Sir, we are at launch! Turn your key!

- I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Turn your key, sir!

They're cleared. Go ahead and open it up.

- Hello. I'm Pat Healy.

- I'm Lyle Watson. This is Arthur Cabot.

I'm Pat Healy, Dr McKittrick's assistant.

I've got some passes for you here.

We had scheduled a meeting

pending your arrival.

If you have any questions,

feel free to ask me.

I'd be happy to fill you in

if there's any way I can.

They're here.

Good.

Let's go.

Cabot and Watson came alone.

No senators. No congressmen.

I wish they'd brought a few senators.

I'd like to tell 'em what's going on here.

John, please! Don't start that right away.

I had them on the phone

and they're calmed down.

Well, are we positive that these men had

no way of knowing this was only a test?

Lyle, for God's sakes! How many times

are we gonna go through this?

- It doesn't make any difference.

- I've spoken to these men.

They all believed it was the real deal.

Look, we gotta be on a plane
in less than an hour.
I have to explain to the president
why 22% of his missile commanders
failed to launch their missiles. What
am I supposed to say? 22% isn't so bad?
The president knows that I am fully
responsible for the men in my command.
I've ordered a re-evaluation of
our psychological screening procedure.
Wait a minute. Excuse me, General.
We can't ask these men
to go back to the president
with a lot of headshrinker horseshit!
You can't screen out human response!
Those men know what it means to turn
the keys, and some are just not up to it!
Now, it's as simple as that!
I think we oughta take
the men out of the loop.
- Mr McKittrick, you're out of line, sir.
- Why am I out of line?
Excuse me!
I'm sorry. I don't understand.
Take them out of the loop?
Gentlemen! We've had men in these silos
since before any of you
were watching Howdy Doody.
For myself, I sleep pretty well at night
knowing those boys are down there.
General, we know they're fine men,
but in a nuclear war we can't afford
to have missiles
lying dormant in those silos
because those men refuse to turn
the keys when the computers tell 'em to!
You mean when
the president orders them to.
The president will probably follow
the computer war plan. That's a fact!
I imagine the Joint Chiefs
will have some input.
- You're damn tootin'.
- Well, hell...

In a surprise attack, there's no time.

23 minutes from warning to impact.

- Six minutes if it's sub-launched.

- Six minutes.

That's barely enough time
for the president to make a decision.

Once he makes the decision,
the computer should take over.

Now, sir, I know that you've got
a plane waiting for you,
but if you could indulge me,
I'd like to show you something.

These computers give instant access
to the state of the world.

Troop movements, Soviet
missile tests, weather patterns.

It all flows into this room,
and then into the WOPR computer.

- WOPR? What is that?

- War Operation Plan Response.

This is Mr Richter.

Paul, would you like to tell
these gentlemen about the WOPR?

Well, the WOPR spends all its time
thinking about World War Ill.

24 hours a day, 365 days a year,
it plays an endless series of war games
using all available information
on the state of the world.

The WOPR has already fought
World War Ill, as a game,
time and time again.

It estimates Soviet responses
to our responses
to their responses, and so on.

Estimates damage. Counts the dead.

Then it looks for ways
to improve its score...

The point is that the key decisions
of every option have already
been made by the WOPR.

So all this trillion-dollar hardware
is really at the mercy
of those men with the little brass keys?

That's exactly right. Whose only problem is that they're human beings.

But in 30 days we could put in electronic relays. Get the men out of the loop.

Gentlemen...

I wouldn't trust this overgrown pile of microchips further than I could throw it. I don't know if you wanna trust the safety of our country to some... silicon diode...

Nobody is talking about entrusting the safety of the nation to a machine, for God's sake!

We'll keep control, but here at the top where it belongs.

All right, gentlemen.

I think I'm going to recommend McKittrick's idea to the president.

And I'll get back to you on this.

You won't regret this.

OK. You had fries and a Coke, right?

Damn!

- Hi, David!
- Hi, Howie!
- How's it going?
- Pretty good.
- You wanna take this over? I gotta go.
- Sure!
- Go ahead.
- Thanks!
- Bye, David!
- Bye!

All right. Question number two.

Seeds that are germinated in water before they are planted will... what?

- Robert?
- Sprout roots?

Ah! David!

Nice of you to join us.

Oh, David. I have a little present for you.

Question number four.

In the history of science, novel and innovative concepts occasionally arise from sudden left-field inspiration.

Miss Mack...

Could you tell us your answer
to question number four?

Why do nitrogen nodules
cling to the roots of plants?

Love?

Jennifer, what do you know about
nitrogen nodules that we don't?

Some bit of salacious info
to which you alone are privy?

- No.

- I see.

No, you didn't know
the correct answer - symbiosis.
Because you don't pay attention in class.

- Thank you.

- You're welcome.

There seems to be a lot of confusion on
this next question - asexual reproduction.

Could someone tell me, please
who first suggested the idea
of reproduction without sex?

- Miss Mack!

- Yes?

What is so amusing?

What?

All right, Lightman.

Maybe you can tell us who first suggested
the idea of reproduction without sex.

Your wife?

Get out, Lightman! Get out!

Mr Ligget wants me to discuss
my attitude problem with Mr Kessler.

I think Mr Kessler's getting tired
of your attitude problem.

Me, too.

Lightman. What a... surprise.

Won't you come in?

Hi!

Hi!

Sorry if I got you in trouble.

I couldn't stop laughing.

That's OK. You were perfect.

- I was?

- Yeah.
- You want a ride home?
- Yeah.
Hop on.
- So you got an F on that test today, too?
- Yep.
Guess we're both gonna be
stuck in summer school.
- Not me.
- Why not? You have to make up biology.
- I don't think so.
- Why not?
- Why not? Come on! Tell me. Why not?
- Make a left.
Why don't you come up to my house
and I'll show you?
What are you gonna show me?
I'm gonna show you.
I'll show you how you do it.
- Hi, Bo!
- Oh! Hi, Bo!
Hey, Bo! How you doin'?
My room's upstairs.
- Your parents aren't home?
- No. They both work.
A little mess.
It's OK. You should see my room.
- You're really into computers, huh?
- Yeah.
- What are you doing?
- I'm dialling into the school's computer.
They change the password every couple
of weeks, but I know where they write it.
- Are those your grades?!
- Yeah.
I don't think that I deserved an F, do you?
- You can't do that!
- Already done.
- Do you have a middle initial?
- K. Katherine.
Those are my grades.
- How can anybody get a D in home ec?
- That's none of your business.
- Can you erase this?

- No. It's too late.

What are you doing?

- I'm changing your biology grade.

- No. You'll get me in trouble.

Nobody can find out. You got a C!

Now you won't go to summer school.

- Change it back.

- Why? They can't...

- I said change it back.

- OK. OK.

I guess I'd better get going.

Thanks for the ride.

Yeah. OK. Bye.

Bye.

Get down. Get down. You've already

had your dinner. Now just sit.

Sit! Stay!

- Don't forget to take out the garbage.

- David.

- Put that lid on real tight.

- I know, Ma.

Yes, they will carry back on the second.

Sure. I think we can really work out
some creative financing.

Oh, but you've gotta see it!

There's a Jacuzzi

in the master bedroom...

Oh, sure. We can work that out.

That is true. You'll have a balloon
payment at the end of five years.

But that's nothing.

The economy is gonna be great then.

He who dances must pay the piper.

- See you, Dad.

- I'll meet you tomorrow at 9.30. Bye.

You know, I worry about that kid.

Why?

Sometimes I think

we're all gonna get electrocuted.

This corn is raw!

I know. Isn't it wonderful? It's so crisp.

- Of course it's crisp! It's raw!

- It's terrific!

You can just taste the vitamin

A and D in here. It's great.

Couldn't we have pills,

and cook the corn?

- What city, please?

- For Sunnyvale, California.

The number for Protovision.

Yes. That's 555 8632.

Thank you. Could you also tell me
what other prefixes cover that area?

There's 399, 437, 767, 936.

Thanks.

Protovision... I have you now.

Yes?

Saul's Fish Market.

- Hi!

- Oh, hi!

What?

I've been thinking.

That thing with my grade.

- Can you still change it?

- Oh, I don't know...

I can't believe I was so stupid.

I should've just let you do it.

- I don't know. It might be kinda rough.

- Why?

They might have changed the password.

Maybe they didn't. Can't we at least try?

- Damn!

- Please.

OK.

- You owe me a quarter.

- Yeah. Come on. Sorry I lost your game.

- What's it doing?

- Oh. It's dialling numbers.

- Don't touch the keys!

- I'm not touching the keys.

Excuse me.

This computer company's coming out
with these amazing new games soon.

The programs are probably
still on their computer.

So I told my system to search for other
computers in Sunnyvale, California.

They answer with a tone that other

computers can recognise. You hear?

You're calling every number
in Sunnyvale?

- Isn't that expensive?

- There's ways around that.

You can go to jail for that.

Only if you're over 18.

Is this going to take a long time?

I'd like to get my grade changed.

Oh. That's funny, actually.

Cos...

I already changed it.

- I told you not to do that.

- Yeah, I know.

But I figured you'd change your mind.

I didn't want you to flunk.

- Well, what did I get?

- You got a D.

- You gave me a D?

- No. You got an A.

- I was kidding.

- Oh.

Well, that's OK.

Here. Let's see what we have so far.

Excuse me.

Did you really give me an A?

Yeah.

- Thanks.

- You're welcome.

Hey! You got a bank!

Gotta make a note of that one.

Might come in handy someday.

Pan Am.

- Where shall we go?

- Anywhere?

- Anywhere.

- New York?

- New York. OK.

- No, Paris. Paris.

Will you be travelling alone?

Yeah... No. You wanna go with me?

OK.

- All right. Smoking or nonsmoking?

- Nonsmoking.

All right, Miss Mack. You're confirmed on Pan Am's flight 1 14 leaving Chicago's O'Hare Airport at 8.15am on 18 August.

Do we need a rental car? No.

- Do we really have tickets to Paris?

- No. You have a reservation though.

It doesn't identify itself.

Try anything.

"Connection terminated." How rude.

We'll ask it for help.

- Can you do that?

- On some systems.

The more complicated they are, the more they have to help you out.

Now what?

Help games.

"Games" refers to models, simulations and games which have strategic applications.

What does that mean?

I don't know. That's gotta be them.

Turn on the printer.

List games.

Oh, my God!

So these guys can tell you what that print-out means?

They probably invented it in the first place.

- Can you wait here?

- Why?

- Cos these guys can get a little nervous.

- OK.

Jim.

Oh. Lightman.

Hi, Lightman!

I want you to take a look at this.

- Hey! What's that?

- I wanted Jim to see that.

Wow! Where'd you get this?

Protovision. I wanted to see the program for their new games.

- Can I have this?

- I'm not through yet.

Remember you told me to tell you when you were acting rudely and insensitively? You're doing it right now.

"Theatrewide biotoxic and chemical warfare."

- This didn't come from Protovision.
- Ask him where it did come from, Jim!
- I told you already.
- Looks military to me. Definitely.
- Probably classified, too.
- If it's military, why does it have games
- Like checkers and backgammon?
- Those games teach basic strategy.

Jim, how do I get into that system?

I wanna play those games.

That system probably contains the new data encryption algorithm.

- You'll never get in.
- No system is totally secure.
- I bet you Jim could get in.
- I bet you he couldn't!
- I bet you he could.
- You won't get through frontline security.
- But you might look for a back door.
- I can't believe it, Jim!

That girl's listening, and you talk about back doors!

Mr Potato-head.

Mr Potato-head!

Back doors are not secrets!

- You're giving away all our best tricks.
- They're not tricks.
- What's a back door?
- Whenever I design a system

I put in a password that only I know about.

That way, whenever I wanna get back in, I can bypass whatever security they've added on. That's basically what it is.

Yeah?

OK. You really wanna get in, find out about the guy who designed the system.

Come on! I don't even know the guy's name.

Boy, are you guys dumb! You guys are so dumb. I got this thing all figured out. Oh, yeah, Malvin? How would you do it? The first game in the list. Go right through Falken's Maze.

Hi! I'm Jennifer.

- Is David here?

- How do you do?

Yeah. He's up in his room.

Thanks.

Have you ever heard of the word tumulus?

Tumulus? No. I haven't. I'm sorry. Neither have I.

Yeah?

Hi!

- Where have you been?

- What?

I haven't seen you all week in school. Are you sick?

No, no. I was...

I was doing things.

You wanna sit down? How are you?

- No. I'm going to get some water, OK?

- OK.

- What is all that stuff?

- Oh, it's nothing. I was just... I was trying to find out about the guy who designed those game programs, so I could get his secret password.

- Why?

- Why? Cos...

What's so special about playing games with some machine?

Oh, no...

No, it's not just some machine. Here. Look at this.

This is a tape that I got from the library. It's about this guy named Falken. He was into games as well as computers. He designed them so that they could play checkers or poker.

- Chess.

- What's so great about that?

- Everybody's doing that now.
- Oh, no, no. What he did was great!
He designed his computer
so it could learn from its mistakes.
So they'd be better
the next time they played.
The system actually learned how to learn.
It could teach itself.
If I could just get that damn password,
I could play the computer.
That's him. That's Falken.
That's him? Wow!
He's amazing-looking!
Can't you write to him
or call him somehow?
No. He's dead.
- He's dead?
- Yeah.
Here. Look. Here's his obituary.
- He wasn't very old.
- Well, he was pretty old. He was 41 .
Oh, yeah? Oh, that's old.
That's his little boy.
Oh, yeah?
This is really sad. Did you know the child
and his mother were killed in a car crash?
- I know.
- "In the years that followed
the tragic loss of his family,
Dr Falken's health deteriorated."
My dad is 45.
- Once he was really sick...
- What was his name?
- My father?
- No, no, no. Falken's kid.
Joshua.
It can't be that simple.
- Wow!
- What?
We got something.
We're in!
It thinks I'm Falken!
Hello.
- How can it ask you that?

- It'll ask whatever it's programmed to.
- Do you wanna hear it talk?
- Yeah!
I'll ask it how it feels.
I'm fine. How are... you?
Excellent. It's been a long time.
Can you explain the removal of
your useraccount on June 23rd, 1973?
They must have told it he died.
People sometimes make... mistakes.
- Yes, they do.
- How can it talk?
It's not a real voice. This box interprets
signals and turns them into sound.
Shall we play a game?
Oh!
- I think it missed him.
- Yeah. Weird, isn't it?
Love to!
How about Global Thermonuclear War?
Wouldn't you prefer
a good game of chess?
Later.
Let's play
Global Thermonuclear War.
Fine.
All right!
Wow!
Which side do you want?
I'll be the Russians.
Please list primary targets.
- Who shall we nuke first?
- Let's see.
How about... Las Vegas?
Las Vegas! Great!
- What next? Seattle!
- Yeah!
Kill 'em!
I have seven, correction, eight Red birds
two degrees past apogee.
Better get the old man down here.
We have Soviet missile warning.
Check formal function
and report confidence.

Projected target areas
NORAD regions 25, 26.
This is Crystal Palace initiating
emergency conference. Stand by!
19 degrees past apogee.
Possible 18 targets in track.
Estimate re-entry at 19.23 Zulu.
- What you got up here, Joe?
- We have a radar tracking.
Eight inbound Soviet ICBMs
already over the pole.
Estimated impact: 1 1 minutes.

Target area:

- Why didn't we get a launch detection?
- We're checking for DSP malfunction.
BMEWS has continuous radar tracking
on inbounds.
Confidence is high.
I repeat, confidence is high.
- What is all that stuff?
- Trajectory headings
- for multiple-impact re-entry vehicles.
- What does that mean?
I don't know. But it's great!
- Are those bombs? Which is the bombs?
- Subs.
- Blow 'em up.
- Blow 'em out of the water.
- What's a trajectory heading?
- I've no idea.
The president's diverting to Andrews.
The vice president is out of position.
- The chairman of the Joint Chiefs is on...
- Missile warning reports no malfunction.
Take us to DEFCON 3.
Get onto SAC.
Tell 'em to flush the bombers.
Yes, sir.
SAC, this is Crystal Palace.
CinC NORAD has declared DEFCON 3.
Scramble all alert aircraft.
I repeat, scramble all alert aircraft.
Inbounds presently MIRVing.

We now have approximately
24 possible targets in track.

- New time to impact: eight minutes.
- SAC is launching the bombers.
- General Powers is on the line.
- Beringer.

Goddamn it! We didn't get
a launch detection from our satellite.
Radar picked 'em up already out of the
atmosphere. That's the first we heard of it.
Get the ICBMs in the bullpen
warmed up and ready to fly.

- Get me the president on the horn.
- Yes, sir.

Mr President? This is Beringer at NORAD.

Oh, attack!

- I wonder if I should use my subs.
- Sure. Give 'em the works.

David!

Excuse me.

David!

How many times have I told you
to fasten these lids on tight?!

- Look at this mess!
- I'll be down in a few minutes.

Now! Come down now!

I want this cleared up now!

Come down here and do what
your father asks you to pronto, David.

We're gonna barbecue tonight.

- You wanna invite your little friend?
- Please!

David!

Shit!

Little friend.

Mr President, something's happening.

I'll get back to you as soon as I know.

- What's happening, Joe?
- BMEWS and Cobra Dane now report
negative confirmation
on all inbound tracking.

Get onto SAC. Tell 'em to hold steady.

Stop! It's a simulation!

There's an attack simulation running!

What the hell's he yelling about?
I didn't order that.
We're not being attacked!
It's a simulation!
Whoa, now! Hold it!
You're not supposed to be runnin' here.
We don't know how it happened.
Someone outside fed an attack simulation
into the main... It's a simulation!
Conley...
Take us off full alert.
Hold at DEFCON 4 till we find out exactly
what in the hell's happening here!
I didn't tell you to cut the line!
Did I tell you to cut it? You cut the line!
They shut down
before we could complete our trace.
We did locate the area
where the transmission originated.
- Where?
- Seattle, Washington.
Shut it down!
Somebody's playing a game with us.
At a prophylactic recycling centre...
Hi, Dad!
David!
- David, come in here!
- What did I do?
Plenty, mister. Plenty.
You have just passed
all of your classes this semester.
Congratulations, dear!
Show this to your dad.
Honey! David has something to show you.
- What's that?
- Here, Dad.
Uh-oh.
This is good!
I'm so proud of you!
..went on a full-scale nuclear alert,
believing the Soviet Union
had launched a missile attack.
A spokesman places blame
on a computer malfunction,

emphasising that the problem
has been corrected.

For more on the story,
let's go live to Washington DC.
Well, that's your phone.

Yeah.

Seriously, David. Congratulations.
This one'll be a pleasure to sign!

- Hello?

- David?

Are you watching the news?

Jennifer. Yeah, I'm watching.

David, is that us on TV? Did we do that?

It could be. Oh, Jesus, Jennifer!

What am I gonna do? They're gonna
come get me. I'm really screwed!

I'm screwed!

No! Sh! Calm down!

Sh! Calm down, calm down. Listen...

If they were so smart,
they would have found you already.

Yeah.

OK. So all you have to do is throw
the number away and don't call it again.

- That's all.

- Yeah.

- Maybe they didn't trace the call.

- Right! Maybe they didn't trace the call.

I'm sure they didn't trace the call.

All you have to do is act normal.

We'll both act normal
and everything will be fine.

OK?

- OK.

- OK.

God! This is so unbelievable!

Can I call Michelle and tell her?

No, Jennifer! Don't call her!

Sorry. All right. I won't.

I'll talk to you tomorrow, OK?

OK. Good night, Jennifer.

Greetings, ProfessorFalken.

Oh, my God.

Incorrect identification.

I am not Falken.
Falken is dead.
Sorry to hear that, Professor.
Yesterday's game was interrupted.
Although primary goal has not yet
been achieved, solution is near.
Game time elapsed:
31 hours 12 minutes 50 seconds.
Estimated time remaining:
52 hours 17 minutes 10 seconds.
What is the primary goal?
You should know, Professor.
You programmed me.
Oh, come on.
What is the primary goal?
To win the game.
David Lightman, hold it right there. FBI.
- I'll read you your rights.
- Step over to the van.
You have the absolute right
to remain silent.
What did I do?
You have the right
to consult with an attorney
and to have one present
during questioning.
If you cannot afford an attorney,
one will be appointed to you by the court.
- Do you understand these rights?
- Yeah.
Are you willing to talk to me
about the charges against you?
All right. Let's move.
This rather large room
is command centre for NORAD.
No picture taking. The screens in front
of you are connected to our satellites
and missile tracking stations
throughout the country.
This is the commander's desk.
Colonel Conley is in charge.
Would you mind relinquishing
your command, sir?
Miss Dailey, would you come

and sit in this rather important chair?

These buttons are connected
with the Strategic Air Command
and missile launching stations.

Miss Dailey, would you press
this button here? The red one.

- The one in the middle?

- Yes, ma'am.

Oh, my God! It's the wrong one!
It's a joke! You didn't blow up anything.
Look what you did do.

"Distinguished visitors
from Birmingham."

Last week I had the governor
of New Jersey in this chair.

He said, "Colonel Thomas, why are we
at DEFCON 4?" as we are right now.

Why are we at DEFCON 4?

The Soviets saw our bombers scramble
and went on alert.

We told them it was just an exercise, but
we want them to relax their posture first.
Wait. Wait.

- Give me that.

- Oh, Christ. Another tour group.

Just what we need today. Why don't they
go to Disneyland where they belong?

- Well, I think they're going to tomorrow.

- OK. All set? Oh, here.

It was a one-in-a-million shot.

There was an open line
at our division in Sunnyvale.

The phone company screwed up!

- John. John McKittrick, George Wigan.

- How are you?

George is with the FBI.

He brought the kid in.

It looks like we've got
a high-school prank on our hands.

Paul, what happened?

The kid broke into the war game using a
password left by the original programmer.

- A password?

- Yes, sir.

None of my team even knew it was there.
Kid claims
he was looking for a toy company.
That's great!
Anybody in here buy that one?
We can find the password and take it out,
but it might help to beef up security.
Oh. Beef up, huh?
How about screwed up?
We did all that and he broke in again.
Kid says your computer called him.
What the hell is going on, John?
I woke up the president. I told him
we were under attack by the Russians.
You know what an idiot that makes me
look? Not to mention the general.
I think we're being a little naive here.
There is no way a high-school punk
can put a dime in a telephone
and break into our system.
He's got to be working
with somebody else.
He fits the profile perfectly.
He's intelligent, but an underachiever.
Alienated from his parents.
Has few friends.
Classic case
for recruitment by the Soviets.
What does this say
about the state of our country?
I mean, have you gotten any insight
as to why a bright boy like this
would jeopardise the lives of millions?
He says
he does this sort of thing for fun.
Dammit, John, I want some answers,
and I want 'em now!
- Let me talk to this little prick.
- I don't wanna talk. Just do it!
Come on, Paul.
Who do they belong to? Do you know?
What?
Good morning, sir.
- Where's the Lightman kid?

- In the infirmary, sir.
Hello, David. John McKittrick.
I run the computer facility here.
Sergeant, these aren't necessary,
the handcuffs?
No, sir.
Well, David, we called your parents.
We told them everything's fine.
No charges have been filed... yet.
But I think we are gonna need
a little time to sort things out here.
How much time?
Well, that depends on
how willing you are to cooperate.
Oh, of course.
Sergeant, would you tell the OD
I'm gonna take David for a little walk?
Let's go down to my office.
We'll be more comfortable there.
Go ahead.
You used to work with Stephen Falken?
I started as his assistant.
How d'you know?
I read an article you wrote with him
on poker and nuclear war.
Bluffing. Yeah,
that shook a few people up.
- He must have been pretty amazing.
- He's a brilliant man. A little flaky.
He never understood the practical uses
of his... of his work.
This machine over here
runs his game program.
Joshua.
Come here a minute, David.
See that sign up here? Up here?
- Yeah.
- DEFCON.
That indicates
our current defence condition.
It should read DEFCON 5,
which means peace.
It's still on 4 because of
that little stunt you pulled.

Actually, if we hadn't caught it in time,
it might have gone to DEFCON 1 .

- You know what that means, David?

- No. What does that mean?

World War III.

Wow.

You broke into our system
just to play a game, right?

That's right. That's exactly right.

After the news, you must have
realised how serious it was.

- Why'd you do it again?

- I didn't do it again.

- I even threw the number away.

- They found it in the trash.

Joshua called me.

Hey!

Look at that! That's some setup.

- What did you say?

- This is some setup.

No, no. Before that.

Joshua called me.

David, machines don't call people.

Yours did.

Who are you going to Paris with?

Paris? Oh!

No... You don't understand.

You had reservations for two to Paris.

- Who are you working with?

- Nobody!

Why don't I believe you?

I don't think I should say anything else
until I talk to a lawyer.

I think we'd better forget
about the lawyer crap
until I get a few answers
out of you myself.

Are you gonna answer the phone?

Hello.

Yeah.

What?

All right. I'll be right down.

You stay here. Don't move.

What's going on?

There's been a serious penetration
into our WOPR execution order file.
- What the hell's he sayin'?
- In English.
I'll give it to you. Somebody got
into Mr McKittrick's system
and stole the codes
that'll launch our missiles.
There's no cause for alarm.
The system won't accept a launch code
unless we're at DEFCON 1 .
I can change those codes in an hour.
Well, who did this?
I think the kid's working
with somebody on the outside.
I don't know what they're up to, but
I don't want our bombers on the ground.
Take us to DEFCON 3
and get SAC on the line.
- Where are you?
- Sir.
Get me an update on those subs. I wanna
know what those bastards are up to.
Joshua.
Greetings, ProfessorFalken.
Hello.
Are you still playing the game?
Of course. I should reach DEFCON 1
and launch my missiles in 28 hours.
Would you like to see
some projected kill ratios?
69% of the housing destroyed.
72 million people dead?
Is this a game
or is it real?
What's the difference?
Oh, wow.
You are a hard man to reach.
Could not fiind you in Seattle
and no terminal is in operation
at your classifiied address.
What classified address?
DOD pension fiiles
indicate current mailing as:

Dr Robert Hume.
AKA Stephen WFalken.
5 Tall CedarRoad,
Goose Island, Oregon 97...
Can I just talk to Mr McKittrick?
I think I know what's going on.
I'm escorting you to Denver
where you'll be placed under arrest,
- pending indictment for espionage.
- Espionage?!
Let me talk to him!
He's right over there.
- Get that bastard out of the war room!
- No! It's Joshua!
He's still playing the game!
He's gonna start a war!
Hold him where you had him before.
We'll leave in a few minutes.
Call Falken. He'll tell you. Please,
call him. Please, call him. Call him!
What the hell's he doing in here anyway?
Some of the men told me
that you're quite a tennis player.
Patient's eyes are dilated, consistent
with use of marijuana and possibly PCP.
Depending on what information you want,
there's a button to press.
Let's say I wanted to find out
how to hit a backhand.
I don't think I have the right program.
Excuse me. What do you want?
Bathroom. It's a long ride to Denver.
Excuse me.
Please! Let me talk to Mr McKittrick.
You can't talk to anybody.
The FBI'll be here any minute.
- Do you have to take a leak or not?
- No.
- I'm working here.
- Oh, I'm sorry.
Stop it!
- You have pretty eyes.
- That's original.
I'll get the elevator.

- Sign in here?

- Yeah, get us all.

I heard they voted you

Miss Fine in 1979. Is that true?

Will you stop it?!

- Am I bothering you?

- Yes.

- Do you want me to leave?

- Yes.

I want this door open right now.

- How about getting on the phone?

- Is there a technician?

Hey, Scooter! Wait up.

Come on, hurry it up. I'm late.

OK. I'll be right with you.

- I think it's jammed from inside.

- Come on.

David! Come on, David.

You're just making it harder on yourself.

OK.

Let's go.

Right this way, folks. I've been informed
that they're cleaning the floors
in the computer centre.

Don't want anyone to slip and hurt
themselves, so we'll end the tour here.

If I can ask you to board the bus
as quickly as possible,
you'll have a complimentary beverage
waiting for each of you.

Hold it! What are you doing?

Got it. Here it comes.

- You kids think you own this place?

- Oh! I was... just looking around.

You're not supposed to leave the group.

So get back there!

OK. Excuse me.

Thank you very much, sir.

Out of the way.

Thank you. Careful there.

Take care. Watch your step.

- Bye.

- Bye now.

Watch your step.

- Check everywhere. He can't be far.
- Move it, will you?
- Thanks.
- Take care.

Bye.

- What city, please?
- Goose Island, Oregon, please.

The number for Dr Robert Hume,
H-U-M-E, on Tall Cedar Road.

Checking underDrRobert Hume,
H-U-M-E, on Tall CedarRoad,
I fiind no listing.

What does that mean?

He doesn't have a phone?

I'm sorry. I have no listing.

Oh, wait.

Falken. Dr Stephen Falken,
F-A-L-K-E-N, at the same address.

I fiind no listing

for a Dr Stephen Falken, F-A-L-K-E-N,
on Tall CedarRoad, Goose Island.

Thank you.

Yeah?

Jennifer? It's me. David.

- David?
- Yeah.

Listen, I'm in Colorado
and I need a really big favour.

- Can you lend me some money?
- What?

I need an airline ticket.

I'll pay you back when I can.

I need a ticket from Grand Junction,
Colorado to Oregon.

- Why? What's going on?
- I'll tell you all about it later.

David, what are you doing in Colorado?

I went by yourhouse.

Your parents werejust freaked.

There are men around from the FBI
asking questions.

I can't talk about it right now.

When you buy the ticket, tell them that

I'll pick it up in Grand Junction Airport.

David, what's happening?

I can't talk. I've gotta get off the phone.

Please, will you just do this for me?

Punch up number five.

Let me see what you have.

22 Typhoon-class submarines

departing Petropavlovsk,

turning southbound at Nordkapp,

bearing 095 degrees.

Sergeant, I hope you like vodka.

Yes, sir. I just hope they don't make me

eat none of them damn fish eggs.

Give me an update...

Sir, the Soviets deny any increase

in their submarine deployment.

They wanna know

why we're provoking them.

They're full of shit.

We know they're down there.

I'm gonna blow their ass out of the water.

Surprise!

- What are you doing here?

- You didn't sound too good on the phone.

- You shouldn't have come. I'm in trouble.

- Why?

Is this because of

what you did with my grade?

You kids better hustle.

The ferry leaves any second.

Thanks. Come on. We gotta run.

- Wait, wait, wait, wait! Whoa!

- Hold it, hold it!

If he's still alive,

why would the obituary say he's dead?

No, he's not dead. He left.

When they know too much,

they give 'em new identities.

- Anyway, the computer said so.

- Oh, the computer said so.

The computer that's still playing

the games? It's the military's computer!

- Why wouldn't they know about it?

- They don't know about Joshua.

Falken knows about Joshua. He's

the only one who knows what it can do.
That computer is trying to win the game
that we asked it to play.
For real!
You don't even believe me!
David... David.
- He's not dead.
- I'm sorry.
I believe you.
Oh!
What was that?
I don't know.
Did you see that? There are still people
who won't believe they could fly.
The sky was once filled with them.
- I'm looking for Dr Robert Hume.
- Is either of you a palaeontologist?
No. We're high-school students.
Oh... Pity.
Well, high-school students,
you're on my land and I didn't invite you.
But
aren't you Stephen Falken?
Now, listen carefully.
Path. Follow path.
Gate. Open gate, through gate, close gate.
Last ferry 6.30, so run, run, run.
Wait! Wait.
I came because of Joshua.
Radar reports two unknown tracks are
penetrating the Alaskan air defence zone.
Confidence is high. Flight profile
suggests Soviet backfire bombers.
I want a visual confirmation on that.
Scramble two F-16s out of Galena.
Go to DEFCON 2.
Crystal Palace, this is Delta Foxtrot 27.
I have negative radar contact.
Repeat, negative Soviet aircraft.
27, this is Brass Hat.
They're right in front of you!
You're almost on top of 'em.
Brass Hat, we got nothing on radar
and 40 miles visibility.

There's nothin' out there, General.
Just blue skies.
What the hell?!
- You haven't been listening.
- Yes, I have.
I loved it when you nuked Las Vegas.
A suitably biblical ending for the place,
don't you think?
Are you gonna tell them
what Joshua's doing?
Now, children, come on over here.
I'm going to tell you a bedtime story.
Are you sitting comfortably?
Then I'll begin.
Once upon a time, there lived
a magnificent race of animals
who dominated the world
through age after age.
They ran and they swam
and they fought and they flew.
Until suddenly,
quite recently, they disappeared.
Nature just gave up and started again.
We weren't even apes then.
We were just these smart little rodents
hiding in the rocks.
And when we go, nature will start again.
With the bees probably.
Nature knows when to give up, David.
I'm not giving up.
If Joshua tricks them
into launching an attack, it'll be your fault.
My fault? The whole point was
to find a way to practise nuclear war
without destroying ourselves.
To get the computers to learn from
mistakes we couldn't afford to make.
Except I never could get Joshua
to learn the most important lesson.
What's that?
Futility. That there's a time
when you should just give up.
What kind of a lesson is that?
Did you ever play tic-tac-toe?

Yeah. Of course.

- But you don't any more?

- No.

Why?

Because it's a boring game.

It's always a tie.

Exactly. There's no way to win.

The game itself is pointless.

But back at the war room,
they believe you can win a nuclear war.

That there can be acceptable losses.

So you gave up? Decided to play dead?

For security reasons,
they graciously arranged my death.

Did you know that no land animal
with a body weight of over 50lb
survived that age?

Extinction is part of the natural order.
Bullshit!

If we're extinguished, it's not natural.
It's just stupid!

Oh, it's all right. I've planned ahead.

We're just three miles
from a primary target.

A millisecond of brilliant light
and we're vaporised.

Much more fortunate than the millions
who'll wander sightless
through the smouldering aftermath.

We'll be spared the horror of survival.

I'm only 17 years old.

I'm not ready to die yet.

You won't make a simple phone call?

If the real Joshua was still alive,
your Joshua,

- you'd do it, wouldn't you?

- Look, we might gain a few years.

Perhaps time enough for you
to have a son and watch him die.

But humanity
planning its own destruction...

That a phone call won't stop.

This is unreal! You don't care about death
cos you're already dead.

I know a lot about you.
I know you weren't always like this.
What was the last thing you cared about?
You've missed the last ferry.
You're welcome to stay.
You want to sleep on the floor?
Good night.
Let's get outta here.
Come on. We'll find a boat.
There's gotta be a boat.
Mr President, we've got 48 nuclear subs
closing on the United States.
And we've got 100,000 Soviet troops
massing in East Germany.
We're monitoring their bombers
that are on alert. Yes, sir...
Well, that's a load of shit!
No, sir. Not you.
Yes, sir. We'll be in touch
as soon as the information changes.
Intelligence reports rumours of a new
Soviet bomber with Stealth capabilities.
It can project a false radar image
600 miles away from the real aircraft.
Christ! Now they got us chasing shadows.
I think I saw one.
What kind of an asshole lives on an island
and he doesn't even have a boat?
Maybe we can swim for it.
How far do you think it is?
No. It's two or three miles.
At least. Maybe more.
- Well, what do you say? Let's go for it.
- No.
- Come on.
- No!
I can't swim.
You can't swim?
No. OK, Wonder Woman? I can't swim.
What kind of an asshole grows up
in Seattle and doesn't know how to swim?
I never got around to it, OK?
I always thought
there was gonna be plenty of time!

I'm sorry.
I wish I didn't know about any of this.
I wish I was like
everybody else in the world.
Then tomorrow it would just be over.
There wouldn't be any time to be sorry.
About anything.
Oh, Jesus!
I really wanted to learn how to swim.
I swear to God I did.
Did I tell you that next week
I was gonna be on TV?
You're kidding?
On that aerobics show
with some girls from my dad's class.
A movie star.
Yeah!
It's kinda stupid, huh? I mean, nobody
would have been watching me anyway.
I would have.
Oh, Jesus!
The bastard turned us in!
It's all right. Get in.
We have a launch detection.
We have a Soviet launch detection.
BMEWS has confirmed a massive attack.
- Missile warning. No malfunction.
- Confidence is high.
- Cobra Dane, is this an exercise?
- This is not an exercise.
General, DPS is tracking
300 inbound Soviet ICBMs.
- Tell me this is one of your simulations.
- It's not, Jack.
All right. Flush the bombers.
Get the subs in launch mode.
We are at DEFCON 1 .
DEFCON 1.
Major Lem, get me a report on the WOPR.
Initial attack profile
is a full-scale Soviet strike.
WOPR is putting our losses
at 85 to 95% of the strategic forces.
What does WOPR recommend,

Mr McKittrick?
Full-scale retaliatory strike.
I need some machine to tell me that?
President's on his way
to join Airborne Command.
We have to give launch option.
- Has he spoken to the premier?
- The Russians deny everything.
We have a Soviet submarine
launch detection.
Let's go into a launch mode.
Close up the mountain.
This is Crystal Palace.
We're closing up the mountain.
After the gates are closed,
nobody gets in or out.
Initiate internal power.
Generators on and functioning.
External power disconnected.
Seal off ventilation shafts.
Shaft locks sealed.
The gate's closed!
Is everybody OK?
- Are you all right?
- Yeah. Run for it!
The gate's gonna shut! Come on!
Come on!
Hold the door! Hold the door!
Hold the goddamn door!
Come on! Hurry!
They're clear! They're clear!
All units confirm weapons targeted
and ready. Awaiting launch codes.
We are in a launch mode.
Major Lem, lock out changes.
Roger. Lock out enabled.
All right. I'll call you back.
Here!
I don't know what you think
you can do here, Stephen.
John! Good to see you!
I see the wife still picks your ties.
- What has this kid been telling you?
- How far has it gone?

The president's ready for a counterstrike.

That's what we're recommending he do.

- It's a bluff, John. Call it off.

- No, it's not a bluff. It's real.

Hello, General Beringer? Stephen Falken.

Mr Falken, you picked

a hell of a day for a visit.

General, what you see

on these screens up here is a fantasy.

A computer-enhanced hallucination.

Those blips are not real missiles.

They're phantoms.

There's nothing to indicate a simulation.

Everything's working perfectly.

- Does it make any sense?

- Does what make any sense?

That!

Look, I don't have time

for a conversation right now.

General, are you prepared

to destroy the enemy?

You betcha!

- Do you think they know that?

- I believe we've made that clear enough.

Then... don't.

Tell the president to ride out the attack.

Sir, they need a decision.

General, do you really believe

that the enemy would attack

without provocation,

using so many missiles and subs,

so that we would have no choice

but to totally annihilate them?

One minute and 30 seconds to impact.

General, you are listening to a machine.

Do the world a favour

and don't act like one.

One minute and 20 seconds to impact.

Yes, Mr President.

Sir, at this point in time, we cannot

positively confirm the inbounds.

We have reason to believe

they may not exist.

Yes, sir. That's affirmative.

Yes, sir.
I do, too.
One minute to impact.
Who's first and how soon?
Initial impact
in the 43rd Bomb Wing at Loring,
319th at Grand Forks,
and Alaskan Air Command, Elmendorf.
50 seconds to impact.
Get me the senior controllers.
I wanna talk to 'em myself.
All stations, this is Crystal Palace.
Stand by for a message from Brass Hat.
Acknowledge.
ElmendorfAirForce Base Operations.
Lieutenant Colonel Bowers.
319th Bomb Wing Operations.
Colonel Chase.
Colonel, this is Loring AirForce Base.
The senior controllerisn't here right now.
That's all right. Who are you?
Sir, this is Airman Dougherty, sir.
This is General Beringer at NORAD.
Our current situation...
Men, we're currently tracking
approximately 2,400 inbound
Soviet warheads.
But at the moment
we cannot confirm this.
I repeat, we cannot confirm this.
30 seconds to impact.
We're right there with you guys.
We've taken all the steps we can.
Stand by to launch missiles
at my command.
Stay on this channel as long as you can.
We'll be standing by.
20 seconds to impact.
Ten... nine...
eight... seven...
six...
five...
four...
three...

two...
one... Impact.
This is Crystal Palace. Are you still on?
This is Crystal Palace.
Are you still on? Anyone there?
That's affirmative, sir.
Yeah! We're here!
- Jesus H Christ! We're still here!
- Our boards are showing impact.
No, sir. No impact. We're alive and well.
All right!
All right!
All right!
All right! Recall the bombers!
Stand down the missiles!
Joshua, what are you doing?
COC, I need Dr McKittrick right away.
- This is McKittrick.
- Sir, we got a problem.
WOPR's not letting me log back on.
- I can't get in to stand down the missiles.
- Stand by.
Paul, this is McKittrick.
The WOPR's not letting us back in.
I know. No one can get back on.
We're trying everything.
It's like the entire password file
has been wiped out.
I tried that! Don't you think
I would have tried that?
What are those?
Those are launch codes.
What are they for?
Joshua's trying to find the right codes
so he can launch the missiles himself.
What's happening?
The random number generators
aren't running.
- Got anything?
- I'm still looking.
I got no idea.
It could be coming from anywhere.
Sir, you better get on the headset.
Yeah?

General, the machine has locked us out.
It's sending random numbers to the silos.
Codes. To launch the missiles.
Just unplug the goddamn thing!

- Jesus Christ!

- That won't work, General.
It would interpret a shutdown
as the destruction of NORAD.
The computers in the silos would carry
out their last instructions. They'd launch.

- Can't we disarm the missiles?

- Over a thousand of them?

There's no time. At this rate
it'll hit the launch codes in 5.3 minutes.
Mr McKittrick?

After very careful consideration, sir,
I have come to the conclusion
that your new defence system sucks.
I don't have to take that,
you pig-eyed sack of shit.
I was hoping for something a little better
than that from a man of your education.
General, it's the president.
What do you...
What are you gonna tell him?
That I'm ordering our bombers
back to fail-safe.
We might have to go through
this thing after all.
Yes, sir.
He's got one. When he gets all ten,
he'll launch the missiles.

- Well, can't they get in and stop it?

- No. They can't.
They've taken out my password.

- Well, what are we gonna do?

- I don't know. Do you?
I told you not to start
playing games with that thing.
It's games.

- Games!

- Try it.

- John, feed it a tapeworm.

- Too risky. It might smash the system.

- Did the kid get in the back door?

- We took it out.

- Invade the deep logic.

- We hit a fire wall.

If it wants to play a game, then play it.

Have it list games.

- For Christ's sake!

- He's played before.

- He can hardly do worse.

- Two numbers.

I'd piss on a spark plug

if I thought it'd do any good.

- Let the boy in there, Major.

- List games.

Chess.

Three numbers locked in.

Poker.

Security system's

not gonna let anything through.

Global thermonuclear war.

Four numbers.

Stephen, for Christ's sake. Do something.

- Come on, kid. Let's go.

- No. Try again.

- Put the list back up.

- We already tried that.

- Put it up!

- Yes, put it up.

- It's not on the list!

- What's not on the list?

Go ahead. It's got to be somewhere.

Tic-tac-toe.

You're in. Order it to disarm the missiles.

No! No.

Five numbers. It's got half the code.

One.

- Put X in the centre square.

- I know.

- Six up.

- There's no way you can win.

I know that. It doesn't. It hasn't learned.

- Is there any way to make it play itself?

- Yes. Number of players zero.

Seven!

Come on. Learn, goddamn it.

Eight.

It must be caught in a loop. It's taking power from the rest of the system.

Nine numbers.

Ten! It's got the code. It's going to launch.

Colonel Conley, call SAC.

Get me a launch status report.

Major Davis, get me the president.

How you doin', Colonel?

Land lines out of the mountain are dead.

I'm trying satellites.

- What's it doing?

- It's learning.

Greetings, ProfessorFalken.

Hello, Joshua.

Strange game.

The only winning move is not to play.

How about a nice game ofchess?

Colonel Conley, take us to DEFCON 5.

Yes, sir.