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Revisiting 'Fail-Safe'

By Unknown

Coming to you live from CBS,
your host, Mr. Walter Cronkite.
Ladies and gentlemen,
you're at an opening night.
Tonight, television takes a giant step.
For the next two hours...
...this network will be presenting
the first feature-length story...
...to be broadcast live on CBS in 39 years.
Tonight's show, Fail Safe...
...is based on the best-selling novel
by Eugene Burdick and Harvey Wheeler...
...and written for the screen
by Walter Bernstein.
You're tuned to CBS.
The clocks are turned back,
and our story begins in just one minute.
What time is it?
Too early.
The Secretary's bringing some...
...muckamuck to lecture to all of us brass.
Taking the train?
No, I'll fly down.
Be back in time for dinner.
That would be fine.
I'll take the children to Manhattan.
We're going to see My Fair Lady.
She's in New York?
The movie.
You had that dream again, didn't you?
Blackie.
Maybe I should quit my job.
The dream's related, I know.
Why don't you come with us to see
My Fair Lady? Audrey Hepburn.
And leave Swenson and General Stark
in a room alone?
No?
No.
Let's take that vacation, Blackie.
-And get you away from all of this.
-Soon.
How did I get so lucky
to stumble onto you?

Come home early.
How long have you been stationed
in Omaha, Colonel Cascio?
Three years, Congressman.
This is the control center to the War Room.
How far down are we?
Six stories.
That seems a little extreme
even for the War Department.
Yes, sir. I'm sure it does.
What we are seeing here
is the naval situation in the Pacific.
Those white ones are our surface vessels
and our submarines.
And those are Russian submarines.
So close to our shoreline?
International waters.
Anyone's got a right to be there.
The Russians aren't just anyone.
What are they doing there,
or is that a foolish question?
Same thing we're doing to them
over there.
General?
Surveillance. Don't worry, Mr. Knapp.
We keep a very close eye on them.
-Thanks to you and your company.
-We just make the computers.
You people do the important work.
Congressman. Follow me, gentlemen.
-Your computers are the best in the world.
-Thank you.
They ought to be. They cost enough.
This is about more than just money.
I got elected to watch
the dollars, Mr. Knapp.
Like Mr. Jefferson said:
'Patriotism is the last refuge
of the profligate.'
Or was it Will Rogers?
-Where you from, Colonel?
-New York City, sir.
New York City.
Your Congressman's Sam Noonan, right?

I wouldn't know. I'm in the Air Force.
Congressman.

Give me the polar projection, please.

Yes, sir.

What we're seeing now is a projection
of the Northern Hemisphere.

It's like looking down at the Earth
from the North Pole...

...at an altitude of about 100 miles.

Those are our bombers
patrolling the Russian perimeter.

Shortly they'll be returning
to their base in Alaska.

They'll be replaced by other bombers
with fresh crews.

Men chosen very carefully, sir.

The cream of the cream.

He's got a good arm.

His fielding skills are a little suspect, but....

-He's 10, Jack.

-No, I know.

We'll see. Next spring.

He can hit. I could never hit.

Stands in there,
puts the bat on his shoulder...

...looks the pitcher right in the eye,
takes his cuts.

Five minutes to ready planes.

The other kids duck when the pitch
comes in. He doesn't flinch.

-Brave little--

-Got that from his mom.

Yeah. She was something.

How's he doing?

Better.

Tommy?

-Dad! How long will this one be?

-Shouldn't be too late.

-You sure?

-Positive.

Only fools are positive.

-Are you sure?

-Positive.

-Dad?

-Yes, Sport.
You know that chameleon you got me?
I know him well.
We talk about you all the time.
Four minutes to ready planes.
Can you get me another one?
Why, you think he needs a friend?
No, it's just that he's dead.
He was alive yesterday. What happened?
He got cooked.
-You cooked the chameleon?
-Not me, the sun.
We're supposed to keep the shade down
so the sun doesn't get on him.
I forgot, and he got cooked.
When I get home,
we'll give him a proper burial.
You mad at me, Dad?
-Of course not. This weekend--
-Tell Tommy I said hey.
Flynn says hey. I'm flying with him today.
-Is he flying Number 6?
-Are you flying Number 6?
I got to go. I'll be home soon, Sport.
-You sure?
-I'm positive.
Only fools are positive.
-I'll see you.
-I'll see you, Dad.
Three minutes to ready planes.
They're all armed with nuclear bombs.
Two kinds of bombs. Air-to-air missiles
for use against enemy planes...
...and two 20-ton hydrogen bombs
designed to detonate over land targets.
Each one more powerful
than what we dropped on Hiroshima.
No comparison.
And you guys are the finger on the trigger.
I think I know what you're worried about.
Somebody goes nuts in here,
the bombs go off and the world blows up.
No way. We have checks upon checks.
Fail Safe procedures--

That don't depend on humans.
That's the scariest thing I've heard
since I came in here.
What Colonel Cascio meant
was that we bypass human error.
Even the best people make mistakes.
We've got the very best.
They get tired, angry,
their minds can wander.
We've compensated for that.
Thanks again to Mr. Knapp
and his systems.
We make them as foolproof as we can.
Maybe you ought to have
a ''fool safe'' procedure.
Protect us from the fools in the world.
-I'd sleep a lot better.
-So would I, but unfortunately--
Excuse me.
What's going on, General?
We've come up
with an unidentified flying object.
Until we know what it is for sure,
we consider it hostile.
So what do you do about it?
We've gone to Condition Blue.
That's our lowest level of readiness.
As you saw, we always have
a certain number of bombers in the air.
They have been told
we're at Condition Blue...
...so now they'll now fly
to their Fail Safe points.
-Put that up for me, please.
-Yes.
Different for each group
and changes from day to day.
The Fail Safe is a fixed point in the sky...
...where the bombers orbit
till they get a positive order to go in.
Without that order, they come home.
No bomber can proceed
on its own discretion.
-You get that order by radio, right?

-But not verbally.
This is of course highly classified.
The attack order is transmitted
to a small box...
...on the aircraft
that we call the Fail Safe box.
This box is operated by a code...
...which can function
only at the express order of the President.
Seven minutes to Fail Safe.
When we go to Condition Blue
it goes on automatically...
...at seven minutes and starts
a countdown. Nothing unusual.
Why don't you just give them
a direct verbal yes or no...
...and save yourselves all this trouble?
Voices can be imitated.
An enemy comes up on
the same radio frequency...
...imitates the voice of the President,
it can send whatever message it wants.
No, there can't be any interference
with the box. We've seen to that.
There's nothing unusual
about Condition Blue?
No. This is Standard Operating Procedure.
We've sent fighter aircraft up
to identify the bogie.
You said it could be hostile.
We have to regard it as hostile.
That doesn't mean that it is.
-Doesn't mean it isn't.
-This happens five or six times a month.
After Blue, we still have to go to
Condition Yellow, Condition Green...
...and then Condition Red.
And Condition Red is?
War.
Maybe this time it's a real UFO.
From outer space? I wouldn't mind that.
Give us something to worry about
besides the Russians.
I read your memo

on counterforce credibility.
I don't think that's what Grotteschele
is going to talk about today.
You mean you don't want me
to bring it up.
Maybe not today.
Someone's got to talk about it.
This whole policy of overkill,
piling bombs on top of bombs...
...figuring even if they hit us first,
we can still destroy them.
-It's crazy.
-It's a crazy world.
-Good morning, gentlemen.
-Good morning, Mr. Secretary.
I think you all know Mr. Grotteschele, here.
He's been gracious enough
to give us more of his valuable time...
...on a subject
we're all naturally concerned about.
So, Mr. Grotteschele, the floor is all yours.
Thank you.
I shall try not to waste your valuable time.
The subject today is 'Nuclear War.'
Specifically, 'Winning a Nuclear War.'
We know in a exchange
between the Soviets and Americans...
...100 million people, more or less,
would be killed.
A 100 million or more?
Yes, Mr. Secretary.
That would be nothing but a tragedy...
...nobody here denies that.
Every war, even a thermonuclear war,
must have a victor and a vanquished.
History tells us that the culture
which is best prepared...
...has the best retaliation,
and the best defense...
...will have an ancient
and classical advantage.
To be victorious?
Yes. It would be the victor in that
it would be less damaged than its enemy.

We would be the victor.
That would be our hope.
Your argument doesn't recognize
that thermonuclear war...
...is not the extension of policy...
...it is the end of everything:
People, policy, institutions--
My argument is if someone
is to survive a nuclear exchange...
...I prefer that it be our culture
and not the Soviets'.
Culture? With most of its people dead?
It's vegetation burned off?
Do you really think
that the world you describe is a culture?
The idea of war has changed since
the advent of the Bomb.
War's function remains the same, Blackie.
Whether it's a spear thrown
or a nuclear bomb.
War is still the resolution
of economic and political conflict.
In these times, in any possible war...
...the overwhelming majority of citizens
are going to be killed.
Does this still suggest to you
that war is a resolution of conflicts?
The situation is no different
then it was 1,000 years ago.
There were wars in which
entire populations were wiped out.
The point remains: Who will be the victor
and who will be the victim?
Short of disarmament,
to which I doubt the Soviets would agree...
...what shall we do?
These weapons exist. We can face that
or we can close our minds to it.
Groteschele, this world is no longer
man's theater.
Man has been made into a spectator.
We define policy by discussing the
possibility of a winnable nuclear exchange.
Once one knows where he wants to go...

...he can collect a great amount of logic and fact to support his argument.

My fear is that both we and the Soviets are settled on mutual destruction.

We are now rallying our different logics to support our identical conclusions.

And, if we are not careful, gentlemen, we will both get the results that we want.

General Bogan, UFO at angels 30, speed 525, heading 196.

That means the unidentified aircraft is flying at 30,000 feet...

...the speed of 500 miles an hour on a compass heading of 196.

Heading right for Detroit.

Pretty cool about it, General.

My guess is a commercial airliner is off course.

One minute to Fail Safe.

Damn thing's disappeared.

Where did it go?

Into the grass, Mr. Raskob.

Under our radar where we can't see it.

-What do we do now?

-Go to Condition Yellow.

Condition Yellow.

-Put our bombers up there, please.

-Yes, sir.

Our bombers are heading for their Fail Safe points.

Thirty-seconds to Fail Safe.

Once they get there, they'll orbit till we call them back.

-What are those other planes?

-Fighter support for the bombers.

It's also automatic under these circumstances.

Twenty seconds to Fail Safe.

Nineteen, eighteen....

The early warning system indicates it's not an air breather.

What the hell is that?

Jets create turbulence when they suck in air through their engines.

We got a warning system
that can pick that up.
If the plane lost power, we couldn't
do that, even if we know it's there.
It could be a Russian rocket coming in
under our radar.
All groups at Fail Safe point.
Right on the money. I told you,
Mr. Raskob, our people are the best.
-How we doing, Jimmy?
-Everyone in orbit, sir.
Let's keep it there. Slow and easy.
So let's say Dr. King sits down
with the powers that be and he says:
'Mr. President, I want it to be equal'
and in a very polite way...
...the President says,
'Dr. King, I can't do it'.
As long as it's polite, sir.
Are you saying
because it's difficult don't try?
That's not what I'm saying. In the Army--
The Army's different. I'd take the Army.
There's a class system, too,
but it's based on seniority.
Let's do it that way.
Everyone in the country
will get paid equally by their age.
All men age 40 will make a better salary
than all men age 35.
What about women?
What about women?
What's happening now?
-Any word on identification?
-Not yet, sir.
What the hell's going on?
-Let's go to Condition Green.
-Condition Green.
Can you tell us why Condition Green?
No. Colonel, let's get our visitors
out of here.
-Gentlemen, please.
-The hell--
That's an order, Mr. Raskob.

The way I read the situation,
we're one minute away from going to war.
Unless you can get me back to my family,
I'm staying here to see what happens.
You really don't want to throw me
out of here.
There it is!
That's it, gentlemen.
I'm sorry we alarmed you.
Have all parties stand down.
Stand down. All parties stand down.
Stand down, Anderson.
Sergeant Anderson. Sergeant Collins.
You need to take a look at this.
We need a new indicator switch.
This one's faulty.
-Right, Chief.
-Put in the report that at 10:47 hours...
...we replaced a PK 30 indicator switch
in the Number 3 bank.
Right away, Chief.
Sir, the Fail Safe box.
I see it.
Check Omaha by radio.
Somebody screwed up.
Yes, sir.
Try another band.
Try them all.
It's the Russians.
Jamming our signals to keep us
from getting the go-ahead.
-They're too late for that.
-It's got to be a mistake.
Request permission to verify, sir.
Permission granted.
I read it as ''CAP 81 1.''
I concur your reading
is Charlie Alpha Poppa 81 1.
We will now both open
our operational orders.
Last year, on a flight from Hamburg...
...we lost an engine over England.
One was a heart stopper, but to lose two--
General Bogan.

Why is that group of planes up there
headed for Russia?

In the case of a surprise attack,
people still advocate a return...

...to manned bombers for a first strike
retaliation rather than missiles.

Why? They're slower, they can be recalled.

The missiles cannot.

They provide a maximum reaction time
for thought, evaluation...

...the detection of error,
perhaps even a peaceful resolution.

I find this point of view
dangerously old fashioned, gentlemen.

We must speed up in this circumstance,
not slow down.

Time is a....

Colonel Purnell, get me Omaha.

Colonel.

-Colonel Cascio.

-Sir.

Get me the President.

Tell Peter not to even hint to the press
there's an emergency.

Tell the Vice President what's happened.

He'll know what to do.

-We met before at your office.

-Yes, sir. I'm the Russian translator.

I hope there won't be any use
for you today. Nothing personal.

No, they'll get wind of this,
they always do.

Tell Peter to tell the press that it is urgent.

It's not a backbreaker.

Not yet. And, off the record, no leaks.

Any leaks on this, the guy and his paper
are dead, now and forever.

-I'll tell him in those words.

-Where's the list for the Pentagon meeting?

-Right here, Mr. President.

-Give it to Buck.

I think that'll be all for now. Stay close.

Right outside, sir.

Sit down, Buck.

-You know what's happened?

-No, sir.

One of our bomber groups
got the wrong message...

...went off to attack Russia.

The whole thing may get settled down
in a couple of minutes. Probably will.

The bombers will realize their mistake
and turn back or...

...we'll contact them by radio
and recall them.

But if things do get serious
then I may have to speak to the Kremlin.

That's where you come in.

-I'll do my best, sir.

-I know you will.

Who's on that Pentagon list?

I want them in on this.

Secretary of Defense...

...Chiefs of Staff...

...Professor....

Groteschele.

Runs an expensive think tank.

Pentagon likes him.

He says what they want to hear.

Is there a General Black on that list?

Yes, sir.

That's Blackie. I'm glad he's there.

We went to school together.

He's very smart and I trust him.

Get me General Bogan in Omaha, please.

We have a little time.

Not much, but some. You can relax.

Easier said than done.

General Bogan, sir.

Yes, General Bogan.

Group 6 is about 260 miles past Fail Safe...

...and continuing on an attack course.

-Do we know what happened?

-No, we do not.

There's a chance they made
a navigational error and they'll swing back.

Has that big an error
ever happened before?

-No, sir.
-Then let's rule it out.
Why haven't we been able to contact them
by radio?
I don't know. We've tried all frequencies.
We can't make contact.
The Russians may be jamming
their radio reception.
Why would they do that?
I don't know, sir.
If we do manage to reestablish
radio contact...
...will they respond to an order to return?
No, sir.
Not even from me?
Their orders are to disregard
all voice transmissions...
...even your voice can be imitated,
Mr. President.
Once they get past a certain point,
they are not to obey any verbal command.
Are they past that point?
Yes, sir. Quite a ways past.
What's the target?
Moscow.
All right. Standard Operating Procedure.
What's the next step?
We got fighter planes in the air.
SOP is that we send them
after the bombers...
...with orders to raise them visually
and divert them.
Will it work?
Sir, these men have been trained
to ignore all visual signals.
They've been taught...
...that the Russians could send up a decoy
to divert the bombers.
That leaves us
with what alternative, General?
To shoot them down.
And who gives that order?
You do, Mr. President.
All right.

Order the fighters to catch up
to the bombers.
Tell them to hold fire until they get
a direct order from me. Is that clear?
Yes, sir.
Thank you.
Mr. Swenson in the Pentagon, please.
Colonel Cascio.
Contact the fighters.
Tell them to go after Group 6.
We can't shoot down our own men.
Yes, Mr. President.
May I call you back?
Thank you, sir.
Gentlemen!
The President may have to order
our fighters to shoot down Group 6.
He'd like our advice
before issuing that order.
I oppose it on the grounds
that it's premature.
Our fighters haven't reached
Soviet airspace.
We must do it.
-There's still hundreds of miles away.
-Do it at once, now!
-We've got no alternatives!
-There are always alternatives.
This minute...
...the Russians are watching Group 6,
trying to guess what we're doing.
You can be damn sure
once our bombers get...
...into their airspace,
they're going to want a good explanation.
And want it fast.
We have to prove to them
that this is a mistake.
By shooting down our own planes?
If it has to be.
Mr. President, it is our....
It is our unanimous view that...
...the fighters should be ordered in.
Thank you.

General Bogan, order the fighters in.
If necessary, shoot down the bombers.
It will be necessary, sir.
I know that, General. Order them in.
Yes, sir.
-Colonel Cascio.
-Sir.
Order the fighters to attack Group 6.
They can't catch them.
They've gone the opposite direction.
Tell them to go to afterburners.
They'll use up all their fuel.
If they succeed, they won't make it back.
They'll go down in the Arctic Ocean.
You heard the order, Colonel.
-They're still--
-Colonel!
Give the order, immediately.
Give me Tangle Able One.
So, we're going to shoot down
our own men.
We are in voice communication
with Tangle Able One.
You can talk to them on Channel 7.
Single-side band.
-Do I tell them in code or in the clear?
-In the clear.
What if the Russians overhear us?
Isn't that what we want?
This is Tangle Able One,
I read you five by five at last transmission.
Tangle Able One,
this is Colonel Cascio of the Omaha staff.
I'm here with General Bogan.
Listen closely.
Group 6 has flown beyond
the Fail Safe point.
It is on an attack course towards Moscow.
It is a mistake. I repeat, it is a mistake.
Jesus!
You are to go to afterburners...
...and overtake Group 6.
If you cannot communicate
with them visually...

...shoot them down.
Roger. Go to afterburners
and if cannot communicate...
...shoot them down.
-Over and out.
-Leave it on.
You heard the order. Any suggestions?
Yeah. They should get
their heads examined.
We haven't a chance
of catching the bombers.
We only got a 50-mph edge
on them and they're halfway to Moscow.
-Who's kiddin' who?
-Cut the chatter.
On the mark, go to afterburners.
Five.
Four.
Three.
Two.
One.
Mark.
Turn it off.
Turn it off!
Did you think they wouldn't do it?
How did General Bogan sound
to you, Buck?
Sir?
Sound worried?
I'd say a little worried, sir.
He's an old-time flyer. He's a good man.
If he's worried, I'm worried.
You know Mr. Swenson,
the Secretary of Defense?
No, sir.
He gives us any advice, we take it.
Get me the Pentagon
and the Omaha War Room, please.
Right away, sir.
Ready, sir.
Mr. Swenson...
...if our fighters manage to shoot down
these bombers the worst will be over.
I want your people to think what'll happen

if we can't shoot them down.
I've got Omaha on the line as well.
Please limit this discussion

to two subjects:

What happened?

And what will we do about it?

Right, sir.

Back at Omaha, we have General Bogan.

Mr. Knapp of Universal Techtotics.

Congressman Raskob of Nebraska.

They have my permission to listen
and make any comments.

In my opinion,

only two things could've happened:

A compound mechanical failure

or someone in Group 6 went berserk.

Double mechanical failure?

You know the odds against that, sir?

Mr. Secretary.

Yes, General Bogan.

Mr. Knapp here knows as much

about the electronic gear as anyone.

He's a little reluctant to talk,

but he understands how important this is.

Mr. Knapp.

Look, it's just that the more complicated
these electronic systems are...

...the more accident-prone they become.

How does that apply to our situation?

Well, sir, in this way:

If you pile all these electronic systems
one on top of the other...

...sooner or later

you'll get a faulty transistor or...

...a damaged rectifier,

then the whole thing just shuts down.

Even computers suffer fatigue.

They become erratic...

...they break down,

just like overworked people.

Excuse me. But you're overlooking

one important factor:

Humans control those machines.

Humans can see an error and correct it.
I'm sorry, sir. But you are misinformed.
The fact of the matter is
that these machines are so complex...
...and these mistakes they make
are so subtle...
...in a real war situation,
you might not know...
...whether it's an error
or telling you the truth.
May I say something, General?
This is Colonel Cascio of my staff.
I don't think it's a mechanical failure
and I don't think anyone went berserk.
I think it's a move by the Russians.
What kind of move, Colonel?
Sir, I think they found a way to mask
the real position of Group 6.
They have the capacity, we know that.
Group 6 is probably on their way home
now with the radio jammed.
What we see heading towards Moscow
is actually a group of Russian bombers.
Up there for one reason:
To make us believe that we've launched
the first strike against them.
We can think as much as we want
that it's accidental.
It's an excuse for retaliation.
If they wanted to, they wouldn't need
an excuse, they'd just attack.
This way, they made us commit a group
of our fighter planes...
...our first line of defense.
-And made us kill our own men.
-I disagree with Colonel Cascio's analysis.
We must believe this is our mistake
and not the Russians'.
Absolutely, I agree.
This is General Stark.
Project the Russian air defense.
The Russians have seven bomber groups
in the air at this moment.
All are following hold patterns

inside Soviet airspace. Next map, please.
Their fighter groups have a large number
of fighter planes in the air.

Which means?

Which means they must have seen
Group 6 cross the Fail Safe point.

That's why they scrambled
all those fighters.

And I think they're waiting.

Just as we would.

If they see our fighters shooting down
American planes...

...they'll understand that we're sincere.

-If not--

-If not, I'll tell you what I believe.

-The Russians will take no action at all.

-Even if we cross their borders--

If our bombers get through,
the Russians will surrender.

Would you explain that, please?

The Soviets believe history is based
on a series of non-human events...

...which will eventually assure the victory
of communism...

...if the Soviet Union is left
reasonably intact.

They know that a war would leave
the Soviet Union utterly destroyed.

Therefore, they would surrender.

But that would leave capitalism
the winner.

They wouldn't see it that way.

In fact, many of them believe
that capitalism must play itself out...

...to its inevitable historical defeat
before communism can really succeed.

So what do you suggest we do?

Nothing.

Nothing?

They will surrender.

The threat of communism will be over.

Forever.

Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Secretary, pardon my language,

but I think that's a lot of crap.
Don't kid yourself.
The Russian generals will react
the same way that I would react.
The best defense is a good offense.
They'll attack.
They won't give a damn
what Marx or anyone else said.
You give too much credit
to the military mind.
The Russian leaders are not
like you and me.
These are Marxist fanatics.
They're not motivated by rage or hate.
These are human calculating machines,
believe me.
They know if they hit us,
they can do terrible damage.
They also know that our second strike
will completely destroy them.
They'll look at the balance sheet
and see defeat.
Mr. Secretary, I'm convinced of it.
This is our chance!
I'd never have made
the first move deliberately.
Group 6 has done that for us by accident.
Now, we must take advantage of it.
History demands it.
We must advise the President that
no effort be made to recall those planes.
Our fighters are firing.
He's out of fuel. He's going down.
They're too far away.
Mr. President, our fighters have failed.
They've all crashed into the sea.
What are the chances of our bombers
actually getting through to Moscow?
We've done the calculations
a thousand times.
One or two of the six will get through.
Even with the entire Soviet defense
apparatus concentrated on them?
Our bombers are too fast.

The Russians won't have time.

Thank you.

Okay, Buck, I'll tell you what we'll do.

I'll speak to the Soviet Premier.

You'll tell me what he says

and his own translator...

...will tell him what I'm saying. Got that?

-Yes, sir.

-I want something more.

I want you to tell me what he's thinking.

As much as you can sense.

Anything you can pick up

that'll give me a clue to his thoughts.

-Think you can do that?

-I can try, sir.

-That's all anybody can do.

-Yes, sir.

Okay.

Let's talk to Moscow.

They're on the line.

Mr. Chairman.

This is the President of the United States
calling on a matter of great urgency.

'Does it have to do with the aircraft...

'...we've detected flying towards Russia
from the Bering Sea?'

Yes, sir, that's why I'm calling.

Your tracking and radar devices...

...must have detected a somewhat
unusual pattern.

'They reported it to me 15 minutes ago.

'I presume you are calling to inform me
that this is another of your off-course...

-''...reconnaissance flights.''

-No!

'I've warned you that your constant flying
of armed--''

This is a serious mistake.

'All right, tell me. Tell me the mistake.''

A group of bombers,

flying at speeds of 1,500 miles an hour...

...each containing two 20-megaton bombs...

...is right now flying towards Russia.

'We shall watch with great interest

while you recall them.

-''If, indeed, that is what you intend doing.''

-I said it was a mistake.

But so far we have been unable
to return these planes.

''Are they being flown by madmen,
Mr. President?''

I wish I could be sure.

My best guess is mechanical failure.

What I can tell you is that it's a mistake.

It is not part of a plan to provoke war.

-This is not part of any general attack.

-''How am I to believe that?''

Because I'm telling you--

''How do I know you don't have hundreds
of planes flying so low...

''...our radar can't pick them up?''

Because I hope to prove to you
that we regard this as a serious mistake...
...and that we take responsibility for it,
and we are trying to correct it.

''Go on.''

You already know.... You have
the same detection devices we do.
You saw that we sent fighters up
to try to catch our bombers.
The fighters had orders
to shoot them down.

''American fighters to shoot down
American bombers?''

-Yes, sir.

-''And who gave that order?''

I did.

Four of those planes have already run out
of fuel and gone into the sea.

This isn't a question of belief,
Mr. Chairman.

Those men are dead already.

''We saw your planes fall into the sea.

''I believe they were making an effort
to do as you ordered.

''I wanted only to hear your explanation.

''And to know who gave the order.

''It is a difficult thing to order men

to their certain death, is it not?''

It is.

''Full retaliation at once. Strike back.

''Full power.

''Mr. President, my advisors are convinced this so-called 'accident' is a trick.

''They want to strike back at once.

''You realize, in their place

I would probably feel the same.''

But you don't.

''Soviet airspace has not yet been invaded.

''But if it is, we will be forced

to shoot down your bombers.

''And then we will come to a full alert and prepare all our missiles and planes.''

I understand that, and I hope you will be able to shoot down our bombers.

But I urge you not to take any steps that are irrevocable.

I give you my word, sir,

that this is a mistake.

But you must know,

if you start to launch missiles...

...we will have to do the same.

And then there will be very little left of this world.

''I understand.''

I've arranged a second conference line...

...between our Air Force headquarters

in Omaha and your similar officers...

...in the Soviet Union.

We will give you any information

you request...

...that will help you shoot down

these bombers.

''Mr. President, we are perfectly capable of defending our country.''

-Mr. Chairman, I would think--

-''We do not need your assistance.''

Sir, of course this is your choice,

but you must know...

...we have new masking techniques.

My experts tell me

that no matter what you do...

...some of our planes
will get through to the target.
'What is the target?'
Moscow.
'I will call you back when I see
how the fighters do.'
You can walk around if you'd like.
No, sir, I'm fine. Thank you.
-How far to their border?
-2 minutes 20, sir.
-Radio still jammed?
-Yes, sir.
All right, here we go.
Lose the horse, lose the buggy.
Attention, Group 6.
We can't penetrate in tight formation.
They'd get two for the price of one.
So, we've got to spread out.
Number 6 in the lead. Flynn?
-Yes, Colonel.
-You're the one with the decoys.
-Use them when we cross the border.
-Roger.
Good luck.
-Project the Soviet border.
-Yes, sir.
Dear God.
Well, Buck...
...we've invaded Russia.
We are now in a technical state of war.
One hour, 38 minutes to target.
Go after the decoys. Go!
-Go after the decoys.
-Wipe out the decoys.
-I just want to see their planes and ours.
-Yes, sir.
-They're still going after the decoys.
-Good.
Get it!
Knock it off!
This isn't some damned football game!
They found one of our planes.
The Soviets have a very slow missile...
...which compensates by having

a greater range than we thought they had.
The slowness made our missile calculate
that they must be decoys...
...so it ignored them
and went after the fighters.
That made the bomber vulnerable.
It's going to get worse
before it gets better.
Yes, Mr. Raskob,
it's going to get much worse.
There goes another one.
That's two bombers gone.
If those Soviet fighters shape up a bit,
maybe there's still hope.
Hope? We lose six bombers,
eighteen good men...
...and you think maybe there's still hope?
Nobody wants to lose those men.
What about the hundreds of millions
of people around the world...
...walking around in total ignorance
that they might be killed.
Think about them, Colonel Cascio,
and hope.
The Chairman is on the line, sir.
Yes, Mr. Chairman.
'Mr. President, there is very little time left.
How should we use this time?'
What luck have you had
in shooting down the bombers?
'Luck? No luck at all.
'We have shot down some of them,
but your decoys have been very successful.
'Many of my experts think
they are not decoys at all...
'...that they are real.
'There is pressure to retaliate.'
Why haven't you?
Why haven't you counter-attacked?
'I am gambling that you are sincere.'
Then you must also gamble that
we can help you shoot down these planes.
Please set up that second line.
We will give you any information

that you need.

'I will give orders to have it set up.'

Fine.

Mr. Chairman, we have been unable to contact our planes...

...because of a jamming of the radio frequency.

Are you and your military involved in jamming the radio signal?

They're arguing again.

'Don't give out the information.

It's too secret. It's a trick.

'The answer is yes, we have done research on your Fail Safe system.

'We wanted to disrupt your communications...

'...in case of a true attack.

'When your system failed, it was interpreted as an attack...

'...and we immediately began jamming your radios.'

Will you lift the jamming now?

If I can contact the group commander, maybe I can get him to return.

- 'Will he return on your command?'

- There's always a chance.

'I will give the order.'

Very good. Please stay on the line.

General Bogan, put me through to Group 6.

- Sir, we can't get through to Group 6.

- You can now.

What's the group commander's name?

- Grady, sir.

- One hour, 15 minutes to target.

Try Group 6 again.

Colonel Cascio, pick it up.

Turkey 6, this is Ultimate 2.

Can you hear me?

Turkey Six this is Ultimate 2.

Come in. Come in.

- Turkey 6, this is Ultimate 2.

- They've stopped jamming us.

Come in. Turkey 6, this is Ultimate 2.

We are not allowed--

Colonel Grady, this is the President...
...of the United States.
Your mission has been triggered
by a mechanical failure.
It's a mistake. I repeat, it is a mistake.
I am ordering you and your group
to return to base at once.
We are not allowed
to receive tactical alterations--
Colonel, your authorized go code
is CAP 81 1--
I can no longer receive tactical alterations.
Your primary target is Moscow.
What you're asking,
I've been ordered not to do!
Colonel Grady, this is an order
from the President--
Damn.
Bogan, can we get him back?
Sir, if he follows procedure...
...he'll make radio contact
when he's in sight of the target.
What kind of man is this Grady?
First class, sir. Flew in two wars,
won the DSC in both of them.
Is he married? Is he a family man?
His wife recently died of cancer.
One child, a boy, must be about 10 now.
Find his son.
I'll get right on it, sir.
Mr. Chairman, it would be wise of you...
...to remove yourself from Moscow
at this time.
That way we will be able to continue
negotiations, even if the worst happens...
...and some of our bombers get through.
'Those arrangements have been made.'
He sounds very different, very determined.
'Unfortunately, Moscow cannot
be evacuated, there is no time.
'And if Moscow is destroyed,
am I to come hat in hand to where?
'Geneva? To set up peace talks
on the ruins of Moscow?''

-There are still ways--
-''There are facts, Mr. President.
-''Your bombers will get through.''
-We will help you shoot down these--
'I will return to you
when I am safely out of Moscow.''
Mr. President.
One hour to target.
Well, that's three down.
Yes, and three more to go.
Excuse me, sir.
Every minute we wait works against us.
The President must send in a full strike.
There's nothing else that he can do.
Now is the time,
before the Russians are on full alert.
We don't go in for sneak attacks,
Mr. Grotzschele.
The Japanese did that at Pearl Harbor.
But the Japanese, sir,
were right to do that.
From their point of view,
we were their enemy.
As long as we existed,
we were a deadly threat.
Do you not believe that communism
is our mortal enemy?
The enemy of capitalism?
The only mistake the Japanese made,
they failed to finish us off.
They paid for that mistake with Hiroshima.
We're in the process of making
the same mistake, gentlemen.
You can't erase history,
but you can learn from it.
You've learned so well, Grotzschele,
there's no difference...
...between you and what you want to kill.
Destroy Russia? For what?
To preserve what?
Democracy, General!
We have here a God-given opportunity--
To kill?
Why are you in the military, if not to kill?

Yes, Mr. President.
Blackie, do you remember
the Old Testament?
A little.
The Sacrifice of Abraham.
Old what's-his-name used it in chapel,
maybe twice a month.
I remember, sir.
You better keep that story in mind
for the next few hours, Blackie.
I need your help.
I want you to go to Andrews Field.
Orders will be waiting for you there.
Are Betty and the kids at home?
She's in New York with them.
I may be asking
a great deal of you, Blackie.
I'll do whatever you say.
Good luck.
Yes, sir.
Contact our Ambassador in Moscow...
...and the Soviet Delegate
to the United Nations.
Patch them in to this line
so they can hear the Chairman.
Right away, sir.
And what about the second conference line
between Omaha and Soviet Headquarters?
Ready and waiting, sir.
General Bogan, you're hooked up
to the Soviet Command.
Will you test the line, please?
When it's working...
...patch me in,
and put me on the intercom...
...so that everyone can hear.
Yes, sir.
This is General Bogan,
Strategic Air Command, Omaha.
This is the translator for Marshal Nevsky,
Soviet Air Defense Command.
Marshal Nevsky sends his greetings.
The same to him.
Our reception is five by five.

How do you read us?
We read you five by five.
I have no instructions
on what we are to discuss.
Neither have we.
Only that we should set up
communications with you.
Just a minute, please.
Mr. President, we're all hooked up.
Thank you.
This is the President of the United States.
Whatever orders I give
to American personnel...
...are to be considered as direct orders
from the Commander in Chief.
They are to be obeyed fully
and without reservation.
Gentlemen, we have to do
everything we can...
...to prevent these planes
from reaching Moscow.
The Soviet Premier has behaved
as I hope I would under similar conditions.
He has delayed retaliation.
And I think he sincerely believes
that this is a mistake.
But we have to convince him
and his chief advisers...
...that this is, in fact, so.
Therefore, I am ordering
all American personnel...
...to cooperate fully with Soviet officers...
...in shooting down our invading bombers.
You are to give whatever information
they request.
Any hesitation of any kind...
...will cause
the most dreadful consequences.
I cannot emphasize
that too strongly, gentlemen.
I expect you all to behave as patriots.
And I wish you success.
General Bogan...
...a number of our fighter planes

have been destroyed by a missile...
...that seems to home
not on the infrared source...
...but the radar transmitter.
Is that possible?
Colonel Cascio will answer your question.
Answer the question, Colonel.
That is a direct order.
An order, Colonel.
Just a minute. Major Handel.
General Bogan.
Sergeant Collins!
Sir!
-You're the backup man to Cascio?
-Yes, sir.
Get over here!
-General Bogan, we must--
-Sergeant Collins...
...do the missiles on our bombers
have both an infrared...
...and radar-seeking capacity?
-Yes, sir.
-Louder. That is a direct order.
Yes, sir.
The Soviets are listening!
I want this loud, and I want it clear.
It has both capacities, sir.
Can the radar-seeking mechanism
be overloaded...
...by increasing the strength of the signal?
Tell them!
Yes, sir, it can be overloaded by increasing
the transmission power output...
...and sliding through radar frequencies
as fast as possible.
The firing mechanism reads
higher amperage as proximity...
...to the target and detonates the warhead.
Thank you, General Bogan.
We will get back to you.
Thank you, Sergeant. That's all.
What the hell was that all about?
We've told them how to destroy
all our missiles...

...and all our planes.
-They're getting close.
-Tell me something I don't know.
It's too hairy up here.
Send out the code.
We're going below the radar.
Roger.
Are they going down? I didn't see it.
They're trying to avoid the fighters,
by going in under their radar.
-Will that work?
-God only knows.
Forty-five minutes to target.
I'm sorry, General. I just couldn't do it.
Everything just went, I don't know, blank.
I'm okay now.
Forget it, Colonel,
it could happen to anyone.
I do think there's Soviet entrapment.
We know they've been fooling around
with our Fail Safe signal.
I think they wanted this to happen.
We have to tell the President it's a trap.
They're using this time
to get their missiles ready...
...and fly their bombers into position.
We have no evidence
they're moving bombers.
They may be flying them in the grass.
They may have missiles up in orbit
that are undetectable.
I am not reporting
what I don't know for sure.
We should recommend
a full-strength strike immediately.
That's not our decision.
It's the Pentagon's or the President's.
Those people don't know the situation
the way we know it.
An enemy trying every trick in the book....
They're in the political game,
we know what to do.
If we act now,
we have enough bombers in the--

That's enough.
Colonel, you're talking mutiny.
Keep it up and I'll have you removed
from the War Room.
The Russians are back on the line.
Yes, Marshal Nevsky.
Please give us the longitude and latitude
of your two planes left in the air?
Sergeant Collins.
I can do that,
but we can't give you their altitude.
We're getting distorted signals.
Will you please give us the position
of the two planes?
We can fly fighters at different altitudes.
I will.
Sergeant Collins, give the Russians
the longitude and latitude of our bombers.
Yes, sir.
7880 north.
5850 east.
On a heading of 205 degrees.
The Ambassador and the Soviet delegate
are on and have been briefed.
Thank you.
Jay, where are you?
On the top floor of the embassy
in Moscow, Mr. President.
Where are you, Mr. Lentov?
In the UN building in New York.
Whatever happens...
...both of you stay exactly where you are
until I release you or the Chairman does.
Is that clear?
-Yes.
-Yes.
Chairman's on.
'I suppose there is a reason
for these other people to be with us.'
There is, sir.
'Then let us hear your reason.'
Not tough. Like he's ready.
'In a few minutes,
the bombs may be falling.

'I have brought our forces to full readiness.

'Without satisfaction,

I must release those forces.

'So, what do you propose, Mr. President?

'My experts tell me that one or two
of the bombers will likely get to Moscow.

'Have you made a decision?'

Yes, I have.

It is my decision.

I take full responsibility for it.

Mr. Swenson, are you on the line?

Yes, Mr. President.

-General Bogan?

-Here, sir.

This is what will happen,
if even one of the bombers gets through.

It will drop two 20-megaton bombs
on Moscow.

Our Ambassador will probably hear
the sound of engines...

...seconds before the bombs drop.

He'll certainly be aware
of the defensive missiles going off.

A few moments later,
the bombs will explode.

I'm told that what we will hear...

...will be a high, shrill sound.

That will be the Ambassador's telephone
melting from the heat of the fireball.

When we hear that sound,
the Ambassador will be dead.

Jay, do you understand
you are to stay exactly where you are?

I understand.

'Is this your plan?

'To sacrifice one American
for five million Russians?'

-No! Listen to me.

-''Do you really think that--''

Listen.

I have ordered one of our bombers...

...into the air from Washington.

In a few minutes,
it will be circling New York City.

It's carrying two 20-megaton bombs.
The moment I know Moscow has been hit...
...I will order those bombs released.
Ground zero will be
the Empire State Building.
When we hear the shriek
of Mr. Lentov's telephone melting...
...we will know that he is gone...
...and with him, New York.
Holy Mother of God.
How can he do that?
What else can he do?
Five million people.
This, Mr. Knapp,
is where we've always been headed.
There is no other way, Mr. Chairman.
Unless you feel...
...that the offer itself is enough...
...showing good intentions.
'Would you think it was enough...
'...if Russian bombers were flying
against New York?
'Could you accept
only my good intentions?''
No.
'I would like to say
that your action is unnecessary.
'Unfortunately, I cannot.'
Well, let's hope that I won't have to do it.
Colonel Grady, we're at 900 feet.
Pierce?
What do you see out the window?
Lights. Village lights, I guess.
Movement on the roads?
Yeah. Cars, a few trucks.
But no blackout?
Everything looks normal.
You'd think they'd be in bomb shelters.
How far from Moscow are we?
Thirty-eight minutes to target, sir.
-How many planes left?
-Us and Number 6. They got the rest.
Flynn?
Still here, Grady.

What's your condition?
Slight wing damage from shrapnel...
...but all it's done is reduce our speed,
down to 1,350 an hour. Drag even.
Still got any of your decoys?
A few.
We have the bombs, you don't.
I'll need you to take those fighters
off my tail.
Whatever you say.
Thanks, Billy.
No sweat.
You take care, now.
You, too.
General Bogan?
Yes, Marshal Nevsky.
Why has one of your planes
appeared again?
That's Number 6, the decoy plane.
It's trying to draw your fighters away
from the plane that's carrying the bombs.
I see.
It's not armed.
You don't have to worry about it.
Thank you.
We shall try for a kill in any case.
You pull your fighters away,
the other bomber will slip by.
You'll never catch it.
It has no bombs aboard.
It's of no danger to you!
You'll let the other bomber through!
Jesus! Jesus!
Excuse me.
Excuse me, one moment.
There has been....
Marshal Nevsky has collapsed.
It appears....
I don't know....
General Koniev....
General Koniev is now in command.
General Bogan.
Nevsky sent his fighters
after a plane that had no bombs.

That means the other bomber
will almost certainly get through.
He can't recall them?
No time. Our bombers are very fast.
Nevsky realized it too late.
It was too much for him.
General Bogan, this is General Koniev.
Do you have the remaining plane
on your screen?
No, we do not.
We are unable to pick it up on radar
and it's flying so fast...
...that our anti-aircraft is almost useless.
I must assume your plane will get through.
Yes.
We have only one chance left.
I intend to concentrate
all our remaining rockets...
...in the estimated path of your plane
and fire them simultaneously.
Our hope, is to set up
an impenetrable thermonuclear ceiling.
It has a chance.
Thirty minutes to target.
You know, General, we almost met once.
In a most unlikely place.
Yes?
In Persia, during the war.
Korammshar on the Gulf.
You were delivering planes to us
and I was there to accept them.
But our paths never crossed.
I just remember the heat.
Yes. It was unbearable.
Like being in a steam room.
And your pilots, I remember them...
...the way they took off in those planes.
They'd lift up their wheels
before they were off the runway.
Never saw anything like it.
They were in a hurry to get the Germans.
General, what is your location? Moscow?
No, I was ordered to leave.
Your family....

It's a hard day, General.
Yes, a hard day.
Goodbye, comrade.
Goodbye, my friend.
They're going to fire off all their rockets
at once.
Colonel Grady, sir?
Yes?
The indicator shows a number
of rocket engines...
...ignited ahead of us.
They should show on the radar screen
in a moment.
What do we know of them?
They home in on heat producing engines,
like an airplane.
They can't be aiming at us, we're too low.
They'd blow themselves up.
What are they doing?
What else do we know?
If they're like ours,
they don't work at low altitudes, only high.
They're going to explode them on top of us
and hope to knock us down with the blast.
They can do it, too.
Would those rockets go after missiles?
Don't see why not.
A missile produces heat.
-How many air-to-air missiles are left?
-Two, sir.
All right.
The second you see their rockets...
...you fire those missiles
for maximum elevation straight up.
Straight up?
Straight up. With any luck,
the rockets will home in on our missiles.
Give them just enough extra boost
so they stay 2,500 ft above the rockets.
Yes, sir. We have to report in, Colonel.
No time for that.
They're expecting it, sir. It's SOP.
We're in range. We have to report in.
Keep an eye on that scope.

Ultimate 2, this is Turkey 6.
Can you read me?
Grady, this is the President.
Keep receiving.
Whatever you hear, keep receiving.
Dad?
Dad, it's me, Tommy.
I'm okay and there isn't any war.
It's a big mistake. It's a mistake.
Is that really your son?
-I don't--
-No, that's not your son, Colonel.
They're just imitating his voice.
That's not your son.
I'm sure, Dad. Do you hear me?
I'm sure. Say it, Dad.
You know what comes next, say it.
'Are you positive?'
'Only fools are positive. ' See?
Nobody else knows that.
Grady, this is not a trick.
There is no war.
I want to see you again, Dad.
Listen to him. Nobody can fake this.
-I can't.
-Here come the nukes.
For the sake of your son!
Fire one.
Fire two.
-Keep them at 2,500 feet above the rockets.
-There is no war.
-18,000 feet.
-Higher.
-20,000.
-Higher, go after them.
30,000. 40,000.
Dad!
-Turn it off!
-60,000 feet.
-I love you. Come home.
-We can't trust it.
80,000.
90,000.
We're too low.

We'll be slammed into the ground.
120,000, we're leveling.
-I love you, Tommy. You're my boy.
-130,000. 135,000.
-Remember that, I love you so much.
-Sir, turn it off.
Hang on!
We're going up.
The nukes are catching up.
Stand by for a ram.
We're going to catch some of it!
Hang on!
We'll make it now.
How far to Moscow?
Seventeen minutes, sir.
There's only one decision left to make
and then our job is done.
We decide from what height
to drop the bombs.
We've already taken on enough radiation
from the blast...
...at best we'd last a couple of days.
I intend to take us in at 900 feet...
...and when we are over the target,
climb to 5,000 feet.
Bombs are set to go off at 5,000 feet.
We'll go with the bombs.
What the hell...
...there's nothing to go home to anyway.
May God forgive us.
Get me an outside line to New York City.
Fifteen minutes to target.
Mom? Mom, listen to me.
We don't have much time.
I want you and Dad....
Mom, listen.
What do you mean? Where is he?
I forgot about the Red Sox.
Is Francis there?
So, you're alone.
Mom, wait.
I will.
Just stay on the phone with me.
Just stay with me.

Are there any papers
or documents in New York...
...that are absolutely essential
to running the United States?
General Stark?
No, sir.
Important documents,
but none absolutely essential.
Will there be any time to warn people?
With a little time
a lot of lives could be saved.
On this short notice...
...all you'd produce is panic.
What about this?
Maybe he doesn't know.
The First Lady is in New York.
He knows.
Dear God.
Gentlemen, we are wasting time.
I've made some rough calculations...
...based on the effect
of two 20-megaton bombs...
...dropped on New York City
in the middle of a normal work day.
I estimate the immediate dead
at about three million.
I include in that figure those buried
beneath buildings.
It doesn't make any difference
if they reached a shelter or not.
They would die just the same.
Add another million or two who'll die
within about five weeks.
Even if there are no irreplaceable
government documents in any buildings...
...many of our corporations
keep their financial records in New York.
Fortune has smiled on us there.
Paper is a wonderful insulator,
it is possible even probable...
...that these records will have survived.
Our first priority would be excavation.
Not of the dead.
But of these records.

Our economy depends upon it.
Our economy depends on it.
Are you married, Buck?
No, sir. Not yet.
We've gone steady for a while,
but we haven't set a date or anything.
Is she in the government?
State Department.
She's a translator like me.
Spanish, French and Italian.
We met in translator school.
When she gets mad
she can curse in four languages.
You did good today, Buck.
You didn't freeze up.
A lot of other men would.
You're the one who didn't, sir.
If you're going to get married...
...you ought to do it soon.
Yes.
Use the time.
It goes fast.
The Chairman is on the line.
Mr. Chairman.
'Mr. President. I have activated...
'...only those parts of our defense...
'...that still have a chance
of shooting down your bomber.
'Our long-range missiles have already
begun to stand down from the alert.
'But we think we do not
have much of a chance.'
I agree.
'And yet who can be blamed?
Can you blame a machine?'
Men built those machines.
'Men are not perfect, Mr. President.'
Men are responsible...
...for what they do.
Men are responsible for what they make.
We built those machines,
your country and mine...
...we put them in place.
Two great cities will be destroyed.

Millions of innocent people will die
because of us.

What do we tell them?

'Accidents will happen?'

I can't accept that!

What do we do, Mr. Chairman.

What do we say to the dead?

'We must say this will not happen again.

But do you think it's possible?'

Mr. President--

Yes, Jay.

I can hear the sounds of explosions
coming from the northeast.

The sky is very bright,
like a long row of sky rockets.

It's all lit up.

Very--

Blackie.

Yes, Mr. President.

Moscow has been destroyed, Blackie.

Release your bombs according to plan.

I understand.

You've all been briefed on this mission,
so there's nothing more to say.

I have only one last order.

No one else is to have anything to do
with the release of the bombs.

I repeat.

I will fly the plane and launch the bombs.

The ultimate act will be mine.

Is that clear?

On course, sir. Approaching the target.

We'll count down from 10.

Give me the signal.

On a heading of 56 degrees south.

Winds northwest at 8 miles an hour.

Altitude:

Ground Zero set at 1,000 feet.

Lob point is in 10.

Nine.

Eight.

Seven.

Six.

Five.

Four.

Three.

Two.

One.

Mark.

Richard Dreyfuss as the President.

Noah Wyle as Buck.

Brian Dennehy as General Bogan.

Sam Elliot as Congressman Raskob.

James Cromwell as Gordon Knapp.

John Diehl as Colonel Cascio.

Hank Azaria as Professor Groteschele.

Norman Lloyd as Secretary Swenson.

William Smitrovich as General Stark.

Don Cheadle as Lieutenant Pierce.

George Clooney as Colonel Jack Grady.

Harvey Keitel as General Black.

SOFTTITLER: