

reykjavik

three days in october 1986

a play by jonathan myerson

cast

RONALD REAGAN, 75, US President

GEORGE SHULTZ, 66, US Secretary of State

PAUL NITZE, 79, Special Advisor on Arms Control

ROZ RIDGWAY, 51, Special Assistant for Negotiations

ED ROWNY, 69, Special Advisor on Arms Control

ADMIRAL JOHN POINDEXTER, 50, National Security Advisor

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, 55, Soviet General Secretary

EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE, 58, Soviet Foreign Minister

MARSHAL SERGEI AKHROMEYEV, 63, Soviet Chief of General Staff

ALEXEI ARBATOV, 54, Ambassador for Arms Negotiations

and

SECRET SERVICEMEN

JOURNALISTS

SCENE 1.VOICE.

SHULTZ TALKS WITH THE QUIET AUTHORITY OF AN ACADEMIC. HE NEVER RAISES HIS VOICE. HE IS A BUDDHA.

SHULTZ (V/O) **The problem is Russia. An enormous country with more military hardware than it needs, quite willing to invade its neighbours or just plain take them over. And there in the Kremlin, they've got a leader we can't read. He's young – comparatively, he's not dead or dying, which makes a change - but is he running the place or is it the people round him? Is he changing things, or is he a new Stalin? And sometimes, you know, you think maybe they don't mind the isolation, they don't mind the world against them, maybe they actually prefer it.**

Then there are the recent tensions: accusations of treaty violations, tit-for-tat sanctions, the shooting down of a passenger aircraft...

It's October 1986.

FX: RADIO 1 CHART SHOW (Bruno Brookes). "And hello to you if you've just joined us in FM Stereo on National Radio 1. From now until midnight, it's all in fantastic stereo...."

SHULTZ (V/O) **Soviet Russia has enough missiles to destroy every European city a hundred times over.**

We try dialogue. We plan summits in Washington and Moscow. But first, a meeting. The two leaders in a quick grip and grin, for world consumption. Somewhere neutral. Somewhere half-way between us.

Turns out that's Reykjavik.

SLAM INTO: TITLES

FROM THIS POINT ON, ALL SCENE TITLES SHOULD BE VOICED AS CAPTIONS...

SCENE 2. AMERICAN EMBASSY: AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE. FRIDAY.
12.30pm

SHULTZ HAS GATHERED HIS TEAM: NITZE, RIDGWAY, ROWNY AND SEVERAL OTHERS. MAYBE FIFTEEN PEOPLE IN THE ROOM.

SHULTZ Let me make this clear. I am demanding a total press black-out. Breach that, expect to be get sent home. Anyone –CIA, Defense, /State, Department of Agriculture, Department of Goddamn Raccoon Trapping. I don't care. No more leaks.

VOICE ***/(OVER THIS) George Shultz, US Secretary of State since 1982.***

ROWNY Do we get to send Gorby home, if he suddenly speaks?

SHULTZ He won't.

NITZE (PAPERS) We've got the breakdown on their delegation.

ROWNY Mostly KGB, right?

NITZE That's the thing. Barely any. They're all media guys. Some of these names we've never logged before.

ROWNY But they're KGB Media guys?/

RIDGWAY Sit down, Ed, have a bagel.

ROWNY Are they fresh?

RIDGWAY Nothing's fresh here. Everything's shipped in.

VOICE ***(OVER THIS) General Edward Rowny: West Point, Italy, Korea, Vietnam, and now the President's Special Advisor on Arms Control.***

NITZE As far as we can tell, they're straight-up Foreign Ministry, no spies.

RIDGWAY Shevardnadze's changed the place.

SHULTZ (CARRYING ON) A quick photo op at the front door and that's it. They shout questions, I've asked the President not to reply.

RIDGWAY Oh yeah? He's the world champion grip and grinner.

SHULTZ I've asked. We have to low-ball the expectations.

NITZE It won't stop the press wanting results.

RIDGWAY They've already got their joke. (PULLING IT OUT OF HER CASE) Here, they presented me.

SHULTZ What is that? A can of fish?

RIDGWAY (READING THE TIN'S LABEL) "Ingredients: the substance of the Reagan-Gorbachev talks." / And on the other side it says – maybe you can see that – “Iceland Waters Blackout”. And on the top here, it says -

VOICE ***(OVER THIS) Roz Ridgway, Special Assistant for Negotiations, former US Ambassador to East Germany.***

RIDGWAY (CONTINUING) "Instructions: in the event of a total news blackout, open can."

RIDGWAY OPENS THE RING-PULL CAN WITH A SATISFYING WHOOSH-POP

SHULTZ It's empty, right?

RIDGWAY They're the Press Corps, not the Marx Brothers.

NITZE You're sure?

SHULTZ We're here to discuss what the Russians are going to do. The Press Corps can stick their –

THE (PROBABLE) EXPLETIVE IS ARRESTED BY THE ENTRANCE OF REAGAN. EVERYONE STANDS, SAYING:

ALL Mr President.

REAGAN Sit down, please, everyone. Please, carry on.

SHULTZ Sir. We were just moving onto our predictions of the Russian proposals.

REAGAN Please. /Carry on. (HE SITS) Everyone, good to see you all here.

ALL RESUME THEIR SEATS

VOICE ***(OVER THIS) Ronald Reagan, first elected President of the United States in 1980.***

SHULTZ We expect Gorbachev to use this to protect himself politically, to take personal credit for –

REAGAN Cold, isn't it? This is not a warm country.

ROWNY Indeed, sir.

REAGAN And dark, did you see what time the sun went down yesterday? Practically before it had got up.

NITZE It's a formative part of the national character.

REAGAN Do we get to meet any of them?

RIDGWAY You have President Finnbogadottir this evening, sir. Seven o'clock.

REAGAN Tell me about him.

RIDGWAY She was first elected in 1980 and in spite of –

SHULTZ (NOT WANTING TO WASTE TIME ON THIS) We've done you cue cards, sir. (PROMPTING) Alan.

REAGAN Sorry, George, please continue.

SHULTZ Right. What are we not expecting? We can't see him making any concessions on the intercontinental ballistic –

REAGAN You get quite a view up here. (STANDING) Is that them out there? They really did come by boat?

A MOMENT AS SHULTZ REALISES THIS MEETING ISN'T GOING TO GO AS HE PLANNED, THEN HE APPROACHES THE WINDOWS:

SHULTZ I think they flew in, sir. And then transferred to...

REAGAN I can never sleep on boats. It's the noise. It never stops.

RIDGWAY It's a cruise liner, sir, it'll be well padded. The 'Georg Ots'.

ROWNY Comrade Ots built labour camps or something?

REAGAN He's a singer, Ed, he's the Soviet Sinatra.

ROWNY (HELPFUL LAUGHTER) That's very good, sir. (THEN:) Really?

REAGAN Sold a lot of records. Big in Estonia.

SHULTZ (TRYING TO STAY ON TRACK) OK, everyone, let's look at the signals we've been picking up. There are signs Gorbachev's wavering on the issue of –

REAGAN He's weak, that why.

SHULTZ Sir?

REAGAN Since Chernobyl. Chernobyl shot him right through the foot.

ROWNY It's got everyone spooked.

REAGAN Chernobyl, Ed, you know what that means in Russian?

ROWNY Sir...?

REAGAN There was this article in 'Reader's Digest'. Memorised it, the Good Book: "The third angel sounded, and a great star fell from heaven on the rivers and on the springs of waters. The name of the star is called Wedgwood; and the waters became wedgwood, and many men died from the waters, because they were made bitter." Revelations. Chapter Eight. This is about the end of the world, Ed.

ROWNY (WTF?) I recall.

REAGAN And Chernobyl, everyone, listen up, this is the kicker, is the Russian for 'Wedgwood'.

RIDGWAY Like, the British china?

REAGAN (CONTINUING) That's a sign, right? Apocalypse is coming and it's our job to see it off at the pass. It's foretold in the Holy Book. Normally I wouldn't – but this is quite a coincidence. You've got to sit up when you hear something like that.

A MOMENT AS EVERYONE CONSIDERS HOW TO FOLLOW THIS.
WHO CAN THINK OF SOMETHING TO SAY?
THEN, NOT LOUD:

NITZE Wormwood, sir.

REAGAN Paul?

NITZE In Revelations, the star is called Wormwood.

REAGAN (WHOLLY UNAWARE HE IS BEING CORRECTED) That's right. Wormwood – the star – the Third Trumpet. Sorry, George, I interrupted.

SHULTZ Yes, thank you, Mister President. In fact, that is a very apposite reminder. We intend to press them hard on

humanitarian rights, especially Jewish emigration to Israel.
Roz will be leading on that.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. VOICE.

SHEVARDNADZE IS RELAXED AND GENIAL.

SHEV’NADZE (V/O) Some people said we were planning to blow up the world. Some said we were keeping the peace. Some days I didn’t know myself. I was still working it out. I’d been there a year, we were still squeezing Gromyko’s guys out of the building. I spoke no foreign languages, and I’d visited just nine countries in my life.

All right, I was sure of this – Russia had become a third-rate country, all so we could have more missiles than the other guys.

SCENE 4. REYKJAVIK HARBOUR. FRIDAY 3pm.

THE SOVIET TEAM IS ASSEMBLED IN THE STATE ROOM OF THE GEORGETS. THE BOAT IS ROCKING SLIGHTLY – WELL, ENOUGH TO HEAR THE SLAPPING OF WAVES AND THE BOAT BANGING AGAINST THE PIER

GORBACHEV But are we planning to go to war? The Soviet Union isn't planning to go to war. Is it? Is this all planned and no-one's told the General Secretary?/

ARBATOV But we have to be prepared, Mikhail Sergeyeovich.

GORBACHEV I don't want to attack anyone, why do we need all these missiles?

VOICE /*(OVER THIS:) Mikhail Sergeyeovich Gorbachev, elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR eighteen months ago.*

THE BOAT IS HIT BY A WAVE.

SHEVARDNADZE (SEASICK) God, I hate this boat.

AKHROMEYEV It was your idea.

SHEVARDNADZE KGB gave me no choice. Said they couldn't guarantee to sweep an entire hotel in the time available.

ARBATOV /See? The Americans haven't come here to make peace. Just to bug us. Get hold of our plans...

VOICE *(OVER THIS) Eduard Shevardnadze, appointed Soviet Foreign Minister just four months later.*

ARBATOV (CONTINUING) This is the man who said "My fellow Americans, today I've signed legislation that will outlaw Russia forever. We start bombing in five minutes – "

SHEVARDNADZE Alexei, do you know what a joke is?

ARBATOV You were laughing?

SHEVARDNADZE Deploying the SS-20 was our biggest mistake. We forced them to fill Europe with missiles.

AKHROMEYEV Bigger than invading Afghanistan?

SHEVARDNADZE Do I have to get them arranged in order?

GORBACHEV Marshal, what do the General Staff want us to do?

AKHROMEYEV We have numerical superiority in Europe. We must maintain that if we wish to protect the Union.

GORBACHEV The pressure on our economy will be inconceivable.

ARBATOV If America can afford it...

SHEVARDNADZE They're spending about seven percent, we think, of their GDP on the military. And struggling.

ARBATOV Good!

SHEVARDNADZE We are running nearer twenty percent.

A MOMENT. THEN:

ARBATOV The Russian people will pull together. We have done it many times –

SHEVARDNADZE But we will panic. We'll be sitting there in the Kremlin and telling ourselves we must win this race and we just won't know how.

A MOMENT. THEN:

GORBACHEV So I have given a lot of thought to this proposal drafted by the Ministry. And this is what I think.

DURING THIS HE TEARS UP THE PIECES OF PAPER.

GORBACHEV It's bullshit. It's crap.

HE LETS THIS SINK IN

GORBACHEV I intend to propose the liquidation of all nuclear weapons in Europe.

AND THEN:

We circled round this idea at Geneva. Before. Now is the time.

AKHROMEYEV In stages, yes? We reduce the forces in agreed stages?

SHEVARDNADZE Like the Vienna negotiations? Fourteen years they talked. They achieved a one percent reduction in Strategic Arms.

ARBATOV But -

SHEVARDNADZE Less than one percent, by the time the cuts were implemented.

GORBACHEV The political approach must dominate, not the bean counters.

ARBATOV What if they have no desire to slow down? Reagan is under colossal pressure from his right.

GORBACHEV In Geneva, we talked. Just the two of us. He is not a man for detail. Not at all.

SHEVARDNADZE And if Reagan refuses, we still win. Sunday afternoon, you march into that final press conference, Mikhail Sergeyevich, and tell the world: we offered peace and the Americans wouldn't even meet us half way.

AKHROMEYEV We publish our offer in full. Everyone will see.

GORBACHEV (LIKING IT) Good. Yes. But he must also know we mean it.

SHEVARDNADZE (IMPROVISING WHAT THEY WILL SAY AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE:) "We made concessions because it was time. They were not made out of weakness but out of strength and humanity. The rush to destruction must end and we have offered the Americans a way out. We are so sad that they have - "

GORBACHEV Yes, all right. Yes.

ARBATOV (DOGGED CERTAINTY) Write it up. You'll need it.

MUSIC

SCENE 5. PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE: SATURDAY 10.15am.

IN THE LIMO, MAKING STATELY PROGRESS. IT IS RAINING FIERCELY.

SHULTZ **(V/O) Saturday morning. By motorcade to the Hofdi House. Reykjavik was everything they had told us it would be: lava, cold and grey, like a frozen river alongside the freeway. As grim as a Soviet smile, somebody at the back said – but I liked it. And Jesus, after those European chateaux – Geneva, Vienna, Paris – I could die happy never seeing another golden cherub.**

REAGAN Is that it? Looks kind of homely.

SHULTZ It belonged to the British Ambassador here, until he said it was haunted.

REAGAN You could see a house like that on the prairies. Clapboard.

SHULTZ He said the pictures kept falling off the walls.

REAGAN Not so surprising, in this wind.

POINDEXTER If I might press on, sir, the CIA briefing?

REAGAN Sure, John, /sure.

POINDEXTER Langley's getting hung up on the Soviet Military again. He sent me through these notes. This is your copy, sir. Double spaced.

REAGAN Uh-huh.

VOICE ***(OVER THIS) Admiral John Poindexter, appointed the President's National Security Advisor ten months ago.***

POINDEXTER The CIA reckon the military top guys are totally opposed to Gorbachev.

REAGAN Why have they got it in for Mikhail?

POINDEXTER They think he's too ready to make agreements. With you.

REAGAN Not so different with my blow-hards.

POINDEXTER CIA reckon – and I'm just the messenger here, sir – they've been thinking about assassinating Mister Gorbachev.

REAGAN That'd be too much. Plain wrong.

POINDEXTER Sir.

REAGAN Anything more from those folks in the Middle East?

POINDEXTER (QUIETER) That wouldn't be part of the CIA remit, sir. It's an NSA operation.

REAGAN I realise that John. I'm asking you. You're my point man here.

SHULTZ Do you have to do this here? You know how I feel about this.

REAGAN Alright, George. Alright.

MEANWHILE THE CAR HAS COME A HALT AND THE DOOR IS NOW OPENED FROM THE OUTSIDE, LETTING IN THE SHOUTED COORDINATION OF THE SECURITY DETAIL (TEXT TO FOLLOW)

S/SERVICEMAN (OUTSIDE) This way, sir.

REAGAN (AS HE LEANS FORWARD) Not sure I'm much the wiser, George – this CIA briefing.

SHULTZ That's why we have the CIA, sir. To keep us all guessing.

REAGAN STEPS OUT OF THE CAR, INTO THE HOWLING WIND AND RAIN:

REAGAN (TO SECRET SERVICEMAN) Can you hold that umbrella still?

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. OUTSIDE THE HOFDI HOUSE. 10.30am.

THE RUSSIAN MOTORCADE IS PULLING UP OUTSIDE THE HOUSE.
GORBACHEV IS STEPPING OUT OF HIS ZIL, INTO BLUSTERY WIND AND
HEAVY RAIN.

SHEVARDNADZE Coat on or off?

GORBACHEV Have you observed the weather?

SHEVARDNADZE You told us to think image. He's always in just a suit.

GORBACHEV He needs to make the effort.

THEY ARE NOW OUT AND WALKING UP THE STEPS.
MUCH CHATTER OF SECRET SERVICEMEN, FROM BOTH SIDES

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND REAGAN EMERGES

REAGAN Mikhail Sergeyevich, welcome.

SHEVARDNADZE (IN GORBACHEV'S EAR) See?

GORBACHEV Good to see you again, Mister President.

REAGAN Shall we do some quick photos?

GORBACHEV Of course.

CAMERAS ARE REELING AND FLASHING

REAGAN Thank you. Thank you.

AND JOURNALISTS ARE NOW SHOUTING A MILLION QUESTIONS FROM
BEHIND THE ROPE. OUT OF WHICH EMERGES:

JOURNO What's your first priority, sir?

REAGAN Peace.

SHULTZ Mister President. (= SHUT UP)

JOURNO Are you going to give away the store, Mister President?

REAGAN I don't own the store.

SHULTZ (STOP!) I think we can probably go in now.

AND HE GUIDES GORBACHEV INTO THE HOUSE.
REAGAN FOLLOWS.

POINDEXTER You're meeting in here, Mister General Secretary. The staffs
have rooms upstairs.

GORBACHEV Thank you.

REAGAN And how is Raisa Maximovna?

GORBACHEV Doing all the sights - you should see the outfits she brought.
At least five changes a day!

REAGAN She's here?

GORBACHEV We squeezed her on the back of the plane.

REAGAN (DISAPPOINTED) I didn't think Nancy should – she's not
here. That's a damn shame.

GORBACHEV She loves the boat. She says it's 'romantic'.

AND THEY GO INTO THE ROOM AND THE DOOR IS CLOSED.
A MOMENT. THEN

SHULTZ Right. It's started.

SHEVARDNADZE It has.

THEN THE MEN AND ONE WOMAN START TO MAKE THEIR NOISY WAY UP
THE WOODEN STAIRS
OVER WHICH:

SCENE 7.

SHULTZ (V/O) Upstairs each delegation had two small rooms and a bathroom. And a large common room in between. Where they put the coffee and rolls. And the fish.

SHEV’NADZE (V/O) Our rooms on the right as you went up. Americans on the left. Did that mean anything?

SHULTZ (V/O) They were scheduled for a brief one-on-one before we joined them.

SHEV’NADZE (V/O) Just the two interpreters and two note-takers. It was only a small room off the hall, brown walls and a view of the grey.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8. HOFDI HOUSE: MEETING ROOM. SATURDAY. 10.45am

FADE INTO CONVERSATION ALREADY UNDERWAY
REAGAN IS RELAXED; GORBACHEV IS EAGER, URGENT

GORBACHEV ...so in addition to all this, the Soviet Union is committed to effective and reliable control, including on-site inspections.

REAGAN 'Doveryai no proveryai.' (HE DOES NOT NECESSARILY PRONOUNCE THIS WELL)

GORBACHEV I'm sorry?

REAGAN Let me try it again. 'Doveryai no proveryai.'

SHEVARDNADZE (EXPLAINING TO GORBACHEV) 'Trust but verify'.

GORBACHEV I see, yes, I remember, from Geneva.

REAGAN Effective verification is essential. It's one of your proverbs.

GORBACHEV What we have outlined here - these are very serious proposals and in case of any misunderstanding, we would now like to present you with an English translation. Do you have it, Eduard?

SHEVARDNADZE PASSES THE PAPERS

SHEVARDNADZE We wouldn't want there to be any ambiguity.

GORBACHEV We are proposing the complete elimination of all missiles in Europe.

A MOMENT

And now we invite you to respond.

SHULTZ This is... very encouraging.

REAGAN We would be delighted to see a non-nuclear Europe. But this is impossible without a parallel reduction of missiles in Asia.

- SHEVARDNADZE But the zero option for Intermediate Forces in Europe - it was your proposal!
- SHULTZ How many times did your people walk out of negotiations, refusing to consider it? 1981, 1982 –
- GORBACHEV It's true, there have been some hiccups since we last met. Even a black eye or two.
- REAGAN Who'd've thought there were so many spies.
- GORBACHEV But Mr President, you and I cannot allow this meeting to fail. It would be a crushing blow. A scandal. People would ask, what kind of politicians are they? They meet for hours, all those words, meetings and they still cannot agree on anything.
- REAGAN We must also touch on the issue of human rights.
- SHEVARDNADZE At Geneva we agreed to postpone –
- REAGAN We have no desire to intervene in your domestic affairs. But you have to understand the pressure I am under from public opinion in the US. We're a nation of immigrants. One in eight Americans has some relation with your country. Just yesterday I received a letter from a Senator, his mother is Russian. He's worried, worried sick. And I understand the force of a national tie. I'm an Irishman, I feel the same about Ireland.
- GORBACHEV But this is – this is all secondary to the nuclear question – yes?
- REAGAN Well, yes, that may well – you know, here we are, sitting together in a room, nothing but wind and rain out there, and we can settle whether there's going to be peace or war in this world. That is quite something, isn't it?
- GORBACHEV We need a new impetus. The zero option is your child. Why abandon it?
- SHULTZ (STALLING) We would have to consult London and Paris...

SHEVARDNADZE Please, please, examine our proposals fully, carefully. We are no longer asking you to include the British and French missiles.

SHULTZ (STILL REELING FROM WHAT THEY HAVE PUT ON THE TABLE) They're totally out of the equation?

GORBACHEV We aren't going to stick on this any more. They can do what they want.

SHULTZ That's... (IMPRESSED) Yes. (DIPLOMATIC FOR 'WOW':) Interesting.

GORBACHEV You will examine our proposals in full?

SHULTZ Maybe...we need to consider this...break for lunch?

CUT TO:

MUSIC

SCENE 9. MOTORCADE. SATURDAY 12.40pm

BACK INSIDE THE ZIL – BIG MEN IN BIG COATS IN THE CRAMPED INTERIOR OF A CAR. THEY ARE PUMPED BUT ALSO ANGRY, FRUSTRATED.

FX: DOOR SHUTS. THE ZIL ACCELERATES AWAY.

SHEVARDNADZE Nothing! They came here with bugger all!

GORBACHEV They want to pick the fruit from our basket.

AKHROMEYEV Did they suggest nothing?

SHEVARDNADZE We presented them with three pages of proposals. In English. They gave us -

GORBACHEV Even what they had offered in '83. Now it's not good enough.

SHEVARDNADZE They will claim we have misled them.

AKHROMEYEV They clearly didn't expect me to be there.

GORBACHEV Is there no-one from their military? From the General Staff?

AKHROMEYEV No-one. All politicals.

GORBACHEV They are completely unprepared.

SHEVARDNADZE We've caught them with their pants down. They believe their own propaganda. And they think you will come to the Washington Summit at any price.

GORBACHEV I will not. What would they do if we didn't buy their grain? Their soya beans?

SHEVARDNADZE They love themselves way too much.

AKHROMEYEV Mikhail Sergeyevich, you told us you could do business with Reagan.

GORBACHEV I can. I believe I can.

THEY LOOK GLUMLY OUT OF THE WINDOWS.

SHEVARDNADZE Any film stories?

GORBACHEV (RUEFUL LAUGH) Not yet.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10. AMERICAN EMBASSY. SATURDAY 12.45pm

THE TEAM – ABOUT TEN OF THEM – ARE SHUFFLING INTO A TEMPORARY ENCLOSURE, MADE FROM PLASTIC SHEETING.

RIDGWAY They are laying gifts at our feet. These are huge concessions. They're reading from our script, almost entirely.

NITZE Sir, these are the best Soviet proposals I have seen in twenty-five years. /And you all know I've been in this game long enough to say that.

AS THEY SHUFFLE IN, WE ALSO HEAR:

SHULTZ (VO) I started to understand the Soviets and their cruise liner. We drove back to the Embassy, where our people had rigged up what they call a 'security bubble'. A small, too-small – it was like cage, a vault. They'd mounted it on blocks between the floor and ceiling.

POINDEXTER OK, settle down. Everyone find a place.

SHULTZ (VO) Walls of clear plastic sheeting. So if there was a bug, you'd see it.

REAGAN Get some water in here, we could keep goldfish.

SHULTZ (VO) And there weren't enough seats for everyone. People were sitting on the floor. It was ridiculous. But everyone wanted to be there. We all knew something was shifting – faster than any of us had predicted.

RIDGWAY The British and French missiles – we've been stuck on that for almost a decade. They've just walked away from it.

ROWNY But they can simply shift those missiles to Asia – Kazakhstan or Whogivesadamnistan – and then wheel them back to Prague as the fancy takes them.

POINDEXTER Then we need to shut down the Asia option as well.

ROWNY But they're not offering that. So you've got to ask yourself why.

REAGAN Why did Gorbachev have more papers than I did?

SHULTZ We were...basically, Mister President, we were working to the assumption that this was purely a preparatory meeting, for Washington. This morning General Secretary Gorbachev turned this into a summit.

REAGAN But there's no agenda for –

NITZE It's our agenda, all ours.

ROWNY There's going to be blowback. Some unpayable price.

RIDGWAY I'm just not seeing it.

SHULTZ We need to use the rest of the time till three, working up your next talking points, sir, your responses for this afternoon.

REAGAN (WAS HE LISTENING?) That's good.

SHULTZ So Paul, Jack, Roz, stay here – no point in coming back to the Hofdi – start preparing for this evening's breakout meetings.

REAGAN Of course, if we were goldfish, someone would come along and feed us.

POINDEXTER (STANDING) Let's get you over to the Residence for lunch, sir. You've had a hard morning.

AS THEY MOVE AWAY, OUT OF THE BUBBLE AND DOWN A CORRIDOR:

REAGAN John, any news – the other thing? The Iran thing?

POINDEXTER Colonel North is fully monitoring the situation, sir, and as soon as –

REAGAN How close are they? Are these people going to publish it?

POINDEXTER It's the two from Ash-Shiraa we're worried about.

REAGAN That's one of these terrorist gangs?

POINDEXTER It's a magazine, sir. In Lebanon. We reckon their reporters have tracked the routes of some of the payments.

REAGAN (DOGMATIC) We never ever passed money to the hostage takers.

POINDEXTER That's wholly clear, sir.

REAGAN (CONTINUING) You have to pay the middle men, that's how business works over there.

POINDEXTER I think the nation will understand that, sir. The arms sales, the anti-tank missiles, the anti-aircraft stuff, supplied to Tehran, that may be harder.

REAGAN Do they know it was going through Israel?

POINDEXTER I don't know if –

REAGAN That'll help, all those editors on the East Coast – as soon as they know their people were involved.

POINDEXTER That may be part of it. Yes, sir.

REAGAN Well...we'll just have to wait and see. (THEN DOWNHEARTED) Do you reckon – think it'll be cod again?

MUSIC AND:

SCENE 11.

POINDEXTER (V/O) People got Reagan wrong – all that warmonger stuff. This was a President who cared about people. (HERE’S AN EXAMPLE:) He drove us crazy, he had to spend an hour or so every afternoon, personally answering letters from American citizens. Sometimes he sent them cheques, his own personal cheque, twenty dollars, fifty dollars. He was the real deal. He wasn’t someone who wanted to start wars, he wanted to protect people. That’s why he got so fized by the Strategic Defense Initiative.

SHEV’NADZE (V/O) Everyone knew it wasn't ever going to work – a bullet to shoot down a bullet? – so this had to be their way of building up new arsenals.

SHULTZ (V/O) The Soviets always had to call it ‘Star Wars’, like we wanted to put space troopers up there, shooting killer rays at each other. The President had announced it in 1983 and it was still all just prototypes but that didn't matter one bit. We knew it had them spooked.

SHEV’NADZE (V/O) We’d all signed a treaty – neither side could ramp up a whole new slew of missiles, just by pretending they're only there to bring down the other guy's missiles, pretending they’re defensive. The ABM treaty.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12. HOFDI HOUSE: MEETING ROOM. SATURDAY 3.45pm.

FADE IN (AS ALWAYS WITH THE NEGOTIATION SCENES)

THEY ARE WELL INTO IT, GORBACHEV ADAMANT:

GORBACHEV It's the ABM Treaty that creates the conditions for stability. It is fundamental. And you now reject it. We simply do not understand this.

REAGAN There's a 'liberal' interpretation of the words in the treaty. And there's a tight one.

SHULTZ This is a legitimate difference of opinion.

REAGAN We want to stay with the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty but we propose a new agreement to allow wider development of defensive weapons. This may require measures currently outside the ABM Treaty.

GORBACHEV So you do want to break the Treaty?

SHULTZ Let me – this is your price, yes, for the zero option?

REAGAN We're going to invite you to observe, everything. All tests would be conducted in the presence of the other party.

GORBACHEV (HERE WE GO AGAIN) Star Wars.

SHULTZ SDI. Strategic Defense Initiative.

GORBACHEV These space weapons are a transfer of the arms race to a whole new environment. It will destabilise the international strategic balance.

REAGAN We need a defensive shield. You do. Everyone does.

SHEVARDNADZE How can we agree to reduce weapons while you are building more?

REAGAN Gas masks.

- GORBACHEV I'm sorry?
- REAGAN Think about it. When chemical weapons were outlawed after the First War, did everyone get rid of their gas masks too? 'Course not. They were a guarantee against a weapon if a madman came along. Some new maniac, like Hitler. We need to keep our gas masks here.
- GORBACHEV How do we know these space weapons won't be used to attack us?
- REAGAN Strategic Defense – it's mostly lasers.
- SHEVARDNADZE 'Mostly'.
- SHULTZ And we all know ballistic missiles are vastly superior for offensive purposes.
- SHEVARDNADZE Even so, the side which has effective defence can launch a first strike without fear of retaliation. Your missile shield collapses mutual deterrence.
- GORBACHEV And the whole basis of Mutually Assured Destruction is undermined. We have no more strategic stability.
- REAGAN Mutually Assured – too many people are learning to love these bombs. They're an abomination. They are wrong.
- GORBACHEV What do you suggest?
- REAGAN (CONTINUING) We may well be the generation that sees Armageddon. The portents are there. Israel rebuilds the Temple. The strange weather we've been seeing. The takeover in Libya. These all point to the coming Armageddon.
- GORBACHEV I would rather remain focused on what you propose, not God's plans. That you are weaponising space.
- REAGAN That – I have to tell you – is not our objective. Please believe me. We are prepared to share all the benefits of Strategic Defence with you. Every test, your observers will be there.

GORBACHEV I am sorry to speak bluntly but I cannot take this seriously.

REAGAN Imagine if – I want you to imagine something with me here – imagine if we were invaded by aliens, if they wanted to invade the planet. We'd all come together then, wouldn't we?

GORBACHEV Please last time, Geneva, we did the little green men.

SHULTZ Perhaps this isn't the best way to –

REAGAN (UNSTOPPABLE NOW) "There must be security for all or no-one will be secure." It doesn't matter it's from a movie, it's still true.

GORBACHEV Forgive me, the Communist Party has no position in the event of an interplanetary invasion. (TO SHEVARDNADZE) Did Lenin write anything on this?

SHEVARDNADZE (GOING WITH THE JOKE) Maybe Trotsky.

REAGAN There's life on other planets and one day they're coming here.

GORBACHEV You think?

REAGAN And if they came to attack us, we – you and me – we would fight side by side. And that's why my offer to you is genuine. All SDI advances will be shared.

GORBACHEV This would be a second American Revolution.

REAGAN I'm sorry?

GORBACHEV You won't share oil drilling equipment, digital machine tools...um...

SHEVARDNADZE Milking equipment.

GORBACHEV How can we believe you will share space weapons with us?

REAGAN (FULL HOLLYWOOD) Why can't we trust each other? Why can't our two great nations learn to believe each other?

A SILENCE. IT HANGS. GORBACHEV DOESN'T REPLY.
THEN, A RETURN TO BUSINESSLIKE:

GORBACHEV We previously made a proposal to cut long-range ballistic missiles by 50%. We would like to hear, are you interested?

REAGAN Naturally. But we need to consider all the issues: throw-weight -

SHULTZ We need to consider how to calculate bombers with gravity-fall bombs, do they rate as one warhead or –

GORBACHEV Everything. We just cut each type by 50%. Across the board. Strategic bombers, sea-launched, land-launched, everything.

REAGAN If we cut each every level by 50%, you will still have more than us.

GORBACHEV (PASSING OVER PAPERS) Here's the figures. Here is a schedule of everything we have, and everything we know you have.

REAGAN This is...

SHULTZ (LEANING FORWARD) Can I see that?

REAGAN This is every...?

BOTH SHULTZ AND REAGAN ARE AMAZED.

GORBACHEV This is the only way out of the forest. We go down this list, we cut each in half. Our people could talk forever about whether one sub-launched missile with three warheads equals – forget all that, this is a simple proportionate solution. A 50% cut is a 50% cut – nothing left to debate.

SHULTZ (STILL AMAZED) Can we keep this document?

GORBACHEV It's for you.

SHEVARDNADZE You have all our secrets now. We know how to share.

GORBACHEV Mister President, let's not slurp at the same cold soup our negotiators have been cooking for all these years. Here's a new recipe.

SHULTZ This is very bold.

GORBACHEV If the United States doesn't want to remove its missiles from Europe, say so. Say now. Please stop wasting everyone's time.

SHULTZ The zero option was our proposal!

REAGAN But that leaves you with missiles based all over Asia.

SHEVARDNADZE You have weapons in South Korea!

REAGAN Ocean-based. Nothing ballistic.

GORBACHEV (CUTTING ACROSS) We have to stop counting, Mister President. Arithmetic is not enough. We think it's time for you, for me, to stop using arms talks as cover to deploy more. (SO:) If we can find a solution to the missiles in Asia, will you, on behalf of the United States, agree to a zero option in Europe?

A MOMENT

REAGAN Yes.

GORBACHEV Thank you. And that's why you must agree to non-withdrawal from the ABM Treaty for at least ten years. This is the only way to create the atmosphere to enable....

USE THIS TO FADE OUT.
AND INTO:

SCENE 13.

POINDEXTER (V/O) I would never've become National Security Advisor if Bud McFarlane hadn't got in so deep with the whole Middle East hostage thing. Then again maybe he wasn't so stupid after all, he knew it was going to blow open any time. And here I was stuck on a volcanic rock in the North Atlantic.

But when I ring Bud from the Embassy and tell him about the Soviet zero proposal, I can hear him smiling for the first time in weeks. Round the office, he always called SDI his 'Sting'. He knew it never had a cat's chance of working. The idea was to con the Soviets into talking. And here they were spilling it all.

SHEV'NADZE (V/O) This ABM treaty was bedrock, you have to understand that. Both sides had agreed no new developments, no new weapons – No New Nothing. It didn't matter if you said it was defensive: it wasn't allowed.

POINDEXTER (V/O) And the SDI Sting, it worked. Here it was, leveraging the Russians. We only made one mistake: Bud never told the President that was the point of it all.

AND BACK INTO:

SCENE 14. BACK AT THE HOFDI HOUSE: MEETING ROOM.

FADE IN:

REAGAN Summer of Seventy-Nine. Maybe Seventy-Eight. No, Seventy-Nine – I was the candidate. I went to visit our Defense Command. Got to tell you, the most shocking day of my life. I said to our general there – you probably know his name, probably know the name of his dog – he took me through all the radars and warning systems, and so I said "Right, so show me what you do, if you see a Russian missile coming?" "Oh," he said, "We can't do anything. We can send a warning, maybe fifteen minutes. But we can't stop it." "We have no defence?" I said. "No. The only thing that's stopping them is that we'll fire back." And that's when I decided. We have to move from Mutually Assured Destruction to Mutual Assured Survival. This safety mechanism – a roof a man might build on his house – SDI is something to be shared. What if a madman comes along - that Gaddafi, for instance, what if he had nuclear weapons?

GORBACHEV Let me be a little less philosophical. We're talking realities here, practicalities. Our military is not worried about your Star Wars. We aren't afraid of it. (NOW RISING TO A PEAK) Spend your money on it if you want. Our response to this will not be symmetrical. It will be asymmetrical, we will develop a huge first strike capability that will overwhelm and obliterate any system which you can deploy in space. (BY THE END HE IS FURIOUS: A COMBINATION OF EXASPERATION AND ANGER)

SHULTZ (BEFORE THINGS GET WORSE) I think it's time to set the experts to work. They've got a long night ahead. There's a whole lot to talk about.

SHEVARDNADZE Let's see.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. HOFDI HOUSE: UPSTAIRS. 7.45pm.

A LARGE COMMUNAL ROOM. EVERYONE IS COLLECTING PAPERS AND COFFEE AND ROLLS. IT IS HECTIC AS THEY ALL SORT THEMSELVES OUT.

SHULTZ Roz, will you head up the human rights team? (TO SHEVARDNADZE) Opposite her...?

SHEVARDNADZE Bessmertnych. (CALLING) Alexander!

SHULTZ (POINTING HIM OUT) Roz. (TO SHEVARDNADZE) We do have many concerns.

SHEVARDNADZE We also.

SHULTZ Good. Good.

SHEVARDNADZE The arrest rate of young black men, in your country, for instance, is very worrying for us.

SHULTZ (ONLY MOMENTARILY DERAILED) And the main business, long-range missile reductions? Paul Nitze will be leading.

SHEVARDNADZE Marshal Akhromeyev.

SHULTZ Right.

NITZE Is there a photocopier somewhere, George?

SHEVARDNADZE We've looked everywhere.

AKHROMEYEV We brought carbon paper, would that help?

NITZE It would.

AKHROMEYEV Another triumph for Soviet technology!

ROWNY We need more desks, George. This place just isn't equipped for –

AKHROMEYEV There's a bathroom through there. Get a bit of wood, throw it across the bath.

ROWNY (ALMOST APPALLED) Mister Secretary?

SHULTZ (TO ROWNY) You heard the President, significant progress is possible. We have to make it possible. (THEN TO AKHROMEYEV) Thank you.

AKHROMEYEV I can cope. I'm the Last of the Mohicans.

NITZE Sorry?

AKHROMEYEV It's what I – I'm the last commander who also fought in the Great Patriotic War.

NITZE What service?

AKHROMEYEV My first action – naval infantry – they told me to hold this road, outside Leningrad. Full Panzer division advancing. Hold it at any cost.

NITZE And you did?

AKHROMEYEV Of course. (BECAUSE:) If you retreated, Stalin had you shot.

NITZE The Last of the Mohicans – where did that – I mean how do you – ?

AKHROMEYEV I grew up reading all that. Fennimore Cooper. What a writer.

NITZE You like American authors?

AKHROMEYEV Paul – may I? – you know, you don't have to be scared of me.

MUSIC: 'YOU CAN CALL ME AL'

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. AMERICAN AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. BEDROOM.
8.30pm.

IN THE BEDROOM
 REAGAN IS ON THE PHONE

REAGAN Some kind of fish. White. And that pickled cabbage.
 Everything here comes with pickled cabbage.
 ⇒ He said it was just a meeting. Not a summit. He said it
 would look wrong.
 ⇒ I know! I'm missing you too, Mommy.
 ⇒ It's sitting right here. You know I can't get off without it.
 ⇒ I don't lose any sleep over that either.
 ⇒ I can explain to anyone who asks that Ronald Reagan
 would never leave any American –
 ⇒ But aren't the planets always in the same place?
 ⇒ OK, sure, OK, you get her to recalculate and she can tell
 Don -
 ⇒ Let them impeach me, if they want. Let them go right
 ahead! I'll stand before the American people and –
 ⇒ I don't care that it's Iranians. They just happen to be the
 guys who could get our people out. You think our citizens
 should just be left to suffer while the President could do
 something about it?
 ⇒ You should see George's face whenever it gets mentioned
 in front of him. He's like a toad that swallowed a dog.
 ⇒ I fully intend to be home for dinner.
 ⇒ Anything but cabbage.
 ⇒ You too, Mommy.

CUT TO:

SCENE 17. HOLT HOTEL: BEDROOM. SUNDAY 2.20am.

SOMEONE IS KNOCKING ON THE DOOR BUT SHULTZ IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY

FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR:

NITZE } Sorry, George. Sorry.
SHULTZ } Coming, I'm coming.

SHULTZ OPENS THE DOOR

NITZE Sorry, George.
SHULTZ Is it all of you?

NITZE Principals.

SHULTZ Let me get a sweater. Get in.

NITZE, POINDEXTER AND ROWNY TROOP INTO THE SITTING ROOM AS SHULTZ CROSSES TO THE BEDROOM

ROWNY Do they turn the heating off overnight?

SHULTZ (CALLING BACK) I don't like things to get stuffy.

NITZE You work in the State Department?

POINDEXTER You didn't quite allow for the Icelandic chill.

SHULTZ You're telling me. (PUTTING SWEATER ON) Everyone sit down. Tell me what you came to say.

NITZE We are truly going somewhere, George. This is amazing.

ROWNY We need to take this slower. There are two sides to this.

NITZE (TO ROWNY) I'm coming to it, Ed. (TO SHULTZ) We've got to show some flexibility.

POINDEXTER I do think this is genuine.

NITZE We've finally got a bomber counting rule. Do you realise what that means?

ROWNY As though a bomber even begins to compare to a single missile-fired warhead. If we simply halve the whole shebang, their numerical superiority increases every time! Do the math, for Christ's sake.

POINDEXTER The President needs a deal.

ROWNY Why? We've got the Washington Summit all-but-inked in.

POINDEXTER (UNCONVINCING) Mid-terms. We need a Congressional majority if any deal's getting ratified.

SHULTZ Jesus, I'm still cold. Hang on. (AS HE GOES TO THE BEDROOM) What about the European deal?

NITZE (CALLING AFTER HIM) Akhromeyev, he's quite something, isn't he?

ROWNY He's also a hell of negotiator.

SHULTZ (COMING BACK, TYING UP A BATHROBE) He's a man of great courage, he's got character.

POINDEXTER If anyone can make the Soviet Union a better place, he can.

ROWNY At best, he's a good guy in a shit system.

SHULTZ (DRY) You're warming to him.

NITZE We have to show flexibility. They're going out on a limb here. They clearly want to reach an agreement.

SHULTZ Stand for equal outcomes. Force them. Forget their hard-liners – tomorrow's it's just our two guys in that room, doing what they want. The President can swing it.

POINDEXTER A deal is what we need. Really need, right now.

ROWNY Where's the fire, John, we never intended to finalise anything here.

POINDEXTER It's – (HE STOPS HIMSELF) – take it from me.

SHULTZ Get SDI worked into the equation, so that these reductions are a clear result of the ongoing SDI. (STANDING) Off you go.

AS THEY SHUFFLE OUT, SHULTZ STOPS NITZE

SHULTZ Paul. This isn't a consensus meeting. You're in charge. You decide.

NITZE What's with John? Why is he so urgent?

SHULTZ You don't want to know.

NITZE Sure?

SHULTZ You'll be glad you didn't.

NITZE OK. Sorry to have woken you.

SHULTZ Speak to Hawkeye – make sure someone's being woken up over there on that ship.

NITZE You think they're getting any sleep, in this weather?

CUT TO:

SCENE 18. THE GEORG OTS: STATEROOM. 3 am.

TEMPERS ARE FRAYING:

AKHROMEYEV I hope you realise that last sentence - that took over an hour and half!

ARBATOV The General Secretary put fifty percent reductions on the table. Category by category. He didn't say -

SHEVARDNADZE Hold on, hold on - go round Rowny, go straight to Nitze.

ARBATOV (EXASPERATION) That's what they want you to do!

SHEVARDNADZE We are not at war, Alexei. We don't need to attack them.

ARBATOV How do we know?

SHEVARDNADZE Where's this war going to be? Tell me.

AKHROMEYEV Thank God we sold Alaska.

GORBACHEV APPEARS. PRIVATELY TO SHEVARDADZE:
[MEANWHILE THE ARGUMENT CONTINUES BEHIND THEM AS BELOW]:

GORBACHEV How are we on human rights?

SHEVARDNADZE What? (AS THEY WALK ASIDE) Oh, a bit of rubbish about Episcopalians. And Jews. Their Bulgarian Connection. It's alright. Go back to bed.

GORBACHEV Raisa says I can't take this back to Moscow. It'll look like surrender.

SHEVARDNADZE That's why we brought the Chief of General Staff.

GORBACHEV I like him. I didn't ever think I would.

SHEVARDNADZE Get to know him, he's your human shield. If he agrees it, then his generals can't -

GORBACHEV Anyhow they'll strip it to the bone in Congress. Even if he signs, this is all pointless.

SHEVARDNADZE Get some sleep. It's a long day tomorrow.

GORBACHEV Raisa says this could split the politburo.

SHEVARDNADZE They're fools.

GORBACHEV And we're not? Pretending we believe in Star Wars?

SHEVARDNADZE SDI is the victory you have to take back. That you have stopped big President Reagan. Made Russia safe from his space lasers. You are the peacemaker.

GORBACHEV Raisa says –

SHEVARDNADZE Go back to her now. Get to bed. Don't talk politics. She's your wife! Be a proper Russian.

[MEANWHILE:

ARBATOV He didn't say we cut more just to make things equal with them.

AKHROMEYEV He didn't have to say it! Anything else is bound to be rejected.

ARBATOV What, so we fold?

AKHROMEYEV Can't we find some room to move on total throw-weight? Balance things up, get to choose what we want?

ARBATOV Twelve years in Vienna they haven't achieved that formula.

AKHROMEYEV Maybe Iceland will be the place. Less cake, less whipped cream.

ARBATOV (SEASICK) Don't. Don't. I hate those journalists.

AKHROMEYEV What?

ARBATOV (DEEP BREATHS) They're why were on this bloody boat.

AKHROMEYEV (START AGAIN) So, who's the sticking point?

ARBATOV (STILL BREATHING) That general of theirs. Rowny. Korea, Vietnam, he's still fighting.

AKHROMEYEV (WRISTWATCH) Doesn't give us long. Well. We can only go forward from here.

ARBATOV You mean the General Secretary can't go back empty-handed.]

CUT TO:

SCENE 19. PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE. SUNDAY 9.30am.

THE MOTORCADE IS MAKING ITS WAY TO THE HOFDI HOUSE.

POINDEXTER It just strikes me, sir, speaking as your National Security Advisor, an agreement here, sir, it might come at an especially good time.

REAGAN He said it would look like this.

POINDEXTER What would?

REAGAN Iceland. Like the moon.

POINDEXTER (UTTERLY BAFFLED) Who...who's that?

REAGAN I was reading that – 'Red Storm Rising'.

POINDEXTER Is that...you mean Tom...Clancy?

REAGAN It's all set here. I wanted to gen up.

POINDEXTER I was saying, sir, an agreement signed today, it's not going to do you any harm.

REAGAN They're going after SDI – you're saying that's less important?

POINDEXTER You've got mid-term elections in three weeks. I know a lot of congressmen who'd like you to come home with something.

REAGAN Is that really what we're talking about, John?

POINDEXTER And yes, the other thing.

REAGAN North, has he heard something?

POINDEXTER It's a guy called Hashemi. In Iran. He's some kind of imam, a real hothead.

REAGAN Can he hurt us?

POINDEXTER (THE NEWS:) Ollie's been told: it's Hashemi who tipped off the reporters in the Lebanon. It means they're getting their material straight out of Teheran.

REAGAN You're saying it's going to get published?

POINDEXTER My point is, sir, when you're answering questions about it, you'll be three thousand percent better off with a major peace treaty in your back pocket.

REAGAN We'll all be better off without these horrible missiles. My whole life is nuclear missiles and ballistic missiles and anti-aircraft missiles to Iran and I don't want to harm a damn soul.

POINDEXTER You walk out of here, shaking Mister Gorbachev's hand, it's going to be a whole lot harder for them to snipe.

REAGAN Are you advising me to – ?

POINDEXTER I'm saying – Mister President, I'm saying if there's a deal on the table, my advice is think twice before saying No.

THE CAR IS SLOWING

REAGAN We'll get this nailed this morning. I've got to be home for dinner.

POINDEXTER (WTF?) Dinner? In Washington?

BUT REAGAN IS ALREADY OUT THE CAR
AND THE PHOTOGRAPHERS' FLASHES ARE POPPING

CUT TO:

SCENE 20. HOFDI HOUSE. SUNDAY 10.00am.

FADE INTO:

TEMPERS HAVE SHORTENED

REAGAN I have to say, Mister General Secretary, that our people have talked all night and I am disappointed.

GORBACHEV I agree. Ten hours work and this is what we have to show from it.

SHULTZ (SURPRISE) You're disappointed? There are so many advances here.

SHEVARDNADZE All we find is the US trying to drag things backwards.

GORBACHEV We want to escape the dead-end of Geneva. We have crafted our proposals to this goal. But we have formed the impression that you believe the Soviet Union is more interested in arms control than you. This could not be more wrong. You think this gives you leverage. You seem to have conveniently forgotten that we have agreed not to include the British and French missiles. We conceded this. We did.

SHULTZ (TRYING TO CALM HIM) It's true.

GORBACHEV (EXPLODING) And here we are, pretending these European missiles can be redeployed to Asia. It's embarrassing, having to talk this when it's just us here, us in this room, and we're spouting these banalities? If we redeployed them to Asia, it would nullify the agreement. You know that, I know that! This is drivel.

REAGAN You say you have conceded, but we never saw the British and French missiles as part of NATO in the first place.

GORBACHEV Really? (TO SHEVARDNADZE) Give me the letter. (TO REAGAN) You say the missiles are not defending West Germany? (TO SHEVARDNADZE) You read it. (TO

REAGAN) This is from your friend Mrs Thatcher. Writing to your Joint Chiefs.

SHEVARDNADZE "These modernised forces will make the Soviets sit up and take notice."

GORBACHEV Come on, we're not at a press conference here. We don't need these easy punches. We know your forces are integrated, target sharing. If you don't want to make an agreement, say so now, and we can get back on our planes.

A MOMENT.
BREATHING.
THEN:

REAGAN I want to eliminate nuclear weapons, I want to see the world at peace.

GORBACHEV I thought Armageddon was coming.

REAGAN We can prevent it. We can change the future.

GORBACHEV And this is our only chance. I couldn't've done this a year ago. I might well not be able to in a year's time. Come on, let's get rid of all the missiles in Europe, let's freeze the rest and agree to cope with the Asian problem – one hundred each. And that won't be easy for us.

SHEVARDNADZE And we'll ignore your build-up in the Pacific basin.

GORBACHEV We want to show we are serious to reach an agreement. Can you go with that?

A MOMENT.

REAGAN George?

SHULTZ NODS

REAGAN Yes. Let's agree to that.

GORBACHEV OK, let's hear some concessions from you then. Meet us half way. (AND HE MEANS:) ABM Treaty.

REAGAN Here we go.

GORBACHEV We ask only for a ten-year signed undertaking not to withdraw from the Treaty. And during those ten years we work towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons.

REAGAN I cannot take back my commitment to the American people. To keep them safe. That's all SDI does, will ever do.

GORBACHEV (CONTINUING) It's no impediment to your programme. You can mock it all up in labs and you stay within the ABM Treaty.

REAGAN We won't get funding from Congress if it's just lab work. (TO SHULTZ) Cap said so, right?

SHULTZ The Defense Secretary is adamant.

REAGAN I am serious about sharing this technology with the Soviet Union. So why can't we make this a new part of the ABM Treaty?

THIS ARE AT A PITCH NOW

SHULTZ Mister General Secretary, you started to say something, a moment ago, about the total elimination of nuclear arms, tied to this ten-year non-withdrawal phase. Do you mean – are you saying we could eliminate every single nuclear weapon in ten years? Is that what you're saying?

GORBACHEV Yes. Not just ballistic missiles. I mean submarines, aircraft, I mean battlefield, I mean everything.

A WOW MOMENT
THEN:

GORBACHEV And that's why ABM is essential. We cannot do this, unless that is in force, guaranteeing no new weapon developments.

- REAGAN I agree, let's eliminate all the weapons. Then our people can sleep in peace. Meanwhile, you and I create a means of protection which will be around long after you and me are gone.
- GORBACHEV I've also picked up an American proverb: It Takes Two To Tango. Here we are, Mister President, how about a man-only tango?
- REAGAN I know another expression, Once Burned Twice Shy. Your Krasnoyarsk radar is in breach of the ABM Treaty.
- GORBACHEV We know about your breakthroughs in SDI, one or two little advances. Why haven't you shared them? If you're the big sharer?
- REAGAN What I can't get straight. We can live together, friendly competitors. We're different systems and I am certain that historical facts are on our side – your Karl Marx said a while back –
- GORBACHEV Earlier we had Lenin, now we're back to Marx.
- REAGAN Everything Marx said, Lenin just repeated. The point is, Marx said Socialism had to be global to succeed. It must be victorious throughout the world. He said the only morality that matters is the one which advances socialism. Lenin said promises are like pie-crusts, made to be broken.
- SHEVARDNADZE (EXASPERATION, BECAUSE THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME) He never said that!
- REAGAN Bet he wishes he had.
- GORBACHEV There you go again. Marx and Lenin. Lenin and Marx. History is littered with those who tried to defeat their manifesto. Don't waste your time.
- REAGAN We have no hostile intentions.

GORBACHEV (AMAZED) Just before you set off here. You said you stood by that speech of yours in Westminster.

REAGAN I do.

GORBACHEV When you called us the Evil Empire. You called for a crusade against socialism. To send us to the ash heap of history!

REAGAN There is a Communist Party in the United States. Every time you people move into a Third World nation, you eliminate all the other parties, by force.

GORBACHEV We could have a wide-ranging, philosophical conversation some time, I'd truly like that.

SHULTZ But maybe now isn't the time.

REAGAN Me too, maybe I'll convince you to join the Republican Party.

SHULTZ If I could bring us back...we have a serious target here. Ten years to eliminate all nuclear weapons, not just ballistic missiles.

HE PAUSES

SHULTZ So...we've already got agreement on a fifty percent cut, yes?

SHEVARDNADZE Yes.

SHULTZ And we could put together a statement on the zero option for European Weapons also. Yes?

SHEVARDNADZE Yes.

SHULTZ OK, on ABM, we seem to be locked. But if we could suggest an additional meeting, this afternoon...?

REAGAN George, aren't we're due back on the plane at –

SHEVARDNADZE (TO SHULTZ) You and me, we see what we can hammer out in advance?

SHULTZ Exactly.

GORBACHEV We cannot release any of the other agreements without your express commitment to ABM. That's obvious.

REAGAN (EXHAUSTED EXASPERATION) What the hell use will any anti-ballistic missiles be if we eliminate all the ballistic missiles?

GORBACHEV It is because we are moving to this elimination that we must strengthen the ABM Treaty. We won't manage these deep cuts without the treaty fully in force.

REAGAN We cannot link SDI to the ABM Treaty.

GORBACHEV Then we should conclude our meeting here.

HE STANDS. A VERY BIG SILENCE.

REAGAN Please, sit down.

GORBACHEV You will report to Congress, me to the Supreme Soviet. I am truly sorry we didn't manage to find a new impulse to arms agreement. I regret it.

REAGAN (ALMOST PLEADING) We have settled so many things. Are we really going to walk away from here with nothing?

GORBACHEV Sadly we can, Mister President, the hour seems to be on us.

SHULTZ (WHO IS FURIOUSLY SCRIBBLING) I've been working on a text here...hang on...some sort of statement. We'll need to come back after lunch...

GORBACHEV If the President agrees...Mister President?

REAGAN (COMING BACK FROM WHEREVER HE WAS) Yes?

GORBACHEV We declare a break for maybe one, two hours. You two, with your teams, work on some words. I can wait. Then you and

me sit down and see. One more session.

REAGAN (MY DINNER IN WASHINGTON!) This afternoon?

SHULTZ I am convinced we can find some words for the ABM Treaty.

SHEVARDNADZE Committed non-withdrawal.

SHULTZ A formula.

GORBACHEV Three o'clock?

REAGAN Right. Three o'clock.

CUT TO:

SCENE 21. HOFDI HOUSE. 1pm

SHULTZ IS ACCOMPANYING REAGAN TOWARDS THE MOTORCADE

REAGAN (TIRED) You reckon he means it?

SHULTZ I'm sure of it.

REAGAN If we go now, we can be in Washington by –

POINDEXTER Hang in there, Mister President, we're winning.

REAGAN And you reckon it's worth it?

POINDEXTER You know I do.

REAGAN George?

SHULTZ 'Afraid I do.

REAGAN Shit. I mean, shit.

JOURNO (SHOUTING OVER) Mister President, have you made any real progress, sir?

REAGAN (INSTANTLY INTO PUBLIC MODE:) We're not through.

SHULTZ (THROUGH CLOSED MOUTH) You don't have to answer.

JOURNO Are you going to meet again, sir?

SHULTZ Let's get you in the car, sir.

REAGAN (AS HE GETS INTO THE CAR) If only Nancy was here.

THEN, FROM INSIDE THE CAR:

REAGAN You're not coming?

SHULTZ We've got prepping to do, sir.

AND HE CLOSES REAGAN'S CAR DOOR.

IT DRIVES OFF DURING:

SHULTZ Get everyone back out, will you, Ted? We're all staying here. Everyone! Jimmy, can you get us some lunch fixed?

S/SERVICEMAN (GOING ALONG THE CARS) Hold up. Hold up. Secretary wants everyone in the house. Everyone out.

OVER WHICH:

POINDEXTER (TO SHULTZ) Do you reckon, I mean – could we get Nancy out here?

SHULTZ Are you serious?

POINDEXTER (CALCULATING IT) It's eight in Washington, if she's at Andrews by ten. She could touchdown by twelve, in town by one, that's five. Six with delays and then they're eating supper –

SHULTZ (OVER HIM) Hold on, hold on, what's this in aid of?

POINDEXTER If we need to do another day.

THEY ARE MEANWHILE WALKING BACK TO THE PORCH

SHULTZ He won't manage another.

POINDEXTER With Mommy here. It makes the difference.

SHULTZ It's not going to happen.

POINDEXTER What if Madame Zorba says it's in the stars?

SHULTZ That woman only predicts what Nancy wants her to predict.

POINDEXTER Reckon you can nail it this afternoon?

SHULTZ We can do what we can do.

THEY ARE NOW JOINING UP WITH THE OTHERS ON THE PORCH

RIDGWAY Soviets are doing a press.

SHULTZ What the hell is there to say?

RIDGWAY That we're very close to agreement on deep cuts to strategic,
and zero on intermediate.

NITZE Are they trying to scupper the thing or help it?

ROWNY How do we ever know with these guys?

POINDEXTER Sounds to me like they want the deal.

SHULTZ Roz, you know the Germans, they're going to go crazy. Get on
the phone right now to Kohl.

RIDGWAY Sure.

SHULTZ Paul, can you speak to the Japanese? Then everyone upstairs
in ten. We are on the edge of something monumental.

CUT TO:

SCENE 22. THE GEORG OTS. 2pm.

THEY ARE EATING LUNCH

GORBACHEV If he agrees to this, if he can do this. The world will be a different place. No nuclear weapons.

SHEVARDNADZE Can he? Is he allowed to?

GORBACHEV He doesn't care about that. He genuinely doesn't. He's a dreamer.

SHEVARDNADZE Ronald Reagan?

GORBACHEV Yes, he gets an idea and then he believes it. He hates nuclear weapons. He's not like Thatcher or Mitterand. He's an abolitionist masquerading as a militarist.

SHEVARDNADZE Only in America.

GORBACHEV He's a romantic.

SHEVARDNADZE And you're not, Mikhail?

CUT TO:

SCENE 23. HOFDI HOUSE. 3.55pm.

FADE INTO:

REAGAN Our new proposal, it's two sets of five years. The first five years runs to 1991, with testing only as allowed by the ABM Treaty - your laboratory thing – and during that time, you and me, we deliver a 50% reduction in strategic missiles. That works out, both sides happy. For the second five years, the goal is total elimination of all nuclear weapons. During that, we test launch SDI. At the end, either side is free to deploy defences.

SHEVARDNADZE Why would you need to? Defence against what? It'll all be gone.

REAGAN Who knows when another Hitler is going to come along.

SHEVARDNADZE Hitler, Gaddafi, Martians.

GORBACHEV We would add only one clause to your draft: during that second period to strictly observe all the provisions of the ABM Treaty.

SHULTZ Meaning no live testing?

GORBACHEV Our proposal contains elements of both sides' wording.

SHULTZ There are differences in the wordings.

GORBACHEV We have moved to you. We have accepted your idea of two five-year periods.

REAGAN Well, you guys love your five-year plans.

GORBACHEV We are only asking for ten years of laboratory-only testing. Then you're free. We're not trying to ring the funeral bells for SDI.

SHULTZ Can I just check, in the two typed-up versions, we refer to "Offensive ballistic missiles" and you to "Strategic offensive arms", are these different - ?

- SHEVARDNADZE Your text refers to "Research, development, and testing permitted by the ABM Treaty." Our reference to laboratory testing has disappeared. Why?
- REAGAN I know, we ask our people in Geneva to do more work on what's allowable under the treaty. Then we discuss that in Washington.
- GORBACHEV Was the word 'laboratory' omitted deliberately?
- REAGAN Yes, it was deliberate. What's the problem?
- SHEVARDNADZE And here, the first part of the proposal talks about 'strategic offensive' but the second part about 'ballistic missiles'. Why the difference?
- REAGAN I've got no problem with getting rid of all nuclear weapons.
- GORBACHEV We can do that. We can eliminate them.
- REAGAN Let's do it. Every single one.
- GORBACHEV Right. The ABM Treaty, if it's indefinite, if both of us agree to non-withdrawal, it is incomprehensible why anyone needs to test a space weapon.
- REAGAN Confine it to laboratories and you're cutting my bridges. SDI won't happen.
- GORBACHEV Then we can bring this meeting to an end.
- REAGAN Hold on, hold on, I have a problem in my country you don't have. If they criticise you, they get packed off to jail –
- GORBACHEV You should read some of the things written about me in our papers!
- REAGAN My critics. On the so-called right wing. They're always the first - I got to tell you, they're kicking my brains out. So listen to this, you get to go home with the ten year plan. I go home with the pledge to continue SDI research but not deploy for ten years. That's a big offer.

GORBACHEV Mister President, we're talking here as equals, yes? We're talking openly and honestly and confidentially. You are three steps from being a great president. If you can agree to strict observance of the ABM Treaty, we can sign now. Here. Now. Something remarkable.

HE LEAVES THIS A MOMENT

GORBACHEV If not, let's say goodbye now. Let's forget all about Reykjavik. There won't be another meeting like this.

SHEVARDNADZE Remember - do you mind if I speak emotionally? – we have to remember, when future generations read the transcript of this meeting and saw we came so close, what are they going to say? Will they forgive us?

GORBACHEV If we sign this agreement, your opponents won't even open their mouths. The whole world – everyone will cheer.

REAGAN They were saying before I came here, Reagan's going to fold, he's going to get trapped inside the ABM Treaty for another chunk of time. So I'm asking you, don't make me to do that. It will hurt me badly at home. I ask this one thing of you.

GORBACHEV I think I have said everything I can.

REAGAN Please, we're talking here about one word. We can't let this go over one word. Anyone reading our proposal would say, yes, the US is committed to the ABM Treaty.

GORBACHEV Others might say the American President used a single word to derail a whole meeting. If I grant the US the right to develop space weapons, how can I go back to Moscow? They'll call me an idiot, a simpleton.

SHULTZ (HEARING THE RUSSIAN WORD) 'Durak.'

GORBACHEV That's right, idiot. Village idiot.

REAGAN I am asking you a favour. We could do so much together, like no two other leaders. But you refuse me one favour. George, this is one word but am I wrong?

SHULTZ You're not, Mister President.

REAGAN (BACK TO GORBACHEV) We can go to the people as peacemakers.

GORBACHEV Ban tests in space, I sign here and now. I have agreed to as much as I can.

REAGAN We shouldn't part this way.

GORBACHEV (STANDING, GATHERING) My conscience is clear. Before you, before my people.

START TO FADE IN MUSIC

REAGAN Maybe you never wanted to reach an agreement. I'm sorry about that.

GORBACHEV I'm sorry too. I don't know what more I could have done.

REAGAN You could have said Yes.

GORBACHEV (TO HIS TEAM) Are we ready, gentlemen?

REAGAN We won't get another chance like this.

GORBACHEV I don't think so either.

EVERYONE STANDS AND PAPERS ARE GATHERED

GORBACHEV Give my regards to Nancy, please. It was a shame she couldn't come.

BY NOW IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MUSIC IS COMMUNARDS: *DON'T LEAVE ME THIS WAY*

AND CUT TO:

FROM THIS POINT, THE SCENE CAPTIONS SHOULD NOT BE READ OUT:

SCENE 24. PRESIDENTIAL MOTORCADE. 7.10pm.

CAR DOORS CLOSING AND SETTling, ALONG WITH:

S/SERVICEMEN Eagle is in car.
 Move it out.
 Move out.

AND THEN DRIVING OFF
ONCE THE DOORS ARE CLOSED:

REAGAN Don't think I've ever felt so beat.

POINDEXTER SDI – that was the only stumbling block?

REAGAN We were that close, John. (HOLDING UP HIS FINGERS)
That close.

CUT TO:

SCENE 25. HOFDI HOUSE. 7.15pm

ROWNY IS TRIUMPHANT. THE OTHERS ARE SHATTERED

ROWNY They came here to kill SDI. We beat them!

SHULTZ It's not about just wins. This isn't the NBA.

ROWNY We lose SDI, we lose all our leverage. That's what brought them to the table.

NITZE You can be pretty dumb sometimes, Ed. Even for a General.

ROWNY Now hold on.

NITZE The whole shebang. That's what SDI is for. It was to get them to do this. Jesus!

SHULTZ He's right, Ed. This was our chance, our chance to cash in Star Wars for the best deal the Russians have offered since they sold us Alaska.

ROWNY I think you're wrong, sir. We've got them now, we've seen their bottom line, we know their weaknesses.

SHULTZ And what do we do with that knowledge, Ed? Where does that take us? (THEN, STANDING:) OK, who's coming to the Press Conference?

RIDGWAY Sir? Before you go. You – you kind of look pretty tired and disappointed.

SHULTZ You want to know why?

RIDGWAY Sir?

SHULTZ It's because I'm tired and disappointed.

CUT TO:

SCENE 26. PRESS CONFERENCE. 7.30pm.

ANNOUNCER They're ready for you, sir.

GORBACHEV HAS HIS ADVISERS ROUND HIM, SEMI-WHISPERING:

ARBATOV This could be a huge propaganda victory for us. Enormous.

GORBACHEV You believe that?

ARBATOV You must tell the world.

GORBACHEV Marshal?

AKHROMEYEV (REGRETFUL) We tried to trust each other. It was too difficult. We failed.

ARBATOV They came in there like cavemen – primitives.

GORBACHEV Eduard?

SHEVARDNADZE You made all the concessions. They moved on nothing. Maybe this was their plan all along. Maybe they were never going to make a deal.

ANNOUNCER (TO PRESS) Ladies and Gentlemen, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

THE CROWD OF JOURNALISTS STANDS AND THEN RESETTLES

GORBACHEV (CHOOSING ONE) Yes, over there.

JOURNO So Mister General Secretary? Who do you blame?

LONG PAUSE
THEN:

GORBACHEV I blame no-one. On the contrary, this has been a hugely successful summit. Meeting. We made huge progress towards arms reduction. This is an enormous breakthrough. We have established new levels of trust between our two

nations. This will produce results. Something has changed. No-one can continue to act as they acted before.

VOICE

(COMING IN OVER THIS) A year later Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev signed the INF agreement to abolish Nuclear Forces from Europe. This remains the only tangible result from the summits at Geneva and Reykjavik and Washington and Moscow.

AND THEN:

In July 2014 Washington accused Russia of violating this treaty by test-launching its new R-500 missile. Vladimir Putin is currently considering withdrawal from the treaty.

CUT TO:

SCENE 27. AIR FORCE ONE. 7.35pm.

REAGAN A failure, they're going to call this a failure.

SHULTZ They weren't ready for you. The world isn't ready for your vision, sir.

POINDEXTER One word! That's... that's a blow.

SHULTZ It's what the word represented, Admiral.

DURING THE SILENCE:

VOICE Three weeks later, a Lebanese magazine was the first to publish revelations of what later became known as Iran-Contra affair.

REAGAN He's right, George. One lousy word. We could have been peacemakers. 'Laboratories.' One lousy word.

CROSS-FADE FROM THE PLANE TO:

VOICE SDI, the Strategic Defense Initiative, sometimes known as Star Wars, now known as the Missile Defense Agency, has yet to score a successful test against a long-range ballistic missile.

END