A NEW PLAN FOR FAT MAN

by

My Name Here
FADE IN

INT. THE PENTAGON WAR ROOM - EVENING

Admirals, Generals, and other officials from all the United States Armed Forces mingle around a large conference table. The conversations are an excited white-noise hum.

Around the room are tasteful and subtle hints of Christmas. A pine bough with red ribbon as the centerpiece, and a very small Christmas tree in a corner.

SUPER: DECEMBER, 1944

A door opens at the far end of the room. A MARINE SARGEANT enters, holds the door open, and stands at attention.

SARGEANT

President Roosevelt, Commander in Chief!

The room goes silent as every occupant stands at attention and salutes.

Through the door enters a wheelchair with a man in a Santa Claus hat. He waves with one hand and holds a sack of gifts with the other.

The man in the wheelchair is PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. Wheeling him in is VICE PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN.

ROOSEVELT

Ho-Ho-Ho! Merry Christmas!

As the room begins to cheer and bust out in laughter. Numerous wait staff follow Roosevelt with carts of champagne bottles, cigars, and appetizers.

The bubbly is served. Officers take turns to shake the President's hand and exchange Christmas wishes.

The room quickly fills with a blue haze of cigar smoke as the chatter reaches a deafening pitch.

From the masses emerge a towering four-star General smoking a pipe. The corners of his mouth show a barely discernible smile. For GENERAL MACARTHUR, he's downright giddy.

MACARTHUR

Merry Christmas, Mister President.

ROOSEVELT

Why, General McArthur! Contain yourself, sir! You don't want to give everyone the impression that you actually have emotions!
MACARTHUR
Yes, sir. I'll try to tone it down.

ROOSEVELT
Aw, come here, Doug.

The President pulls McArthur down to his level for a bear hug and clap on the back.

MacArthur is uncomfortable and steps back. This man needs his personal space.

ROOSEVELT
Now, hold on, General. Don't go too far, I got something for you.

He rifles through his bag, pulls out three small gift wrapped boxes, and hands them to MacArthur.

ROOSEVELT
I need you to find Ike and George. Don't open those boxes until I say so, okay?

MACARTHUR
You're the boss, Mister President.

He salutes, turns, and disappears into the crowd.

Roosevelt looks around the room. He gets Truman's attention and waves him over.

ROOSEVELT
Harry, come here and wheel me over to the head of the table.

Truman was in mid-conversation with a high ranking officer and seems a bit put off. He puts on his best smile.

TRUMAN
Yes, sir.

He wheels him to the table. A waiter brings over two glasses of champagne for Roosevelt and Truman.

Roosevelt taps on the glass with a pen and the room quickly goes silent with anticipation.

ROOSEVELT
Gentlemen, first and foremost, I want to thank each and every one of you for the bang-up job ya'll did in the Pacific. We told the American people that we'd have our
(MORE)
ROOSEVELT (cont'd)
boys home by Christmas of forty-four and, by God, we did it!
Salud!

Hearty affirmations of 'Here, here' and 'Merry Christmas' throughout the room as Roosevelt raises his glass.

ROOSEVELT
Second, before we get down to brass tacks, I want to recognize a couple individuals. Doug, George, Ike? Can you stand up for me?

Generals MacArthur, DWIGHT (IKE) EISENHOWER, and GEORGE PATTON stand side-by-side on the other side of the table.

ROOSEVELT
The three men before us engineered and executed a flawless ground invasion of the Japanese mainland. General MacArthur at Nagasaki, General Eisenhower at Hiroshima, and General Patton at Honshu. Boys, go ahead and open your gifts.

The three Generals open their gifts and each hold high golden five-star shoulder ornaments.

ROOSEVELT
It was by your actions and commitment that won the unconditional surrender of Japan.

A standing ovation ensues as the attendees recognize the new, and first ever, five-star Generals.

Roosevelt clinks his glass again for silence.

ROOSEVELT
I also want to recognize FLEET ADMIRAL KING... Where's Ernie?

Roosevelt looks about and notices an embarrassed Admiral King at the end of the table.

ROOSEVELT
Come on Ernie, stand up.

Roosevelt slides a gift wrapped box to the end of the table. King opens it and holds another five-star ornament for another round of applause.
ROOSEVELT
As you all know, while the war in the Pacific raged on, Ernie secured our eastern seaboard from the war in the Atlantic. He kept our shores safe and, for that, we are forever in your gratitude. Cheers!

The room is in a frenzy as glasses are raised yet again and everyone congratulates each other.

Roosevelt settles the crowd with a raised hand. The room falls silent once again.

ROOSEVELT
Thank you, everyone. Now, on to business. Sargeant, would you please clear the room of the service? Thank you.

SARGEANT
Yes, sir.

The Sargeant quickly herds the wait staff from the room and closes the door. The remaining attendees take their seats around the conference table.

ROOSEVELT
(throws the Santa hat on the table)
We are at peace and our boys are coming home. But we cannot ignore what's going on in Europe. GENERAL BRADLEY? Omar, can you give us an update on the latest in the European theater?

GENERAL OMAR BRADLEY stands up and reads from notes.

BRADLEY
Yes, sir. It seems that Europe is in a bad state of affairs. Rommel has defeated Montgomery in North Africa. The Italians have secured Turkey and much of the Middle East, and the eastern front is into Moscow. England, well, it's hard to say where the line through the U.K. is, these days.

The room is suddenly quite somber. Eisenhower raises a hand and stands. He speaks as if a politician in training.
EISENHOWER
Mister President, I think we all know where you're going with this, and we understand, for sure. We just barely finished our first foray on foreign soil and you want to join another?

Fleet Admiral King stands.

KING
Sir, Germany never declared war on the United States. They've held true to their word of not harming any of our vessels in the Atlantic.

A low mumble as attendees have whispered side-bar comments.

ROOSEVELT
And that's why we're here. Can you imagine if Hitler HAD declared war on the U.S. after Pearl Harbor? If we had to fight two fronts instead of focusing all our forces in the Pacific? Think about that for a moment.

Roosevelt lets this scenario hang heavy over the room.

ROOSEVELT
Now ask yourselves, when is enough, enough. How long can we stand idly by while Hitler and Mussolini run rampant across Europe?

General Patton stands up abruptly.

PATTON
Sir, let me at 'em. I'll take on those cocksuckers one at a time, if I have to. Whatever you want, sir. I'm with you!

Not to be outdone, General MacArthur takes a stand.

MACARTHUR
Sir, you know me. If I commit to something, I follow through. Give me back my boys and I'll take any shore you say. I'll even take on those two-faced commies. Just say the word.

Eisenhower leans on the table shaking his head.
EISENHOWER
No, I'm not so sure about this. What about our people, sir? The American citizen won't stand for entering an undeclared war.

PATTON
Ike, when did you get soft? Then WE declare it! Our boys could run right through those Nazi bastards! They're run-down and worn thin!
(to Bradley)
Isn't that right, Omar? What's their achilles?
(to King)
Ernie, for God's sake, just find me a beach!

With that last remark, Patton slaps both palms on the table for effect. There's a bit of instability in his actions.

The low mumble of side-bar discussion ramps up to a dull roar. The debates get heated.

Truman holds his hands up and tries to get their attention without success.

TRUMAN
Please. Everyone. Please.

Roosevelt has no patience for Truman's mild manner and slams his fist on the table.

ROOSEVELT
Settle down, dammit!

Attention getting, yes, but it's more from whom the slam came from. They all admire their President and settle back down with sheepish expressions.

PATTON
Apologies, sir.

Roosevelt scans the men in the room. He clears his throat and continues.

ROOSEVELT
Like I was saying, we can't stand in the wings. Watching and waiting. We need to come to the aid of our friends and allies. We need to stand up against the aggressors and do the right thing.

A somber look crosses Roosevelt's face.
ROOSEVELT
There are so many fronts, though.
If...and I emphasize the if...we
were to get involved, how best we
approach such an animal?

Silence. All the attendees look down and around to avoid eye
contact, until...

TRUMAN
Sir, how do you eat an elephant?

Roosevelt gets a screwed up look on his face before turning
to his Veep.

ROOSEVELT
What's that, Harry?

TRUMAN
One bite at a time, sir.

The attendees look puzzled. Patton has another outburst.

PATTON
What the Sam Hill do you mean by
that horse shit? "One bite at a
time." What do you want? Another
drawn out war? Hell, sir, let's hit
them with everything we got on all
sides!

ROOSEVELT
George, you're out of line! Sit
down before I regret that fifth
star!

As Patton reluctantly sits, Roosevelt leans over to Truman
and whispers in his ear.

ROOSEVELT
Harry, don't make me regret
dismissing Wallace as my second.
Chances are you're going to be
their Commander in Chief in the not
too distant future. Find your
voice.

Truman looks as if he'd been slapped. He nods to Roosevelt
and leans back in his seat.

TRUMAN
Yes, sir.

With the room back in order, Roosevelt starts anew.
ROOSEVELT
Okay, gentlemen. Any thoughts?
(glances at Patton)
Rational thoughts?

After a brief moment...

TRUMAN
Sir, I think we need to introduce
the Fat Man and Little Boy.

Patton leans over to MacArthur and whispers...

PATTON
Ain't that who's leading this
country these days?

MacArthur snorts and elbows Patton in the ribs.

MACARTHUR
Quiet, damn you! We'll lose that
star for sure.

Roosevelt gives the two Generals a dirty look before he
continues.

ROOSEVELT
You're right, Harry. Why don't you
give them all a briefing.

Truman smiles and stands.

TRUMAN
Thank you, Mister President. Okay.
Gentlemen, I need not remind you
that what's discussed in this room,
remains in this room.

The attendees all nod their heads in agreement but a few
roll their eyes with the dramatics.

TRUMAN
While you and your boys have been
doing your part in the Pacific,
we've been doing ours back here.
Down in New Mexico we've a Cracker
Jack bunch of scientists, holed-up
in a top secret lab, working on a
weapon that could end all wars.

Truman hesitates for more drama.
TRUMAN
Now, this may sound like it's out of an Edgar Rice Burroughs book but we've discovered how to split the atom.

All around the table are assorted looks of astonishment and disbelief.

ROOSEVELT
True story, men. And with that process, we've developed what we call an atomic bomb. Two of them, actually. Fat Man and Little Boy.

TRUMAN
Preliminary tests show that, upon detonation, they release an untold amount of energy. They produce a fire ball that lays waste to tens of square miles in an instant. They are the game changers. They are the future!

Truman bangs a fist on the table for added effect.

After the news sinks in, Eisenhower stands.

EISENHOWER
Sir, with that much devastation... Well, what I'm wondering is... How do we control it?

PATTON
Control it? Hell, we just drop it! What's there to control? We drop it on Berlin and Rome, and we sort out what's left.

MACARTHUR
Sir, if we do this, it could save hundreds of thousands of lives. American lives.

BRADLEY
Europe is lost as it is. If all goes well, we could have their surrender in days.

EISENHOWER
You might be right, Omar. The death toll could be staggering. We need to think this through. And what's in it for us?
Everyone starts to buy into the idea and Truman wastes no time. He leans on the table and goes in for the finish.

**TRUMAN**

Then it's settled. We drop the Fat Man on Berlin and Little Boy on Rome!

Roosevelt looks at Truman with a combination of shock and fear. He's uncomfortable at the quick turn of events.

**ROOSEVELT**

Whoa, now, Harry. We just can't make a decision like this so quickly. Let's just say that this is our primary focus while we explore our options.

**TRUMAN**

Yes, of course, sir. Let's discuss the other options.

Truman is not going to let go of this so easy and addresses the room.

**TRUMAN**

So, let's look at our options. First, we could do nothing and let the war in Europe work itself out. Not a very appealing prospect. So, we would have to go for option number two...declare war on the Axis to the protest of every American citizen.

Truman scans the room to rest his eyes on Roosevelt for just a fleeting moment.

**TRUMAN**

With that, we move our Pacific fleet and manpower halfway around the world and enter into an air, ground, and naval war that's raging across three continents and a million square miles of ocean.

**ROOSEVELT**

Now, Harry---

**TRUMAN**

If you please, Mister president. I'm explaining our options, thank you.

Truman is on a roll.
TRUMAN

Tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of American lives will be lost. Or...we take out Berlin and Rome.

Truman leans on the table with palms firmly planted. He knows that the room is his.

TRUMAN

What say you, gentlemen? All those in favor of using the Fat Man and Little Boy as suggested, raise your hand.

FADE TO BLACK