



Kenneth J. Munkens

Minther
& Sklar

“Action without vision is only passing time, vision without action is merely day dreaming, but vision with action can change the world.”

-- Nelson Mandela

Chapter 9 | THE GAME

“I found a history book, a printed book from before the Reorganization. It really opened my eyes.”

“I did too,” I say before I can stop myself. Here I tell Dee not to spill the beans and I just did.

Virginia looks at me for a moment, then returns to her driving. “It’s hard to believe that the government has hidden the facts, rewritten history, and removed any trace of how great America once was,” she states. “Do you know in the late 1900s there were stores called supermarkets that had shelves filled with food of every imaginable kind?”

This is the most friendly and open that Red, uh Virginia, has been. Maybe now that the cat is out of the bag and we are working together we’ll get to know one another.

“USMart stores were once called Walmart and had more food, clothing, electronics, and other items than you have ever seen in one place. Not like the over-priced slim-pickings in today’s stores.” She paused, then added, “All the Walton’s were arrested, died, or disappeared.”

“Is that in the history book?” I ask.

“No, I saw it in the Ghost Room.”

“Walter Tize mentioned that room. Do I get to see it?”

Virginia ignores my question, “Do you play chess?”

“I have.”

“We should play.”

I finally ask, “When am I going to find out what my role is in this, uh, exercise, uh, campaign?”

“It’s called a revolution and will be the third in American history, not counting the Reorganization.”

“The third?”

“I wish I could tell you that things will get much clearer, but I’m afraid

everything is going to become more complex and vague.”

“That’s encouraging.”

Virginia smiles and replies, “Yes.”

Virginia’s office is on the ninth floor of the STUS headquarters building. She pushes open the door and I find myself entering another strange world. To begin, there is a fish tank wall—very cool. On the other side I enter what looks like a traditional Japanese room. There are two steps up to a wooden floor covered with bamboo mats, in the middle of the room is a square black enamel low table, against one wall is a black side board cabinet, various cushions are spread about, and two walls are shoji rice paper sliding panels. Virginia kicks off her shoes and climbs the two steps. Out of respect I do the same.

Virginia sits on a pillow on one side of the table. I sit opposite her.

“How many states are in the United States?” she asks.

“Thirty,” I reply correctly. Note: a map of modern America is available at www.2076AD.com.

“You know that there used to be fifty,” she says matter-of-factly, “and that Texas was once a state? Do you know how Texas became the Republic of Texas?”

“Something about a vote during the Reorganization,” I say not really sure how it occurred.

“In 1762, France ceded to Spain most of its land in the interior of North America which included Texas and Louisiana.”

“I read about that. It was after the French and Indian War,” I remark.

“Correct. Spain then returned the Louisiana Territory back to France which sold it to the United States. Texas attempted to become a republic in 1813 but that didn’t last as it was considered a part of Mexico. Sometime around 1823 Stephen F. Austin and a group of American settlers gained the right to homestead in Texas, but seven years later Mexican President Anastasio Bustamante outlawed American immigration to Texas. Then in 1835 Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna revoked the Constitution of Mexico and began to consolidate power under his leadership. Because of this the Texians, as they were called, formed their own military. There were numerous skirmishes during this period of time. When Texians captured San Antonio General Santa Anna was angered and arrived February 23, 1836 with a huge army. That’s where 200 Texians defended the Alamo for thirteen days. During the siege, on March 2, 1836 the provisional government of Texas declared independence and formed the Republic of Texas.”

“Then they became a state,” I conclude.

Virginia stands and walks over to the black side board cabinet as she says, “Not exactly. For ten years Texas remained a republic but constant battles with Mexico drained their finances. Then after a year of negotiations Texas entered the Union on December 29, 1845.” She returns carrying a hand carved wooden chess set.

"You have a real chess set," I exclaim in surprise.

"It's so much better than playing on a screen." She sets up the board and puts a white and black pawn in one of her hands behind her back. I choose a hand and receive the white pawn. I guess I'm starting. I decide to use the King's Indian Attack and move the king's pawn up two. Virginia immediately answers by moving her knight to f6. I answer by moving my knight to f3. While looking at the board Virginia asks, "Do you know why I told you all about Texas?"

"Absolutely . . . not."

"When a State entered the Union of Pre-reorganization United States of America they agreed to an Enabling Act which required that all unappropriated lands be granted to the Union for its disposition. As a result, the federal government controlled the land." Virginia moves her king's pawn up one. "The Republic of Texas never ceded its lands to the United States." Virginia looks up, "This created a unique situation. When Texas made the decision to return to being an independent republic there were numerous legal battles during the Reorganization. Finally, it took an international court to determine that Texas was a sovereign nation and could separate from the United States. That's why The Republic of Texas exists today."

"We don't hear much about Texas in the news," I admit. I move my knight to d2.

"Well, you're going to learn more about it—we're going there." Pawn to c5.

"Uh, wait, that's a foreign country. I need a passport, permission to travel there, shots, travel vouchers," I try not to sound panicked but, come'on, I've barely traveled around the east coast of the United States.

"It's your move," Virginia states flatly.

I sit in silence staring at the chess board. My mind is not on chess. Going to Texas actually is intriguing. But, you have to remember that just a few weeks ago I was happy with my stipend from the government and planning to find a job. Everything that has happened since then is making my head spin. I move my pawn up to e3.

"Relax, we're not going tomorrow," Virginia says as she moves her pawn to b6.

"When are we going and for what purpose?"

"STUS has business there," she tells me, "and it will be an education for you."

"I've had more education in the past few weeks than in an entire semester in college," I move my other bishop to d3.

"Yes, it probably has been a lot to digest," Virginia moves her bishop to b7. I'm looking at an odd board. It's not your typical configuration. I decide to castle on the king's side.

"When are we going and who is making the arrangements?" I ask.

"Once you're cleared of all of your legal problems, our people will begin

making arrangements.” Virginia moves her bishop to e7. She then says, “Chess is a game of strategy. You have to stay keenly aware of your opponent’s moves and strengths, think three or more moves ahead, and do the unexpected.”

I move my pawn to c4. All this action and no pieces have been taken. I’m trying to envision what strategy Virginia is developing.

Virginia continues, “What we are attempting to do is going to test all of our intellects.” She castles on the king side. “It is going to be a complex, dynamic, enigmatic, dangerous game on a massive scale with the future of the world at stake.”

I decide to be cautious, move my pawn to b3, and am compelled to ask, “Why me? I haven’t done anything noteworthy to indicate that I’m a world mover.”

Pawn to d5 is Virginia’s move. She explains, “George, you and I are pawns—no more no less. You don’t have to be a world mover—just a patriot. We are a very small part of a great and honorable endeavor. The powers that chose us did so after serious consideration. Whether or not it has anything to do with our ancestors having signed the Declaration of Independence I don’t know. My impression is that it does. Maybe they believe somehow that insightful divine spirit is hereditary. Maybe we are born rebels.” Red looks directly at me as if sizing me up to judge my rebel index.

It’s time to get my powerful pieces into the game so I move my queen to c2. Virginia smiles. I don’t like that smile. Is she congratulating me, giving me a false sense of security, or pleased that I fell into a trap?

“Remember this movement began decades ago,” she continues. “I can tell you this much there were earlier attempts to restore the original constitution that fell short. Lives were lost.” Once again she looks at me and states, “More lives will be lost.” She moves her knight to c6.

“STUS was founded in 2015, correct?” The bloodless battle continues as I move my pawn to a3 and continue my question, “If they couldn’t achieve their goal in 60 years what makes you think it can be done now?”

“Our goal,” Virginia corrects as she fires the first shot by taking my pawn with her pawn d4. Now, here’s the problem. There are two pawns that I can take. However, when I take one the other will be free to take my pawn. I study the board and decide to take her pawn on d5 to open a line for my queen. She then explains, “When America failed economically there was chaos, martial law, violence, and international intervention. A lot of people got hurt. The founders of STUS had all they could do to keep the company afloat and the secret society functioning. The collapse and Reorganization was a game changer.” She moves her queen to d5 taking my pawn.

“Am I in the secret society?” I take the other pawn on d4.

“You’re in the waiting room.” Knight to d4 taking my pawn and threatening my queen. Well, the bodies are dropping now.

“What is the name of the secret society?” Queen to b1. I don’t like what I

see. Virginia controls more than half the board. She forced me to retreat. I wonder if she would get upset if I happen to knock the board over.

"I can't tell you that." Rook to d8.

"I thought that I was in." I continue to regroup by moving my knight to e1.

"You're a pawn. You don't get into the back row that easily." Queen to h5.

"OK, when do I get my secret decoder ring?" Bishop to b2.

"Say you owned a restaurant," Virginia says matter-of-factly, "that offered the best meat, poultry, and fish." Bishop to b6.

Huh? Where in the blue blazes did that come from? I move my pawn to g3.

Virginia continues, "You search far and wide for the best vegetables and fruit. Then you recruit a world-renowned chef." She moves her knight to g4.

If I don't do something her next move will be to bring her queen down for mate. I move my pawn to h4 to prevent it.

"The décor is inviting and service outstanding," Virginia surprises me by moving her queen to h4 taking my pawn but leaving her queen threatened by my pawn.

No matter how I look at it I'm in trouble. There is one thing I know for sure if I don't take her queen she simply moves to the corner and it's mate. I take her queen h4.

"Prices are reasonable," she continues, "Sounds like a formula for success, doesn't it?"

"Absolutely."

"What if you forgot to budget for advertising and nobody knows about Che Clymer?" Red moves her bishop to h2—checkmate. "That's mate. Good game."

"Good game for you. Me, not so much." Virginia smiles.

"Back to Che Clymer, what would you do?"

"I'd walk the streets with a sandwich board."

"A sandwich board, huh? I'd like to see that." She leans back and asks, "So, after walking the streets for two weeks no one visits your restaurant—what happens?"

"I guess I go out of business."

"Exactly." Virginia puts the chess set away and as she returns to the table she asks, "What if you did have a budget for advertising and still no one visited. Do you know why?"

"I'm sure that you're going to tell me."

"Because until they taste the food they have no idea how good it is and what they are missing."

"So, while I walk with my sandwich board I'll give out free samples," I reply.

"Good idea. Che Clymer might just make it."

"That's a load off my mind," I smile.

Virginia leans forward, looks at me, and asks, "What if they started a

revolution and nobody cared?"

At home at dinner I'm still thinking about my conversation with Virginia. Has the population been so conditioned to not even consider that there is a better way to live? Have they been taught to accept their station in life and not expect more? I decide to attempt to find out with a little experiment. My subjects—mom and dad. I ask my father, "If you could do anything at all for a job what would you do?"

"Why do you ask?" he replies.

"I'm just curious. It would give me a better understanding of your interests."

He gives me an odd look, but attempts to answer, "Well, I was always interested in airplanes and flying."

"Really? That's so cool. Have you ever flown?"

"Of course not, I neither have the clearance nor the money."

"If things were different, would you have pursued that direction?"

My father sits looking at his plate. The scientist in him weighs all of the variables. Then he answers, "No, the number of slots available was limited, there were endless regulations and fees, and far too many individuals had government connections."

"So, you looked into it?"

He nods.

"If there weren't so many obstacles in the way is that what you would have done?"

"I believe so."

"Do you feel cheated?"

"Cheated? Why? It's just the way things are." He puts down his fork and looks directly at me. People seem to be staring into my eyes a lot. Next time someone does, I'm going to pick my nose. My father says in a stern voice, "Now, don't go chasing butterflies again. It will only lead to trouble. Remember your arrest?"

"Oh, yeah, about that, it's all cleared up."

"I'm glad to hear that."

"Listen, dad, all I want to know is whether it bothers you that there are things denied you and if you could change it—would you?"

"I can't change it, therefore, it's not worth discussing."

"What if a candidate ran for president wanting to give more freedom to the people? Would you vote for that person?"

"To get more freedom you give up security. No, I wouldn't vote for that person."

Wow, we are definitely on different tracks. I want to break loose and spread my wings while he's content to remain in the zoo and be taken care of even though it means they clip his wings. I turn my attention to my mother who is staring right

at me. OK, I know what I said, but she's my mother. This time I take a different approach. "What do you know about The Republic of Texas?"

"Very little," she admits, "what I do know is it is a violent, corrupt, immoral, greed-driven, and dangerous place. Big corporations run everything and keep the population uneducated, misled, and enslaved."

"I'm going there," I say nonchalantly.

"You're what!" my father barks.

"I'm going to The Republic of Texas for business."

"No, you are not," my mother bellows. "No son of mine is going to that hell hole."

OK, do I pursue this and keep the argument going or use good judgment and let go of it? By now, you know me so what I do might come as a surprise. I look at my mother and say gently, "I understand, mom. I'll see what I can do." There, end of argument.

My father chimes in, "You're lying!"

"What makes you say that?" I ask innocently.

My mother answers, "Because it's not like you to give in. You're headstrong, stubborn, and an anarchist."

In this corner Mom The Socialist, this corner Dad the grounded flyer, and this corner George The Punching Bag Clymer. You saw it, I tried. So, with fists flying every which way I state with conviction, "I said I would see what I could do. But, if my job requires me to go to The Republic of Texas—I'm going." I stand up from the table and add, "I won't tell either of you how to live your lives. But I know there is more out there for me—for us. Dad, you have as much right to be a pilot as anyone. You weren't even given a chance. That's wrong. We're all human beings. What gives one group of human beings the right to control the lives of other human beings?" I look at my mother. She picks her nose—just kidding. She doesn't say anything as I add, "OK, I'm stubborn and an anarchist but my ancestor and namesake was probably called the same thing. When he signed the Declaration of Independence he was a traitor and risked being hung. It's strange how you get accused of being evil when all you want to do is give people a chance at a better life." I leave the room.

Virginia is right. Nothing will happen if people don't care. You know where I turn next.

GEORGE: What happens if you start a revolution and nobody cares?

DAWN: God cries and innocent people perish.

GEORGE: I fear that most Americans have been lulled into a state of passivity and submissiveness to such a degree that the thought of rebellion never enters their minds.

DAWN: In 1818 John Adams wrote, "But what do we mean by the American

Revolution? Do we mean the American war? The Revolution was effected before the war commenced. The Revolution was in the minds and hearts of the people; a change in their religious sentiments, of their duties and obligations...This radical change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people was the real American Revolution."

GEORGE: The colonists wanted freedom and valued liberty.

DAWN: Exactly.

GEORGE: But that's not the case today. American citizens are more interested in what television programs are on, what their sports teams are doing, and whether or not the Social Compensation Board will increase allocations.

DAWN: A few weeks ago those were your concerns.

GEORGE: I feel as though a veil of ignorance has been lifted from me.

DAWN: You're welcome.

GEORGE: OK, OK, thank you. But, I'm one individual. That's not a very big revolution.

DAWN: During colonial times communications were mainly done through newspapers, pamphlets, and word-of-mouth. It was a very slow process. Today, we have communications capable of reaching millions of people instantly.

GEORGE: Great, but how do we get them to become interested in freedom?

DAWN: You tell me.

GEORGE: I don't know.

DAWN: Then find out.

GEORGE: You're doing it again.

DAWN: I know. I have faith in you.

GEORGE: You wouldn't if you saw how poorly I played chess, today.

DAWN: Don't feel badly, Virginia is a chess master. Didn't she tell you?

GEORGE: No, she left that out. People seem to have this annoying habit of leaving things out.

DAWN: True.

GEORGE: It doesn't change the fact that I have no idea how to reach the minds and hearts of the people.

DAWN: You'll figure it out.

GEORGE: How do you know?

DAWN: There was a young boy who came upon a little girl with a lemonade stand. She was crying because two police officers told her she was breaking the law and that her parents would be fined. This boy not only convinced the officers to overlook the infraction but to also buy a cup of lemonade.

GEORGE: I remember.

DAWN: What you don't know is that these officers told others and after you left the little girl sold lemonade to police officers all afternoon.

GEORGE: I didn't know that. Wait, how do you know?

DAWN: You have talents of which you are not aware. We wish to use them.

GEORGE: You didn't answer me.

DAWN: George, I believe the sun heals all wounds.

GEORGE: And, the shadow of darkness keeps being pulled over my eyes.

DAWN: What happens if the people start a revolution? Good night, George.

I remember the lemonade incident. What I don't remember is what I said to the police officers. Something about, if this was their daughter would they make her cry? There was more but that was a long time ago. Now, this is perplexing, how in the world would Dawn know about that incident? Did someone follow me around with a camera all my life? What the hell is going on?

Dee enters my room. "Quite a show, brother."

"Yeah, well, I was just trying to do an experiment that obviously didn't work."

"You didn't ask me anything."

"I know where you stand."

"Do you?"

"Yeah, you want to write a declaration of independence, to lead the charge, to be free."

"But, do you know why I will not do those things?"

"No, why?"

"Because—I'm afraid. Like dad said to get freedom we have to give up security. We are safe as long as we hide in the shadows. When we, uh you, thrust us out into the prison spotlight we are sitting ducks. I fear for you, and mom, and dad, and—I hate to admit—myself. You already went to jail for visiting a website. If you do anything to threaten the government I'm afraid that I will never see you again." Dee looks into my eyes, shut up, and says with tears in her eyes, "I'm sorry, I'm not a very good patriot."

I hug Dee. This is becoming standard operating procedure. "Fear is their weapon, the truth is our defense. Yes, I'm afraid. Remember, I threw up in the police vehicle." Dee chuckles. "However, I also remember our ancestor who risked his life, his fortune, and his sacred honor. I can't help but think this is my only shot at life. Who the hell are those who would cheat me of my God-given right to live my life to the fullest? They hijacked my life. That pisses me off."

"Me too."

"Now, if I can only find a way to get the entire population of the United States pissed off," I smile.

Dee whispers, "I pledge my life, my fortune, and my sacred honor." She leaves my room.

For an hour I surf the globalnet. I'm not really sure what I'm looking for. As a matter-of-fact I'm hoping some divine power will cause me to land on a website that will give me guidance. Electronically, I'm throwing darts at a dart board. There's a low knock on my door. I look up and my father walks in.

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