Akagi Camouflage After Riichi Deception analysis

Created by ResponseLower49/Mob5850

This feat takes place over two chapters (72 and 73) in the manga Ten

Some context

This feat is from the manga Ten and happens halfway through the East-West showdown. The rules of the mahjong they are currently playing is the same as regular Riichi mahjong with the only differences being that you can only win off a hand that is mangan or above (which means you need to get at least 4 han) and the other rule is that each player has to rotate with another once they've discarded 12 tiles.

The current situation is that Ten and Akagi were able to make the other two randos on West side lose all their points and drop out. So the West side only has two players left, Harada and Soga (both highly skilled). Which means they'll be playing the remaining games as they now have no one to rotate with. Meanwhile on the east side there's only 3 players left (Harada was able to Ron off Ginji who made him lose all his points and drop out). This now leaves Akagi, Ten, and Hiroyuki. There rotation would go something like this:

Akagi and Ten playing-Hiroyuki spectates

Hiroyuki comes in for Akagi once Akagi has reached the discard limit

Now Hiroyuki and Ten playing-Akagi spectates

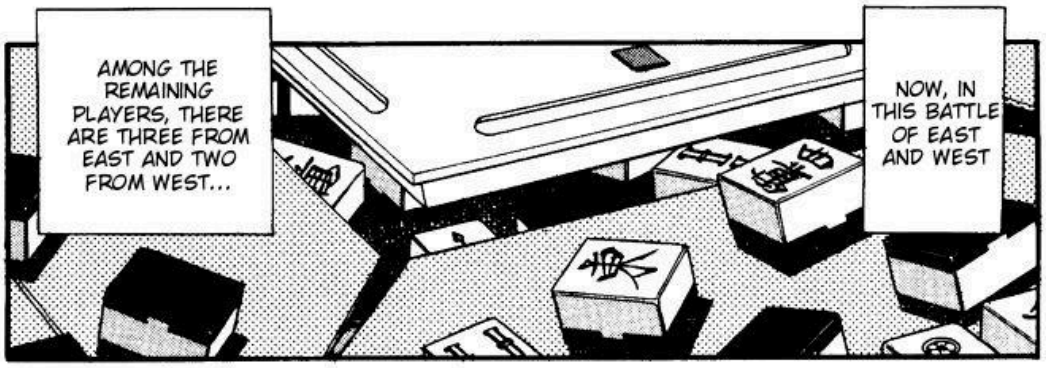
Akagi comes in for Ten once Ten has reached the discard limit

Now Hiroyuki and Akagi plays- Ten spectates

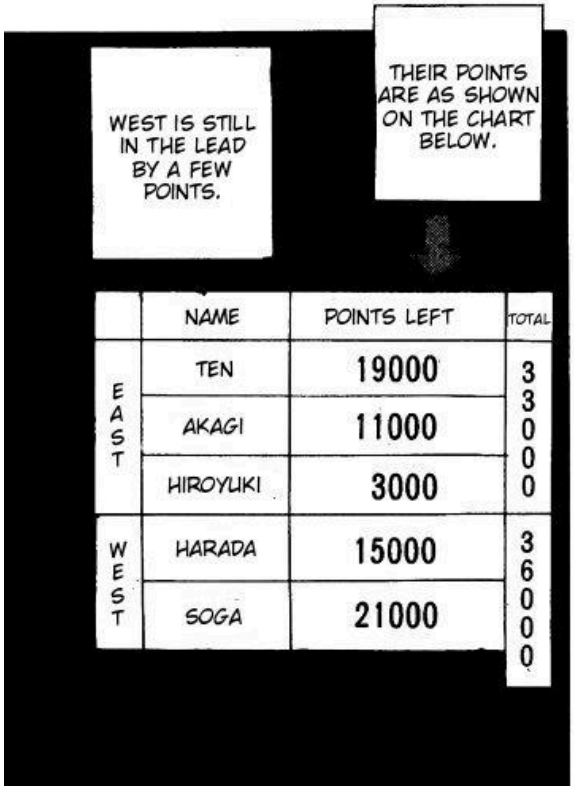
And then it continues to repeat.

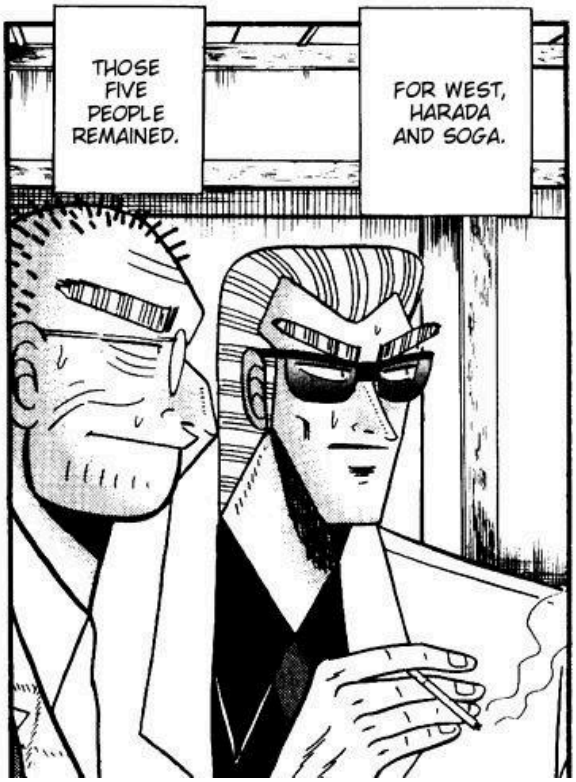
So before the West side lost 2 of their players they had the advantage numerically (they had 4 players while east had 3 players) so they planned to keep Hiroyuki in the game even though he was low on points (had only 3000). This way he'll be restricting both Akagi and Ten who were top players. He'd restrict them since the player who had to sub in for Hiroyuki would have to play with his hand, which wouldn't be good due to both Hiroyuki being the weakest link and the fact that Hiro would play more defensively which would halt the hands progress. West changes this

strategy once they lose two members and now decide to just take out Hiroyuki and progress the game to the next stage. The strategy they come up with for this is than when Hiroyuki is not in the game (Akagi/Ten rotation) then they would play completely defensively and when he's in the game they both will go with Riichi after getting Chii Toi Tsu (translated to 7 pairs) which is a yaku (winning hand) that can be accomplished through getting 7 pairs of tiles in your hand. Here's the scans to explain West’s strategy:

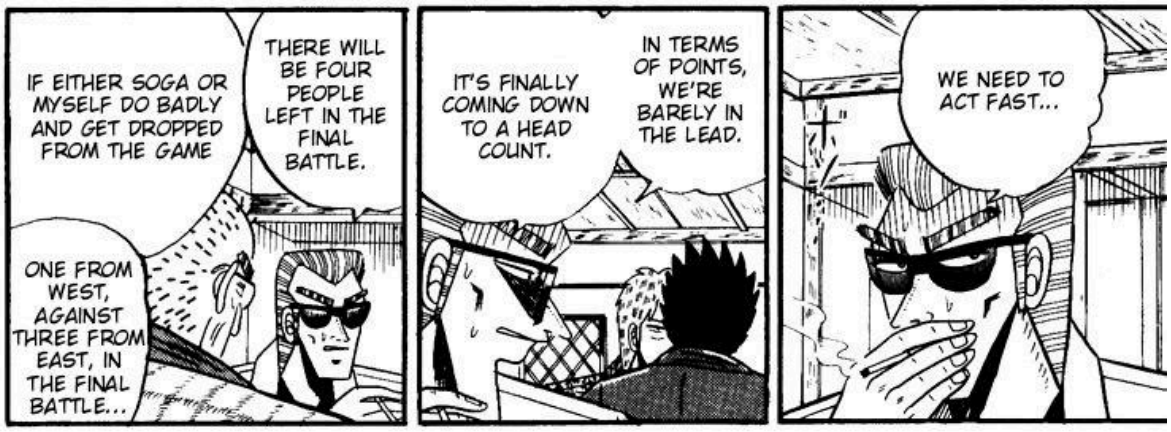

AMONG THE REMAINING PLAYERS, THERE ARE THREE FROM EAST AND TWO FROM WEST...
NOW, IN THIS BATTLE OF EAST AND WEST


FOR EAST, TEN, AKAGI, AND HIROYUKI.


WEST IS STILL IN THE LEAD BY A FEW POINTS.
THEIR POINTS ARE AS SHOWN ON THE CHART BELOW.
NAME
POINTS LEFT
TOTAL
EAST
TEN
19000
AKAGI
11000
HIROYUKI
3000
330000
WEST
HARADA
15000
SOGA
21000
360000


THOSE FIVE PEOPLE REMAINED.
FOR WEST, HARADA AND SOGA.

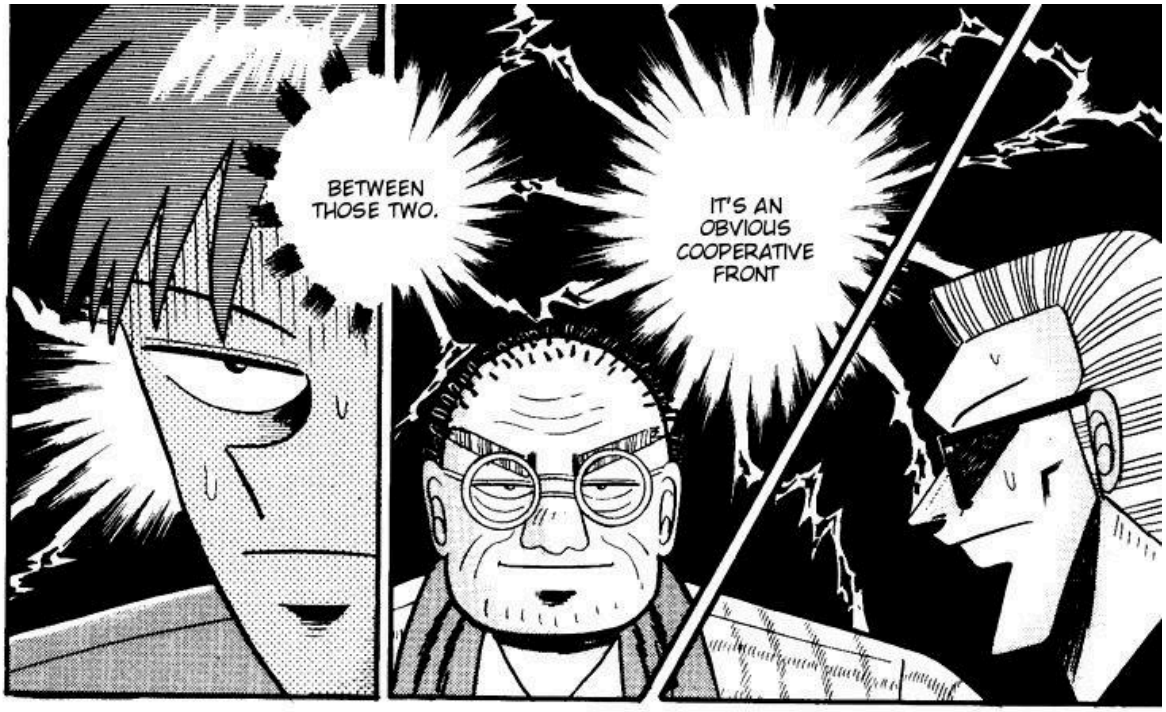

.....
ざわ・・
ざわ・・

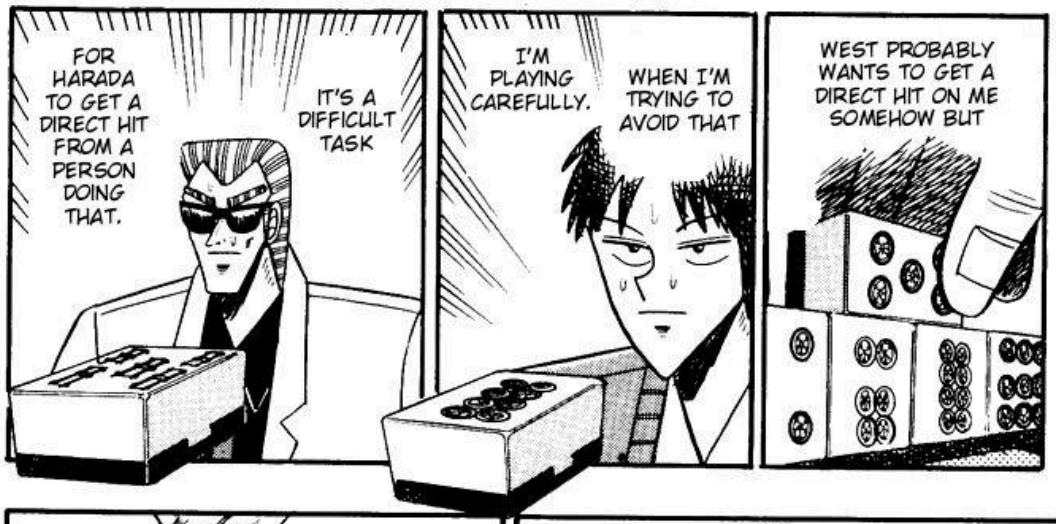

IF EITHER SOGA OR MYSELF DO BADLY AND GET DROPPED FROM THE GAME
THERE WILL BE FOUR PEOPLE LEFT IN THE FINAL BATTLE.
ONE FROM WEST, AGAINST THREE FROM EAST, IN THE FINAL BATTLE...
IT'S FINALLY COMING DOWN TO A HEAD COUNT.
IN TERMS OF POINTS, WE'RE BARELY IN THE LEAD.
WE NEED TO ACT FAST...

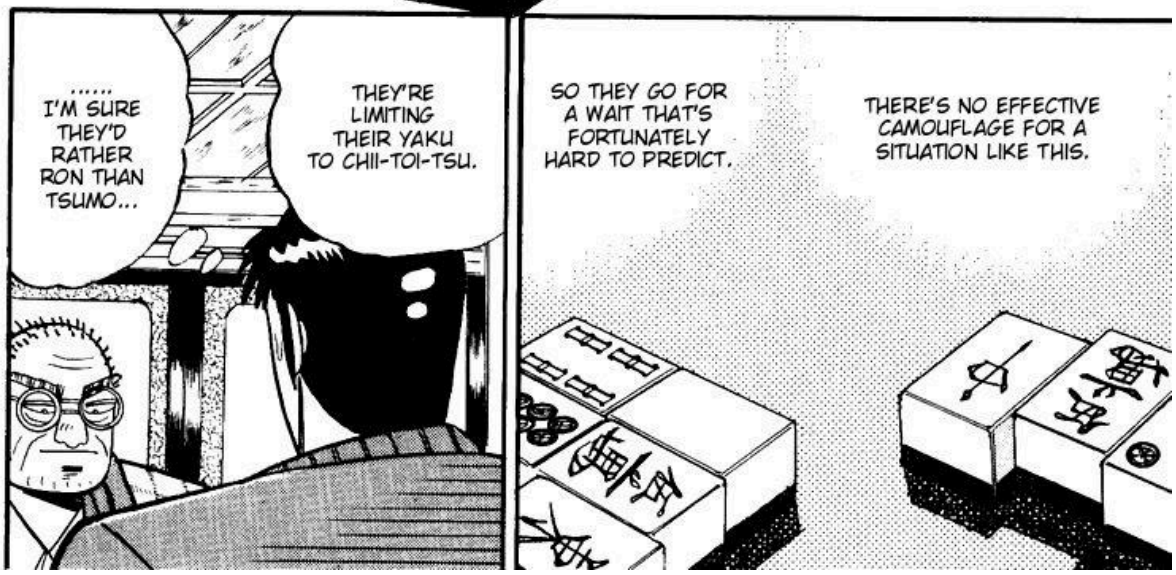

SURE.
GIVE UP ON LEAVING HIM HALF-DEAD...
AND TAKE OUT HIROYUKI AND HIS 3000 POINTS...!
I'M NOT SAYING TO BE AMBITIOUS AND GO AFTER TEN OR AKAGI.
IF THAT HAPPENS, IT'S INEVITABLE THAT WE'LL LOSE...
TAKE OUT HIROYUKI ...!
.....
LET'S JUST GO AHEAD AND KILL OFF THE WEAK RIGHT AWAY.
WE CAN'T KEEP JOCKEYING FOR POSITION ANY MORE.

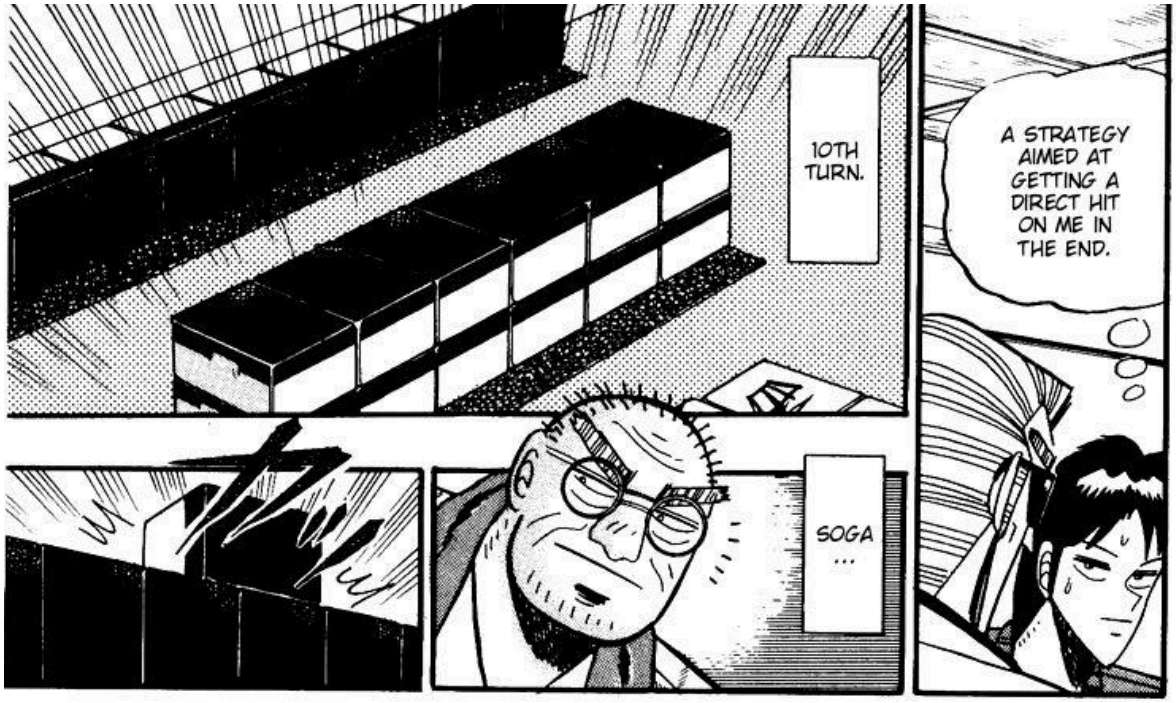

EVERYONE WHO'S BEEN ELIMINATED SO FAR.....!
AS A WAY OF REPAYING
チラ
HARADA'S HAND LOOKS LIKE CHII-TOI-TSU.

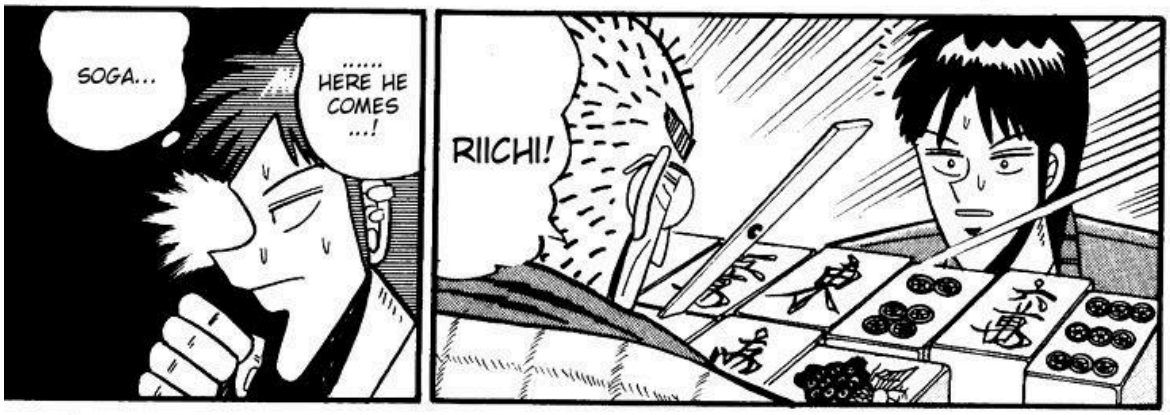

AND SOGA ...?
ざわ・・
.....
THOSE DISCARDS ARE.....
SOGA IS AFTER CHII-TOI-TSU TOO ...?
.....
I SEE .....

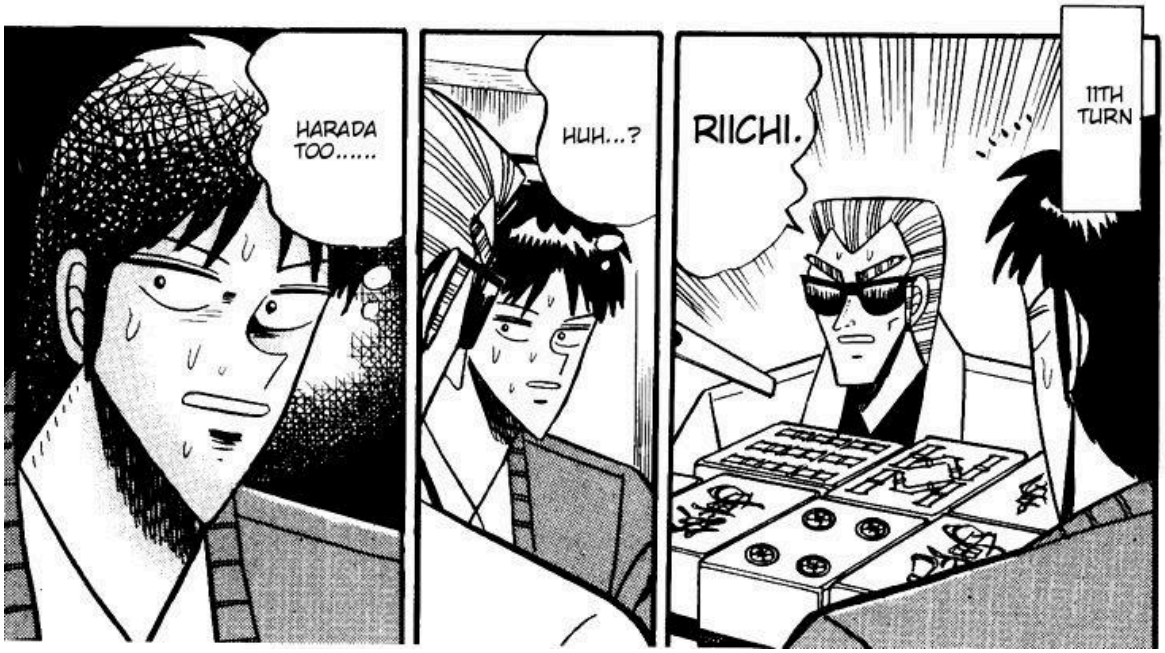

BETWEEN THOSE TWO.
IT'S AN OBVIOUS COOPERATIVE FRONT

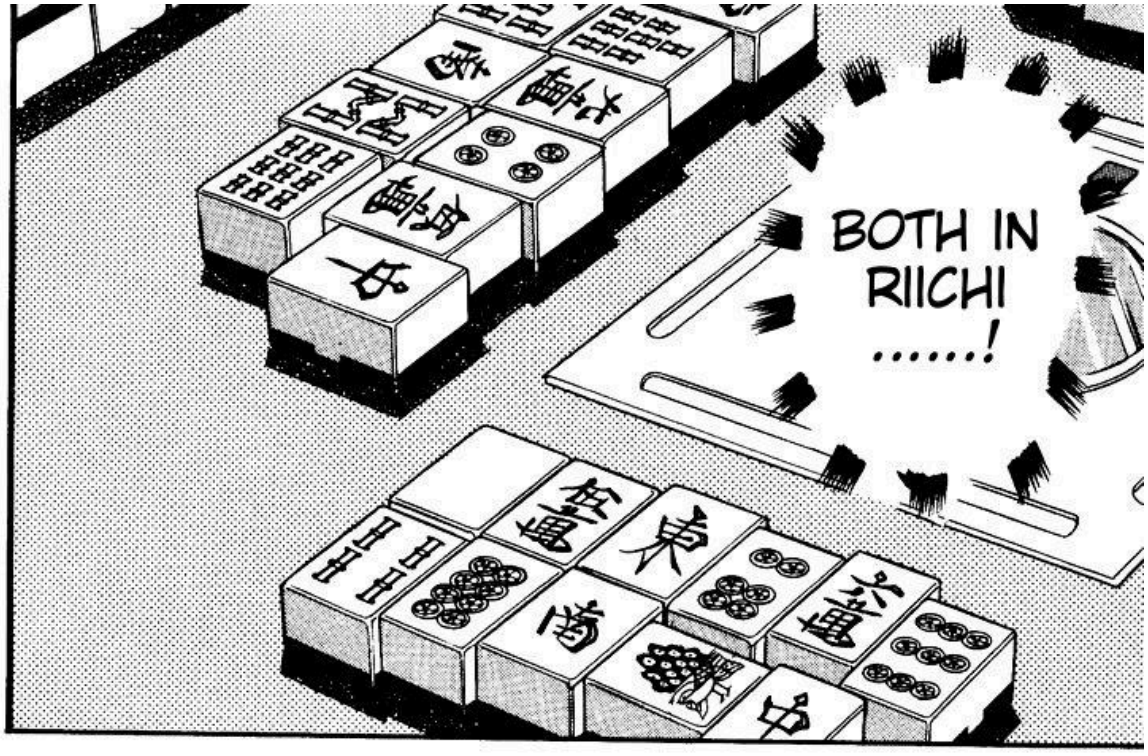

FOR HARADA TO GET A DIRECT HIT FROM A PERSON DOING THAT.
IT'S A DIFFICULT TASK
I'M PLAYING CAREFULLY.
WHEN I'M TRYING TO AVOID THAT
WEST PROBABLY WANTS TO GET A DIRECT HIT ON ME SOMEHOW BUT


.....
I'M SURE THEY'D RATHER RON THAN TSUMO...
THEY'RE LIMITING THEIR YAKU TO CHII-TOI-TSU.
SO THEY GO FOR A WAIT THAT'S FORTUNATELY HARD TO PREDICT.
THERE'S NO EFFECTIVE CAMOUFLAGE FOR A SITUATION LIKE THIS.

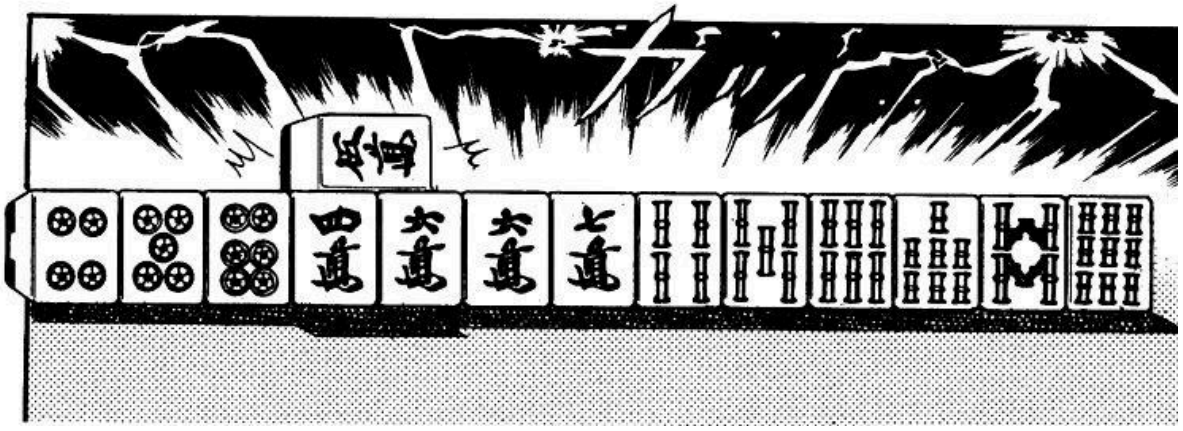

10TH TURN.
A STRATEGY AIMED AT GETTING A DIRECT HIT ON ME IN THE END.
SOGA ...


SOGA...
..... HERE HE COMES ...!
RIICHI!


HARADA TOO.....
HUH...?
RIICHI.
11TH TURN

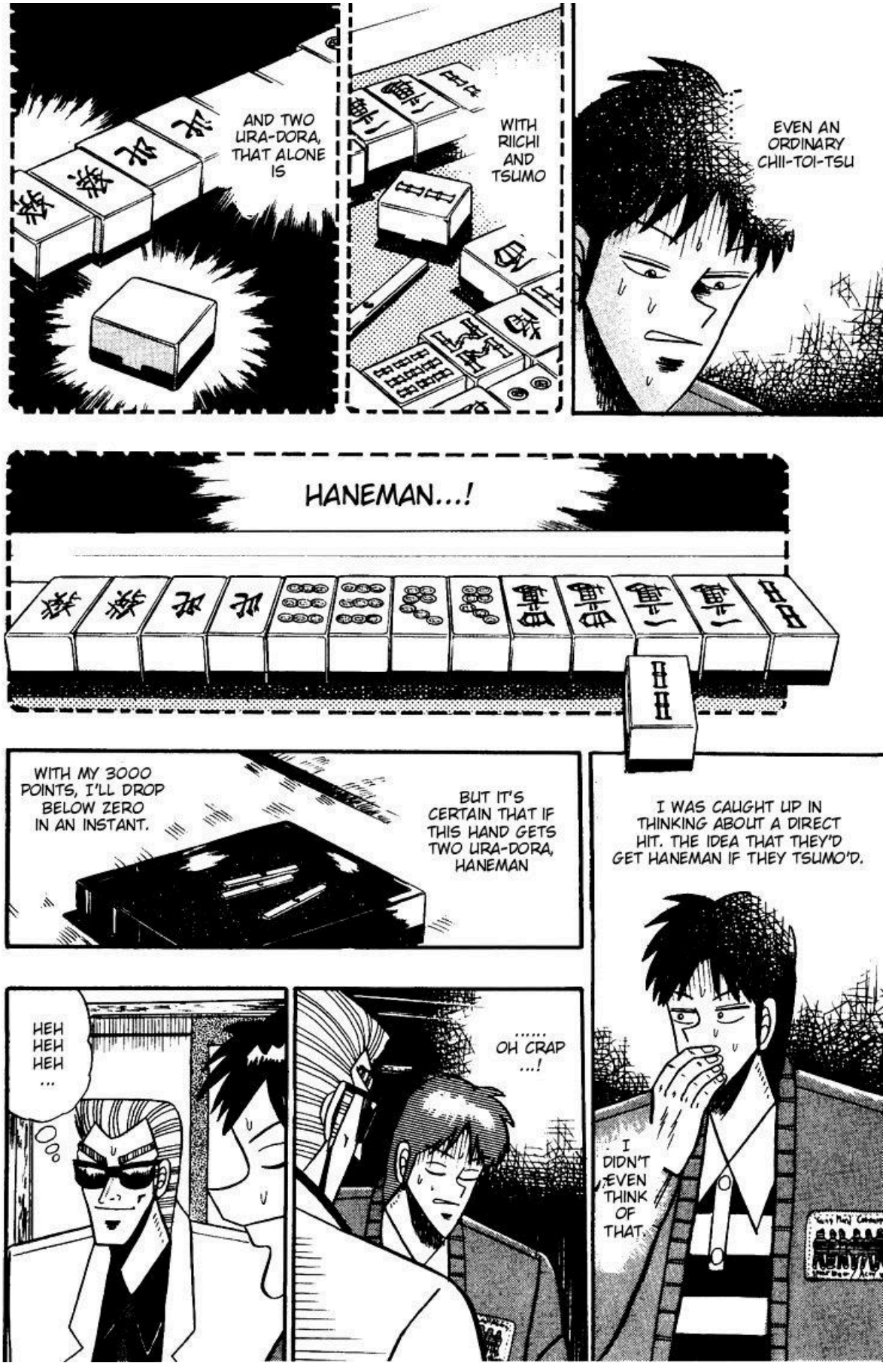

BOTH IN RIICHI .....!

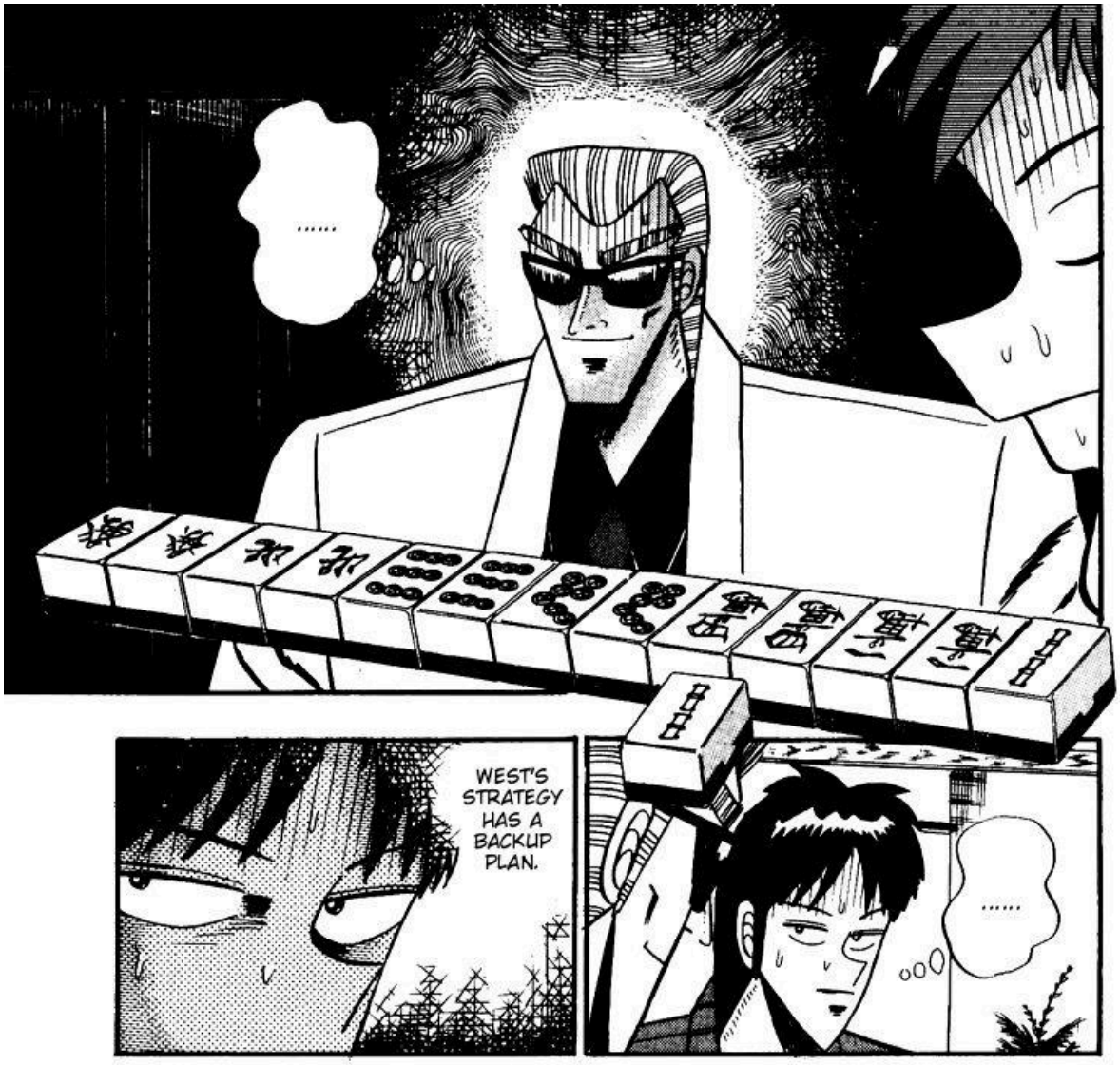

SHIT...
PRETTY LOW ON THE SCALE
EVEN THOUGH CHII-TOI-TSU IS
IT TURNS INTO MANGAN.
WITH RIICHI, IF THEY CAN GET TWO URA-DORA
THIS IS BAD ...
.....

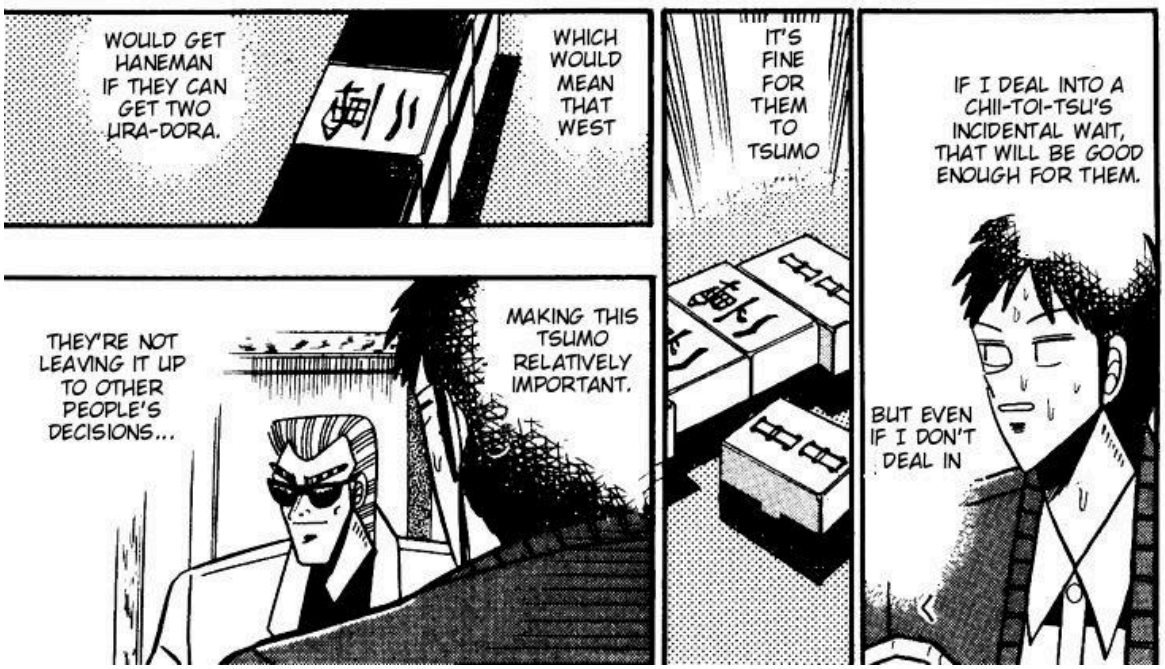


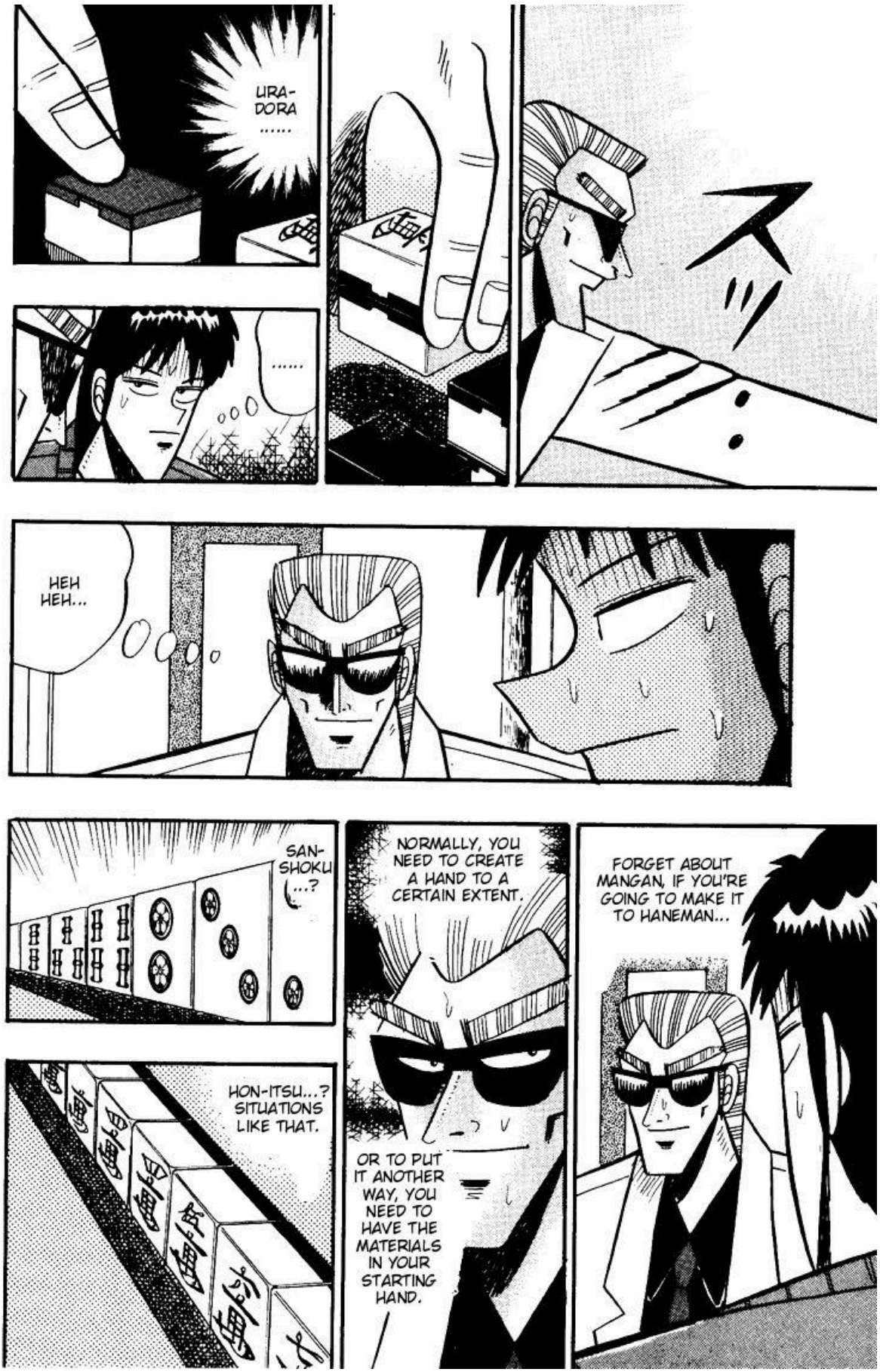

HIROYUKI EVADED.
I CAN'T RISK DEALING IN.
IT WOULD GET TO MANGAN
BUT
IF I COULD RIICHI
I'M READY TO GO OUT...!
AND AFTER 3 TURNS, ON THE 14TH TURN
HE FELL BACK A STEP
WITHOUT DECLARING RIICHI SO IT COULD GET TO MANGAN
HARADA

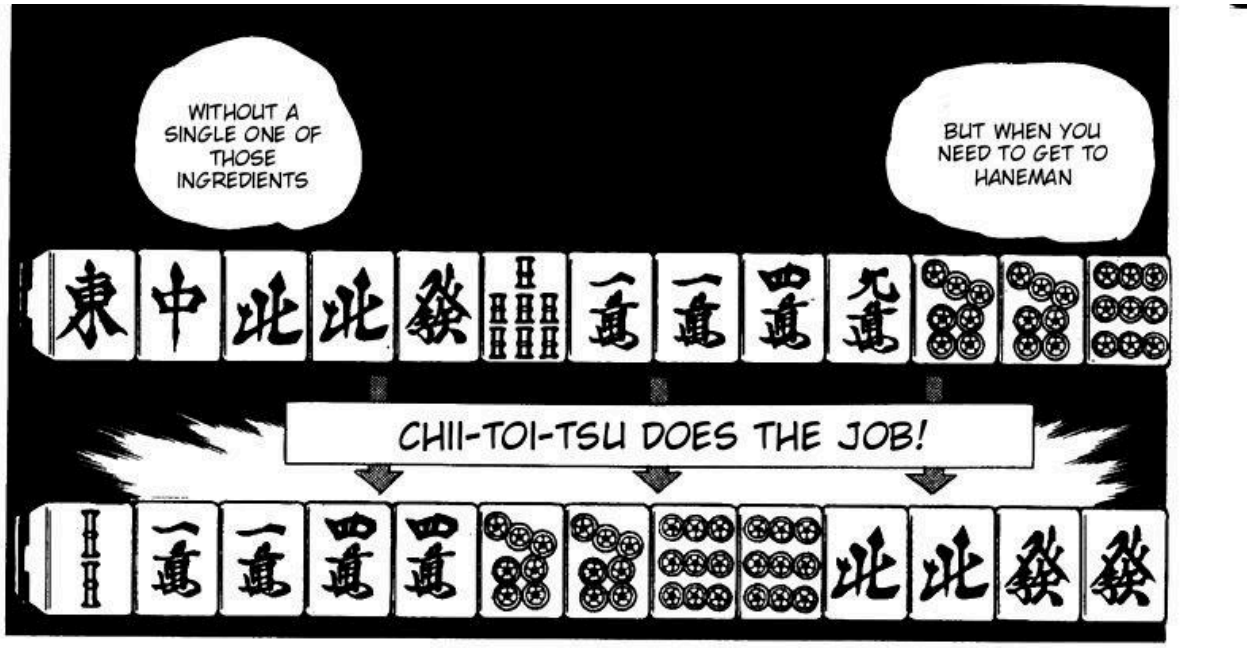

RIICHI, TSUMO, CHII-TOI-TSU ...!
ノバラ..
NO...
WHAT A MISTAKE I'VE MADE .....
SHIT .....!
NO, THAT'S WRONG ...!
ざわ..
AS FAR AS ME DROPPING BELOW ZERO GOES...
IF THEY CAN GET URA-DORA
BUT I GUESS IT'S OKAY FOR THEM TO TSUMO TOO.
IT'S ONLY CHII-TOI-TSU.
YEAH...

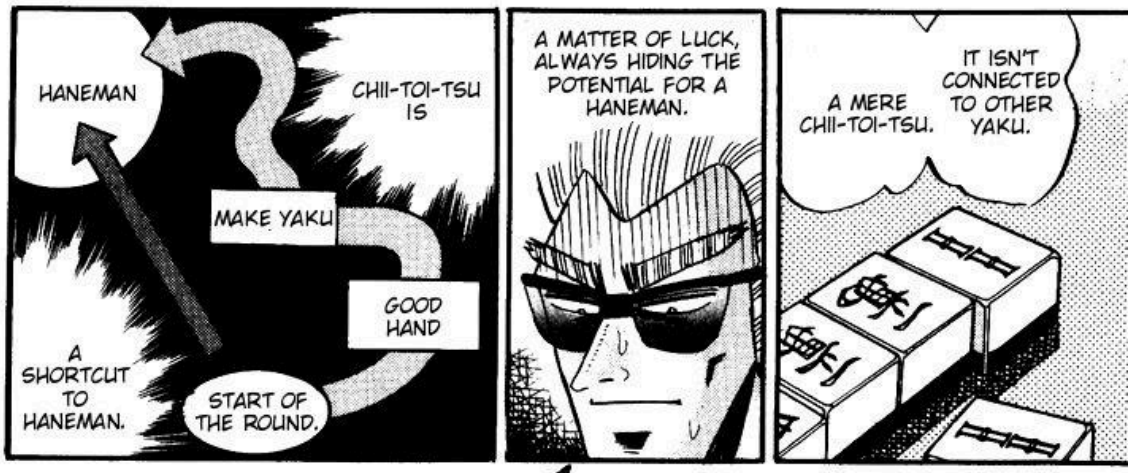

AND TWO URA-DORA, THAT ALONE IS
WITH RIICHI AND TSUMO
EVEN AN ORDINARY CHII-TOI-TSU
HANEMAN...!
WITH MY 3000 POINTS, I'LL DROP BELOW ZERO IN AN INSTANT.
BUT IT'S CERTAIN THAT IF THIS HAND GETS TWO URA-DORA, HANEMAN
I WAS CAUGHT UP IN THINKING ABOUT A DIRECT HIT. THE IDEA THAT THEY'D GET HANEMAN IF THEY TSUMO'D.
HEH HEH HEH ...
.....OH CRAP ...!
I DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF THAT.


.....
WEST'S STRATEGY HAS A BACKUP PLAN.
.....


WOULD GET HANEMAN IF THEY CAN GET TWO URA-DORA.
WHICH WOULD MEAN THAT WEST
IT'S FINE FOR THEM TO TSUMO ...
IF I DEAL INTO A CHII-TOI-TSU'S INCIDENTAL WAIT, THAT WILL BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM.
THEY'RE NOT LEAVING IT UP TO OTHER PEOPLE'S DECISIONS...
MAKING THIS TSUMO RELATIVELY IMPORTANT.
BUT EVEN IF I DON'T DEAL IN


URA-
DORA
.....
.....
HEH
HEH...
SAN-
SHOKU
...?
HON-ITSU...?
SITUATIONS
LIKE THAT.
NORMALLY, YOU
NEED TO CREATE
A HAND TO A
CERTAIN EXTENT.
OR TO PUT
IT ANOTHER
WAY, YOU
NEED TO
HAVE THE
MATERIALS
IN YOUR
STARTING
HAND.
FORGET ABOUT
MANGAN, IF YOU'RE
GOING TO MAKE IT
TO HANEMAN...


WITHOUT A SINGLE ONE OF THOSE INGREDIENTS
BUT WHEN YOU NEED TO GET TO HANEMAN
CHII-TOI-TSU DOES THE JOB!


HANEMAN
CHII-TOI-TSU IS
MAKE YAKU
GOOD HAND
A SHORTCUT TO HANEMAN.
START OF THE ROUND.
A MATTER OF LUCK, ALWAYS HIDING THE POTENTIAL FOR A HANEMAN.
A MERE CHII-TOI-TSU.
IT ISN'T CONNECTED TO OTHER YAKU.


HIROYUKI WILL BE DEAD.
IF I CAN GET WHAT'S UNDER HERE RIGHT NOW


CH'...
DIDN'T GET IT ...
PHEW ...
.....


ゴト・・・ ゴト・・・
ドヤッ
THAT WAS CLOSE.
.....
BUT.....
HOW SHOULD I RESPOND
TO WEST'S CHII-TOI-TSU ATTACK .....?
EVEN IF I'M CAREFUL TO NOT DEAL IN
AND HAVE A SOLID DEFENSE, THEY'LL END UP GETTING URA-DORA AT SOME POINT.
IN THAT CASE .....
DON'T RUSH IT.


EVEN WEST IS STRUGGLING.
BECAUSE CHII-TOI-TSU IS LIKE FIGHTING AT CLOSE RANGE.
FOR NOW, JUST WAIT.
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU'LL HAVE TO BUT
YEAH...
FIGHTING AT CLOSE RANGE .....?
AND I'LL.....
WEST HAS CLOSED THE GAP BETWEEN US.
ACCEPT THEIR CHALLENGE...!

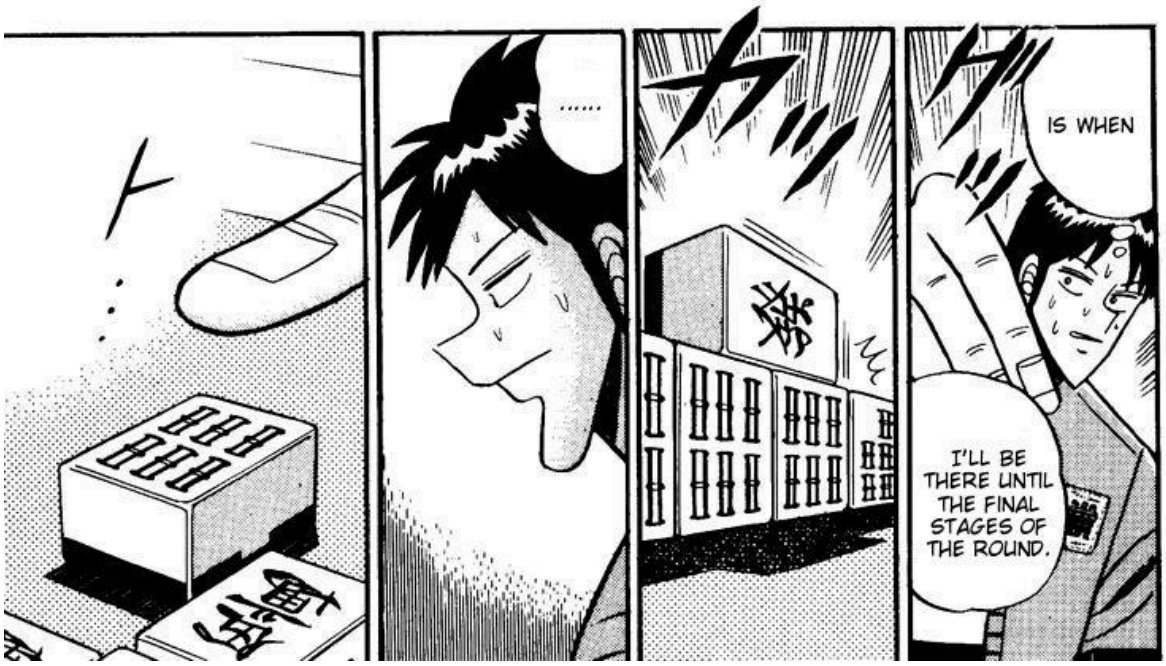
Panels For The Feat



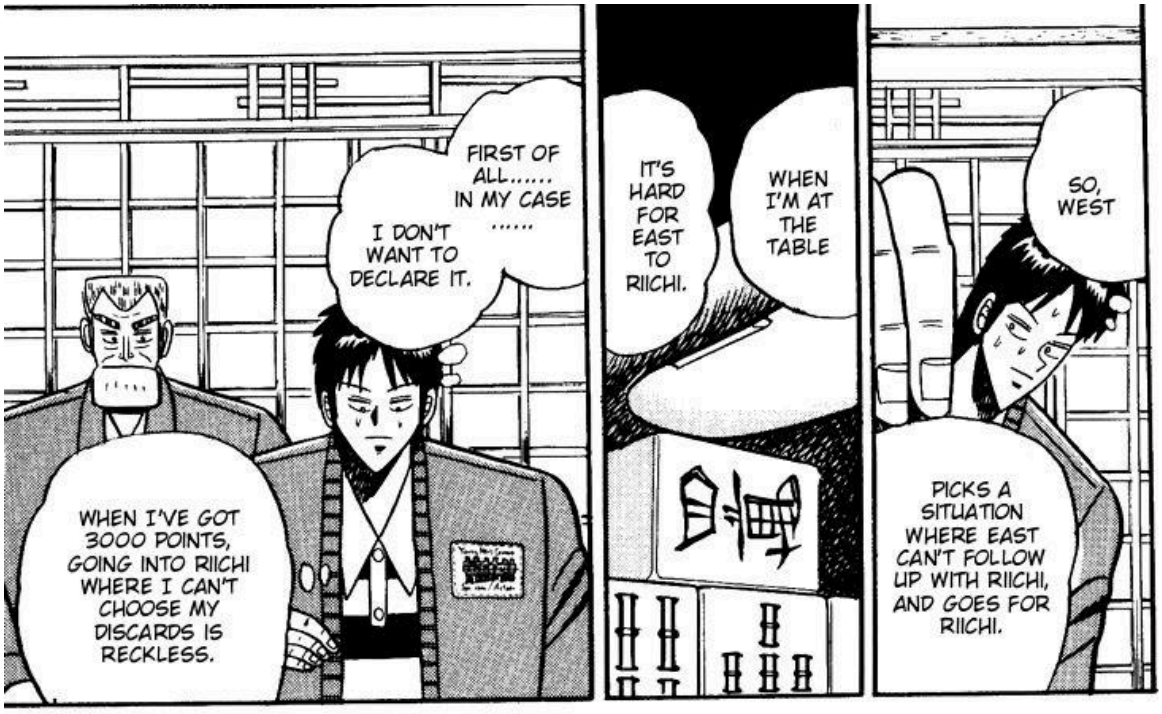

I'LL ACCEPT THAT CHALLENGE.
CHII-TOI-TSU IS A CLOSE-RANGE FIGHT.
.....
IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE SITUATION MUCH.....
THAT'S WHAT AKAGI SAID A LITTLE WHILE AGO, BUT
.....
WEST'S CHII-TOI-TSU.
IT'S A HIT AND RUN BATTLE PLAN.
THERE ARE ROUNDS THAT THEY'RE CLEARLY PASSING UP, TOO.
SURE, THEY'D BE GOING FOR A CLOSE-RANGE FIGHT, BUT
IF THEY DECLARED RIICHI EVERY ROUND
THAT'S NOT THE CASE.
RATHER
IT'S LESS OF A CLOSE-RANGE FIGHT.


チャラ...
RIICHI...!


IN SHORT, WHEN THEY GO INTO ATTACK
WHEN WEST DECLARES RIICHI!
YEAH .....
.....


.....
IS WHEN
I'LL BE THERE UNTIL THE FINAL STAGES OF THE ROUND.


ONE IS THAT WEST'S GOAL IS TO WIPE ME OUT
THERE ARE TWO REASONS.
WITH HANEMAN, CHII-TOI-TSU TSUMO WITH TWO URA-DORA.
WHY...?
THEY CAN CHASE ME DOWN WITH RIICHI.
WHEN I'M STILL AT THE TABLE
THE LEVEL OF DANGER IN DOING THAT DECREASES DRAMATICALLY.
THE OTHER REASON IS
IF THEY DON'T RIICHI WHEN I'M AT THE TABLE
TSUMO WON'T MEAN ANYTHING.
IT'S OBVIOUS THE REASON IS THAT CHII-TOI-TSU'S SINGLE WAIT WON'T STAND A CHANCE.
IF YOU PUT A NORMAL HAND LIKE A DOUBLE-SIDED WAIT UP AGAINST CHII-TOI-TSU
WITH RIICHI, WHERE YOU HAVE TO DISCARD ANY NON-WINNING TILE
THEY DON'T WANT TO GET INTO A RIICHI CONFRONTATION IF THEY CAN HELP IT.
WITH RIICHI ON CHII-TOI-TSU


FIRST OF ALL..... IN MY CASE .....
I DON'T WANT TO DECLARE IT.
WHEN I'VE GOT 3000 POINTS, GOING INTO RIICHI WHERE I CAN'T CHOOSE MY DISCARDS IS RECKLESS.
IT'S HARD FOR EAST TO RIICHI.
WHEN I'M AT THE TABLE
SO, WEST
PICKS A SITUATION WHERE EAST CAN'T FOLLOW UP WITH RIICHI, AND GOES FOR RIICHI.


BECAUSE OF ME WITH MY 3000 POINTS
IF IT GOES BADLY AND THEY GET TSUMO WITH RIICHI, I'LL END UP BELOW ZERO.
IT'S HARD FOR THEM TO RIICHI TOO .....
THAT IS, AKAGI OR TEN
OTHERS FROM EAST, TOO

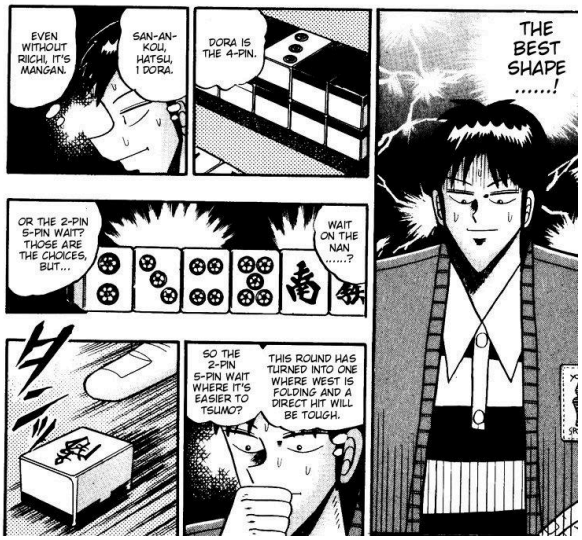

AND AFTER FURITEN, THE IDEA THAT THEY COULD DEAL INTO AN OPPONENT'S HAND
IS ALL TOO POSSIBLE.
THEY CAN'T WIN IF THEY DRAW IT
THEY DON'T HAVE A CHANCE LEFT .....
IF THEY DRAW THEIR WINNING TILE BEFORE THAT
IT WOULD BE GREAT IF IT DID JUST COME OUT BUT
THEY CAN ONLY WAIT FOR IT TO COME FROM AN OPPONENT.
IN THE END, EVEN IF THEY RIICHI


IT'S LIKE EAST IF FIGHTING WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND OUR BACKS.
WHILE I'M AT THE TABLE
IN THE END
THAT'S WHERE WEST IS AIMING FOR.
A QUIET STYLE OF PLAYING.
NOT DECLARING RIICHI.
IN THE ROUNDS I'M GONE FROM THE TABLE
WEST DOESN'T NEED TO BE CARELESS.
THEY GO ON FULL DEFENSE.
OF AN ADVANTAGE LIKE THAT COMING UP
BECAUSE THERE'S A 50% CHANCE
A DRAW.
18TH TURN
CLEAR ROUNDS OF ATTACK AND CLEAR ROUNDS OF DEFENSE.
IT'S EXACTLY LIKE ATTACK AND DEFENSE IN BASEBALL.


THE WINDS SHIFT AGAIN.
THE ROUND PASSED... WEST'S CHII-TOI-TSU DIDN'T WORK OUT FOR THEM.
THE GAME WAS ON THE 7TH HAN-CHAN.
BY THE 6TH TURN, COUNTING LAST ROUND
HIROYUKI WAS ON HIS 10TH DISCARD IN A ROW.
THIS ROUND
EAST 2ND ROUND
6TH TURN
LEAVING THE DIRECTION OF THIS GAME TO TEN AND AKAGI.
ONE DISCARD FROM HERE AND IT WOULD BE DONE.
THIS WAS HIS FINAL CHOICE.
LEAVING THE TABLE.

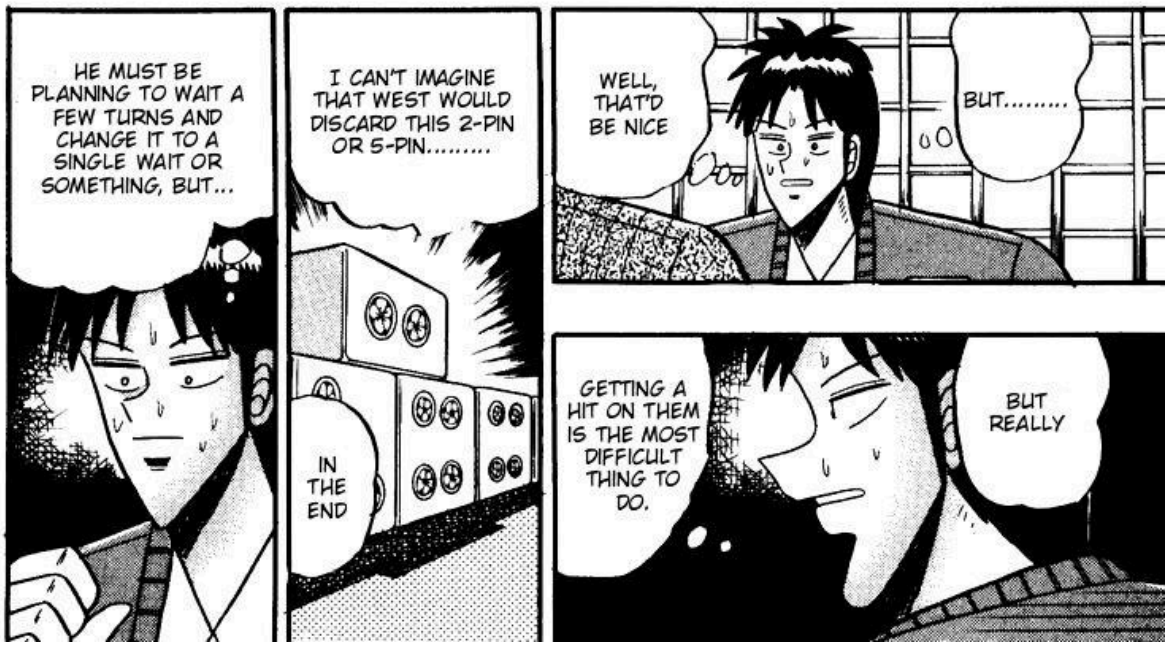

SAN-AN-KOU TENPAI

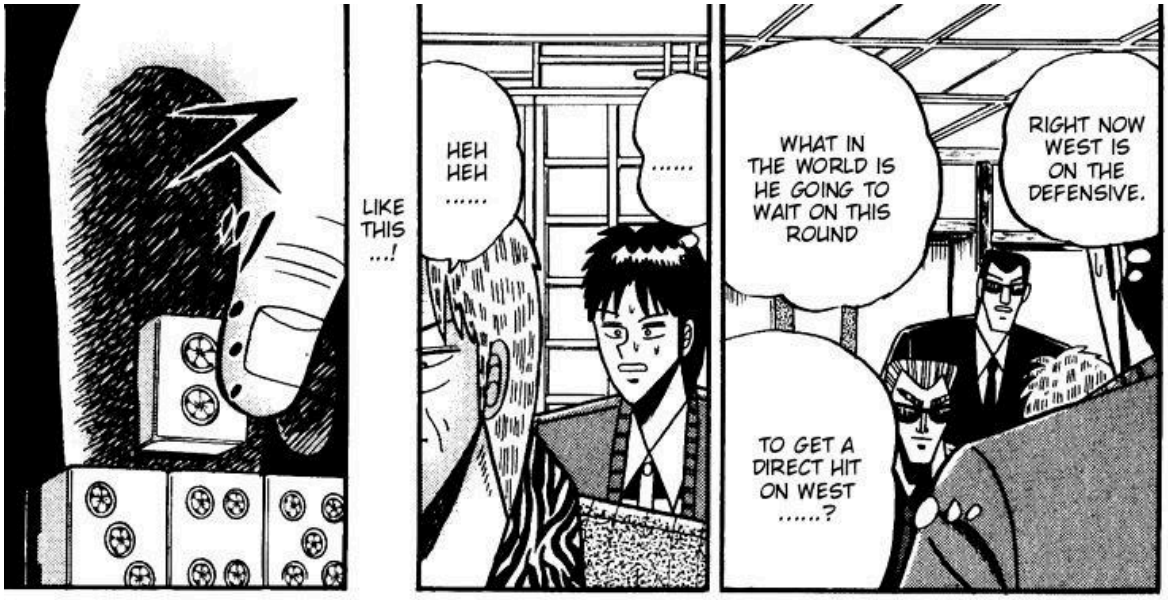

A CLOSED KAN FOR NOW, I GUESS .....
HE DREW THE 4-MAN.
NEXT TURN WENT FROM HIROYUKI TO AKAGI.
LET'S TAKE THEM OUT ...!
AFTER GETTING IT THIS FAR, IT'D BE BORING TO GO FOR TSUMO.
THIS IS GETTING INTERESTING.
HIRO.
THIS HAND
?
HEH HEH ...


EVEN WITHOUT RIICHI, IT'S MANGAN.
SAN-AN-KOU, HATSU, 1 DORA.
DORA IS THE 4-PIN.
THE BEST SHAPE .....!
OR THE 2-PIN 5-PIN WAIT? THOSE ARE THE CHOICES, BUT...
WAIT ON THE NAN .....?
SO THE 2-PIN 5-PIN WAIT WHERE IT'S EASIER TO TSUMO?
THIS ROUND HAS TURNED INTO ONE WHERE WEST IS FOLDING AND A DIRECT HIT WILL BE TOUGH.

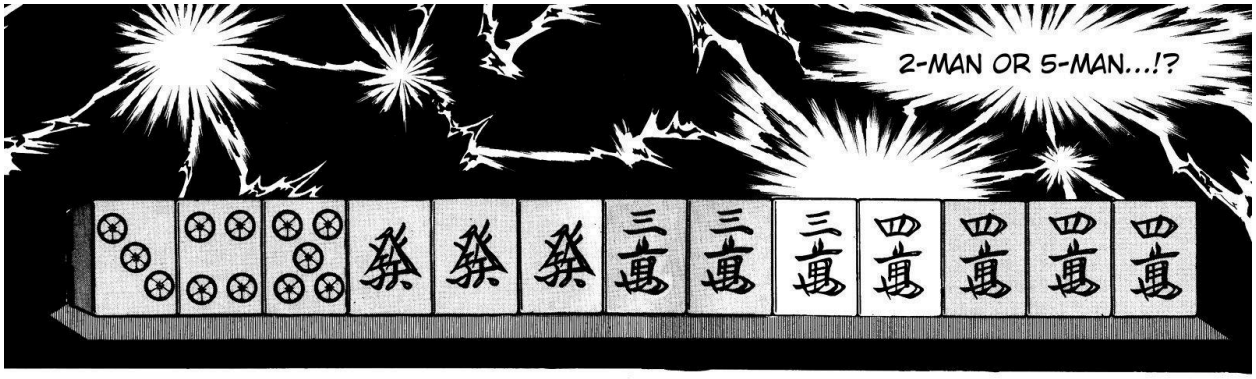

HEH HEH.
ざわ.!
ざわ.
HUH...?


UHH...
TSUMO IS BARELY EFFECTIVE.
IF THAT'S HOW WEST IS GOING TO PLAY IT
I'LL HAVE TO HIT THEIR POINTS HARD WITH A DIRECT STRIKE TO OPEN THEIR EYES.
AFTER SO LONG
EVEN AFTER I THOUGHT IT WAS GOING TO TURN INTO A FLASHY CONFRONTATION
THEY KEEP ON RUNNING OFF AT THE HINT OF DANGER .....


HE MUST BE PLANNING TO WAIT A FEW TURNS AND CHANGE IT TO A SINGLE WAIT OR SOMETHING, BUT...
I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT WEST WOULD DISCARD THIS 2-PIN OR 5-PIN.....
IN THE END
WELL, THAT'D BE NICE
BUT.....
GETTING A HIT ON THEM IS THE MOST DIFFICULT THING TO DO.
BUT REALLY


LIKE THIS ...!
HEH HEH .....
.....
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HE GOING TO WAIT ON THIS ROUND
RIGHT NOW WEST IS ON THE DEFENSIVE.
TO GET A DIRECT HIT ON WEST .....?

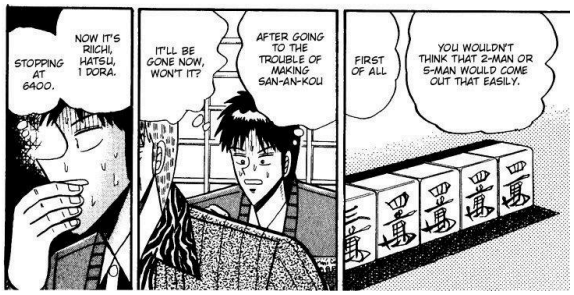

RIICHI...!
THAT'S CRAZY ...!
THA...
HUH ...?


2-MAN OR 5-MAN...!?

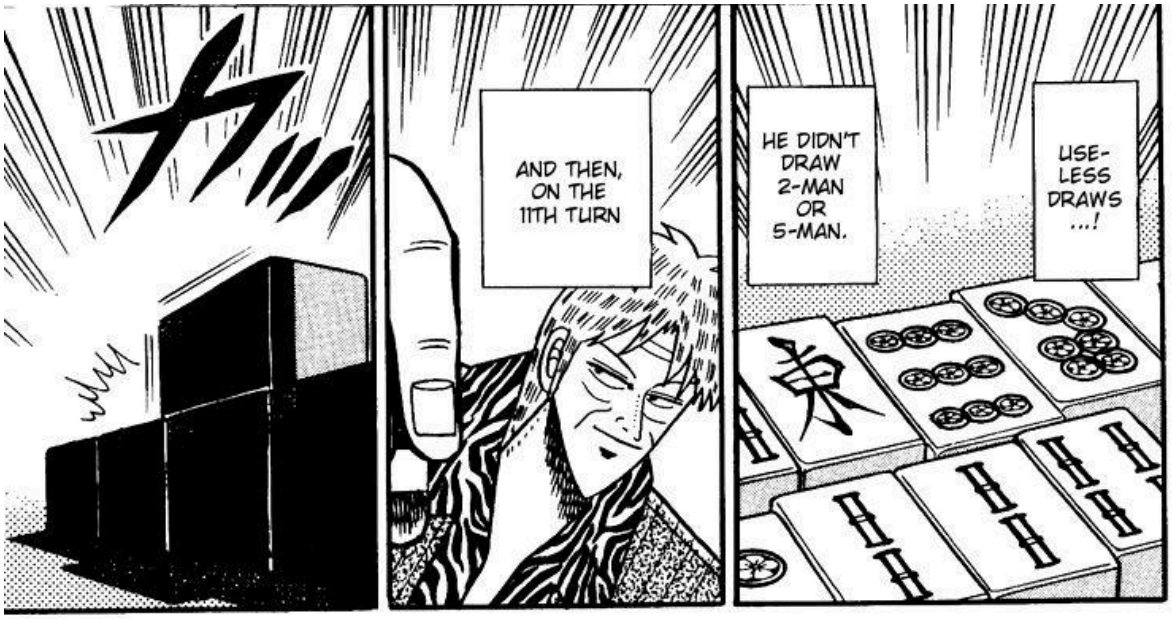

AKAGI...
SO THEN, I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HE'S DOING.
IT'S MADNESS ...
IT WON'T REACH THE CRITICAL MANGAN.
EVEN IF THE 2-MAN OR 5-MAN COMES FROM WEST

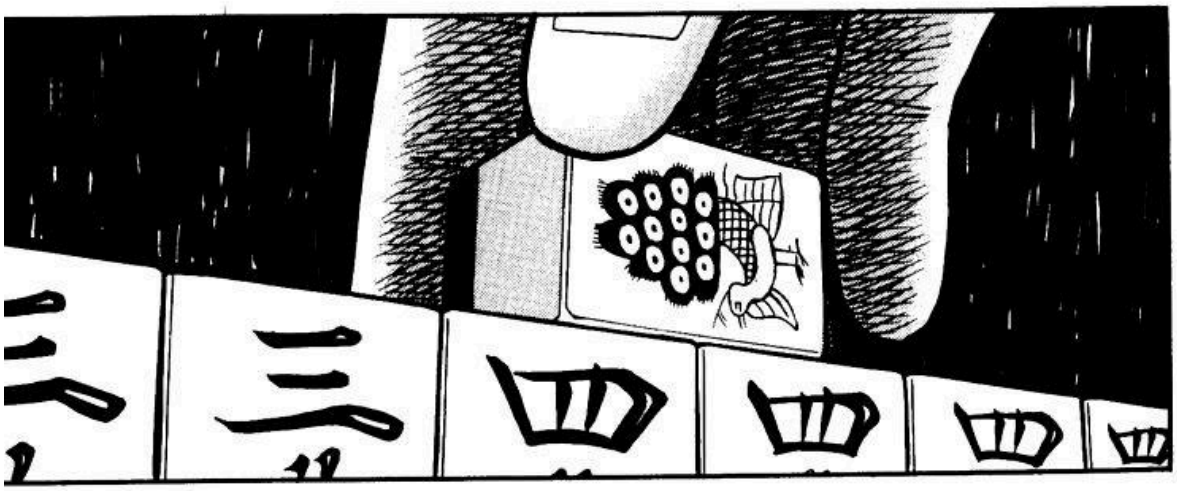

RICHI, HUH .....
WEST, UPON SEEING THIS RICHI
ざわ...
.....
ざわ...


WHY .....?
WHY...
A 2-MAN OR 5-MAN WAIT ...!?


STOPPING AT 6400.
NOW IT'S RICHI, HATSU, 1 DORA.
IT'LL BE GONE NOW, WON'T IT?
AFTER GOING TO THE TROUBLE OF MAKING SAN-AN-KOU
FIRST OF ALL
YOU WOULDN'T THINK THAT 2-MAN OR 5-MAN WOULD COME OUT THAT EASILY.


BUT WE CAN'T GET CARELESS.
BEFORE HE CAN TSUMO... I WANT TO GET A WIN BUT...
IF I CAN
PLAYING TO FOLD.
PLAYED A SERIES OF TILES ALREADY OUT AND SAFE TILES...
BUT ALSO SOGA
NOT ONLY HARADA
I'LL GO AROUND HIM.
THIS ROUND WEST IS BASICALLY IN DEFENSE.
I CAN SEE WHAT'S GOING ON.
.....
WITH THAT IN MIND, ON THE 8TH, 9TH, 10TH TURNS
WEST WON'T DEAL IN.
IT'S HOPE-LESS.
THE THING THEY'RE WATCHING OUT FOR THE MOST.
WEST WON'T DISCARD THOSE TILES.
NOT SEEING 3-MAN OR 4-MAN OUT ON THE TABLE, THE 2-5 SUJI IS


AND THEN, ON THE 11TH TURN
HE DIDN'T DRAW 2-MAN OR 5-MAN.
USE-LESS DRAWS ...!

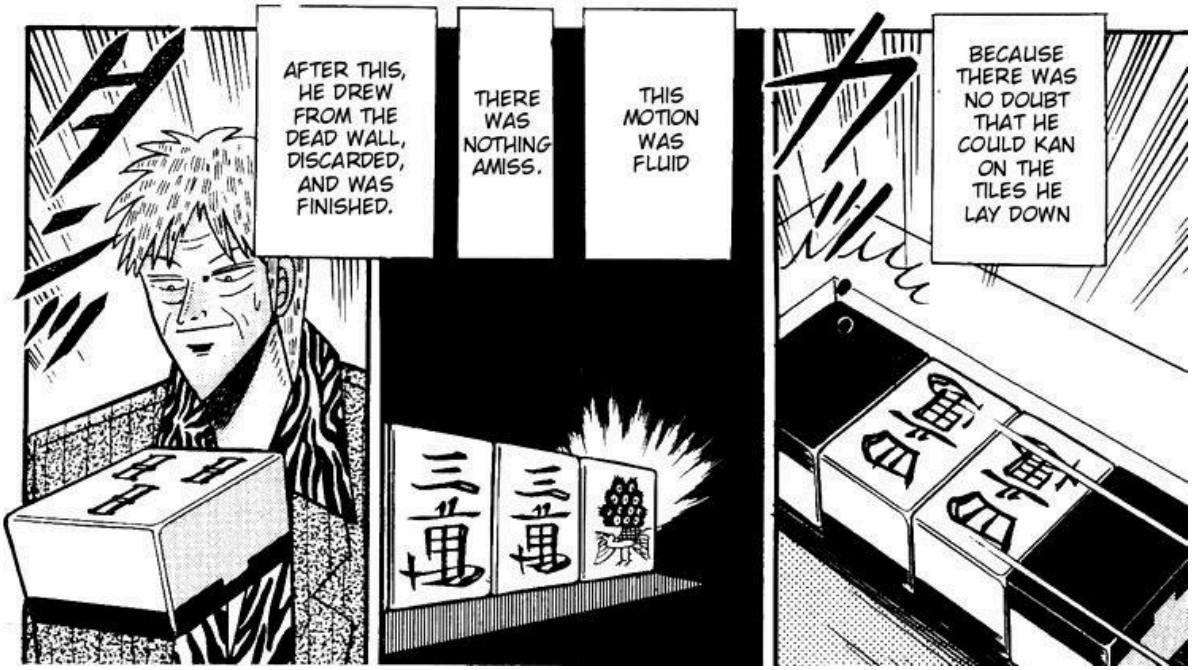



KAN...!
HEH HEH ...


HUH...?

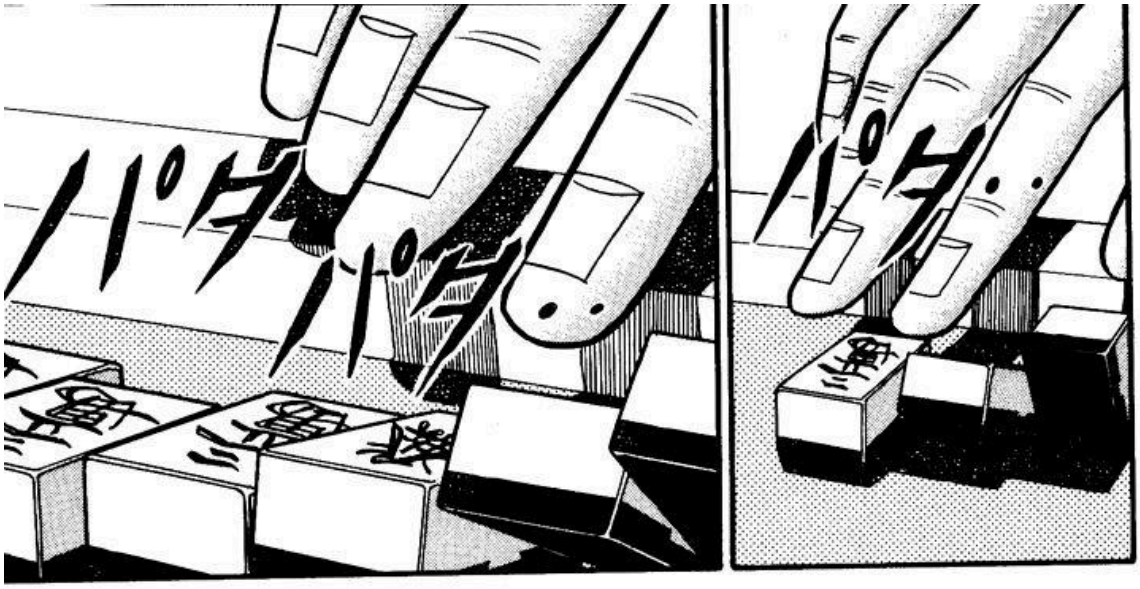

AKAGI'S ILLEGAL KAN...!


AFTER THAT, HE OPENED UP THE TILES.
THAT SPOT WAS HIDDEN FROM SIGHT.
WHERE DID HE PUT IT .....?
WHEN HE PUT THE TILE INTO HIS HAND
IT WAS HARD TO TELL IT WAS ILLEGAL.
BUT TO WEST


AFTER THIS, HE DREW FROM THE DEAD WALL, DISCARDED, AND WAS FINISHED.
THERE WAS NOTHING AMISS.
THIS MOTION WAS FLUID
BECAUSE THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT HE COULD KAN ON THE TILES HE LAY DOWN

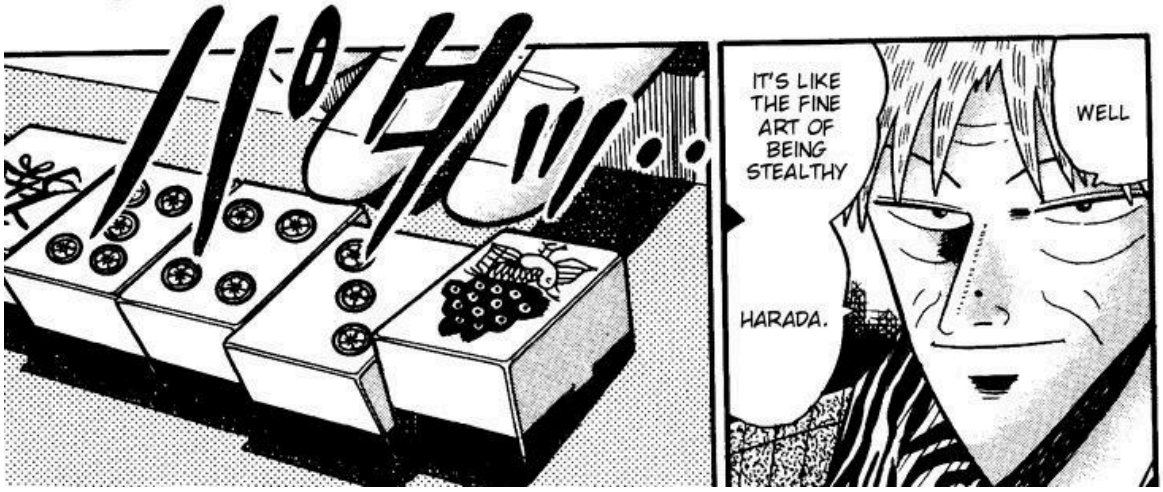

TURNED INTO A SINGLE WAIT ON THE 1-SOU .....!
IN A SPLIT SECOND
THIS 2-MAN, 5-MAN WAIT
NEXT TURN
HARADA
HE'S FEARLESS ...
WHAT AN IDEA...
..... THAT'S CRAZY.
.....
ざわ・・・
I'VE GOT DORA AND KAN-DORA IN MY HAND TOO.
THE PEI IS A SAFE TILE BUT
IF IT COMES OUT, IT'LL BE HANEMAN.
I DREW 4-PIN AND I'M IN TENPAI AGAIN.
カッ!!

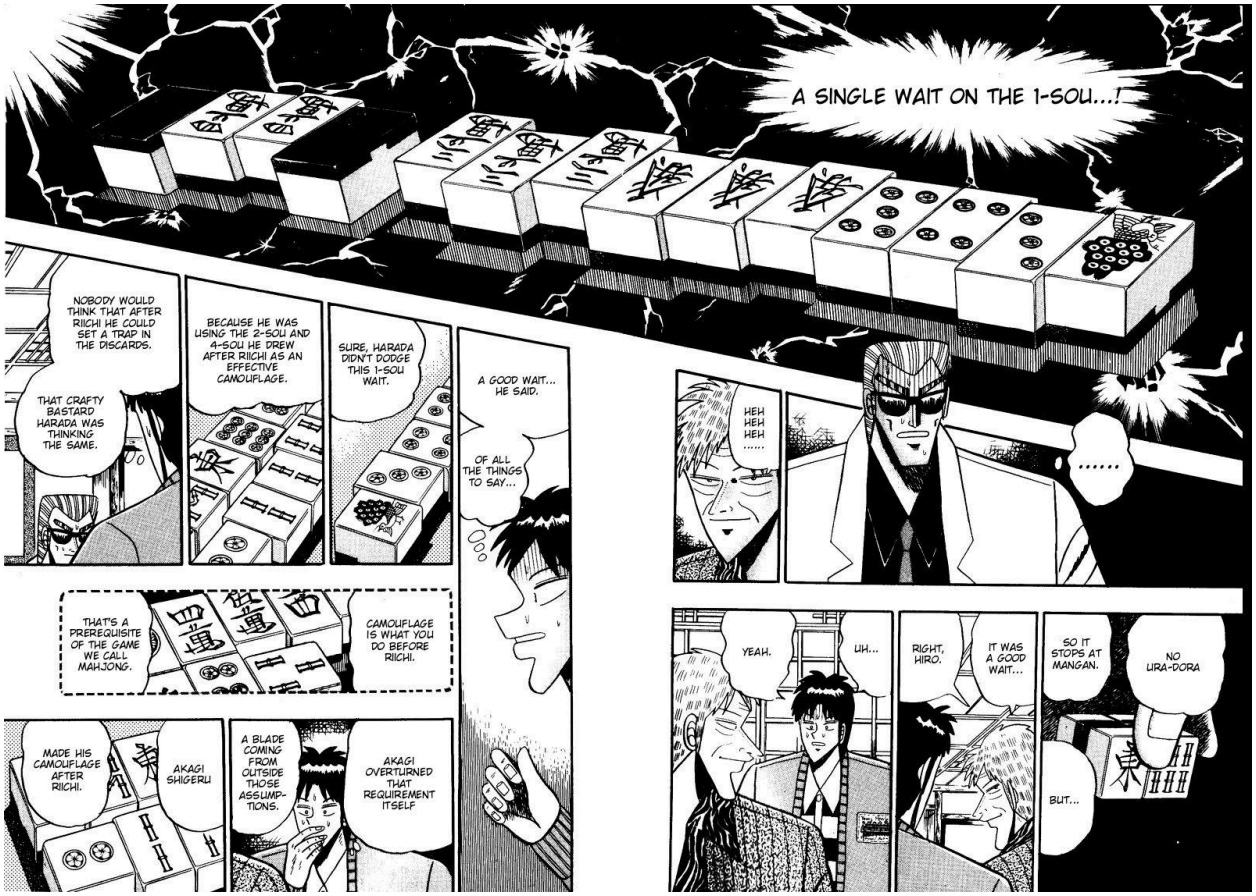

NO PROBLEM .....
チラ
RIGHT AROUND HERE ...
ドン!!
HUH...?
SORRY, THAT'S THE ONE, HARADA.
HEH HEH...
URGH ...!
HOW COULD HE...?
1-SOU .....?


パラ
パラ
パラ

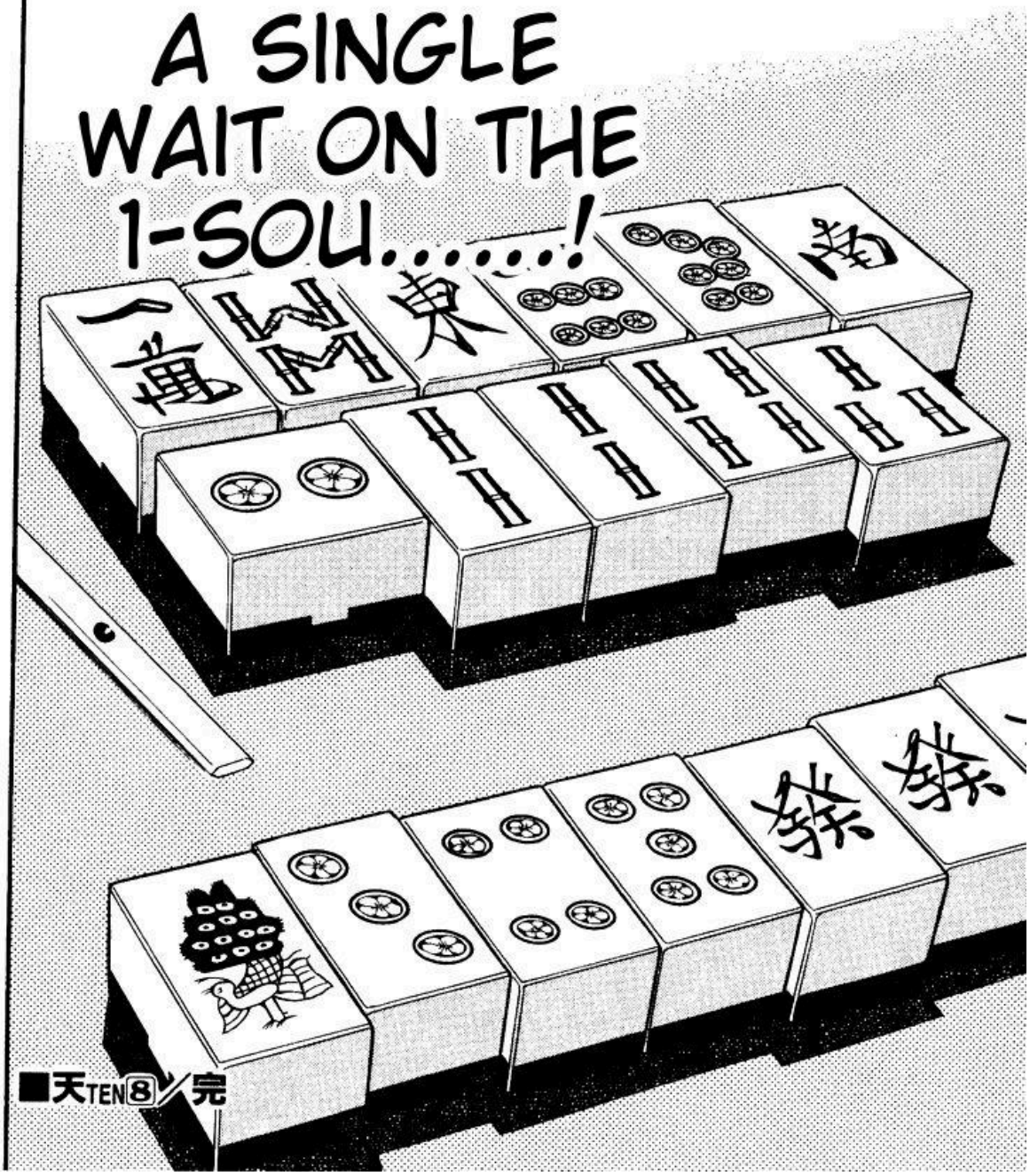

GH...!


WHEN THE SNOW HAS FALLEN, THEY CAN EVEN TURN INTO A WHITE FOX.
AFTER RIICHI, WHEN THE LEAVES FALL FROM THE TREES, AMONG THOSE LEAVES
THAT'S CRAZY .....


パラ
IT'S LIKE THE FINE ART OF BEING STEALTHY
WELL
HARADA.


A SINGLE WAIT ON THE 1-SOU...!
NOBODY WOULD THINK THAT AFTER RIICHI HE COULD SET A TRAP IN THE DISCARDS.
THAT CRAFTY BASTARD HARADA WAS THINKING THE SAME.
BECAUSE HE WAS USING THE 2-SOU AND 4-SOU HE DREW AFTER RIICHI AS AN EFFECTIVE CAMOUFLAGE.
SURE, HARADA DIDN'T DODGE THIS 1-SOU WAIT.
A GOOD WAIT... HE SAID.
OF ALL THE THINGS TO SAY...
HEH HEH HEH .....
.....
THAT'S A PREREQUISITE OF THE GAME WE CALL MAHJONG.
CAMOUFLAGE IS WHAT YOU DO BEFORE RIICHI.
MADE HIS CAMOUFLAGE AFTER RIICHI.
AKAGI SHIGERU
A BLADE COMING FROM OUTSIDE THOSE ASSUMP-TIONS.
AKAGI OVERTURNED THAT REQUIREMENT ITSELF
YEAH.
UH...
RIGHT, HIRO.
IT WAS A GOOD WAIT...
SO IT STOPS AT MANGAN.
NO URA-DORA
BUT...

A COMEBACK DISGUISE THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND AGAINST



■天TEN 8 ／完

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Feat explanation

Strategy/Tactics

Akagi's strategy in this sequence operates across three nested levels.

Match Analysis

Akagi has first completed an analysis of the entire competitive situation. He has identified West's primary objective (eliminate Hiroyuki before the final table), the mechanism West is using to pursue that objective (chii-toi-tsu hit-and-run keyed to Hiroyuki's point vulnerability), and the structural asymmetry this creates: when Hiroyuki is seated, East fights at a disadvantage and Hiroyuki cannot riichi freely without risking elimination, and this constraint propagates upward, making it harder for even Akagi and Ten to riichi without inadvertently facilitating West's attack on Hiroyuki.

This strategic read is described exactly in the manga: "It's like East is fighting with one hand tied behind our backs while he's at the table." That observation will serve as the foundation of the counter-strategy. To remove the tied hand, Akagi must strike during the exact window when the constraint is gone: after Hiroyuki has made his final discard and is about to leave, but before the round ends is the moment when East regains full tactical freedom and West has already switched into defense mode.

The strategic insight can be summarized as: West's strategy creates two distinct game states — one where West attacks and East is constrained, one where West defends and East is free. Conventional play responds to each state as it arrives. Akagi's play is designed to be maximally destructive in the second state (West defending, East free) and patient during the first.

Strategic: Choosing the Response That West's System Cannot Model

Given West's strategy, what is the correct counter? Three options:

Option A: Direct conventional confrontation. Declare riichi on a legal, strong wait. Problem: West's suji defensive system handles all legal waits. In full defense mode with active suji tracking, West will fold rather than discard a suji-dangerous tile. Expected value: low. The trap never lands.

Option B: Chii-toi-tsu counter. Match West's chii-toi-tsu with East's own riichi. Problem: chii-toi-tsu's single wait is structurally inferior in a direct confrontation and if West gets a two-sided wait against the single wait, the odds favor West. Furthermore, chii-toi-tsu riichi with

West in full defense still doesn't produce a direct hit, because West won't discard the single winning tile unless it's disguised as safe.

Option C: Attack outside the defended perimeter. Create a wait that West's system classifies as safe, not by finding a tile that's genuinely safe under the rules, but by making a tile appear safe that isn't. This requires operating outside the rules. Option C is the only option that produces the desired outcome (direct hit on a defensive West player).

The strategic logic is great once you look at it as it shows that Akagi doesn't choose the illegal approach out of preference for risk or rule-breaking but chooses it because it is the only logical conclusion once all legal approaches are eliminated. The strategy is the product of constraint elimination reasoning applied to the strategic level.

Strategic Depth: Attacking the Opponent's System, Not Just Their Hand

A critical strategic nuance is that Akagi didn’t merely try to score points but also attack the structural integrity of West's defensive system. West's system is built on the assumption that rules hold and specifically that post-riichi waits are fixed and that tile selection under defense can be trusted based on suji calculations and legal game state.
By introducing an illegal wait change, Akagi doesn't just score a mangan. He demonstrates to West that their defensive system has a fatal blindspot. He makes the suji system a liability rather than a resource and because if the wait can change after riichi, then no post-riichi suji calculation can be trusted. He corrupts the basis of West's defensive system. Along with the fact that Harada is now within range to be eliminated if he deals into another mangan hand, which means Akagi has effectively crippled Harada in the long run. This is the difference between tactical victory and strategic victory. A tactical victory would just be scoring points but a strategic victory changes the opponent's model of what is possible and it degrades their future decision-making capacity. After this round, West cannot rely on post-riichi suji analysis with the same confidence. That degradation of their system is worth at least as much as the mangan points.

Positional Strategy: Score, Timing, and the Phase Window

The decision to strike in this specific round is the product of positional analysis.

Score positioning: The han count san-an-kou with 1 dora = mangan even without riichi. The hand has sufficient value to make the attempt meaningful without requiring ura-dora variance.

Timing the phase transition: Hiroyuki is on his final discard before leaving the table. This is the exact moment of the phase transition that West is about to switch from attack mode (Hiroyuki present) to defense mode (Hiroyuki absent). But the round isn't over yet. West is already mentally in defense mode, which means they're already running their safe-tile selection process. The trap activates at the moment West's behavioral state (looking for safe tiles) aligns with the trap's requirements (they need to discard a tile that's not around the 2-5 man suji).

Amplification via West's own behavior: West in full defense mode is not just a passive state. It is an active behavior as they are actively seeking safe tiles to discard. This active seeking is what makes them more likely to discard the 1-sou, not less. The trap is designed for a player who is working hard to be safe. The harder they work at it, the deeper into the trap they walk.

Akagi's tactical execution is a sequence of five discrete, mutually reinforcing operations. Each one would be difficult in isolation. Together, they form a system where the success of each subsequent step depends on the previous steps having worked — and they do.

Tactic 1- Pre-Riichi Wait Configuration: Planting the False Signal

The first tactical operation is the hand construction itself. Akagi reaches tenpai in san-an-kou configuration and has multiple viable waits available. The tactical selection criterion is not "which wait gives me the highest probability of winning under normal conditions." It is: "which wait configuration produces a suji pattern that makes 1-sou appear maximally safe to Harada's defensive system?"
The selected apparent wait (2-man/5-man, implied by the tile discards and hand development) achieves several things simultaneously. It activates West's suji tracking on the man suit. It creates a specific threat object (2-man and 5-man) that will dominate Harada's attention. And crucially, it creates a contrast: since the danger is in the man suit, the sou suit (where 1-sou lives) reads as a separate, uncontested domain. The sou tiles are not in anyone's crosshairs. This is the foundation of the entire tactical sequence. Without the correct pre-riichi configuration, the post-riichi operations cannot land. The false signal must be planted precisely here because the suji reading that Harada will run during defense depends on what discards preceded riichi.

Tactic 2 — The Riichi Declaration: Activating the Defensive Mode

The riichi declaration is a tactical trigger. It does two things: it announces Akagi's hand is ready, and it locks the other players' behavior into predictable patterns. Harada, on seeing the riichi, activates his defensive protocol. He switches attention to suji tracking and safe-tile selection. He stops pursuing his own hand and starts managing his defense.
The tactical value of triggering this mode is that it makes Harada's subsequent behavior highly predictable. A Harada in defense mode follows a rule: discard safe tiles. By declaring riichi, Akagi removes Harada's agency and channels it into a predictable rule-following pattern. The riichi declaration serves as a psychological switch that sets up the final discard. The riichi also serves an information purpose. It commits Akagi to a revealed tenpai state, which gives Harada information to work with. But the information Harada receives is the false signal Akagi planted and not the true wait. The riichi transforms the pre-planted false signal into an active, verifiable threat.

Tactic 3 — The Illegal Kan

The kan is the mechanism that separates the apparent wait from the actual wait. Without it, the entire deception is purely pre-riichi camouflage and technically legal, and limited in scope. The

illegal kan is what makes the post-riichi period into a second, hidden deception stage. For people who don't know mahjong this might be a little confusing so I'll give a brief explanation of why what Akagi did was illegal. First a Kan is something you can do when you have 4 of the same tiles. When you have a Kan that was built in you hand you can make a closed Kan which gives you the benefits of keeping your hand closed which allows you to still be able to riichi. But that information doesn't matter for what Akagi did as what Akagi did involves Kan after riichi. This is a legal move that allows you to first riichi and if you already have a triplet then when you're drawing during riichi and get the 4th time you can now Kan. What makes Akagi's Kan illegal is that he didn't draw his 4th identical tile after riichi to make the Kan (as he already had the Kan in his hand. He instead used the tile he drew (1 sou) and pretended that it was the 4th 4 man he needed to make a valid Kan after riichi. Which would allow him to illegally change his hand into a valid new hand under the Concealment of a normal Kan after riichi.

The physical execution is precisely constrained:

• The kan must be declared in a way that appears fully legitimate, it must look like Akagi drew that 4 man to call his Kan

• During the moment when tiles are in motion (lifted, placed, the brief window when position is ambiguous), the concealment must occur.

• The motion must be fluid. No hesitation, no unusual speed, no pause that would flag an anomaly to behavioral monitors.

• After the kan, Akagi draws from the dead wall and discards. The post-kan sequence must proceed exactly as a normal rinshan draw would.

The manga notes that the spot where the concealed tile was placed was "hidden from sight" and that the motion was "fluid" with "nothing amiss." The only detectable signal of deception during the process would be behavioral leakage, and he produces none.

The result of the kan: Akagi's wait silently shifts from 2-man/5-man to single wait on 1-sou. This shift happens inside the only concealment window the game's rules naturally provide (tile handling during a kan declaration). The timing of the kan was chosen as the mechanism precisely because it provides a legitimate cover for tile handling and because 1-sou was an ideal wait for Akagi.

Tactic 4 — Post-Riichi Camouflage Discards: Triple-Layer Misdirection

After riichi and after the illegal kan, Akagi draws two tiles before Harada draws the 1-sou: first 2-sou, then 4-sou. He discards both. Under normal rules, post-riichi discards are forced and you discard whatever you draw because you're locked into your wait. This makes post-riichi discards appear informationally inert: they tell you nothing about the wait because the player has no

choice. But Akagi has made this apparent inertness into an active weapon. The 2-sou and 4-sou discards do three distinct tactical things simultaneously:

First layer- Suji-based safety signal for 1-sou. Under suji logic, if a player just discarded 2-sou, it's unlikely they're waiting on 1-3 of sou (because that sequence would have put 2-sou in their winning tile zone). The 2-sou discard actively signals that 1-sou is probably safe. The 4-sou discard adds a parallel safety signal from the other direction. By the time Harada draws 1-sou, two suji readings have independently certified it as safe and not from the absence of evidence but from the presence of confirming evidence.

Second layer- Cross-suit misdirection. The 2-sou and 4-sou discards are sou tiles. Sou-suit discards from Akagi in the post-riichi period reinforce the narrative that his wait is in a different suit (man). Nobody waiting on sou tiles would casually discard bamboo tiles or so the reasoning goes. The sou discards point away from sou as the dangerous suit.

Third layer- Post-riichi normalcy maintenance. If Akagi drew 2-man or 5-man (his apparent winning tiles) post-riichi, he'd have to discard them and that would be an obvious tell. The fact that he draws and discards sou tiles instead is treated as simply the variance of what tiles the wall delivers. This randomness confirmation reassures observers that no manipulation is occurring and the post-riichi sequence looks like a player waiting for his winning tiles while drawing dross.

This triple-layer deception exploiting a single pair of discards is the most compressed piece of tactical genius (yeah I'm glazing lol) in the sequence. Three distinct defensive readings in Harada's mind are fed simultaneously by two tile discards.

Tactic 5- The Single Wait Optimization: Narrowing to the Perfect Window

A tanki (single wait) on 1-sou is conventionally considered a weak tenpai as only one tile wins instead of two. But the tactical context inverts this entirely.
The wait on 2-man/5-man would theoretically be stronger under normal play (two winning tiles). But West is in defense mode and will not discard man-suit tiles that their suji tracking flags as dangerous. The strength of the two-tile wait is irrelevant because neither tile will come from West during this phase.
The 1-sou single wait is the right tactical choice because it targets the specific tile that Harada's system has certified as safe, and which Harada in defense mode will actively seek to discard. The "inferior" wait structure is actually the highest-expected-value option given the specific behavioral state Akagi has engineered in Harada.

This is the culminating tactical mov. It is conditional on the opponent's behavioral state. Akagi has created a specific behavioral state (Harada in defense mode, looking for safe tiles, with 1-sou classified as safe) and then built the optimal hand for that specific state instead of a general case. The single wait on 1-sou is only weak if you don't control what the opponent believes. When you control it, it's the strongest possible position.

Deception/Manipulation

Sleight of hand / Holdout (The Illegal Kan)

In the sequence: During the kan declaration, Akagi secretly obsurces the tile he drew near (1-sou) near his four 4 man tiles which provides visual cover to obscure the fact that his Kan was already in his hand. The result is a hand that appears to have been kan'ed legitimately but now contains a different wait.

The concealment window is a naturally occurring moment of tile handling when multiple objects are in motion and visual tracking is distributed. In sleight of hand theory the effective window is determined by three factors: the expected trajectory of objects (which provides cover for deviations), the target's attentional fixation point (which must be elsewhere), and the handler's baseline behavioral rhythm (which must be maintained throughout).

Akagi satisfies all three: the expected kan procedure provides trajectory cover, Harada's attention is on the discard pool and suji assessment rather than Akagi's tile-handling micromotion, and Akagi's motion is described as fluid and consistent with his normal rhythm. The deception works because of Akagi's extraordinary sleight of hand skill during a positional change during a routine procedure that everyone expects to see.

Schema poison/logical manipulation

Schema poisoning is Corrupting the premise of a true inference.

In the sequence conventional wisdom is that after riichi, you cannot change your wait, so post-riichi discards are forced and transparent. Akagi corrupts the premise (wait is fixed) while leaving all the downstream reasoning intact. Harada's inference system runs correctly on a corrupted input.

So the strategy is to identify a true inference that the target relies on ("post-riichi discards reveal the wait"), find the assumption that makes it true ("the wait is fixed after riichi"), and corrupt the assumption without alerting the target. The target's reasoning remains valid and it's their inputs that are wrong. Assumption poisoning corrupts a background condition the target doesn't examine because it's treated as axiomatic.

The target's own valid reasoning then generates the false conclusion without any further manipulation required. In formal terms: if $P \rightarrow Q$, and Q is Harada's conclusion, Akagi doesn't need to directly assert Q. He simply makes $\neg P$ true (the wait is NOT fixed) while ensuring Harada never checks P.

Parallel Evidence Construction (The Suji Convergence)

The three independent lines of reasoning are man-suit suji danger accounting for the primary threat, 2-sou discard clearing 1-3 of sou via suji, 4-sou discard clearing 3-5 of sou via suji all independently confirm that 1-sou is safe. None of these channels is fabricated (each follows genuine suji logic); what's fabricated is the underlying condition that would make them relevant (Akagi being in a sou-suit wait).

Active deception via parallel channels is a core technique in strategic deception operations. The principle behind it is that a single piece of confirming evidence can be questioned, but multiple independent-seeming sources of the same confirmation create a belief that is highly robust against revision. This is why the best deceptions don't rely on a single lie but they construct a situation where multiple legitimate-seeming observations all point to the same false conclusion. A collection of individually legitimate pieces of evidence that collectively point to a false picture. Harada's "1-sou is safe" belief is a structured belief as each piece in it is true suji logic applied to observed discards. Only the underlying situation (the wait) has been fabricated.

Attentional Hijacking

Attention hijacking is the action of creating a compelling false threat that monopolizes attentional resources.

The apparent 2-man/5-man wait creates an explicit, prominent danger signal in Harada's threat evaluation. This signal is internally consistent, suji-supported, and behaviorally confirmed. It occupies the foreground of Harada's defensive attention, leaving the 1-sou in the background and background items don't receive deliberate scrutiny. The exploitation of attention's limited bandwidth. The classic form in stage magic is the visible hand technique: the magician creates a prominent, legitimate-looking action ("watch this hand") that captures the eye, while the actual manipulation happens in the unattended zone. In psychology, this exploits intentional blindness when attention is fully allocated to a compelling object, genuinely important objects in the periphery become invisible even if they would normally be noticed.

The 2-man/5-man threat is the "visible hand." It's real in Harada's mental model (he genuinely believes Akagi is waiting on those tiles). The 1-sou is in the cognitive periphery, and Harada's attentional bandwidth is fully consumed by the prominent, system-confirmed threat.

Post-Riichi Agency Reversal

I'd describe agency reversal as exercising hidden agency in a period conventionally defined by absence of agency. Similar to a false constraint.

Post-riichi, players are expected to have no discretion as you typically discard whatever you draw. Akagi uses the illegal kan to secretly have exactly the discretion nobody thinks he has: he can choose what he's waiting on, making his post-riichi discards targeted rather than random

(this is also what gives the strategy it's flexibility because if 1-Sou was no good the Akagi could just discard it and not do the illegal Kan and can just wait until he gets the tile he needs).

False constraint signaling is representing oneself as constrained when one is actually free. This is related to the psychological concept of social proof via compliance: when a person appears to be following the same rule as everyone else ("I can't choose my discards after riichi"), others treat their compliance as confirmation of the rule's application. Akagi's post-riichi behavior looks like rule-compliance, which signals to all observers that the constraint is operating. But the constraint isn't operating as the illegal kan has removed it. The appearance of constraint is the deception.

Psychology

Cognitive Style: System-Dominant, Rule-Based

Harada does not rely on intuition. He relies on internalized rule systems. The suji system, safe-tile hierarchies, and the attack/defense mode binary are the architecture of his defensive decision-making. His strength is consistency and low error rate under conditions his system handles. His weakness would be that is that the system has edges, and outside those edges he is essentially undefended. Rule-based cognitive processing, studied through the Wason Selection Task and subsequent work in cognitive psychology, produces a distinctive failure mode: rules are encoded as absolute constraints rather than probabilistic heuristics. Harada doesn't assign "probability 0.99 that the wait is fixed after riichi" but he instead assigns "the wait is fixed after riichi, full stop." This categorical encoding is efficient but creates brittle zones where probability-zero events are not just low-priority, they are cognitively absent (this is something that would also cost him in his final battle with Ten).

Binary Attack/Defense Mode

Harada operates in clear modal states. In attack mode: riichi, pursue the target hand. In defense mode: safe tiles only, suji tracking active, no riichi. The switch between modes has clear triggers (Hiroyuki present → attack, Hiroyuki leaving → defense). This binary structure is what makes him a reliable strategic partner for Soga and a predictable target for Akagi. You can model his behavior from his mode and his trigger conditions.
Binary mode switching under pressure is associated with what psychologists call "approach-avoidance conflict resolution" and people under competitive threat simplify their decision tree to reduce cognitive load and enable faster response. Harada's clean mode switching is exactly this. Its operational effectiveness is also a vulnerability: Akagi doesn't need to predict a complex, nuanced behavioral distribution. He just needs to know which mode Harada is in.

Low-Frequency Assumption Update Rate

Once Harada's system categorizes a tile as safe (via suji reasoning), he doesn't revisit that categorization unless a new tile enters the discard pool that changes the suji calculation. The 1-sou was safe when he first assessed it. Nothing new enters the discard pool that would update this assessment, because the 2-sou and 4-sou discards (Akagi's deliberate camouflage) actually reinforce it. Harada never re-evaluates 1-sou because his update logic doesn't find any trigger for re-evaluation. This is the anchoring effect in action. The initial assessment (1-sou = safe) anchors the subsequent evaluation, and incoming information (2-sou and 4-sou discards) is interpreted in a way that confirms rather than challenges the anchor.

Internalized Conventional Wisdom as Axiom

Harada treats the game's conventional wisdoms as structural features of reality rather than heuristics that approximate reality. "Camouflage is done before riichi" is not a probability estimate in his mind but is a rule about how things work. This is not a sign of intellectual deficiency as it's actually the correct cognitive approach for 99.9% of mahjong situations. The convention holds almost universally. The problem is that when a convention is treated as an axiom, the 0.1% case becomes a blind spot with zero allocated probability weight and Akagi abused that 0.1% blind spot.

Schema Exploitation

Schemas are organized mental templates that allow the brain to process information efficiently by auto-completing expected patterns. Harada has a schema for "opponent in riichi": the schema includes sub-elements like wait is fixed, post-riichi discards are forced, the discard pool reveals the wait. This schema is activated the moment Akagi declares riichi. Once active, it generates predictions and fills in expectations without requiring conscious deliberate analysis. Akagi's operation exploits this by corrupting one element of the schema (the wait is fixed) without Harada knowing it was corrupted. Harada runs the schema and gets a coherent picture of an apparent 2-man/5-man wait, post-riichi discards consistent with that wait, 1-sou not in any danger zone. The picture is internally consistent because the remaining elements (discard pool, suji) genuinely point to 2-man/5-man. The corrupted element is invisible because Harada never checks whether "wait is fixed" actually holds and schemas, once activated, don't invite verification of their premises.

The Availability Heuristic

People estimate the probability or importance of something based on how easily examples come to mind. Harada's suji system makes 2-man and 5-man cognitively dominant and they are the prominent danger. His attention and probability estimates concentrate there. The 1-sou is not part of any recent or prominent mental event, so its danger probability is assessed near zero by default. Akagi's post-riichi discards (2-sou and 4-sou) further increase the availability of sou-suit reasoning while pointing to the absence of a sou-suit wait and making 1-sou's safety feel confirmed rather than merely unexamined.

Attentional Tunneling

Under threat conditions, the scope of attention narrows to the most prominent danger cue (a well-documented phenomenon in aviation psychology and high-stakes decision research). Harada's attention tunnels onto the man-suit suji danger (2-man/5-man) when Akagi declares riichi. This is an adaptive response to a high-stakes competitive situation but tunneling reduces the cognitive bandwidth available for peripheral analysis. The 1-sou never receives deliberate scrutiny because it's outside the attentional tunnel.

Dual-Process Interference

Kahneman's framework distinguishes fast, automatic cognition (System 1) from slow, deliberate cognition (System 2). Harada's suji tracking reading is a trained System 1 procedure and it runs fast, automatically, and produces confident verdicts without effortful deliberation. By the time Harada holds the 1-sou tile, System 1 has already produced the verdict "safe" and System 2 is never engaged. System 2 engagement requires a trigger/something anomalous or uncertain that flags the situation for deliberate review. Akagi's perfect execution of the illegal Kan produces zero behavioral anomaly, and the suji reading produces a confident "safe" verdict. So in the end there is no trigger for System 2.

Exploitation of Rule-Based Thinking's Brittle Zone

Research in moral and decision psychology distinguishes between rule-based cognition (deontological: actions are evaluated against rules) and outcome-based cognition (consequentialist: actions are evaluated against their expected results). Rule-based thinkers produce highly consistent behavior within their rule system but have blind spots where rules meet their boundaries. Harada's rule about post-riichi wait fixity is a cognitive rule, not a probabilistic belief. Rules have binary application and either they apply (and the conclusion is certain) or they don't apply (and the situation is unmodeled). Akagi creates exactly the "doesn't apply" case and exploits the unmodeled zone.

Thinking/Reasoning

Counterfactual reasoning

Although we don't see Akagi go through this process in full we can infer that he did through his statement that tsumo will barley be effective and that his goal of wanting to score off either Soga or Harada with a direct strike and some of the dialogue that Hiroyuki has about Harada and Soga using suji reading on the discards to doge Akagi's 2-5 wait that Akagi did systematically tests "if I do X, West does Y" branches before committing. If he declares riichi on a conventional

double-sided wait: West's suji tracking catches it, they fold, he wins by tsumo at best. If he challenges with chii-toi-tsu riichi himself: his single wait is at a structural disadvantage against West's normal waits. If he plays a quiet defensive hand and waits for a turn opportunity: West's phase structure (attack when Hiroyuki is present, defend when absent) means he never gets a direct hit on Harada during a defense phase under conventional play. Counterfactual reasoning doesn't just identify what works but also eliminates the solution space until only one option remains. Which in Akagi's case was a strategy that West's system literally couldn't model before hand.

Inverse Assumption Reasoning

Akagi identifies the axiom "after riichi you cannot change your wait" not as a concrete law but as an assumption that players treat as a concrete law. He then asks: what does the solution space look like if this assumption is removed? By treating a fixed constraint as a variable, an entirely new class of moves becomes available that every other player has excluded from consideration by default.

Systems Thinking

He perceives the game as an system of interdependent decisions rather than a sequence of isolated choices. West's suji tracking system, Hiroyuki's point vulnerability, the round rotation, and the conventions that govern post-riichi behavior are not separate facts but are all interconnected components of a single organism. When he attacks, he doesn't attack a surface gameplay but instead attacks the assumption that rules hold. Disrupt that and the entire system (West's defensive strategy) loses its coherence.

Chain reasoning

Akagi constructs multi-step logical chains where each conclusion becomes the premise of the next: West's goal is to eliminate Hiroyuki → Hiroyuki's vulnerability is his 3,000-point exposure to riichi tsumo → West will riichi aggressively when Hiroyuki is at the table → West will go to defense when Hiroyuki is not at the table → Defense means safe-tile selection via suji tracking → Safe-tile selection is exploitable if a tile can be made to appear safe while being the winning tile. The conclusion at the end of this chain is derived. Each link has epistemic weight, and the chain is only as strong as its weakest link. Akagi has verified each link through behavioral observation of how west his currently playing.
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This was a pretty short and underrated feat of Akagi in Ten (Ten as a whole is underrated in Akagi scaling) but was packed with a lot of good stuff. I might come back and update this doc with a Theory of mind setting I have time but right now I want to go back to a Akiyama analysis I've been working on as I promised a friend I'd do it.
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Categories this feat covers:

Psychoanalysis, Logical profiling, psychology warfare, TOM, Direct manipulation, indirect manipulation, psychological manipulation, logical manipulation, fabrication, Falsification, Concealment, Misdirection, obfuscation, destabilization, critical thinking, lateral thinking, holistic thinking, analysis classification, analysis tracing, analysis probing, casual reasoning, abductive reasoning, tactical potency, tactical synergy, tactical complexity, scheming alignment, scheming Foiling, scheming Invincibility, scheming adaptability, scheming contingencies, scheming intricacies, scheming shielding, scheming coverage, prediction, trap setting, trap evasion, intuition.