

NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY

by

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Based on the book "**The CIA's Greatest Covert Operation**"

by

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TITLE CARD:

"During the early years of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union had two ways to deploy their nuclear arsenal -- from the ground and from the air. But that changed in the 1960s..."

FADE IN:

EXT./ESTAB. SOVIET NAVAL BASE - PATROPAVLOSK - NIGHT

The middle of nowhere. That's by design -- this is the Headquarters for the Soviet Union's Pacific Fleet.

February 24, 1968

Torpedoes and ballistic missiles are loaded onto a 300 foot long Soviet nuclear sub--

-- **The K-129.**

As Soviet sailors head inside, A YOUNG SAILOR lingers, savoring the last cigarette that he'll enjoy for months.

AN OFFICER confiscates the sailor's cigarettes, yells at him to get on the sub. Once he's gone, the Officer lights up a confiscated cigarette.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

"Nuclear-armed subs made it possible to constantly shift the locations of nuclear weapons that could single-handedly wipe out U.S. and Soviet cities..."

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

The K-129 descends beneath the water as it leaves the harbor.

INT. BRIDGE - K-129 - LATER

As the sailors go about their business, the RADIOMAN sends an encrypted message:

"Systems Normal. Will report in two weeks on March 8".

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

**"These subs became arguably the most
powerful weapons system ever created."**

INT. SOVIET NAVAL WATCH COMMAND - DAY

March 8, 1968

A Young Signalman scans through different radio frequencies, searching for any message from the K-129. Nothing.

CUT TO:

SHOTS OF SOVIET SHIPS -- NAVAL AND CIVILIAN --

-- patrolling the K-129's path in the international waters of the Pacific Ocean. The CAPTAINS radio each other that they're not finding any trace of her.

The SCREEN splits.

The Soviet ships shift to the LEFT HALF.

THE RIGHT HALF shows: **THE US NAVAL TRACKING STATION--**

-- as A YOUNG US SIGNALMAN spins the radio dial, picking up the Soviet Captains' chatter. NAVAL OFFICERS hover next to him.

YOUNG US SIGNALMAN
I've never seen this, where they're
talking over open channels so...
openly. I think... I think they
lost the K-129.

On his superiors' stunned expressions,

DISSOLVE TO:

THE MIDDLE OF THE PACIFIC - DAY & NIGHT

Over the next months, the Soviet ships slowly disappear one by one -- giving up the search. And when the last one vanishes,

THE CAMERA LOWERS BENEATH THE OCEAN, until it finds --

-- "A FISH."

Not a real one. This one is **an aluminum mini-sub** full of audio-video surveillance gear, including a camera that is capturing photos of the ocean's floor.

The "fish" is being towed by--

-- **THE USS HALIBUT.**

The Navy's spy sub. It's distinguished by a giant hump on the front of it, affectionately known as--

-- **THE BAT CAVE.**

Filled with all sorts of hi-tech equipment, including --

-- **A DARK ROOM.**

A SAILOR shuffles through thousands of the "fish's" photos.

Stops. Can barely make out what looks like, what could be...

... **A SUB'S SAIL** (the tower-like structure on the top of the sub).

The sailor jumps up, flings open the darkroom door, races out--

-- and runs into a closed door because his eyes haven't adjusted to the light.

CUT TO:

EXT. / ESTAB. THE PENTAGON - DAY

February 1, 1969

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME TIME

Chyrons identify:

- **CAPTAIN JIM BRADLEY (Naval Intelligence)**. He's the Navy's Chief Spy. Mid 30s. His coiled-spring personality at odds with his genteel Southern accent.

- **DR. JOHN PINA CRAVEN (Navy's top scientist)**. And smartest -- according to him.

They stand in front of easels that are filled with a photo collage of the K-129.

They're excited; the smartest kids in class presenting their latest science report to their favorite teacher. The "teacher" is--

-- **REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS MOORER (Chief of Naval Operations)**.

Admiral Moorer (40s) is a towering and voluble personality. Rarely have to guess what's on his mind.

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

(comes closer)

Look at it! Just sitting there, waiting for us to come and get her.

(looks back)

And the Russians have no idea we've found her?

CRAVEN

(shakes head "no")

Speaking of retrieval, sir... we've come up with a plan.

Craven places photos and drawings of their retrieval plan on the easels. Moorer leans in...

CRAVEN

We'll use a remote controlled mini-sub to go down to the target--

(flips the drawings)

-- then we'll employ small explosive charges to gain access to the sub--

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

Wait, what? You're gonna blow a hole in the sub?

CRAVEN

Just a small one to gain access--

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

But I want the whole damn sub! Those Commie bastards got the whole damn *Pueblo*!

Craven and Bradley exchange looks as they face every military officer's worst fear -- how to explain a plan to somebody with a lower IQ, but a higher rank.

BRADLEY

Sir, the *Pueblo* was a surface ship that was boarded by the North Koreans. This is a sub three miles down.

CRAVEN

It's impractical, if not impossible, to bring a sub up from those depths.

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

Well, what is it? Impractical or impossible?

BRADLEY

Sir, I think what John is trying to say is that the best way for us to proceed is to remove selected material--

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

"Selected material?!" We've got a chance to pull off the biggest intelligence coup of the Cold War and you want to think small?

(glares at them)

I want everything... Nuclear missiles, logs, cryptographic codebooks. I don't want bacon, gentlemen. I want the whole damn pig!

As he storms out, he tells an AIDE:

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

Get me some time with Dick Helms at the Agency.

(mutters under his breath)

"Selected materials"

CUT TO:

EXT. / ESTAB. UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA CAMPUS - NIGHT (MAY 1969)

Students carry signs protesting Vietnam and Nixon ("*Stop the War*"; "*Tricky Dick Has Pulled His Last Trick*") around the Thomas Jefferson statue in front of the Rotunda.

INT. LAB - ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT - SAME TIME

Empty except for walls of chalkboards and one person...

DAVE SHARP. Late 30s, but still gets checked out by the female undergrads. His dry sense of humor (mostly) masks his intensity.

The chalkboards are filled with equations. Hours, if not days, of work. Dave stares at them...

... then erases it all. Not angry, just methodical.

He restarts, chalking numbers and equations.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Christ Almighty! When we paid for
 your doctorate, I thought we were
 paying for somebody smart enough to
 get the answers right.

Dave turns, is stunned to be facing --

-- JOHN PARANGOSKY. (Assistant Deputy Director of Science &
 Technology for the CIA.)

"JP" to friends and foes (often the same person). Mid 40s.
 Dressed, as always, in a tailored suit. He's short; with a
 physique that betrays his strong affection for French
 cuisine. A lifelong bachelor, the CIA is his wife and
 mistress.

JP
 I've got a job for you.

On Dave's stunned expression,

CUT TO:

INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

JP and Dave sit at a table in the back. JP sits like a Mafia
 Don, his back to the wall.

DAVE
 (disappointed)
 ... But I don't know anything about
 ocean engineering.

JP
 Nobody at the Company does. But
 the Chief of Naval Operations wants
 us to come up with a plan to
 recover the sub, so here we are--

JP stops talking as a waitress deposits a couple greasy
 hamburgers. He starts to speak, then notices some college
 kids at the next table.

DAVE SHARP
 I don't think they're Soviet spies. I
 just think they're trying to get laid.

JP
 Soviet spies don't like to get laid?

DAVE SHARP

Don't you have anything else for me? Aerospace or satellites?

JP

You wanted those you should've done a better job on Oxcart--

DAVE SHARP

(insistent)

That wasn't my fault.

JP

(hands up in surrender)

I acknowledge that I might have acted rashly by firing you. That's why I'm here.

DAVE SHARP

No, you're here because nobody else is or desperate or stupid enough to take it.

JP

I'm not here for the food, that's for sure.

He pushes his burger away.

JP

And yes, I'm here because this hasn't been the easiest position to fill. But I'm also here because you're the most brilliant and determined engineer that I've worked with.

He chuckles when Dave doesn't say anything.

JP

And the most humble. But mostly I'm here because I know you'll take this job. Because I know how much you love showing people how smart you are.

Dave wants to say "no", but JP has him pegged.

JP

So can we please stop wasting each other's time so I can get back to the city and get a decent meal before Ebbets closes?

DAVE SHARP
Can I pick my team?

JP
No. I've tasked you with Sparkman
and Ruggles to start.

DAVE SHARP
The Burn-Out and Up-With-People?
(sighs)
Jesus, you really do think this is
a waste of time.

CUT TO:

EXT. GENERIC OFFICE BUILDING - TYSON'S CORNER, VA - DAY

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - AKA "THINK TANK" - SAME TIME

Dave and his team of eight engineers. Watching--

DR. EARNEST RUGGLES. Late 20s. The temperament of a golden retriever. The "Up with People" nickname is dead-on.

Ruggles enthusiastically pitches an idea (with diagrams):

RUGGLES
... we use mini-sub^s to attach
booster rockets to the sub, which
will raise it up.

He mimes the sub being raised theatrically.

DR. JACK SPARKMAN (40s; cynical; the burn-out) interjects:

SPARKMAN
(sarcastic and skeptical)
Like Lazarus?

RUGGLES
(not getting either)
Exactly.

Everybody looks at Dave.

DAVE SHARP
Interesting. But even if we could
get it to the surface, how could we
keep it up there?

RUGGLES
Uh, I'm working on that.

SPARKMAN

I know!
 (they all look at him)
 Jesus will keep it on the surface.

RUGGLES

(harsh profanity for him)
 Screw you, Jack.

SPARKMAN

That's religious persecution.

RUGGLES

You know, at least, I'm trying
 here.

SPARKMAN

Hey, I've got a lot of great ideas.

RUGGLES

Name one!

SPARKMAN

(thinks, then:)
 I think we should break for lunch.

The other engineers all shout their agreement with that.

CUT TO:

MCDONALDS WRAPPERS

Covering the conference table. Dave and his team sit in
 silence.

CUT TO:

PIZZA BOXES

Covering the table. Dave and team ARGUE at full volume.

CUT TO:

CHINESE TO-GO CONTAINERS

On the table. Complete SILENCE. Hit (yet) another wall.

Three months (and lots of take-out) later

Sparkman balances chopsticks on his nose. Ruggles stares at
 the ceiling tiles.

JP (O.S.)
 What the hell is going on here?!

JP strides in, aghast at the inactivity.

JP
 Besides nothing?!
 (to Ruggles)
 How many?

RUGGLES
 How many... what, sir?

JP
 Ceiling tiles! How many god damn
 ceiling tiles are up there!

RUGGLES
 Uh... a hundred-and-thirty-nine...
 and a half--

JP
 Great! Thank you! I'm sure the American
 people will be happy to know that after
 sixteen weeks, some of the country's
 greatest engineering minds finally
 figured out that there are a hundred-and-
 thirty-nine ceiling tiles in an office
 building in Tyson's Corner, Virginia!

A beat.

RUGGLES
 And a half.

JP
 What?

RUGGLES
 (a hesitation)
 A hundred-and-a-thirty-nine and a
half.

JP doesn't even know what to say to that. Turns to Dave.

JP
 You might want to start shopping
 for one of those sport coats with
 patches on the elbows.

He storms out. Silence. Sparkman points to the ceiling.

SPARKMAN

That's actually more like two-thirds.

The engineers all crack up, minus Dave.

INT. DAVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Spartans would consider this under-furnished.

The only furniture is a kitchen table, piled high with ocean engineering books. Dave's engrossed in one of them.

As he reads, he continuously and absently throws a tennis ball through the empty apartment that his black lab DUKE retrieves.

EXT. STREETS - TYSON'S CORNER, VA - NIGHT

Dave runs with Duke down the main drag.

He runs past a RESTAURANT, but then stops. Circles back. Stares in, sees next to the cigarette machine --

A CLAW GAME.

Watches as a couple of kids try to pick up a stuffed animal with the claw.

On his expression,

MATCH CUT TO:

JP'S OPEN-MOUTHED EXPRESSION

directed at Dave. They're in **JP'S CIA OFFICE**.

JP

A god damn kids arcade game?!
That's your brilliant idea.

DAVE SHARP

The math pencils out--

JP

Well, maybe we need a new pencil.
(beat)
Or better yet, a new lead engineer.

DAVE SHARP

This is the best idea. The only real idea that we've been able to come up with after six months.

He waits for JP to bite his head off. When he doesn't:

DAVE SHARP

There's an ocean drilling company out in LA, Global Marine. They have the technology to do this. Their chief naval engineer, John Graham, he's the best in the field.

JP hesitates for a beat, then reluctantly:

JP

Alright, we'll go out and see what they have to say.

He waves Dave away, but Dave doesn't leave.

JP

What?

DAVE SHARP

There's just one problem.

off JP's expression,

CUT TO:

EXT. / ESTAB. ART DECO OFFICE BUILDING - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Global Marine Development Headquarters

INT. CURTIS CROOKE'S OFFICE - GLOBAL MARINE - SAME TIME

CURTIS CROOKE (40s) is dressed casually with longish hair -- the epitome of California living.

He's the VP of Global Marine -- smart enough to talk engineering with his engineers, charming enough to convince potential clients to write the company large checks...

... which is what he's doing right now.

CURTIS

(to TWO POTENTIAL CLIENTS)

Sure, we haven't been around as long as some of our competitors, but our technology--

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)
Excuse me, Mr. Crooke. But I have a gentleman who is saying he needs to see you immediately about a job.

CURTIS
Tell him I'm with clients and that I'll get back to him.
(to Clients)
I did not tell her to say that.
(they all laugh)
As I was saying--

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)
He won't give his name.

CURTIS
Tell him to call back after lunch.
(to clients)
Where was I?--

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)
Sir! That man, he's on his way up--

CURTIS
(to potential clients)
My apologies. Perhaps we should reschedule.

CURTIS' OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

JP and Dave walk in. JP immediately shuts the door.

CURTIS
(annoyed)
Who are you?

JP ignores him, goes over to the windows. Pulls the blinds.

CURTIS
(buzzes intercom)
Sarah, call security--

JP
I'm John Parangosky. And this is Dave Sharp. We work for the CIA.

Not what Curtis was expecting at all.

CURTIS
(into intercom)
Forget about security.
(to JP)
(MORE)

CURTIS (CONT'D)

The CIA, as in the Central Intelligence Agency?

JP

No. The Culinary Institute of America. How were your eggs this morning?

(hands Curtis a piece of paper)

This is an NDA that says you're committing treason if you divulge anything I'm about to tell you.

Curtis is unsure whether to sign it. Curiosity wins out. After he signs:

JP

How's John Graham's drinking?

CURTIS

(thrown)

How'd--

(realizes who JP works for)

John hasn't had a drink in eight years--

JP

How do you know that?

CURTIS

Because he told me.

JP scoffs. Curtis gets offended.

CURTIS

And because in the eight years he's been here I've never seen him exhibit any signs of being under the influence of anything other than nicotine and caffeine. That's how I know.

JP thinks for a beat, then hits the intercom.

JP

Sarah, get John Graham in here.

Curtis is getting annoyed at the questions and JP's presumption.

CURTIS

(points to NDA)

I signed this thing.

(MORE)

CURTIS (CONT'D)

So how about telling me why the hell you chased fifty million dollars of business out of my office?

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)

They say he's out.

JP (INTO INTERCOM)

It's three PM. Where is he?

CURTIS

He's probably down at the shipyard--

SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)

They said he's sailing.

JP looks at Curtis.

CURTIS

He likes to work out problems on his boat.

DAVE SHARP

Well, at least he's not at a bar.

JP doesn't see the humor.

CURTIS

We can always do this another time--

JP

(sitting down)
We'll wait.

Exactly what Curtis was afraid of.

CURTIS

I'm sure he'll be back soon.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN GRAHAM'S OFFICE - GLOBAL MARINE - DAY

JOHN GRAHAM (50s) walks into his office, clutching a cigarette in one hand, a coffee in the other. A one-two punch that he's perfected so well that he can drink the coffee without removing the cigarette.

John's brilliant, but gruff. He graduated top of his class at MIT. (And didn't receive one vote for "Most Personable.")

John goes over to his drafting table, which is covered with plans for his latest ship, but also with napkins and odd bits of paper on which he's jotted down notes or drawings.

His secretary CANDY GILLETTE (late 20s) comes in. Tough and pretty (and there are many men at work who've made the mistake of reversing those two attributes).

Her pay-stub might read "secretary" but she sees her job as John Graham's protector.

CANDY

Curtis has been calling non-stop,
says he needs you up in his office
as soon as you get back.

JOHN GRAHAM

Uh-huh.

He doesn't look up. Continues drawing.

INT. CURTIS' OFFICE - **NIGHT**

John Graham strolls in, notices JP and Dave.

JP

How was your sail?

JOHN GRAHAM

Delightful.
(to Curtis)
Who the hell is this?

JP

We're from the CIA. Sign this.

As JP hands him the papers, he sniffs at Graham, seeing if he smells of alcohol. Detecting nothing, JP hands him a pen.

Graham looks at Curtis, who nods. Graham signs the papers.

Curtis finally gets to ask the question he's been dying to ask for the past four hours:

CURTIS

So, how can Global Marine help you gentlemen?

JP

We need you to vet a...
(still doesn't like this)
... plan that we've come up with.

JOHN GRAHAM

(surprised)
Why the hell's the CIA's getting
into the ocean drilling business?

DAVE SHARP

We're not. We're going to pick up
a nuclear-armed Russian sub from
the bottom of the Pacific Ocean.

As Curtis and John Graham exchange a look of disbelief,

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CURTIS' OFFICE - LATER

Dave finishing his briefing. Leans back. Waits for John and
Curtis to recognize his brilliance:

JOHN GRAHAM

It'll never work--

JP

Jesus!

DAVE SHARP

It will. The math works.

JOHN GRAHAM

Yeah, sure if your assumptions are
made without the benefit of a day
spent at sea.

He waits for Dave to contradict him, but of course he can't.

Dave gets the sense that, for the first time in a long time,
he's not the smartest guy in the room.

JOHN GRAHAM

(begrudgingly)

Though the underlying idea, a grunt
lift, is sound. In fact, it's the
only possible way to do it.

He says it's begrudgingly, because he has a hard time when a
great idea doesn't originate from his brain.

DAVE SHARP

(brightens)

Okay, so what would we need to
change?

JOHN GRAHAM

Alright, first off, you'd need pipe
string that has a cross section
of...

He pulls out a a bar napkin from his pocket. Starts jotting down computations on it.

JP
(sotto to Dave)
A bar napkin?--

JOHN GRAHAM
-- of about 160 square inches. Problem is that'd have to be custom-built.

DAVE SHARP
Okay. What else?

JOHN GRAHAM
None of our ships can handle that pipe string or the weight you're gonna be pulling up.

JP
Whose can?

JOHN GRAHAM
Nobody. You're going to have to build a ship.

INT. CAR - LOS ANGELES - LATER

Post-meeting. Dave and JP sit in the back of a car. Dave is excited; sees the meeting as a win. JP stews, shakes his head. Muttering under his breath.

JP
(sotto)
... "build a ship."
(to Dave)
I don't even know why I'm getting worked up. Halfway through your briefing, ExCom's gonna shoot us down--

DAVE SHARP
(taken aback)
I'm briefing them?

JP
On the technical part. I don't understand half the details... and the half I do understand, I wish I didn't.
(off Dave's smile)
Don't get too excited.

(MORE)

JP (CONT'D)

Chances are they're gonna throw us
out and you'll be back to making
googley-eyes at coeds.

(leans back / mutters)

God damn kids' claw game.

CUT TO:

EXT. / ESTAB. THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Excom Meeting - October 30, 1970

INT. BATHROOM - THE WHITE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Fifteen minutes before meeting

Dave's hands grip the sink as he stares into the mirror.

He's sweating, his heart races.

Takes some deep breaths, ready or not...

CUT TO:

INT. CABINET ROOM - WHITE HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Dave, JP, along with DICK HELMS (**DIRECTOR OF THE CIA**) and
CARL DUCKETT (**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**)
present their plans to--

-- **THE EXCOM**, a committee that advises the president on all
intelligence matters. It's populated by some of the most
powerful members of the government, and chaired by arguably
the most powerful -- **HENRY KISSINGER**.

As everyone drinks coffee and munches on pastries, Dave
stands, makes the presentation with a slide-show. (And Dave
is sharp, confident. No trace of the guy in the bathroom.)

DAVE SHARP

... Global Marine will build the ship.

SLIDE -- a mock-up of the ship John Graham came up with. And
it's the strangest ship you've ever seen -- it has a huge
moon pool in the middle (essentially a hole in the middle of
its bottom) and a giant derrick in the middle.

ADMIRAL MOORER

Impressive.

Moorer's chyron comes up -- **CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS**. But then "**FORMER**" appears in front of his title. Then his new title is chyroned -- **CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF**.

Other participants are not as impressed. Especially--

-- ADMIRAL ELMO ZUMWALT (**CURRENT CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS**). Zumwalt is in his mid 40s and he's a Navy man through-and-through (he's rumored to hum "Anchors Aweigh" when he makes love to his wife).

He puts down his coffee mid-sip -- *what the hell kind of ship is that?*

DAVE SHARP

Lockheed, who we've had great success with in the past, will build the barge and then construct the Capture Vehicle in the barge.

SLIDES -- A huge BARGE (it's covered; resembles a floating soundstage) and the CAPTURE VEHICLE (CV), which does look like a giant version of a kids' claw game.

NOTE: All the slides show how incredibly unique, cool, and complicated this heist will be.

DAVE SHARP

The capture vehicle, enclosed in the barge, will then be towed to Catalina Island, where it will be submerged...

SLIDES -- show the barge submerge. Then its roof retracts.

DAVE SHARP

... The capture vehicle will then be transferred into the ship, invisible to the outside world.

ZUMWALT'S HORROR -- increases with each passing slide.

SLIDES -- as the bottom of the ship hovers over the open barge. The ship's bottom opens and the CV is transferred into it. It's an impressive magic trick.

DAVE SHARP

Based on meteorological data, we'll have an eight week period in the late summer months where the seas will be calm enough for us to operate.

(MORE)

DAVE SHARP (CONT'D)

Once at the recovery location, our automated positioning system will keep the ship in a fixed position as the capture vehicle is lowered, via custom-built pipe string, three miles down to the K-129.

A SLIDE -- as the Capture Vehicle (CV) hovers over the sub; the CV's sixteen giant tines (each 60 feet long) spread out.

DAVE SHARP

The capture vehicle's tines will then be driven into the seabed and enclose the sub.

(beat)

At which point, it will be raised up into the ship's moon pool, again completely invisible to prying eyes.

ON ZUMWALT, still not believing his eyes.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - **FLASH FORWARD**

Craven and Bradley's eyes nearly pop as Admiral Zumwalt debriefs them about the meeting.

CAPTAIN JIM BRADLEY

They think they can keep a ship's location fixed?! In those seas?!

CRAVEN

If that pipe breaks-- which at three miles, it will-- it'll rip the ship apart.

Zumwalt nods along. In total agreement.

CAPTAIN JIM BRADLEY

Jesus Christ, have they lost their damn minds?!

CUT BACK TO:

THE EXCOM MEETING

Skepticism abounds.

ASST SECDEF PACKARD

The first question I have is how much is this operation going to cost the taxpayer?

CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - **FLASH FORWARD**

As Craven reacts to the budget:

JOHN CRAVEN

Three hundred and fifty million dollars?!

CUT BACK TO:

THE EXCOM MEETING

Everyone digests that number.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

Does the CIA even have the funds for this?

DUCKETT

No. In fact, it's close to our entire annual budget. But I've spoken with Senators Stennis and Chafee about alternative sources...

CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - **FLASH FORWARD**

Craven and Bradley stare at their boss with shocked expressions:

BRADLEY

-- Our budget?! They want the Navy to pay for it?!

Zumwalt nods.

CRAVEN

Let me get this straight. The CIA wants to build a ship, even though they've never built one. And they want us, the US Navy -- whose job is to literally build and operate ships, to pay for it?!

ZUMWALT

And that's not the craziest part.

Craven and Bradley exchange a look -- *how can this get any crazier?*

CUT BACK TO:

EXCOM MEETING

JP's standing, addressing the meeting.

JP

... the Russians will naturally wonder what a ship is doing anchored for a month in the general area where their sub went down.
Walt Logan--

JP gestures to **WALT LOGAN** (30s, officious), who sits with lower-level functionaries against the wall.

JP

-- will be in charge of managing the white-world story that this is an ocean mining operation.

SECRETARY OF STATE

What the heck is ocean mining?

Walt stands up.

WALT LOGAN

Well, sir, it's essentially digging for minerals on the ocean floor.

ASST SECDEF PACKARD

And Global Marine does this?

WALT LOGAN

No, sir. They don't. Actually, nobody does. It doesn't exist; one of these things that's always a couple years away.

ASST SECDEF PACKARD

So Global Marine's getting into the non-existent ocean mining business?

WALT LOGAN

(cagey)

Well, not exactly.

ASST SECDEF PACKARD

(annoyed)

What exactly does "not exactly" mean?

WALT LOGAN

Global Marine's too small of a company to do it on their own, and they're public, so investors would have to be notified. And we obviously want to stay within the law--

Even though he says it without irony, the CIA worrying about staying within the law elicits CHUCKLES.

WALT LOGAN

But we've approached a company that's a perfect fit -- private, large enough to conceivably fund this, and they'll help support the cover story since the owner has a reputation for... unconventional behavior.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - **FLASH FORWARD**

BRADLEY / CRAVEN

Howard fucking Hughes?!

They sit there, stunned.

CRAVEN

(curious)

They actually met Howard Hughes?

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DESERT INN - LAS VEGAS - **FLASHBACK**

Curtis Crooke sits across from three men who Hughes' inner circle. They're collectively known as **THE MORMON MAFIA**.

CURTIS CROOKE

... so Hughes Tool Company would only be the buyer of record--

The PHONE rings. BILL GAY (head of the Mormon Mafia) silences Curtis with a finger, picks up the phone, listens for a beat, then hangs up.

BILL GAY
Hughes Tool Company will need to
build the pipe string.

Curtis surreptitiously looks around, wondering how Hughes is listening in.

CURTIS CROOKE
That shouldn't be a problem--

The phone RINGS again. Bill answers, listens, hangs up.

BILL GAY
And the ship has to be called the
Hughes Glomar Explorer, not the
Glomar Hughes Explorer.

CURTIS CROOKE
(leans in, smiles)
Is he next door or does he have the
room bugged?

Bill and the Mormon Mafia don't crack a smile.

BILL GAY
Who?

CUT BACK TO:

THE EXCOM MEETING

Skepticism has been replaced by disbelief -- *a custom-built ship, \$350 million, Howard fucking Hughes?!*

ASST SECDEF PACKARD
(diplomatically)
I think there are just too many
unknowns, too many variables.

SECRETARY OF STATE
(sotto)
And too many dollars.

Murmurs of assent from other members. Zumwalt seems relieved. The CIA team is disappointed -- except for Dave, who is crushed.

Everyone looks at Kissinger, assuming he'll drive the stake through the heart. Then--

BAM! A hand slams down on the conference table. Belongs to:

REAR ADMIRAL MOORER

What the hell are we doing?! We have a chance to land a decisive blow in the Cold War, to finally tilt the balance of power toward good for good!

(beat)

Is it bold? Yes! Thank God! Because gentlemen, we're dealing with an enemy who is bold enough to have the North Koreans commandeer one of our ships. In international waters!

(looks around)

Is it expensive? Hell yes! But if you think it's too expensive, then I ask you, how much would you be willing to pay, to get a fully armed Soviet submarine, on operational station, with its weapons targeted on our cities?

Silence. Everyone looks to Kissinger.

KISSINGER

(inscrutable)

I'll take it to the President.

EXT. HALLWAY - WHITE HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

The CIA team exits the meeting.

DUCKETT

What do you think?

JP

(shrugs)

No clue. But if I'm ever on trial for murder, I want Moorer giving the closing argument.

They laugh.

CUT TO:

A TOP SECRET FOLDER

... as it's opened. The title page reads: "**PROJECT AZORIAN.**" It's stamped "**APPROVED.**"

November 15, 1970

PRELAP the sound of a RINGING TELEPHONE.

DAVE SHARP (O.S.)

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dave on the phone with JP.

JP (O.S.; ON PHONE)
 Congratulations. You're leading
 the most audacious covert operation
 the Agency's ever attempted.

CUT TO:

DAVE'S APARTMENT - LATER

He sits on the floor, lost in thought. He throws the tennis ball against the wall. Trying to get it past his dog Duke, who gets half of them. The conversation with JP continues to play over this.

JP (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 We're going to build the ship and
 the components, test them, and then
 the Navy will actually do the
 recovery.

DAVE SHARP (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 When do we start?

JP (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 As soon as you get out to LA.

Dave is excited, but also worried, feels the pressure already.

JP (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 And try not to screw this up or
 we'll all be fighting for tenure
 instead of fighting the Soviets.

Duke retrieves the ball, brings it over to Dave.

DAVE SHARP
 What the hell'd I get myself into,
 Duke?

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave, with Duke riding shotgun, drives down a meandering driveway. Pulls up to the house. GAIL SHARP (30s; WASP mixed with hippy) walks out.

Dave's wistful -- this used to be his home; Gail used to be his wife.

INT. GAIL'S HOUSE - DAY

Duke rests in his old favorite spot -- in front of the fireplace as Dave and Gail talk about Duke's future.

GAIL
(surprised)
... You're not taking him?

DAVE SHARP
The schedule's... ambitious. And it's not fair for him to be cooped up all the time in an apartment.
(beat)
And he loved it here.

It's clear as Dave looks around that he too loved it here. In an attempt to hide that, Dave squats down, nuzzles his dog.

GAIL
Of course I'll take him. How long?

DAVE SHARP
Ummmm... three or four years.

Off Gail's shocked expression:

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. GENERIC OFFICE BUILDING - EL SEGUNDO, CA - DAY

Summa Corp Deep Ocean Mining Headquarters

A taxi pulls up. Dave, Sparkman, and Ruggles emerge. Under Dave a chyron appears with his job title: **"Director of Recovery - Summa Corp Deep Ocean Mining"**.

INT. SUMMA CORP HQ- MINUTES LATER

The public office of the cover story. Filled with EMPLOYEES who are "building" the world's first ocean mining company.

Dave and group are led through the office by a burly mustachio'd guy in his late 40s. This is **STEVE CRAIG**.

Steve's former LAPD and a current CIA contractor / fixer. He has a could-give-two-shits attitude that separates him from the CIA lifers.

A chyron gives us his cover title: "**Office Manager - Summa Corp Deep Ocean Mining**".

STEVE CRAIG

So how was the flight?

RUGGLES

Ah, the turbulence over the Rockies was awful. And we were fighting the jet stream the whole way. And--

STEVE CRAIG

Yeah, don't really care. Just making small talk to cover the walk.

He leads them into A REMOTE OFFICE.

STEVE CRAIG

And here's our good friend Harvey Wallbanger.

He pushes open a couple metal storage cabinets, revealing a secret staircase.

RUGGLES

Whoa... that is so cool.

Sparkman shakes his head at Ruggles' gee-whiz attitude. But as the others head down the staircase, Sparkman lingers and checks out the hidden passageway.

SPARKMAN

(under his breath)

Bitchin'.

He catches up to the group. As they head down the staircase, Steve and Dave's real jobs are chyroned: "**Head of Security - Azorian Program**" and "**Director of Recovery - Azorian Program**".

They enter an unmarked door, revealing --

THE HIDDEN OFFICE SPACE.

Azorian West Coast Program Office

Steve gives the quick tour. Points to VAULTED ROOM.

STEVE CRAIG
Secure comms in there, including
the Donald Duck phone.

RUGGLES
Why do they call it the Donald Duck
phone?

STEVE CRAIG
Because it makes your voice sound
like Mickey Mouse.

RUGGLES
Then why do they call it the Donald
Duck phone?

STEVE CRAIG
(sotto)
Wow. I'm feeling even better than I
was yesterday about you guys
getting that sub.
(shakes head; points)
Bathroom's there-- gotta jiggle the
handle.
(to Dave)
Oh yeah, after we're done here
today, I'll take you to your condo
in Marina Del Rey and give you the
keys to your Vette.

DAVE SHARP
I get a Corvette?

STEVE CRAIG
(nods)
JP wanted to get you a Pinto to
save money, but I convinced him
that the head of a Hughes division
wouldn't be caught dead driving a
Pinto.

SPARKMAN
What do I have?

STEVE CRAIG
Which one are you again?

SPARKMAN
Jack Sparkman.

STEVE CRAIG
Oh yeah... you got a Pinto.

Everyone but Sparkman laughs.

STEVE CRAIG

Alright, let me get you set up in
your offices--

DAVE SHARP

Actually, can you bring me by John
Graham's office first?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

He's in Philly at the shipyard.

They turn to see Candy.

CANDY

Hi, I'm Candy, his secretary.

STEVE CRAIG

And more importantly, the organizer
of our weekly volleyball game.

CANDY

(scrutinizes Dave)

So you're Dave Sharp?

(he nods)

Huh. You don't look like a total
asshole.

SPARKMAN

First impressions are often
misleading.

This time, everyone but Dave laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

Zumwalt stares in disbelief at Bradley and Craven, who have
just debriefed him:

ZUMWALT

They're over budget and behind
schedule and they're leasing Sharp
a condo on the beach and a
Corvette?

Bradley and Crave nod.

ZUMWALT

With our money?!

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE OF JOHN GRAHAM'S OFFICE - WCPO - DAY

Dave waits outside with Candy, John's secretary. They can hear John ARGUING with somebody in his office.

DAVE SHARP
Candy, who's he meeting with?

CANDY
His eleven o'clock.

He gives her a look -- *that's helpful.*

DAVE SHARP
Well, would you do me a favor and tell him that his twelve o'clock would prefer not to become his one o'clock?

CANDY
Oh, he knows you're here.

Annoyed, he taps his foot on the floor. Candy can't help but smile.

CANDY
Could I get you another cup of coffee? Decaf perhaps?

As he gives her a look, the door bursts open and John's #2 **SHERM WHETMORE** (40s; looks like a bouncer) storms out. John waves Dave in.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN GRAHAM'S OFFICE - WCPO - DAY

Filled with drawings and models of the *Hughes Glomar Explorer*, the ship he's in charge of building.

Dave walks in, taking inventory of the space and John, who looks stressed and fidgets with the small piece of metal.

DAVE SHARP
What's that?

JOHN GRAHAM
A small piece of metal.
(beat)
Now that we've got that cleared up...

He gestures to the door. Doesn't move.

DAVE SHARP

John, I've been doing some calculations on the roll stabilization. And I've got some concerns.

JOHN GRAHAM

I don't.
(calls through door)
Candy, how we making out on that coffee?

Candy comes in, curtsies.

CANDY

(sarcastic British accent)
Here you are, M'lord.

John laughs as he takes the coffee.

JOHN GRAHAM

Take a seat. Dave was just telling me how to build a ship. Fascinating stuff.

Candy sits. Dave's annoyed, but soldiers on.

DAVE SHARP

I was suggesting that we need to increase the roll stabilization to eight-and-a-half degrees.

He pulls a thick report out of his briefcase. Puts it on John's desk.

DAVE SHARP

As I point out in my report--

JOHN GRAHAM

The roll's fine at eight.

Dave shakes his head, takes back the report.

DAVE SHARP

Should I throw this away or do you want to?

JOHN GRAHAM

(shrugs)
Up to you.

Dave looks like he's going to leap across the desk. Candy tries to play peacemaker:

CANDY

Don't take it personally. John's too obstinate and egotistical to take suggestions from anyone.

JOHN GRAHAM

She's right.

DAVE SHARP

(loses it)

Well maybe he should! Because then maybe we'd have the damn keel laid like we're supposed to. And maybe I wouldn't be getting my ass reamed out by JP because we're behind schedule--

JOHN GRAHAM

(innocently)

Maybe you should hire somebody else then.

DAVE SHARP

We can't, John. As you well know.

(beat)

This ship, it's all on you. Like you want it. But... but maybe you can't handle it. You look like hell, you're practically wearing that... "piece of metal" thing down to nothing. And...

JOHN GRAHAM

And maybe I'm drinking again?

That's exactly what Dave's worried about. John lets him worry a beat longer before:

JOHN GRAHAM

I haven't had a drink in twenty-nine-hundred-and-sixteen days. I'm hoping when I drive by my favorite bar on the way home tonight that I can make it to twenty-nine-hundred-and-seventeen.

Dave's not exactly reassured.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - WCPO - DAY

Dave, annoyed, leaves John's office. Ruggles runs up to him.

RUGGLES

Hey, JP's on the quack-quack for you.

DAVE SHARP

(doesn't stop)

Tell him you couldn't find me.

Sparkman walks up.

SPARKMAN

(to Ruggles)

Heavy is the head that drives the 'Vette.

CUT TO:

DAVE IN HIS CORVETTE

Doing 90 up the PCH through Malibu. Trying to drive away his frustration with John Graham. Seems to be working until...

... his vision blurs.

He pulls over. Tries to blink away the blurriness. Can't.

JP (PRELAP)

Over the past year, Project Azorian has made significant progress and passed many milestones...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - SUBURBAN WASHINGTON DC - DAY

**Project Azorian Briefing
January 15, 1972**

JP briefs various government entities (Defense Department, the Navy, State Department, etc) about their progress. Craven and Bradley sit in the front, representing the Navy.

JP

The submersible barge that will house the Capture Vehicle was constructed at the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company in San Diego...

CUT TO:

INT. SUBMERSIBLE BARGE - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

It's huge -- 300' long, 100' wide, and 90' feet tall.

Dave stands in the empty barge with the FOREMAN.

BARGE FOREMAN

... and this is how you operate the retractable roof.

He hits buttons and levers. The roof doesn't retract.

BARGE FOREMAN

Shit.

JP (V.O.)

It's currently undergoing testing.

(beat)

The Hughes Company has been working on the custom pipe-string...

CUT TO:

INT. HUGHES TOOL COMPANY - HOUSTON - **FLASHBACK**

Sparkman, and Ruggles, watch from behind glass as a thirty-foot piece of pipe string is inserted into a machine.

Ruggles works the dial, replicating the pressure that they will face on the mission.

THE PIPE-STRING starts vibrating and GROANING as the pressure increases. Until--

-- the pipe SHATTERS, accompanied by the most HORRIFIC NOISE you've ever heard.

SPARKMAN

Shit.

JP (V.O.)

Testing is under way there as well.

CUT BACK TO:

JP'S BRIEFING

JP (V.O.)

And most importantly, at Sun Shipyard in Philadelphia, the *Hughes Glomar Explorer's* keel was laid and the ship is well on its way toward completion.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUN SHIPYARD - PHILADELPHIA - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

The *Hughes Glomar Explorer (HGE)* is framed out. Even this early in its conception, it's clear what an odd ship it is -- mostly because of the huge derrick that reaches 100 feet above the ship's deck--

Suddenly that giant derrick starts tilting. Workers scurry out of the way as the derrick SMASHES onto the deck.

John Graham and Sherm Whetmore race out of their construction trailer office.

JOHN GRAHAM

Fuck.

John lurches into a spasmodic cough. He doesn't look good. The stress of building this ship has taken its toll on him.

CUT BACK TO:

JP'S BRIEFING

JP

But to me, the most impressive accomplishment so far is that even with tens of contractors and hundreds of people read into the program, our cover story and security has held up.

Unbeknownst to JP, a WINDOW WASHER appears behind him.

JP

We've detected no breaches...

The crowd starts laughing. JP's confused, but eventually turns around.

The window washer waves to JP. The crowd laughs harder.

JP doesn't.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMS ROOM - WCPO / JP'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dave is arguing with JP on the secure line. It's hard to hear and it does make your voice sound like Donald Duck.

DAVE SHARP

... why are you yelling at me? I didn't forget to close the drapes?

Sparkman opens the door, whispers to Dave:

SPARKMAN

Graham's leaving.

DAVE SHARP

JP, I gotta go.

As JP continues yelling, Dave hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN GRAHAM'S TRUCK - NIGHT

John's at the wheel. It's parked.

As he fidgets with his small piece of metal, we see that--

He's parked outside a dive bar.

CUT TO:

FURTHER DOWN THE STREET

Dave is parked in his car, watching John's truck.

Dave nearly jumps out of his skin when Candy opens his passenger door.

DAVE SHARP

What-- How--?

CANDY

I'm good at tracking people. Part of my training as a Russian spy.

She laughs and climbs in, carrying a bag of chips.

CANDY

Have you been following him every night?

DAVE SHARP

Whenever I can. You?

CANDY

Only when he's had a really stressful day. So almost every night on this job.

DAVE SHARP

Why does he do it?

CANDY

He said it was like taking a cold shower. But I never got why people did that, so...

She offers him the open bag of chips. He takes some.

DAVE SHARP

Why do you do it? Follow him, take care of him?

CANDY

(beat)

Because John cared about me at a time when it felt like nobody else did.

(changing subject)

Now I got a question for you-- how come you never come out and play volleyball with everyone?

DAVE SHARP

Because I'm here to work.

CANDY

Even God took off one day.

DAVE SHARP

Yeah, well, he wasn't trying to raise a Russian sub that's three miles down.

CANDY

You know what I think?

(beat)

I think all your worrying, all your hard work, I think it's really about something else.

(MORE)

CANDY (CONT'D)

I think it's because there's a
little boy inside of you who is
scared...

Dave tenses up. Not sure he wants Candy psychoanalyzing him.

CANDY

... of me kicking his ass on the
volleyball court.

As they both laugh,

CUT TO:

JOHN'S TRUCK

He watches some people walk into the bar. Then drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOCKHEED OCEAN SYSTEMS DIVISION - **REDWOOD CITY, CA** - DAY

December 3, 1972

It's heavily secured and abuts a harbor. Tied up to a dock
is--

THE HUGHES MINING BARGE (HMB-1), the one they built in San Diego.

INT. HBM-1 - SAME TIME

Dave argues with OSCAR "OTT" SCHICK (40s), Lockheed's Program
Manager about the Capture Vehicle aka --

-- **THE CLAW**. This is what will actually pick up the sub. It's
huge -- 180 feet long, 58 feet wide, and 54 feet high and
four million pounds.

Or worded differently...

*... as long as 4 city buses, as wide as 6 buses, as tall as 4
buses, and weighs as much as 100 buses.*

Huge.

Ott points to the Claw's tines (each 60 feet tall).

OTT SHICK

... I can't know if these tines
will be strong enough unless we get
core samples.

DAVE SHARP

How close to the K-129 do the samples need to be from?

OTT SHICK

How close? Right next to the damn thing.

Seeing Dave's reaction, Ott runs his hand through his thinning hair. Dave puts his arm around Ott's shoulder.

DAVE SHARP

Relax, Ott, I don't want you to lose what little hair you have. We'll get you those samples.

JP (O.S.; PRELAP)

No! We can't get those samples!

CUT TO:

INT. EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM - CIA HQ - DAY

Dave sits across from JP and Walt Logan.

DAVE SHARP

Lockheed needs it.

JP

And if we alert the Russians, that's just a happy byproduct?

They sit there, stalemated. The CHEF brings over three covered plates.

CHEF

Poulet Basquaise.

He uncovers the plates. JP takes a deep whiff. Dave recoils.

JP

(to the Chef)

Robert, if you were running this place, the Soviets would all be speaking English.

(gestures to Dave)

And I'm sorry it's lost on this philistine.

As the Chef leaves, JP digs in greedily.

WALT

Actually, we could spin a recon mission to enhance the cover story.

JP grunts for him to continue.

WALT

Say we're sending out a ship to survey potential spots for manganese deposits while we wait for the *Explorer* to be finished.

JP

(considers between bites)
Not the worst idea.

DAVE SHARP

I'll get a ship from Curtis and send Sparkman and Ruggles out there. Have them visit a bunch of spots so the Russians don't get suspicious.

JP

(nods; to Walt)
And in the press release, make sure you mention Howard Hughes name as much as you can. People can't get enough of Howard Hughes.

(chuckles)

At Thanksgiving, my brother-in-law was pontificating about how he was buying up Global Marine stock because of Howard Hughes.

(imitates brother-in-law)

"John, you're an idiot if you don't get in on the ground floor on this. It's like the new Gold Rush."

DAVE SHARP

If there's nothing else, I'd like to go visit my dog before I have to fly back.

JP

Glad to see your priorities are in the right place.

(waves him off)

Go. Leave.

Dave stands up, leaves. JP pulls over Dave's plate, starts eating off it.

WALT LOGAN
 (tepidly)
 JP, regarding your brother-in-law...

JP
 Just spit it out, Walt.

WALT LOGAN
 Well, Global Marine's stock has seen a large uptick in the last couple of years. And well, I'm just worried what happens if the plan is revealed and the stock tanks. There could be lawsuits, probably class-action ones.

JP glares at him for a long beat. Puts his utensils down. His appetite ruined.

JP
 No more meetings at lunch!

CUT TO:

EXT. GAIL'S HOUSE - DAY

Dave throws a ball with his dog Duke. He's missed this simple pleasure. Gail joins Dave.

DAVE SHARP
 My arm's about to fall off.

She takes the ball from him. As she does, he notices she's wearing an engagement ring. She sees that he's noticed.

DAVE SHARP
 He a good guy?

GAIL
 (throws the ball)
 No, he's an asshole.

DAVE SHARP
 Congratulations.
 (beat)
 And I almost completely mean that.

Duke returns with the ball. Dave squats down in front of his dog, nuzzles his face.

DAVE SHARP
 I should get to the airport.
 (stands up)
 (MORE)

DAVE SHARP (CONT'D)

Seriously, Gail, I'm happy for you.
And I hope he makes you happy...
happier than I could.

GAIL

Our problem wasn't you making me
happy. It was that you couldn't be
happy with yourself. You were too
hard on yourself. It's what makes
you great at your job...

DAVE SHARP

And terrible at everything else?

GAIL

That's not what I meant.

DAVE SHARP

I know.

(beat)

Doesn't make it not true though.

As Dave throws the ball and Duke chases it, PRELAP the sound
of a WINDSTORM.

CUT TO:

THE MIDDLE OF THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

The *Glomar*, the reconnaissance ship, bobs in huge seas amidst
an epic storm.

THE BRIDGE

Trying to maintain their balance, Ruggles and Sparkman BINOC
an approaching ship that's half a mile away. It's--

-- *THE GIDROGRAF*, a Soviet trawler.

RUGGLES

It's Russian, but at least it's
commercial.

SPARKMAN

We're a commercial ship ostensibly
searching for manganese nodules.

RUGGLES

(beat)

Good point.

As they ponder that,

PAN BELOW:

THE GLOMAR

As the 10' x 10' reconnaissance platform (affectionately known as "The Dork") is lowered on a cable toward the (unseen) K-129.

CURTIS CROOKE (V.O.; PRELAP)
Five short years ago, Howard Hughes
devised an audacious plan to mine
the ocean floor...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUN SHIPYARD - PHILADELPHIA - DAY

**Sun Shipyards - Philadelphia, PA
Launch Day
November 5, 1973**

Huge crowd. Tons of Press. All eyes on Curtis, who addresses the crowd from a dais (joined by HUGHES COMPANY HONCHOS).

CURTIS CROOKE
... And today, we take a huge step
toward realizing Mr. Hughes's dream
with the launch of the *Hughes
Glomar Explorer*.

He dramatically gestures to the ship behind him.

And now for the first time, we get to see what a remarkable, but also, odd ship, the *Hughes Glomar Explorer (HGE)* is, with its giant derrick and the two huge docking legs.

As people APPLAUD, find John Graham and Candy off to the side. Candy squeezes John's hand. He tries to pretend that this isn't a big deal, but we can see how proud he is.

CUT TO:

INT. A RAILWAY CAR THAT'S A MILE AWAY - SAME TIME

JP and Duckett, who can't be seen at the shipyard, watch the proceedings through telescopes.

Duckett is ecstatic. JP is suspicious -- scans the crowd, looking for people who might be Russians.

CUT BACK TO:

THE SHIPYARD

Dave approaches John Graham.

DAVE SHARP
Congratulations, John.

JOHN GRAHAM
Thank you. Couldn't have done it
without you.

They laugh and shake hands. Up on the dais, the CEO OF HUGHES COMPANY'S WIFE christens the ship with a bottle of champagne. It doesn't break.

Audible GASPS from the crowd.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RAILWAY CAR - SAME TIME

JP can't believe that the champagne bottle didn't break.

DUCKETT
... It doesn't mean anything, JP.

JP
Of course it does. It's an omen, a
harbinger of doom--

A KNOCK and Walt enters the Railway car.

WALT LOGAN
We've got a problem.

SMASH CUT TO:

"THE DORK"

Descending toward the (still unseen) K-129. But then its cable snaps and it falls to the sea floor.

SMASH BACK TO:

THE RAILWAY CAR

JP stares at Duckett, then explodes at Walt:

JP
Find out who bought that champagne!

WALT LOGAN
(confused)
"Champagne"?

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. CIA - DAY

INT. HALLWAY - CIA

Duckett and JP walk down the hall. They stop in front of an office where a Maintenance Worker stencils "**Director William Colby**" onto the opaque glass door.

Before they go in:

DUCKETT
Remember, optimistic.

It's more of a warning, then a reminder. JP nods.

INT. CIA DIRECTOR BILL COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

JP, Duckett, and Walt brief the **new CIA Director** BILL COLBY (50s; WASP -- like every CIA chief).

JP
... even without the soil samples, the engineers are confident-- extremely confident -- that the tines on the Capture Vehicle will be capable of penetrating the seabed.

DUCKETT
And now that that *Hughes Glomar Explorer's* in Long Beach, we'll be starting sea trials on the West Coast next week. So we're on track to recover the K-129 in our eight-week window next summer.

COLBY
And the cover story?

JP

It continues to hold. No leaks, no breaches--

The door bursts open. It's COLBY'S SECRETARY. She utters the scariest six words in Washington:

COLBY'S SECRETARY

Seymour Hersh is on line one.

A long beat.

JP

(being "optimistic")
Maybe he's selling subscriptions?

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - SY HERSH'S HOUSE - WASHINGTON, DC - DAY

SY HERSH (30s) pours martinis out of a shaker into two glasses as he talks to someone o.s.

SEYMOUR HERSH

... I understand that there are national security implications.

Carries a martini over to Bill Colby, who sits in a tattered club chair. His hat, literally and figuratively, in hand.

BILL COLBY

I appreciate that, Sy. And if you hold off until we get the sub, I promise you'll have it exclusive.

Hersh sips the martini, then nods.

COLBY

(relieved)
Great martini--

SEYMOUR HERSH

And... I'm going to need you to answer some questions about another story I'm working on...

Colby's relief evaporates. Knows exactly what story Hersh is talking about:

BILL COLBY

A break-in at a local office complex?

SEYMOUR HERSH
 (nods, smiles)
 Let me get you another drink.

DISSOLVE TO:

TITLE CARD:

First Sea Trial
January 1974

EXT. THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER (HGE) - DAY

Leaving Long Beach Harbor.

DAVE SHARP (O.S.; PRELAP)
 Over the next six months, we will
 be conducting sea trials to test
 all of our systems...

INT. CAFETERIA - HGE - SAME TIME

Dave stands on a table, addressing the 100+ person crew.

DAVE SHARP
 ... the Mission Director for the actual
 recovery, Captain Chuck Richeloux will have
 operational control during the trials.

He gestures to **NAVY CAPTAIN CHUCK RICHELOUX** (40s; stern) and
 his AIDES. They wear pressed shirts, khakis, and flat
 brimmed hats.

SPARKMAN leans over to Steve Craig:

SPARKMAN
 Steve, I thought you told them to
 fit in.

STEVE CRAIG
 I did.

Sparkman glances over at **THE ROUGHNECK CREW**. The guys who do
 the actual work on the ship. They're mostly Southern good
 ol' boys; big, strong. Dressed nothing like the Navy guys.

SPARKMAN
 (laughs)
 Oh man, JP is not gonna be happy.

DAVE ON THE TABLE:

DAVE SHARP

Our objectives for this trial are to operate the well gates and evaluate the docking legs, the gimbal system, and the heave compensator. And of course, the most important objective...

Everyone looks up.

DAVE SHARP

... Make me look good, since JP's gonna be here.

(gets laughs)

Alright, let's go.

CUT TO:

THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - DAY

It comes to a stop a couple miles off the coast. The seas are calm.

CUT TO:

DAVE'S BERTH - SAME TIME

Despite the calm seas, Dave's perched over the toilet, puking his guts out.

INT. CONTROL CENTER - THE EXPLORER - DAY

John Graham, rubbing his small piece of metal, takes a deep breath. Gives the order:

JOHN GRAHAM

Flood the moon pool.

CUT TO:

THE MOON POOL.

It's enormous -- 200 feet long by 74 feet wide and 100 feet high. Just big enough to fit a Soviet nuclear sub.

THE CATWALK ABOVE IT

Steve Craig is there with a couple of the other CIA guys, watching as water floods into the pool.

STEVE CRAIG

Am I the only one who feels a
little nervous seeing a ship being
filled with water intentionally?

The other guys laugh... a bit nervously.

CUT TO:

EXT. HELIPAD - LONG BEACH - DAY

JP, Walt, and Curtis climb into a waiting helicopter.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hold on!

They turn around, see Admiral Zumwalt getting out of a car.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

Mind if I join? Excited to see
what our three hundred million
dollars has bought.

JP

(sotto to Walt)

Guess he hasn't seen the latest
budget yet?

(big smile; to Zumwalt)

Of course, happy to have you.

Zumwalt walks over. He's in his civvies -- ironed khakis and
shirt. He looks just like the other Navy guys.

JP

(to Curtis)

Jesus, why doesn't he just wear a
sign saying, "I'm in the god damn
Navy!"

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S BERTH - DAY

Dave lays on his bed. Miserable.

BOOM... BOOM... BOOM... *What the hell is that?*

Dave races out, his seasickness instantly forgotten.

CUT TO:

DAVE

Racing up to the CATWALK. Looks down into--

THE MOON POOL.

Partially filled with water. But because of the boat's pitching--

-- **A THIRTY FOOT WAVE OF WATER** sloshes back and forth, SLAMMING into the walls with incredible force.

CATWALK ABOVE THE MOON POOL

Dave, John Graham, Captain Richeloux and their collective teams watch this.

CAPTAIN RICHELOUX

Maybe we should wait to open the gates.

JOHN GRAHAM

No. These are the conditions that you'll be working in -- if we're lucky.
(yells to men)
Open the gates!

The sound of MASSIVE MACHINERY kicks in...

... The TWO GATES start to open.

They're supposed to move away from each other so that a giant hole is created in the bottom of the ship.

Supposed to. But they don't.

Instead all hell breaks loose.

The violent wave action tosses the gates around in their guides as though the gates were made of plywood instead of nine-foot thick steel.

BAM!... BAM!

CAPTAIN RICHELOUX

Jesus Christ! Stop it! Move 'em back!

JOHN GRAHAM

We can't. We're too far along now!

BAM!... BAM!... The doors continue to SLAM... John has to literally scream into Sherm Whetmore's ear:

JOHN GRAHAM
Drive 'em harder!--

The entire ship SHUDDERS.

NAVY OFFICER #1
Holy fucking shit!

Steve Craig, Sparkman, and Ruggles are so freaked out that they can't even comment on the Navy Officer swearing.

CUT TO:

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME TIME

They head out to the *Explorer*, which is visible on the horizon.

JP
Admiral, I know we've had our differences, but I think you're going to be quite impressed with this ship.

CUT BACK TO:

THE CATWALK ABOVE THE MOON POOL

The gates slowly open as they continue to SLAM UP AND DOWN. But in between BANGS, Dave hears a worse sound -- JP's helicopter approaching.

DAVE SHARP
John, they're almost here.

JOHN GRAHAM
It's okay. We'll be good once we get 'em completely opened--

The gates GRIND to a halt. (Though they keep slamming up and down.) John, for the first time, looks worried.

JOHN GRAHAM
I think... the pinion gears must've got stripped.

Dave turns to Navy Captain Chuck Richeloux, the man with operational authority.

DAVE SHARP
Chuck, you're gonna have to send divers down there.

Chuck doesn't even hear him. He's a deer in headlights.

DAVE

Chuck!

(Chuck finally comes to)

The divers gotta lock down those gates!

CUT TO:

JP'S HELICOPTER

touching down on the *Explorer's* helipad. They climb out.
Hear the BANGING.

But what's worse is they see PHYSICAL DEFORMATION WAVES going up and down the derrick.

ZUMWALT

(to helicopter pilot)

Keep the rotors running.

CUT TO:

DIVERS

tethered to safety and breathing lines, drop into the MOON POOL.

Swim to the center, avoiding the bucking gates. Until--

-- a diver is sucked through the open gates.

BAM! The uncontrolled gates SLAM SHUT. They lose sight of the diver. Can only see his severed breathing line.

After an excruciatingly long beat, the gates open. The diver swims through them back into the moon pool.

DAVE SHARP

Pull him up! Pull him up!

The diver is pulled out of the pool. But-- BAM! BAM! The gates keep slamming.

JP, CURTIS, AND ZUMWALT

take this all in.

And Zumwalt, a man who has spent his life at sea, is shaken.

Finally the divers secure the gates. The BANGING stops. Dave turns to JP and Zumwalt, but Zumwalt's already on his way back to the helicopter -- he's seen enough.

DAVE SHARP

(to JP)

We'll get to work figuring this out--

JP

No, you won't. 'Cause you're fired.

Dave's stunned.

JOHN GRAHAM

It's not his fault--

JP

Not alone. But since I can't fire you, Sharp goes. Somebody's gonna be held accountable.

He starts off. Graham calls after him:

JOHN GRAHAM

John, after some deep soul-searching, I've realized that in an effort to foster accountability, I should quit.

JP turns around. Stews for a beat in the corner he's painted himself. Then:

JP

Sharp, you're rehired.

(beat)

Now fix this god damn ship.

He storms off with Walt in tow. Dave and John Graham stare at each other for a beat.

JOHN GRAHAM

This is customarily the moment where a person articulates their appreciation.

DAVE SHARP

(scoffs)

You want me to say "thank you" for getting me a job back I lost because of you?

(beat)

You wouldn't take any advice, you had all the answers--

SHERM WHETMORE

As John said, this stuff happens--

DAVE SHARP
 Not like this, Sherm. I saw his
 face up there.

He waits for John Graham to deny it, but he doesn't.

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. LONG BEACH PIER - NIGHT

The *HGE* is tied up. It's the middle of the night. Deserted.

THE MOON POOL - SAME TIME

John Graham and Sherm Whetmore inspect the gates. John lets
 loose a terrible COUGH.

SHERM WHETMORE
 You alright?

JOHN GRAHAM
 Will be when I figure out what the
 hell's going on here.

SHERM WHETMORE
 You always do.

John nods, goes back to the work. Then stops. Turns to his
 old friend.

JOHN GRAHAM
 But what if I don't?
 (vulnerable)
 What if I can't?

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - WCPO - NIGHT

Dave's Corvette's the only car in the lot.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - WCPO - SAME TIME

Dave works at his desk. A KNOCK. He looks up, surprised to
 see Candy at the door.

CANDY
 I was driving by on my way to get a
 late dinner and saw your car in the
 parking lot. Wanna join?

DAVE SHARP

So this has nothing to do with today's disaster?

CANDY

("confused")

I heard it went pretty well.

DAVE SHARP

(laughs)

I appreciate the offer, but I'm going to stay a little longer.

CANDY

Working all night and drinking cold coffee versus a dinner and drinks with a hot woman?

(shakes her head)

Well, I knew it was a long shot.

She raps twice on the door as a good-bye. Dave watches her walk down the hall. For a moment, we think he's going to follow her.

But the moment passes and he returns to his work.

INT. DAVE'S CORVETTE - NIGHT

Dave is parked outside Candy's apartment. Wants to go in and talk with her about the disaster that was today.

But he can't. Drives off.

DISSOLVE TO:

A TV.

WALTER CRONKITE (ON TV)

... in a troubling development for the White House in the burgeoning Watergate scandal, Seymour Hersh of the New York Times wrote today...

REVEAL that it's in **BILL COLBY'S OFFICE**. Colby, Duckett, and Walt watch.

DUCKETT

Hersh must have a hell of a source.

They chuckle, except for JP -- something's bothering him. Colby turns off the TV.

COLBY

Where are we with the ship?

DUCKETT

(full salesman mode)

We're making great progress. We're on track for recovery next summer--

JP

We can't wait 'til next summer. We have to go this July. The cover story won't hold--

DUCKETT

(shakes his head)

Yes it will. Hersh is playing ball.

JP

Yes, but what Hersh is not is the only journalist in this great nation. Whoever leaked our story to him wants it out there. And it's only a matter of time before the *Post* or the *Journal* gets it.

COLBY

Or that human pestilence Jack Anderson.

They all shudder at that thought.

COLBY

Will you be ready by July?

JP

We'll have to be.

DUCKETT

(shakes his head)

Damn First Amendment.

As they enjoy a needed laugh,

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - WCPO - DAY

Dave is in a meeting with Sparkman and Ruggles. He looks stressed. The compressed schedule weighing on him.

He stops speaking mid-sentence when out the window he sees--

-- John Graham's truck leaving the parking lot.

Dave checks his watch -- 4pm. Curses under his breath.

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Discreetly following John Graham's truck.

The truck passes John's bar without stopping.

Dave's surprised...

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

... but not as surprised as he follows John's truck into a HOSPITAL PARKING LOT.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

John goes through a door. A beat later, Dave walks up to the door. It's the chemotherapy treatment center.

CUT TO:

INT. CHEMO TREATMENT CENTER - DAY

As John gets his dose of poison, he reviews architectural drawings of the *HGE*.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOSPITAL - LATER

John exits, lights up a cigarette and heads to his truck. Stops short when he sees Dave.

JOHN GRAHAM

Well if we don't get this ship figured out, good to know you can become a PI.

DAVE SHARP

"Mannix" makes it look fun.

John laughs as they stand there awkwardly.

DAVE SHARP
I'm sorry, John.

JOHN GRAHAM
Thank you.

DAVE SHARP
Well, I should get back.

Dave turns to go.

JOHN GRAHAM
Hey--
(Dave turns around)
-- wanna play hooky?

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Following John Graham, who pulls into a MARINA PARKING LOT.

DAVE SHARP
Shit.

EXT. DOCK - MARINA - LONG BEACH - DAY

Dave and John walk down the dock to John's sailboat. John steps on, but Dave pauses.

JOHN GRAHAM
Everything okay?

Dave hesitates. He should tell John that he gets seasick...
... but that would mean telling John that he gets seasick.

CUT TO:

THE SAILBOAT

Heading into the bay. John's at the tiller, smoking a cigarette. Content. This is where he's happiest. Dave is miserable. White-knuckling the railing.

JOHN GRAHAM
(yelling over wind)
The wind's whipping. Beautiful day
for a sail.

They pick up speed; the boat smashes into the waves. Dave's face goes green. John sees this; starts LAUGHING.

JOHN GRAHAM
Why would somebody who gets seasick
spend four and a half years of
their life trying to raise a sub?

DAVE SHARP
I'm not sea--

He leans over the side, spews chunks into the water. John
laughs harder. Swings the tiller...

JOHN GRAHAM
Coming about.

... Dave ducks the boom. They head back into the harbor.

DAVE SHARP
Thanks.

JOHN GRAHAM
(still laughing)
No, thank you. Most fun I've had on
the water in a long time.
(beat)
And I bet the fish appreciated it
too.

His LAUGHTER echoes as they head back in.

JOHN'S SAILBOAT - LATER

Safely tied up at his slip. Dave drinks a beer, John enjoys a
Coke and a cigarette.

DAVE SHARP
Now this kind of sailing I could
get used to.

JOHN GRAHAM
You're a regular yachtsman.

They sit there for a beat.

DAVE SHARP
Are we going to be able to make
this work?

JOHN GRAHAM
The gates?

DAVE SHARP

(nods; quietly)

And the pipe string... the capture
vehicle... All of it.

Dave looks away; ashamed that he let his vulnerability show.

JOHN GRAHAM

Well, I wasn't dumb enough to sign
up to oversee all of that. But as
far as the ship goes, I think we'll
get there-- or at least I'll die
trying.

Dave doesn't laugh at the gallows humor. John clocks this as
he takes a long pull on his Coke.

JOHN GRAHAM

My old man was a wildcatter back in
Texas. Anyway, he'd been drilling
this hole for a while, sure it was
gonna be the motherlode. "Matching
Cadillacs for me and your mother."

(beat)

Nobody got Cadillacs. We barely
kept our house. He was devastated.
Hell, I was devastated and I was
only seven. But I'll never forget
what he told me. "Sometimes you get
oil, sometimes you get mud. And it
ain't nobody's fault but a bunch of
really old rocks and dead
dinosaurs."

Dave considers that for a long beat:

DAVE SHARP

I don't think I'd be a good oilman.

JOHN GRAHAM

(laughs)

Probably not.

(tosses cigarette into the
water)

We should probably get back, put
our heads together and figure out
how to make those gates work.

DAVE SHARP

(taken aback)

Is that your way of asking for my
help?

JOHN GRAHAM

No, it's my way of throwing you a bone to boost your spirits.

CUT TO:

INT. BEACH - MARINA DEL REY - DAY

The weekly co-ed volleyball game for the West Coast Program Office. A way to blow off steam.

Candy rules the court. Dave, on the other team, gets by on determination and hustle.

He and Candy go at each in a competitive, but friendly, way. Trash-talking as they one-up each other.

Candy goes up to spike it. Dave skies to block it. He's in perfect position. Then--

-- his vision goes blurry. Can't see the ball.

Candy spikes it. Dave takes it right in the face. He falls down to the sand, his nose gushing blood.

CANDY

Oh my God! Dave, sorry--

DAVE SHARP

(waves it off)

It's okay. I'm fine. Just got the sun in my eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Dave's on the exam table talking with an:

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

... it's called Central Serus Retinopathy, which is a fancy way of saying that stress has created tiny holes in your retina and fluid is leaking through them.

(beat)

The good new is that if you stop whatever's causing the stress the holes will heal on their own.

DAVE SHARP

(beat)

And if that's not an option?

OPHTHALMOLOGIST

It'll get worse... and eventually
become permanent.

As Dave considers that,

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S CONDO - MARINA DEL REY - DAWN

Dave sits at the kitchen table, working. Still trying to solve the problem with the gates...

... yet the answer continues to elude him.

He gives up, goes into THE BATHROOM. Turns the shower on. Slides the shower door open. Steps in.

Stops.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME

Sneaking a cigarette, John works in his bed. The PHONE RINGS. Answers it.

DAVE SHARP (O.S.; ON PHONE)

(excited)

What if we had wheels on the bottom of the gates in the guides, like a shower?-- Then when the gates locked in there'd be a little dip where the wheels could go?

JOHN GRAHAM (INTO PHONE)

(long beat, then:)

Are you sitting in your condo naked?

DAVE SHARP

No.

REVEAL -- Dave naked in his condo.

DAVE SHARP

I'm standing.

They both laugh.

JOHN GRAHAM
Sharp, maybe you're not completely
useless as a marine engineer.

Dave relishes the "high praise" from John Graham. Then:

DAVE SHARP
Shit.

JOHN GRAHAM
What?

DAVE SHARP
What if we actually figure this all
out and then they don't let us go?

JOHN GRAHAM
Why wouldn't they let it go
forward?

DAVE SHARP
'Cause it's Washington.

CUT TO:

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

**Excom Meeting
June 5, 1974**

INT. CABINET ROOM - SAME TIME

The meeting that will determine the mission's fate.

Dave sits against the wall with other underlings as JP, Duckett, and Colby make their case to the most powerful people in the world, including PRESIDENT NIXON.

JP
... After our changes, we're
confident that the systems will work.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT
(scoffs)
I was on that ship! It is unsafe a
couple miles off the California
coastline, but you expect us to
just take your word that it'll be
okay in the middle of the Pacific?!

Dave taps his foot anxiously... knows it's not going well.
But powerless to do anything about it.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

Your reconnaissance mission, so you
have no idea if the tines will even
penetrate the seabed.

(beat)

And we haven't even heard a
contingency plan. What the hell's
going to happen if the Russians
board you?

A beat as JP tries to project confidence in his answer:

JP

Our contingency plan needs to line
up with our cover story so...

(beat)

The plan would be to repel them
with water hoses until the Navy
arrives--

The military guys nearly spit-take. Zumwalt looks around the
table incredulously (and theatrically).

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

I'm sorry, but I will not allow any
of my men to serve on this mission.

(beat)

The Navy refuses operational
responsibility for this mission.

SecDef Schlesinger nods in support. A big blow.

The CIA group look to Kissinger. He stares back blankly.
Bigger blow.

Finally they turn to their last hope, Joint Chief Chairman
Admiral Moorer. The guy who started this thing.

ADMIRAL MOORER

I think we should cancel it.

The CIA is incredulous.

ADMIRAL MOORER

I want those missiles more than
anyone, but the Navy's saying it's
a disaster waiting to happen, a
suicide mission--

DAVE SHARP (O.S.)

It's safe!

It takes people a moment of looking around before they realize that the voice came from the cheap seats.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

(scoffs)

It's easy to say that when you won't be the one on the ship--

DAVE SHARP

I'll go. I'll lead it.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

(thrown)

You're not qualified.

(to Kissinger; flustered)

The CIA's trying to avoid responsibility by doubling down on a plan that doesn't work--

WHAM! JP slams his hand on the table. Looks at Moorer:

JP

Remember when you did that five years ago, Admiral?

He stands up, takes a deep breath. Addresses the President.

JP

Sir, there's a ship docked in Long Beach Harbor...

CUT TO:

EXT. HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - DAY

As the crew continues working.

JP (V.O.)

We built it for one purpose -- to lower a giant claw and recover a Soviet sub that's sitting three miles below the ocean's surface.

John Graham and Sherm Whetmore are in the giant moon pool, working to fix the gates.

CUT BACK TO:

THE MEETING

JP

That claw, is in a specially-built
submersible barge that's being
towed to Catalina Island.

THE HMB-1 BARGE

With the Capture Vehicle housed inside is towed through
stormy seas by a POWERFUL TUG.

CUT BACK TO:

THE MEETING

JP

And right now, up in Redwood City, I
have over two hundred men learning
how to take apart a Russian sub...

CUT TO:

INT. SECURED WAREHOUSE - DAY

The crew, including Sparkman and Ruggles, practice using
welding torches to take apart a scaled-down version of the K-
129.

JP (V.O.)

... Which very likely will be hot.

CUT TO:

THE CREW MEMBERS

Practice putting on their radiation suits. Duct-tape each
other's hoods so they're air-tight.

CUT BACK TO:

THE MEETING

JP

When we were tasked with coming up
with a plan to recover the sub, I
thought it was a fool's errand, a
pipe dream, a way to pacify
somebody's bruised ego.

He glances over at Admiral Moorer.

JP

And I wasn't alone. In fact the only reason we have this opportunity is because the Russians think it's impossible. It was impossible. But over the past five years this man...

Points to Dave.

JP

... and his team have made me believe that the impossible is possible. Am I guaranteeing success? No. It's risky as hell.

(beat)

But when the hell was greatness ever achieved without a large degree of risk?

He pauses dramatically, a prosecutor reaching the climax of his closing argument.

JP

Was it on the fields of Gettysburg? The beaches of Normandy? Maybe it was on the surface of the moon?

Zumwalt senses the room starting to turn.

ADMIRAL ZUMWALT

I'm not arguing we cancel it. Just do more sea trials, go later--

JP

(explodes)

We can't! As you know, there's two months out of the year that we can operate in those seas. But our cover story won't hold 'til next year...

(stares at Zumwalt)

... because somebody's leaking to the press.

After a beat, JP turns back to President Nixon.

JP

We can do this, sir. But it's now or never.

Dave watches Nixon, who is inscrutable as the Sphinx.

CUT TO:

WHITE HOUSE HALLWAYS

The CIA contingency leaves the meeting. Still tingling from JP's speech.

DUCKETT

Great speech, JP. "When was greatness ever achieved without a large degree of risk?"

JP

Saw it on a TV show about the moon landing.

As they laugh,

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT./ESTAB. WCPO - LOS ANGELES - DAY

INT. DAVE SHARP'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Dave throws a tennis ball against the wall. Nothing to do but wait.

A knock, then Candy enters.

CANDY

JP's calling.

INT. COMMS ROOMS - WCPO - DAY

Dave takes a deep breath, then connects to JP on the secure Donald Duck line. And finally, the connection is clear.

INTERCUT WITH:

JP

Nixon's going to Moscow for the SALT II talks...

Dave shuts his eyes, crushed.

JP

... so you can't initiate the recovery between June 27th and July 3rd.

OUTSIDE THE COMMS ROOM

Seemingly everyone from the office is here. They hear Dave's SHOUTS OF JOY penetrate the (almost) sound-proof room. They return the SHOUTS OF JOY.

INSIDE THE COMMS ROOM

Dave hears them, but doesn't hear them. Lost in the moment.

JP

One other thing. Colby told them we'd have some guns in case you're boarded.

DAVE SHARP

They really think we're going to hold the Russians off with a couple rifles?

JP

No. But it'll help ease their consciences a little.

As Dave wonders why their consciences need to be eased,

CUT TO:

INT. WCPO - LOS ANGELES - MINUTES LATER

The celebration is in full swing as Dave steps out of the Comms Room. Everyone shakes his hand and slaps his back.

He goes to middle of the room, stands on a chair. Whistles to get everyone's attention.

DAVE SHARP

It's official. We're going.

More WHOOPS and HOLLERS.

DAVE SHARP

But there's been a change.

(beat)

The Navy will not be coming to our aid if we're boarded.

The whoops and hollers stop. Sparkman stops drinking from the champagne bottle mid-sip.

DAVE SHARP

The White House is worried that if the Navy engages and something goes wrong, this could escalate.

SPARKMAN

So we'll be on our own?

DAVE SHARP

We will be. And in light of that, I'd like everyone who is going to reassess their decision.

(beat)

Everyone who is here has already given so much to this mission. If you choose not to continue, I completely understand.

He steps down. Candy comes over, hugs him.

DAVE SHARP

We should go tell John.

CANDY

We'll call him.

(off Dave's look)

No visitors. It's what he wants.

Dave's saddened. But he nods, accedes to John's wish.

CUT TO:

INT. JP'S OFFICE - NIGHT

JP sips a scotch in silence. His mind on the fact that Dave and his team will be out there without back-up.

A knock at the door, then Walts walk in.

WALT LOGAN

I just wanted to say,
"congratulations." You did it, JP.

JP

Thanks, Walt. But we should probably hold off on the congratulations 'til it's clear what I did.

CUT TO:

EXT. WCPO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dave walks through the nearly empty lot toward his car. He hears footsteps behind him. Turns around. Sees...

Ruggles. He's shaken.

RUGGLES
I was filling out my next-of-kin
affidavit...

DAVE SHARP
It's okay.

RUGGLES
It's not because I don't have
confidence in the mission. And if
I didn't just have a daughter--

Dave puts his hand on Ruggles' shoulder.

DAVE SHARP
You don't owe me an explanation,
Rugs. You don't know me anything.

Ruggles nods. They shake hands. Dave watches as his good friend walks across the parking lot, his mission over.

CUT TO:

A RINGING TELEPHONE

Followed by CURSING and a dog BARKING.

Gail, Dave's ex-wife, bounds down the hall, still half-asleep. Grabs the phone.

GAIL
Hello...
(beat / concerned)
What time is out there, Dave?

INTERCUT WITH:

DAVE PACING IN HIS CONDO

It's the middle of the night.

DAVE SHARP
I should be back in a couple of
months.

(MORE)

DAVE SHARP (CONT'D)

But I just wanted to make sure that you'd be okay keeping Duke... if it turns out to be longer.

GAIL

(composes herself)
Of course.

DAVE SHARP

Thanks.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

Day of Departure
July 20, 1974

THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - LONG BEACH - DAWN

Under intense security and secrecy, preparations are made for the departure. Steve Craig and **CAPTAIN GRESHAM** (40s; works for Global Marine) watch as equipment and huge amounts of food are brought on board.

ON THE PIER

Candy hugs Dave good-bye. Breaks the hug, then hugs him tighter.

DAVE SHARP

(off the hug)
Did John tell you something about the ship he didn't tell me?

Candy laughs, shakes her head.

DAVE SHARP

Tell him I said "goodbye", okay?

CANDY

I'll see you soon--

She kisses him. Pulls back. Looks around. Nobody noticed.

CANDY

(embarrassed)
I'm sorry--

Dave pulls her behind a storage container. As he kisses her back, PRELAP:

DAVE SHARP (V.O)
That's the contingency plan?

CUT TO:

INT. DAVE'S BERTH - THE EXPLORER - DAY

He and Steve Craig stare at the contingency plan--

-- a handful of guns from Big 5 Sporting Goods. Not exactly enough to hold off the Russian Navy.

DAVE SHARP
The fire hoses are looking better
and better.

STEVE CRAIG
That's why I came up with a Plan B.

He goes out, then wheels in six cases of Russian vodka.

STEVE CRAIG
Best vodka in the world. If you're
boarded, hopefully your guests will
be more interested in your
hospitality than doing a thorough
inspection of the ship.
(off Dave's dubious look)
It also has one other benefit.

DAVE SHARP
What's that?

STEVE CRAIG
You can drink it if the ship sinks.

Dave and Steve laugh.

JOHN GRAHAM (O.S.)
It's not gonna sink.

Dave and Steve are shocked by John's appearance. Still has his hair, but he's frail and shockingly thin. Sensing that he's a third wheel, Steve excuses himself:

STEVE CRAIG
Good to see you, John. I'm just
gonna make sure the gangplank is
still up.

He leaves.

DAVE SHARP
How you doing, John?

JOHN GRAHAM
(laughs)
Better than your powers of
perception obviously.
(beat)
Brought you a little something.
(hands Dave a small vial)
Ancient Chinese sailors used this
for seasickness.

DAVE SHARP
Does it work?

JOHN GRAHAM
(offended)
How the hell should I know? Never
had occasion to use it.
(beat)
There's one other thing...

John hands him the tiny piece of metal that he always rubs.

DAVE SHARP
Ah... the tiny piece of metal.

JOHN GRAHAM
Pull tab from the last can of beer
I ever had.

DAVE SHARP
(reads the tab)
"Schlitz?" Jesus, you really were
an alcoholic.

JOHN GRAHAM
(laughs)
Yeah, if jonesing for a Schlitz
isn't rock bottom, I don't know
what the hell is.

DAVE SHARP
Thank you, John.

John nods, but looks away. Uncomfortable with the emotion.

JOHN GRAHAM
Anyway, you probably got a million
things to get squared away.

DAVE SHARP
 Million and a half.
 (beat)
 I'll see you when I get back.

They both know that's a lie.

JOHN GRAHAM
 Yeah. Maybe we'll go for a sail.

Dave laughs as they shake hands. Then, to Dave's surprise, John pulls Dave in for a fierce hug.

JOHN GRAHAM
 (urgent)
 Now go get some god damn oil.

CUT TO:

THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - NIGHT

Five years after its conception, it pulls away from the pier to start its mission.

THE BOW

Dave stands alone. Excited. Nervous. Ready.

CUT TO:

WCPO & ECPO

Curtis calls JP on the secure Donald Duck phone.

JP
 Did it sink?

CURTIS
 (laughs)
 They're on their way to Catalina.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOR - CATALINA ISLAND - THE NEXT DAY

Sunbathers and swimmers all stare at--

the HMB-1 barge as it submerges.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARBOR - CATALINA ISLAND - NIGHT

The *Explorer* positions itself over the submerged barge.

DAVE SHARP (O.S.; PRELAP)
Open the gates.

CUT TO:

CATWALK ABOVE THE MOON POOL

Dave watches as the giant well gates start to open and pull apart. It's much smoother than last time.

SPARKMAN
Well, that's an improvement.

DAVE SHARP
We'll see how it goes when we have actual seas to contend with.

Dave looks down into the giant hole in the ship -- the top of the submerged barge is visible.

VOOOOOM...

The roof of the barge slides open, revealing the Capture Vehicle (the crew affectionately refers to her as "Clementine").

VVVVVVVVV...

The *Explorer's* TWO GIANT DOCKING LEGS lower into Clementine.

UNDERWATER

DIVERS lock Clementine into the docking legs with giant support pins.

VVVVVVVVV...

The giant legs retract, pull Clementine into the moon pool.

OUTSIDE *THE EXPLORER*

The transfer is completely invisible to the outside world.

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. AIRPORT - MOSCOW - DAY

Nixon and Brezhnev do a photo-op on the tarmac.

NIXON

... It is my sincere hope that these talks usher in a new era of openness and mutual trust...

MATCH CUT TO:

A TV IN JP'S OFFICE.

JP and Duckett nurse scotches while they watch Nixon.

DUCKETT

I almost believe him myself.

(grins, turns off TV)

Well, we're off to a good start.

JP

(grunts)

We've duped some sunbathers and had a President, who's being impeached for lying, tell a lie.

(finishes scotch)

Plenty of time for this to all go sideways.

CUT TO:

INT. CIA HALLWAYS - DAY

Walt, looking grim, hustles down the hallway to JP's office.

CUT TO:

INT. JP'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Walt explaining to JP and Duckett:

WALT LOGAN

... There was a break-in last night at a Hughes facility.

(beat)

Evidently, among numerous other things, the thieves made off with a handwritten memo from the Mormon Mafia to Howard Hughes describing the operation... in detail.

JP

Is it possible the next words out of your mouth are going to be, "but they caught the thieves and they've secured the documents?"

Walt shakes his head. JP gives Duckett a knowing look.

JP

Have Steve Craig read in the
detectives working the case.

(beat)

And it's probably a good idea to
get some more booze in here. I got
a feeling it's gonna be a long
couple of months.

CUT TO BLACK.

**July 1, 1974 - Day 13 of the mission
Arrival at Recovery Site**

EXT. THE EXPLORER - DAY

It's battered by terrible weather and huge waves.

INT. DAVE'S BERTH - SAME TIME

Dave, seasick, is on his knees in front of the toilet. He
pours the vial of Chinese remedy John Graham gave him down
his throat. It's empty.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOSCOW AIRPORT - DAY

Nixon waves and walks up the steps to Air Force One.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - DAY

A beautiful day. Dave runs laps around the deck, trying to
burn off nervous energy as they wait for the go-ahead.

He stops, sees something on the horizon.

CUT TO:

SHIP'S BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Dave is with Captain Gresham, BINOC-ing the something-on-the
horizon, which has now been revealed to be a **450 FOOT LONG
SHIP with a HELICOPTER.**

DAVE SHARP
... no flags, no markings--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
And lots of antennas. No way that
thing's commercial.

CUT TO:

INT. COLBY'S OFFICE - CIA HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Duckett and JP walk in. Colby grins:

COLBY
Air Force One is officially out of
Soviet airspace.

As they grin,

CUT TO:

CIA HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Walt, looking grim again, hustles down the hallway.

CUT BACK TO:

COLBY'S OFFICE.

JP
(stops grinning)
Does anybody hear footsteps?

CUT TO:

COLBY'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

Frowns all around as Walt debriefs them:

WALT LOGAN
... NSA says it's *The Chazhma*, a
Soviet missile tracker that was on
its way back to its home port of
Petrovavlovsk when it was diverted.

Colby, Duckett, and JP don't say anything. Just look at
satellite photos of *The Chazhma*.

COLBY
Jesus... do they know?

Nobody can answer that.

JP

And are they just waiting for us to pick it up so they can take it?

Or that.

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. THE RECOVERY LOCATION - DAY

The *Chazhma* sits half a mile away from the *Explorer* -- it's also the only ship within a hundred miles.

CUT TO:

THE MESS HALL - THE EXPLORER - SAME TIME

Dave and Captain Gresham argue as a dozen staffers watch on.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

... We should wait out the *Chazhma*--

DAVE SHARP

We can't. The National Weather Service says the next thirty-six hours are as good as we're going to get for the next ten days.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

If they send divers down while we're transferring, we're done.

The emphasis on "done" not lost on the others.

DAVE SHARP

We don't even know if they have divers.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

We don't know that they don't--

DAVE SHARP

We don't know anything for sure--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

We know that's not a commercial ship.

Subtle nods from others -- Gresham isn't alone in his thinking. Dave considers for a beat. Then:

DAVE SHARP
We're going.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - EXPLORER - MINUTES LATER

The meeting's just broken up. Sparkman catches up to Dave.

SPARKMAN
Listen, I know you've got a lot riding on this. We all do. And that you've sacrificed a lot getting to this point. We all have--

DAVE SHARP
Just spit it out, Jack--

SPARKMAN
I just want to make sure that's not influencing your thinking, the sunk costs-- sorry, bad choice of words.

Dave stares at his friend for beat.

DAVE SHARP
Just to be clear, you're asking if I'm jeopardizing everyone's lives, including my own, because I've been working on this for five years?
(beat)
I got that right?

A tense beat.

SPARKMAN
Yeah.
(beat)
Not intentionally of course.

DAVE SHARP
(shakes his head)
Drop the transponders.

SPARKMAN
(with an edge)
Aye, aye, sir.

He salutes sarcastically and leaves. Dave stands there, doubt creeping in... *is he making the right call?*

CUT TO:

EXT. RECOVERY SITE - NIGHT

The *Explorer* is bathed in **fog**. Visibility down to a couple hundred yards. It's so thick they can't see the *Chazhma*.

CUT TO:

RADAR SCREEN - HGE - SAME TIME

... but the *Chazhma*'s out there, circling them.

SPARKMAN (V.O.)
Drop the transponders.

CUT TO:

THE CRANES

release THE TRANSPONDERS. As they disappear into the ocean...

CUT TO:

THE OCEAN FLOOR

as THE TRANSPONDERS' WEIGHTED BATTERY PACKS hit the ocean floor, one after the other. Tethered to them thirty feet above, the blinking TRANSPONDERS.

SPARKMAN (V.O.)
Transponders have landed.

The blinking lights give us a tiny glimpse of the K-129.

CUT TO:

THE CATWALK ABOVE THE MOON POOL

Dave stares down at the gates. Hoping/praying that his shower epiphany will work.

DAVE SHARP
Open the gates.

The giant gates GROAN as they open in the rough seas. But they don't buckle.

CUT TO:

CURTIS & JP ON THE DONALD DUCK PHONES:

CURTIS
The gates have opened.

JP
And the ship's still floating?

CURTIS
(laughs)
Affirmative.

JP breathes a sigh of relief. Turns to Walt:

JP
I don't think my heart's gonna be
able to take this.
(sips his drink)
Or my liver.

CUT BACK TO:

THE MOON POOL

The gates are completely open. Dave stares down at the
ENORMOUS HOLE. Relieved it worked.

DAVE SHARP
Lower the pipe-string.

CUT TO:

ON THE DECK

The Roughnecks load the pipe string under the watchful eye of
John Graham's lieutenant, Sherm Whetmore. It's an impressive
ballet of coordination and brute strength.

A sixty-foot piece of pipe is pulled out of storage by a
crane and...

.... conveyed up to the top of the derrick, 240 feet above
the deck. Then...

... another crane spins the pipe and holds it vertically as
it's lowered into the preceding pipe...

... where it's screwed into place, then driven down.

Another piece in an ever-expanding chain that will eventually
reach three miles.

The power for this process comes from--

THE HEAVY LIFT SYSTEM.

Forty-eight hydraulic pumps operating pressures of up to 3,000 psi. So deafening and literally teeth-rattling that the TECHNICIANS operate the pumps from a glass-enclosed room.

BENEATH THE SHIP

Twelve DIVERS tread underwater as they watch THE PIPE STRING emerge sixty feet at a time.

CUT TO:

THE CHAZHMA

Continues to circle the fog-covered *Explorer*.

DAVE SHARP (V.O.; PRELAP)
Start Clementine's descent.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

attached to the giant docking legs, slowly descends through the open moon pool into the ocean.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE

Captain Gresham and his team work the thrust in tiny bursts -- attempting to keep the ship as still as possible.

RADAR TECHNICIAN
Captain.

Gresham looks at the radar, sees the blip of the Chazhma... And then a second blip, emerging from the Chazma, heading toward them, faster than a ship.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
Shit.
(into radio)
Sharp, we have a helicopter approaching!

THE CHAZHMA'S HELICOPTER

Heads through the fog toward the *Explorer*.

THE EXPLORER'S DECK

DAVE EMERGES FROM A STAIRWELL.

Can't see the helicopter, but can definitely hear it. Yells to a bunch of ROUGHNECKS:

DAVE SHARP
Get some boxes!

ROUGHNECK
Of what?

DAVE SHARP
Of anything!

THE HELICOPTER

approaches the *Explorer*. Tries to land, but Dave and the roughnecks load boxes on the helipad. The helicopter comes closer... but Dave and the guys stand their ground.

Finally the helicopter aborts the landing attempt.

DAVE & THE ROUGHNECKS

watch the chopper circle the Explorer. The Copter's REAR DOOR opens and A CREWMAN starts taking pictures with a huge telephoto lens.

As the Russian snaps the photos, we DIVE INTO--

THE WATER.

Clementine continues its descent toward the pipe string.

The Divers look up... can see the shadow of the helicopter as it circles the ship.

DAVE SHARP (O.S.; PRELAP)
Prepare to undock.

INT. THE CONTROL CENTER - THE EXPLORER - DAY

Dave and the Department Heads stare intently at the MONITORS, watching as the divers start the most crucial step...

... undocking the four million pound Clementine from the Docking Legs and transferring it to the pipe string.

UNDERWATER

BOOM! BOOM!

The pipe string and Capture Vehicle smash into each other, causing--

THE ENTIRE SHIP

to shake. Physical shock waves from the collisions are visible on the derrick structure. But that's not what's the scariest part... the sound is.

It sounds like the ship is being torn apart.

THE BRIDGE

Captain Gresham and his crew look at each other. Terrified.

FIRST MATE

Feel like we're being taken down by the Kraken--

RADAR TECHNICIAN

Captain!

The Chazhma blip moves toward them.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

Shit.

RADIO OPERATOR

The Chazhma is calling us.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE - MINUTES LATER

Dave watches as the Captain talks with Chazhma:

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)

Why are you approaching us?

CHAZHMA CAPTAIN (O.S.; OVER RADIO)

(stilted English)

We heard your foghorn.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)

You must be mistaken. We did not sound our foghorn.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO) (CONT'D)
 We require no assistance. Repeat.
 We require no assistance.

CHAZHMA CAPTAIN (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
 What are you doing here?

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)
 Conducting ocean-mining tests.

There's no response. Off the silence...

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - BELOW THE EXPLORER

The Divers continue transferring Clementine onto the pipe string. It requires guiding **GIANT HALF-TON PINS** into eye-holes.

It's like threading a needle. Underwater.

CONTROL ROOM

Dave and his group exhale as they hear:

DIVER (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
 First pin secured. Three to go--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
 Sharp, need you back up here.

CUT TO:

DAVE

Races across the deck heading toward the bridge. Sees the *Chazma* emerge from the fog, heading for them.

Dave sprints faster.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE

Dave mid-argument with Captain Gresham.

DAVE SHARP
 You can't move until the transfer's complete--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
If the Chazhma continues its
course, then I have to move--

DAVE SHARP
You can't! We'll lose Clementine--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
I am the Captain--

DAVE SHARP
And I am the Recovery Director!
(beat)
And you know that I have absolute
authority once we have reached the
recovery site.

The Captain's crew looks away, not used to having his
authority challenged. Dave calls down to the Control Room:

DAVE SHARP
How many pins are in?

SHARPMAN (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
Two down, two to go.

Gresham's men GROAN.

DAVE SHARP
He's not going to hit us. He's just
playing chicken. He'll stop--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
"Stop?!" These aren't a couple souped-
up cars! They're fifty-thousand-ton
ships! They don't just stop!

He waits for Dave to see the error of his ways.

DAVE SHARP
I have to get back to the control
room. You have your orders.

Off Captain Gresham's look of disbelief,

CUT TO:

THE CHAZHMA

coming toward the Explorer...

UNDER THE EXPLORER

The third pin is threaded into place. But--

FOURTH PIN DIVER (O.S.; INTO RADIO)
It's not threading correctly.

CUT TO:

THE DECK OF THE EXPLORER

The Crew watches the *Chazhma* coming toward them. The ship is going to turn, right?

Right?!

THE CONTROL ROOM

Dave stares at the monitor as the divers try and force the last pin.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (O.S.; ON RADIO)
Sharp...

Sparkman reaches for the radio, but Dave waves him off.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sharp?!

THE EXPLORER'S BRIDGE

Gresham stares at the *Chazma* through the binocs; the *Chazma* crew is panicking. Gresham calls down to Dave:

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)
They're never going to be able to stop in time! They think we're going to move!

CONTROL ROOM

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
Sharp, we have to move!

Dave continues to ignore him.

UNDER THE EXPLORER

The fourth, and final, pin is locked into place.

DIVER (O.S.; OVER RADIO)
Clementine secured to pipe string.

Sighs of relief. But they're not done yet.

DAVE SHARP
Complete transfer.

UNDER THE WATER

The pipe string GROANS and BENDS as it takes the entire weight of the four million pound Capture Vehicle.

ON THE SHIP

Alarms SCREAM as the ship sways and GROANS.

UNDER THE WATER

The pipe string stops BENDING and GROANING.

OVERHEAD SHOT OF THE TWO SHIPS

heading for a collision.

CONTROL ROOM

The alarms stop. Dave yells into the radio:

DAVE SHARP (INTO RADIO)
You can move!

THE BRIDGE

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
Full forward! Full forward!

THE ENGINE ROOM

The giant engines roar to life.

UNDERWATER

Clementine sways precariously from the pipe string as the Explorer starts to move forward.

THE MOON POOL

The stresses cause bolts attached to the gimbal rings and heavy lift cylinders to shear off. The bolt heads fly off, ricocheting around like bullets.

THE DECK

Dave stares at the *Chazhma*, which is trying to turn, but still coming toward them. It looks like it's going to hit the *Explorer's* stern.

Until finally...

THE TWO SHIPS

narrowly miss each other.

THE BRIDGE OF THE EXPLORER

All breathe a collective sigh of relief. Dave enters.

DAVE SHARP

Guess they don't play chicken in Russia, huh?

(Gresham just glares)

Get us back to our position please.

GRESHAM

(giving command)

Full stop!

As the orders are relayed and the GIANT ENGINES shift,

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. HOSPITAL - LOS ANGELES - DAY

INT. JOHN GRAHAM'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Candy and Curtis sit at John Graham's beside. He's very frail and thin.

CURTIS

Hit six thousand feet yesterday.
Been a little slower going then
we'd all like -- especially JP.

They all laugh.

JOHN GRAHAM

(raspy)

Well, guess I'm gonna have to hold
on here a little longer.

They smile, but don't laugh.

DISSOLVE TO:

July 30, 1974 - Day 41 of Mission

THE EXPLORER

bobs in gentle seas. The *Chazma* sits a quarter of a mile
away. Both crews watch each other through binoculars.

**16250 feet of pipe string deployed.
100 feet from target**

CUT TO:

THE PIPE STRING

As we whip down the three miles of it:

DAVE SHARP (V.O.)

Okay, let's see what she looks
like.

Clementine's lights come on... and we get our first real
glimpse of the K-129.

As the cameras pivot,

CUT TO:

CONTROL ROOM - THE EXPLORER

Dave and his team stare at the monitors. Stunned to actually
be staring at the K-129, which is mostly intact--

SPARKMAN

Shit.

-- except for the missile tubes -- some sort of explosion
occurred.

CUT TO:

INT. WEST COAST PROGRAM OFFICE - DAY

A secure written communications comes across the printer.
Curtis grabs it, reads it.

CURTIS
(worried)
"Tubes impacted."

CUT TO:

INT. JP'S OFFICE - CIA HQ - DAY

Colby, JP, and Duckett look worried:

JP
Well, we know what sunk her.
(beat)
The problem for us right now is
that the atomic material might
be... compromised.

COLBY
You mean those nukes could go off?

JP
(nods)
That's why they're going to sit tight
for the next twenty-four hours.
Tropical storm Kim is projected to
sweep through the area in the next
twelve hours.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDGE OF THE EXPLORER - DAY

CHAZHMA CAPTAIN (O.S.; ON RADIO)
We have a sick man. He is having
heart distress.

Dave nods to Gresham.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)
We can send our doctor to you--

CHAZHMA CAPTAIN (ON RADIO)
No! He needs a hospital. We
believe he is dying.

DAVE SHARP
Tell him that we don't have a hospital.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
 (shakes his head)
 Any ship this size would.

DAVE SHARP
 I don't want him on this ship--

CAPTAIN GRESHAM
 The Law of the Sea dictates that we
 give aid to any fellow sailor. Not
 letting him on is more suspicious.

As Dave considers that,

CUT TO:

INT. DUCKETT'S OFFICE - DAY

DUCKETT
 ... they're letting a Russian on
 the ship?!

JP nods. A beat of silence. Punctured by POUNDING FOOTSTEPS
 o.s. They're confused, because Walt's in the room.

The office door's thrown open. Director Colby runs in.

BILL COLBY
 The LA Times is running a story
 about the operation.

CUT TO:

JP

giving orders to Curtis on the secure line.

JP
 ... get Steve Craig over there.
 The Director says to have him tell
 the editor whatever he has to so
 they won't run the story.

CUT TO:

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - LA TIMES - DAY

Steve Craig finishes briefing the astonished EDITOR.

LA TIMES EDITOR
I'd love to stop the story, but the
Final Edition's on the trucks.

Off Steve's look,

CUT TO:

DAVE

binocing the lifeboat as it's lowered down from the *Chazhma*.
There's five Russians on the lifeboat -- one on a stretcher.

DAVE SHARP
(to Captain Gresham)
Only the one pretending to be sick
gets on.

CUT TO:

PAY PHONE - LOS ANGELES

Steve Craig talks with JP.

JP
How prominent is the story?

Steve stares at a copy of the *LA Times* -- in bold letters
across the whole page, the caption: **"US REPORTED AFTER RUSS
SUB"**.

STEVE CRAIG
It's not "Japs Bomb Pearl
Harbor"... but it's close.

JP shakes his head, can't believe it.

STEVE CRAIG
I think their source is the cops
looking into the Hughes burglary.

JP
Why do say that?

STEVE CRAIG
(grins)
'Cause I was worried the cops might get a
little chatty. So when I read 'em in, I
implied that the sub we were looking for
is in the Atlantic Ocean.

JP perks up... a little.

CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON

Bradley and Craven have just told Zumwalt about the *LA Times* story.

ZUMWALT
That's it, it's over!
(yells to Secretary)
Get me John Parangosky!

CUT TO:

INT. JP'S OFFICE - DAY

Telling Walt:

JP
Get the message out to Sharp--

JP'S SECRETARY (OVER INTERCOM)
Admiral Zumwalt calling again.

JP
(to Walt)
For a guy who was worried about our budget, he doesn't mind running up the phone bills.

CUT TO:

A CRANE ON THE EXPLORER

As it lifts up the stretchered Russian from the lifeboat.

DAVE

watches from the DECK. Sparkman runs up. Hands Dave the message from JP:

"Cover story deteriorating rapidly. Recover target ASAP."

DAVE SHARP
We've gotta get the Russian back over there as soon as we can.

SPARKMAN
Why?

DAVE SHARP

Because we've gotta pick up the sub
before the storm hits.

Sparkman does an exaggerated look between Dave and the sky --
which is filled with ominous dark clouds.

SPARKMAN

And by storm you mean the one after
the storm that's hanging above us
now, right?

CUT TO:

INT. COLBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Colby informs JP and Duckett that:

COLBY

The *New York Times*, *The Post*,
they're all cooperating.

(beat)

And from what I've heard, Jack
Anderson doesn't have the story yet-

-

JP holds up his finger. They hear FOOTSTEPS pounding o.s.

CUT TO:

WALT

sprinting down the CIA hallway.

CUT TO:

COLBY'S OFFICE

Walt telling them:

WALT LOGAN

NSA's just detected a Soviet Yankee
class sub in the Pacific that's
altered its course. It's heading
toward the *Explorer*.

They have to absorb that for a beat.

COLBY

I have to tell the President.

As he reaches for the phone--

JP

Sir, this is probably coming from the La Times story. The Russians are probably not sure what the hell's going on, since the story says the sub's in the Atlantic. Sending that sub is just them being cautious. But if Sharp can convince this Russian sailor whose coming aboard that they're really Howard Hughes's mining ship, then maybe word'll get back to the Moscow and they'll call off this sub.

COLBY

(beat)

What exactly are you asking me to do?

JP

Nothing. For a little while.

A beat, then Colby hangs up the phone.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - THE EXPLORER - DAY

Crew carry the sick Russian's stretcher to the hospital.

They pass a door marked NO ENTRY. LOUD ARGUING coming from it. A beat later, Sparkman leaves the room. The Russian cranes his neck to see--

Dave and Sherm arguing. Seeing the Russian, they immediately stop talking.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - THE EXPLORER - DAY

The DOCTOR gives the Russian a battery of heart tests.

DOCTOR

Everything looks good so far--

Suddenly ALARMS blare. A beat later, a SAILOR runs in.

SAILOR

Doc, we've got a fire in the engine room!

DOCTOR
 (to Russian)
 Wait right here. I'll be back.

He leaves. The Russian waits for a beat, then gets up. Opens the door... peeks out.

Complete pandemonium. Everyone running back toward the engine room.

CREW MEMBERS
 Fire! / Fire!

He knocks on the door that reads "NO ENTRY". No answer. He opens it. Nobody's there.

He goes in. A map is spread across the table. It marks the manganese deposits they're "looking for."

He takes out a small camera. Photographs the map. Pokes around. Finds a crate of manganese nodules. Pockets a couple.

Finds a box. Opens it. GASPS.

REVEAL -- it's a box of the Russian vodka. He greedily takes two bottles. Starts to leave. Grabs another.

CUT TO:

THE RUSSIAN LIFEBOAT

heading back toward the *Chazma*. The winds that announce the imminent arrival of the tropical storm have turned the waves into twenty-footers.

The "sick Russian" holds on to his rucksack, full of CLINKING vodka bottles, for dear life.

CUT TO:

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - DAY

Zumwalt rants into the phone to his boss, the Secretary of Defense:

ZUMWALT
 ... A Soviet sub is heading toward them--

Zumwalt cups the phone as Bradley enters.

BRADLEY

The Soviet sub has re-established
its original course.

As Zumwalt processes that, PRELAP:

DAVE SHARP (V.O.)

Everybody ready?

CUT TO:

EXT./ESTAB. THE HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER -- DAY

Tropical storm Kim has announced her arrival with forty foot waves. And she's just getting started.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - THE EXPLORER - SAME TIME

Tense. All eyes on Dave. Nods from everyone.

DAVE SHARP

Then let's get this SOB.

Dave puts his hands on HANK VAN CALCAR's shoulders, who is operating Clementine. Hank's a young cocky guy in his 20s.

DAVE SHARP

Ready to win the Cold War, Hank?

Hank doesn't answer. And then Dave notices that Hank's hand is shaking. Dave's face goes white...

HANK VAN CALCAR

Just screwing with you. All good.
Engaging thrusters.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

Its eight thrusters engage. Clementine slowly positions itself above the sub.

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - THE EXPLORER

They can feel the boat pitching in the waves.

Hank makes adjustments, lining up with his three reference points on the sub -- including a large fracture.

But it's hard since there's such a long lag time. Nobody speaks (or seemingly breathes).

Finally, Hank exhales. Lets go of the controllers.

HANK

We are lined up.

(shakes out cramps in hand)

Hasn't hurt like that since I was thirteen.

The guys laugh.

DAVE SHARP

(deep breath, then:)

Commence touchdown.

OTT SCHICK

Extending breakout legs.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

As the breakout legs -- think of them as four HUGE COLUMNS -- descend out of the bottom of Clementine until-- THUD -- they make contact with the sea floor.

CUT TO:

THE CONTROL CENTER

OTT SCHICK

We have touchdown!

WHOOPS and CHEERS. But not from Dave.

DAVE SHARP

Drive the tines.

CUT TO:

THE ENORMOUS TINES

dig into the seabed beneath the sub.

Or at least try to. The tines don't pierce the seabed.

THE CONTROL CENTER

They YELL at the monitors as the tines struggle to penetrate.

Dave reaches into his pocket. Pulls out the beer tab that John Graham gifted him. Rubs it.

SPARKMAN
What's that thing?

DAVE SHARP
Small piece of metal.
(off Sparkman's look)
Inside joke.

CUT TO:

THE TINES

force their way into the seabed, which still does not want to give. Tiny cracks appear in the tines...

... but finally the tines penetrate the soil.

CUT TO:

CONTROL CENTER

As they explode in applause.

HANK
Preparing to close tines.

DAVE SHARP
Just remember, there's enough nuclear material to blow up Los Angeles.

HANK
I live in the Bay Area.

As Hank takes a deep breath:

CUT TO:

THE TINES

come together beneath the sub.

CUT TO:

THE CONTROL CENTER

HANK

We're closed. Deploying net.

A metal net deploys from Clementine and is pulled over the missile tubes.

THE BRIDGE OF THE EXPLORER

The ship pitches back and forth.

HANK (OVER RADIO)

Target is secured.

Everyone high-fives, except Captan Gresham who is watching the huge waves crash over the deck of the ship.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM

(to First Mate)

What's our roll?

FIRST MATE

Five degrees.

Off Gresham's nervous look,

CUT TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

DAVE SHARP

Okay, let's bring her home.

(beat)

Commence breakout.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

starts to vibrate as pressure is applied.

But it doesn't move.

CUT TO:

DAVE AND TEAM

watch as Clementine tries to defy gravity.

CUT TO:

THE DERRICK

strains, trying to dead-lift over twelve million pounds.

CUT TO:

THE EXPLORER

rolls even more on to her side from the exertion.

CUT TO:

CONTROL ROOM

All eyes on the monitors.

CAPTAIN GRESHAM (O.S.; ON RADIO)
Sharp, our roll's at seven!

Dave ignores him.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

rises for a second...

... then sinks back to the ground.

DAVE

Calling into the radio:

DAVE SHARP
Need a little more Sherm--

HYDRAULICS CONTROL ROOM

It's so loud that they can't even hear Dave.

They push the controls. The shaking gets worse...

CUT TO:

THE EXPLORER

Rolled even more on to its side, battered by the giant waves. But still, over MOTHER NATURE'S FURY, they hear the scariest sound anybody on board has ever heard. It's coming from--

UNDER THE SHIP

The pipe string is stressed to the breaking point because of the ship's roll.

Every connection between the sixty-foot pieces of pipe-string STRAINS, each wanting to tear apart and start a cataclysmic chain reaction that will send the pipe string smashing back up into the ship.

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE

GRESHAM (INTO RADIO)
Our roll's at seven-point-five.

CUT TO:

THE CONTROL ROOM

GRESHAM (O.S; OVER RADIO)
We've gotta let it go!

Dave ignores him.

SPARKMAN
When you told Graham that we needed the roll to be able to go to eight-and-a-half degrees instead of eight, how sure were you?

DAVE SHARP
Not very sure at all.

SPARKMAN
I know you're lying to me, but I appreciate it.

DAVE SHARP
(into radio)
A little more, Sherm.

CUT TO:

THE HEAVY LIFT CONTROL ROOM

SHERM WHETMORE
I don't think I can! The gimbals
are locking up!

CUT TO:

THE BRIDGE

GRESHAM
We're at seven-point-eight degrees!
We gotta stop!

CUT TO:

THE CONTROL CENTER

DAVE SHARP
Sherm, John knew this ship better
than anyone. He said we'd be okay
at eight.

CUT TO:

SHERM

Giving them a little more power.

CUT TO:

THE EXPLORER

Her port side now completely under the giant waves. The
DERRICK bends and SCREAMS from the strain.

CUT TO:

CLEMENTINE

rises off the ocean floor...

... and keeps rising!

It pulls away from the Breakout legs, which are left behind.

CUT TO:

THE EXPLORER

as it rolls back and forth, creating GIANT WAVES that smash into the NATURAL WAVES. Finally the ship stabilizes.

CUT TO:

CONTROL CENTER

HANK
We have lift off!

They all start CHEERING!--

HANK
Shit!

DAVE SHARP
What?

HANK
It's shifting!

CUT TO:

THE K-129

rolls in Clementine's grasp.

CUT TO:

CONTROL CENTER

Everyone SCREAMS at Clementine as if they're yelling at a racehorse.

EVERYONE
No! / Stay! / Come on, Clementine!

CUT TO:

THE SUB

finally settles. Snug.

CUT TO:

CONTROL CENTER

Finally the celebration can begin. They all start hugging and high-fiving each other. Sparkman look arounds for Dave. He's not there.

OUTSIDE OF THE CONTROL CENTER

Dave has found a place by himself. Leans against a wall. The hooting and hollering echoes from every part of the ship.

Dave's oblivious. Reflecting on the five years that have led to this moment.

He slides down against the wall, squatting on the floor. He breaks down; overwhelmed.

DAVE SHARP

(sotto)

We got oil, John. We got oil.

CUT TO:

INT. WEST COAST PROGRAM OFFICE - SAME

Curtis and Candy lead the cheers as everybody drinks champagne.

CUT TO:

INT. COLBY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

JP, Duckett, and Colby are high-fiving and hugging. JP hushes them... they hear FOOTSTEPS.

CUT TO:

WALT

Running down the hall.

CUT BACK TO:

COLBY'S OFFICE

Walt hustles in. Carrying a couple bottles of champagne.

The POPPING of the champagne bottles gives way to:

WALTER CRONKITE (O.S.; PRELAP)
 ... So it seems that this will end
 in one of two ways -- impeachment
 or resignation.

INT. ZUMWALT'S OFFICE - THE PENTAGON - SAME TIME

Zumwalt watches the latest trouble for Nixon on TV. Craven and Bradley walk in.

CRAVEN
 They, uh, they picked up the sub.
 They're bringing it up now.

A beat of silence as they wonder how they should react to the news. Then Zumwalt breaks out into a grin.

ZUMWALT
 Son of a bitch, they did it.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Candy hurries down the hall. Goes into John Graham's room to tell him the good news.

But his room is empty.

As she watches the NURSE strip the bed and prep the room for the next patient,

CUT TO:

THE K-129

as she slowly and methodically rises toward the surface.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE BRIDGE - THE EXPLORER - MORNING

Dave and Captain Gresham watch the *Chazhma* depart.

DAVE SHARP

Good. Now we can stay longer and get that other sub I saw down there.

Gresham, for the first time on this mission, laughs.

DAVE SHARP

We'll have her up later today--

BOOM! A SMALL EARTHQUAKE seems to pass through the ship.

Everyone looks at each other -- what the hell was that?

CUT TO:

THE HEAVY LIFT CONTROL ROOM

The dials and gauges go crazy. Everyone clueless as to why.

HYDRAULICS ENGINEER (INTO RADIO)

We're losing all sorts of weight.

CUT TO:

THE CONTROL CENTER

Dave and the other guys stare at the monitor -- it shows the sub safely in Clementine's claw.

DAVE SHARP

It's not us! We've got it all!

A collective sigh of relief. But then Dave sees Ott shaking his head.

OTT SCHICK

We took it off the live feed to save bandwidth.

He resets the feed. It goes live.

And most of the sub is gone.

All but the back forty feet of it.

Sparkman goes closer, sees that one of the claw's giant tines is missing. That's why they lost it. He starts to tear up, knows that it's his fault since they didn't get the soil samples with the Dork.

Sherm puts his hand on Sparkman's shoulder.

Dave isn't cognizant of any of this. He stares at the monitor, refusing to believe what he's seeing.

CUT TO:

INT. JP'S OFFICE - DAY

JP and Duckett have heard the news. Duckett is unhinged. Pacing and ranting. JP, who can rant with the best of them, is calm.

DUCKETT

(to Walt)

Send 'em a message, tell 'em to go back and get it!

JP

Carl--

DUCKETT

(ignores him)

Tell 'em to go back and get it! And it's not a request, it's an order.

Walt starts off.

JP

Carl, they can't go back.

(Walt stops)

They don't know the sub's location or condition--

DUCKETT

(to Walt)

Get me a line into that ship!

JP

There aren't any secure ones.

DUCKETT

Then get me an unsecure one! I don't care! I want to talk to that son of a bitch who dropped my sub! Who lost the missiles!

JP

(calmly)

Carl, you can't call Sharp. The Russians will hear everything. Everything will be compromised. The mission... The crew. Everything. I know you're frustrated. But we can't act rashly.

Duckett realizes the logic. Doesn't make it easier.

DUCKETT
Then what the hell do we do, John?

JP
Bring up what they have.

Duckett sits down. Crushed.

DUCKETT
They're gonna crucify us, John.

CUT TO:

INT. MOON POOL - THE EXPLORER

Clementine, attached to the docking legs, is pulled into the Moon Pool, which is full of water.

We can't see how much of the K-129 is left.

CUT TO:

INT. SECURE COMMS ROOM - WCPO - DAY

A secure message comes over the telex.

"Target onboard. Will advise of condition."

But nobody's there to pick it up. They're all--

WATCHING TV as Nixon resigns.

NIXON (ON TV)
... "I have always tried to do what
was best for the Nation."

CUT TO:

THE CATWALK ABOVE THE MOON POOL - THE EXPLORER - DAY

Dave, by himself, watches as the water's drained from the moon pool, revealing what they recovered--

-- the forty foot piece of the K-129. It's incredible to think that this was pulled up over three miles.

But sitting here in a moon pool that was built to hold the entire sub, it's underwhelming.

Ironically, there are also manganese nodules scattered around that were scooped up when they picked up the K-129.

Sparkman comes over. Puts his arm around Dave's shoulder. Dave doesn't acknowledge it, just stares at the chunk of sub.

SPARKMAN

We did good, Dave.

No response from Dave. Then:

DAVE SHARP

Have 'em bring up the Geiger counters.

SPARKMAN

You wanna get started on the recovery--

DAVE SHARP

I want to get in there and look at those tines, see why they broke. Maybe even get the data up to Lockheed while we're heading home so they can get a head-start.

SPARKMAN

On what?

DAVE SHARP

Fixing it for the next mission.

Dave walks off. Resolute. Sparkman double-takes -- "*next mission?*"

COLBY (V.O.; PRELAP)

Sy, it's Bill Colby. I promised I'd call you first.

CUT TO:

INT. COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

JP and Duckett watch on as Colby works the phones.

BILL COLBY

We got part of the sub...

CUT TO:

SHOTS OF THE EXPLOITATION

- They use blow torches to cut their way into the sub.

- They pull out codebooks, a nuclear-tipped torpedo.

BILL COLBY (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 ... that's why I'm asking you to
 hold the story. So that we can go
 back and finish the job.

- Sparkman crawls through the sub. Stops when he sees a dead sailor.

BILL COLBY (V.O.; ON PHONE)
 Many people have worked so hard and
 so long and at such great cost on
 this mission...

The sailor is the young one who was smoking a cigarette on the K-129 before she departed.

Sparkman reaches out with his gloved hand and closes the sailor's eyelids.

PRELAP the *Soviet Union National Anthem*...

EXT. DECK OF THE EXPLORER - DAY

The remains of the SIX SOVIET SAILORS have been placed in a large steel container. The Soviet flag is draped over it.

Dave and the rest of the crew watch solemnly as a crane picks up the container. Gently places it in the ocean.

As the *Soviet Anthem* fades away,

CUT TO:

INT. COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Colby hangs up the phone, pumps his fist.

COLBY
 (to JP and Duckett)
 The *Times*, the *Post*, the *Journal*,
 they're all on board--

COLBY'S SECRETARY (O.S.)
 Jack Anderson on Line One.

Colby stops. Sits down. Answers the phone. INTERCUT WITH:

JACK ANDERSON (50s) on the set of his RADIO PROGRAM.

COLBY

Jack--

JACK ANDERSON

We're going with a story about the CIA raising a Soviet sub in the Pacific and I'm calling to see if you'd like to comment.

COLBY

Well, Jack, we have a bit of a situation here--

JACK ANDERSON

I go on the air in two minutes.

A beat and then PRELAP:

JACK ANDERSON (V.O.)

Good evening, this is Jack Anderson, live from the Mutual Radio Network...

CUT TO:

A HELICOPTER

landing on the deck of the *Explorer*, which is anchored a mile off shore.

**August 17 - Day 59
Laihana, Hawaii**

JACK ANDERSON (V.O.)

And tonight, I have an exclusive story about the boldest, and some would say, the most ill-conceived covert operation in the history of the Central Intelligence Agency...

JP gets out of the helicopter, carrying a small box. Dave heads over... pauses when he sees JP's glum expression.

JP

John died.

He gives Dave the small box. Dave opens it. It's a small container with some of John's ashes.

JP

Wanted you to scatter his ashes off the fantail.

DAVE SHARP

(beat)
I'll do it when we get the rest up.

JP

(beat)
We're not going to.

A beat as Dave realizes that's why JP's here, to tell him that it's over.

JP

Dave, this is not a failure.
(voice quivers)
And you were a big part of that... the biggest. And I know I rode you hard, but, I just wanted to say "thank you" 'cause you're the finest engineer I've ever worked with.

But Dave's not listening; just stares at the box of JP's ashes.

DAVE'S POV -- his vision is no longer just blurry, it's like he's looking through a fish-eye lens.

CUT TO:

INT. MESS HALL - THE EXPLORER - DAY

The entire crew is here. Dave walks in, climbs up to a table. A long beat of silence. Then:

DAVE SHARP

We're not going back.
(beat)
The mission is over.

The crew is, not exactly surprised, but still crushed.

We can see and feel the incredible disappointment that they feel after devoting so much time and energy to the project.

DAVE SHARP

I'm sorry... For some of you, many of you, this has been a five year project. And I'm sorry I let you down.

People shout out encouragement -- "it's okay", "not your fault."

DAVE SHARP

No, it's true. I failed. The objective was to bring up the K-129 and we didn't do it.

The crew looks down, sharing the collective shame.

DAVE SHARP

(quiet intensity)

But damn it, look at what we did.

(beat)

John Graham built a ship unlike anything that the world has ever seen. And we went out into some of the harshest seas anywhere in the world and picked up a Soviet sub from the bottom of the ocean, three miles down.

People start to CLAP.

DAVE SHARP

And we did it right under Russia's nose; hell, the world's nose. And why we could do that? Because everyone thought it was impossible!

The claps have turned into WHOOPS AND HOLLERS. It's turning into a church revival.

DAVE SHARP

But it's not a secret anymore. Right now, it's in probably every paper in the country...

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSTAND - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A line of people reading Sy Hersh's article in the *New York Times*. The Headline: **"CIA Salvage Ship Brings Up Part of Soviet Sub"**.

DAVE SHARP (V.O.)

... being read in every country in the world.

CUT TO:

CONFERENCE ROOM - THE KREMLIN - SOVIET UNION - DAY

GENERAL SECRETARY BREZHNEV and his MILITARY AIDES stare at the pile of papers about the mission.

DAVE SHARP (V.O.)

And so right now, the Soviet leadership knows we got part of their sub. But they're not going to believe that. They can't. We wouldn't. They'll have to assume the worst case scenario -- that we've recovered it all.

CUT BACK TO:

THE EXPLORER'S MESS HALL

The cooking staff comes around, starts pouring the Russian vodka from the contingency plan into glasses.

DAVE SHARP

And so the Russians are going to have to redesign everything about that sub class. Missiles, cryptographic hardware. The operational procedures--

More whoops and hollers.

DAVE SHARP

-- for their entire fleet!

Still louder.

DAVE SHARP

And that's all because...
(emotional)
... what man could do, we did.

JP hands him a glass of vodka. He raises his glass. Everyone toasts. And as they down the vodka, we see all of the glasses have a little piece of manganese nodule in them.

He fishes his nodule out. Holds it up high.

DAVE SHARP

And always remember that.

The CHEERS eventually turn to silence as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FANTAIL OF THE EXPLORER - SUNSET

Dave pours John Graham's ashes into the water, says a silent prayer. Glances up at the setting sun.

DAVE'S POV -- His vision is crystal clear; the blurriness is gone.

And as Dave enjoys a perfect sunset,

DISSOLVE TO:

A TITLE CARD:

"Even after the news embargo lifted, President Ford never acknowledged the operation to raise the K-129."

CUT TO:

INT. BILL COLBY'S OFFICE - DAY

Colby sits across from JP, Duckett, and Walt.

JP

... We're being inundated with Freedom Of Information Action requests.

DUCKETT

But we don't want to give them anything more, especially since we don't want to antagonize the Russians.

JP

So Walt came up with a response.

He nods to Walt, who clears his throat and reads from a piece of paper.

WALT LOGAN

"We can neither confirm nor deny the existence of the information requested but, hypothetically, if such data were to exist, the subject matter would be classified, and could not be disclosed."

He puts it down. Thinks. Smiles.

COLBY

"We can neither confirm nor deny..." I like it. But you think it'll actually work?

The others shrug.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD:

"This response came to be known as the Glomar Response and was used repeatedly by the CIA and other government branches in subsequent years.

When the CIA opened its official Twitter account in 2014, its first tweet was: "We can neither confirm nor deny that this is our first tweet."

CUT TO:

INT. EAST COAST PROGRAM OFFICE - CHURCH FALLS, VA - DAY

Dave, Sparkman, and Ruggles are packing up their offices at the place where it began. As Dave carries a box out,

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD:

**"Dave Sharp left the CIA shortly after the operation...
... as did Director Colby, Carl Duckett, and John Parangosky."**

CUT TO:

EXT. HUGHES GLOMAR EXPLORER - DAY

Idling at its pier in Long Beach.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD:

"After the project was cancelled in 1975, the Hughes Glomar Explorer was set to be scrapped. But John Wayne wrote to President Ford and helped the Explorer achieve a reprieve...

... until it was finally scrapped in 2015."

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Dave calls out the passenger window:

DAVE SHARP

Excuse me, wanna go for a ride?

REVEAL he's talking to Candy, who is walking on the sidewalk.

CANDY

In that?

REVEAL he's in a rental Pinto; his dog Duke rides shotgun.

DAVE SHARP

(laughs)

I'm not a successful ocean miner anymore.

CANDY

I'll think about it.

As she walks down the sidewalk, he slowly follows her.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD:

"Candy eventually took the ride. She and Dave married in 1980 and remained married until her passing in 2018."

CUT TO:

REAL LIFE PHOTOS

Of Dave and Candy on their dock in Maryland.

CUT TO:

A TITLE CARD:

"Some naval historians believe that the CIA recovered the entire K-129 and that subsequent accounts which depict recovering only a portion of the sub are misinformation intentionally put out by the CIA.

The CIA neither confirmed or denied those rumors..."

And then the FINAL TITLE CARD:

"... nor have they released the contents of what was recovered from the K129. They remain classified to this day."

THE END