

STINGRAY: DEEP SEA RESCUE

"Hard Ball"

by

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TEASER:

Earth Rise - The Apollo 13 shot of Earth in black space.

CASS (V.O.)

I always loved this shot. Our beautiful blue marble just hanging there. But this was taken long before the Earth's axis shimmied in twenty twelve and humanity was crushed in the Decade of Disasters.

The photo morphs into reality, perspective rocketing down through the atmosphere into:

MONTAGE - Volcanoes spew lava and ash clouds. Tornadoes in packs rip through towns. Tremendous ocean waves level coastal cities. Populations run in panic. Reporters brave on-site video feeds.

OVERLAPPING REPORTERS (V.O.)

The eight point four quake in Alaska. Aftershocks have weakened the San Andreas fault. Wildfires spreading to Arizona and Utah.

MONTAGE - Airplanes are grounded under layers of ash. Amateur video of overloaded boats battling furious waves. Police patrol in armored cars. Kilimanjaro's snows bury Nairobi.

OVERLAPPING REPORTERS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Airports across Europe remain paralyzed by Grimsvotn's ash cloud. Is anyone out there? Tornadoes approaching Marseilles. Take shelter. Food stocks depleting all over Italy. No place is safe.

MONTAGE - Satellite video documents Honshu sinking. Dirty dust clouds swirl in tight spiral patterns over continental coast lines that aren't quite the same. Cities rise under pressure domes on the sea bottom.

CASS (V.O.)

Actually there was a safe alternative. The ocean floor became the new west. As colonies expand below the waves, it's my job to keep those people safe.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - DAY

The Atlantic Shelf, in pale green twilight waters, piles of building materials and a huge Plexiglas dome.

Inside water-adapted earth movers and pressure-suited humans work amid a sprawling complex of low rise buildings.

A strange manta-shaped craft appears out of the depths, hovers into range. Mylar wings retract, reforming into a standard submarine. Torpedo doors open.

INT. REBEL SUB - BRIDGE - DAY

Stations manned by unkempt, hard-eyed men. Mongrel thin NICK REYNOLDS (54) a life of trials and cynical humor etched into his weathered face, takes charge of a targeting screen.

COLONY POD (V.O.)

You are in violation of territorial waters. Withdraw immediately.

He looks at a structural schematic of the dome, highlighting weak points, thumbs a firing button.

On screen, the dead-head missile scores a deliberate glancing hit. Cracks spiderweb the dome.

COLONY POD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Evacuate. All hands, evacuate. Damn Greenies. You can't stop progress.

REYNOLDS

How's that for gratitude? I give these blokes fair chance to get out and they complain. One more shot would put them out of their misery.

An alarm sounds at the Sonar station. Fuschia-haired DAVE (20s) turns from the screen.

DAVE

Two Navy ships on intercept, closing fast.

REYNOLDS

Bollocks! Skim the bottom.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - DAY

The mylar wings spread and the sub settles like a flounder into a field of building materials, virtually disappearing.

INT. REBEL SUB - BRIDGE - DAY

Silence holds as Sonar bounces over them. The PINGS fade. Dave nods an all clear, spins around to Reynolds.

DAVE

We stopped this one. What's next?

Reynolds brings up the schematics of a massive submarine on the monitor. Dave studies it, shakes his head.

DAVE

The Constitution? I heard about that. All sorts of new telemetry. It's suicide to go up against her.

REYNOLDS

No worries. She's a house of cards. With help from our friend, we pull the right one and down she goes.

Dave frowns disbelief. Reynolds leans toward him.

REYNOLDS

With a bonus of salvage when we retrieve and sell that new tech.

Reynolds cuffs him. Dave gives in with a nod. Reynolds straightens, looks over his remaining scurvy crew.

REYNOLDS

Right. Get us underway. The details of this plan we pick up in person.

People get busy. Reynolds turns back to the schematics.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE - DAY

The same schematic on a Tablet. 3 STAR ADMIRAL ALLEN BALENTINE (45), a kinetic dynamo, frowns over the image, fidgeting a signet ring.

The bridge is a split level of pristine control panels and telemetry stations. Captain's chair centered behind a holographic chart table. Video screens all around.

5 Star ADMIRAL BRIAN POWELL (33), coffee-colored skin, cropped hair gone prematurely gray, strolls behind Balentine. Dour, serious, he carries himself with exhausted dignity.

Balentine pulls up short at a bare undefined structural noise. Powell raises an eyebrow, gets a weak smile back.

BALENTINE

Nerves. The last thing we need with the world press watching is for this beast to pull a Hunley. I've been over these specs a million times and I still have the feeling I'm missing something vital.

Gauging Powell's indifference, Balentine switches tactics.

BALENTINE

You know I could have built a Nevada class boat for every colony for what this one monster cost.

Behind them, BRIGADIER GREG SINCLAIR (20s), oily suave, plays with the controls of the communications array. A signet ring flashes as he secretively pockets a flash drive.

SINCLAIR

(Georgian drawl)

Exaggeration doesn't become you, admiral. The public wanted a high profile war machine.

BALENTINE

One ship can't be everywhere. How many kickbacks did you get for pushing this through Congress?

SINCLAIR

I assure you, sir, appropriations is above reproach.

Tension rises between them. Powell moves, draws attention.

POWELL

She's here. She looks good. What about her captain?

BALENTINE

I have a short list.

He surrenders the Tablet. Powell scans the one name under the ID photo of CASS DEXTER.

POWELL

You have a gift for understatement. Cass Dexter is our best instructor.

BALENTINE

You need her on this boat, Brian.

SINCLAIR

Deck 'em First Dexter. You'd trust someone with that short a fuse with our primary attack vessel?

POWELL

I was one of the people she decked. Fully deserved. Sound her out.

Balentine lights up with relief, takes his Tablet and heads out. Sinclair stalls. Powell cocks an eyebrow at him.

POWELL (CONT'D)

Another favor, Greg?

SINCLAIR

Now, admiral, getting money out of Congress requires diplomacy, tact, and yes, a favor now and then.

He offers a flash drive from a different pocket.

SINCLAIR (CONT'D)

The Senator from Florida could be persuaded to divert NASA funds in return for the sponsorship.

A withering smile and he exits.

Powell slides the drive into a computer port. His eyes roll at the profile of the very young, cocky CRAIG JENSEN.

Pulling the flash drive exposes a small tattoo on his wrist - a straw boater outline around a 3C. He touches the mark, pulls his phone, animated now.

POWELL

Lewis, I need somebody found.

END TEASER

ACT I

INT. NAVY BASE - CASS' OFFICE - DAY

Small room, functional furniture, barely used. COMMANDER CASS DEXTER (33) polished with an eye toward efficiency, angrily stuffs materials into a briefcase.

The only non-military decoration on the desk, a framed photo of 20-year-olds Cass and JP in a pile of autumn leaves.

Balentine stops in the door, twirling a single rose, evaluates her body language.

BALENTINE

Oh oh, is this a bad time?

Cass glares disinterest. He lets the flower droop. Cass almost relents, slides the picture into her briefcase.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

Can't blame a guy for trying. Would assignment to the Captain's berth on the Constitution cheer you up?

Cass' breath catches with excitement, quickly doused.

CASS

I don't want to know what that would cost me in favors.

BALENTINE

Just one. Dinner. We can talk.

CASS

I'm married, Allen.

BALENTINE

So I've heard. You never talk about him. Flash pictures. Even money says this guy doesn't exist.

She reaches for a frame on the wall. He gets it first.

INSERT - Freshly minted Ensigns Cass, Powell and JP, front and center with a ship's crew.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

Ah yes, the Class of fifteen's infamous Three Musketeers.

CASS

Caballeros.

BALENTINE

Whatever. Thicker than thieves, yet you didn't speak up for McCarthy at his trial.

CASS

How do you defend idealism when it ignores protocol? I had no idea he was involved until his arrest.

She takes the photo, stone-faced. Balentine brightens.

BALENTINE

Son of a bitch. You married *him*.

Cass' mask cracks. She gives in to their friendship.

CASS

It seemed like the thing to do at the time.

BALENTINE

You haven't seen him since his pardon, have you?

CASS

I figured he'd find me when he got out. Guess I figured wrong.

He waggles the rose in her face.

BALENTINE

So you're saying there's a chance.

Cass fights a smile. She slides the picture into her bag.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

Okay, you win, just business.

Now she takes the flower.

CASS

The other eleven better be waiting in the captain's cabin.

INT. POWELL'S OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT

Ill-at-ease in beard, long hair and a loud Hawaiian shirt, JP (33) idly turns a globe. A metal wristband on his left wrist carries an LED screen, quiet now.

Behind the desk bland ENSIGN LEWIS (25) ignores him. The inner door opens. Powell comes out, blocking curious looks from Balentine and Sinclair inside. He pulls the door shut.



JP and Powell trade cool stares.

JP  
Recruitment so bad you have to  
shanghai people in the middle of  
the night?

POWELL  
I'm granting reinstatement and  
assigning you to Constitution.

JP  
Yeah, right.

Powell moves to the Ensign's computer, taps keys.

POWELL  
You'll start as lieutenant and  
serve as pilot. A year's probation.  
Bracelet.

JP steps in, left hand going to an electronic pad. He balks.

JP  
What's the catch?

POWELL  
I need to bait a trap and you're  
the best I have.

JP  
Oh, well that's a relief. Here I  
thought I was totally screwed.

POWELL  
Look on the bright side. Show me  
you remember how to be an officer,  
and I'll wipe your slate clean. No  
jail debt, no criminal record.  
Unless you enjoy being a bartender.

JP  
Now that's an offer I can't refuse.

JP lays his wristband over the pad. Lights go nuts, settle  
down into a new pattern.

POWELL (CONT'D)  
Welcome back to the Navy, John.

The Ensign offers a phone. JP's left-handed reach slides the  
bracelet up past a small tattoo - a sombrero outline around  
3C. He salutes crisply, exits.

INT. NAVY OFFICE - NIGHT

A computer screen glows. Hands work a keyboard.

ON SCREEN - JP's file comes up. His posting to Constitution is highlighted, deleted and a new ship entered: Stingray.

A signet ring flashes as the change is confirmed.

INT. POWELL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Military artifacts and awards. Plain desk and chair. A conference table and chairs. A map of the Atlantic Ocean floor, outward sprawl of underwater colonies marked out in purple. Rebel bases labeled with green pins.

Powell lounges behind his desk, but he's not relaxed. Next to the idling computer a small photo.

INSERT PHOTO - Ensigns Cass, JP and Powell show off tattoos, mimicking the Three Caballeros pose.

The computer beeps. Screen lights up. Powell leans in.

POWELL  
That was quick. Stingray?

A moment to think, then he types quickly.

POWELL (CONT'D)  
You just raised the stakes once too often. I'm all in.

EXT. NORFOLK SHIP YARDS - DAY

Constitution is a monster of a submarine, dwarfing her sister boats, crisp lines in steel gray, white and black paint.

The remnants of an opening ceremony are being taken down.

Three berths down, Stingray is a squat, mud colored Typhoon class workhorse.

INT. STINGRAY - MAIN HATCH

CHIEF RUSSELL THORNE (58) hustles up the corridor to catch up to Cass as she strides through.

THORNE  
Captain. Chief of the Boat Thorne.  
I wasn't aware you were aboard.

CASS

I don't stand on formality when we're going out on short notice. How do we look?

THORNE

Waiting on two flats of supplies and a replacement pilot.

JP makes his way in. Clean shaven, neat in his uniform, he's taken 5 years and miles of agony off his face.

Then his eyes meet Cass' and he stops. Dread ricochets back and forth. Cass recovers first, pent-up fury finding release.

CASS (CONT'D)

John Paul? Could this day possibly get any worse?

JP

Hello to you too. Chief, permission to come aboard.

He presents his orders to Thorne, who glances through, passes them on to Cass. She buttons down her irritation.

CASS

Launch pilot. Permission granted. The lieutenant can help you sort out supplies, chief.

JP's eyes follow as she heads up the corridor, uncertainty not lost on Thorne.

THORNE

You've done quartermaster before?

JP

Nope.

THORNE

No time like the present to learn. Her?

JP

Academy classmates. Neither of us liked to lose.

THORNE

You're both in trouble. I never lose. Ward room's this way.

He thumps a Tablet into JP's chest.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE - DAY

Stations manned by starched young men and women.

Sinclair and CRAIG JENSON (20s), stand head to head over cell phones. Jenson, giddy and in awe, accepts a tap transfer of files from Sinclair's phone. They shake hands.

To one side, Balentine shepherds a clutch of reporters.

BALENTINE

Normal crew complement of two  
hundred twenty. For this drill ...

Sinclair appears at his elbow.

BALENTINE

Please don't add to my migraine.

SINCLAIR

I've been reassigned to Stingray.

BALENTINE

Bon voyage.

Sinclair makes his exit. Balentine is waved over to the Communications board and a waiting inset screen.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

(To Reporters)  
Excuse me.

On screen, hangdog tired CPO SIMMONS (40s).

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

I'm up to my ears in press. What  
couldn't wait?

SIMMONS (V.O.)

It's Stingray, sir. She's asking...

BALENTINE

Granted.

SIMMONS (V.O.)

Sir?

BALENTINE

Give them whatever they want, and  
expedite it.

SIMMONS (V.O.)

Yes sir.

The screen goes dark. Balentine tunes into that noise he can't quite find. He shakes it off, returns to the reporters.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

Where were we? Oh yes. For this drill we're running a short crew --

EXT. NAVY BASE - DOCK - DAY

Sinclair pulls a cell phone off his belt, drops it in the water. He grins at Stingray, keys up a new cell.

Falls in behind bored reporters - 2 men and a woman dressed like she's auditioning for a centerfold, waiting to board.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE - DAY

At the helm, JP is focused and exhilarated.

Behind him, the machinery and computers show an age no amount of polishing can rub out. Stations manned by young MEN and WOMEN, all attentive to their tasks.

A small holograph table centered in the middle. Behind that the captain's chair where Cass sits, fingers tapping out irritation on her chair arm.

FLASHBACK -

EXT. NAVY BASE - CONSTITUTION DOCK - DAY

1100 hours. Flags whip in a stiff breeze under heavy clouds. Spectators and reporters crowd a roped-off tier of seats in front of Constitution.

BALENTINE (O.S.)

Top speed eighty knots submerged.

Smashing in dress uniform with captain's bars, Cass stands with a group of officers, rigid with fury.

BALENTINE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And the most advanced telemetry in the world. You'll take care of her for us, won't you? Captain Jenson.

Jenson preens as he moves to Balentine's side.

BALENTINE

Captain Dexter will be taking over Stingray, a veteran rescue boat. If you'll follow the Ensigns to begin the tour.

Balentine holds her back as the press junket moves on.

BALENTINE

Cassie. It wasn't my doing.

CASS

Some things never change. All you testosterone jockeys watching out for each other.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

JP shows a sure hand behind VR goggles as he guides the sub like a wave runner through vicious curling currents.

The sub shudders. At the rear bulk head, Sinclair's reporters grab holds. Something gets knocked to the deck. Cass glances back, looks forward, gaze landing on JP's back.

FLASHBACK

INT. STINGRAY - WARD ROOM

Cass and JP face off, both struggling to keep calm.

CASS

Brian put you here.

JP

Uh, yeah. Launch pilot. It was supposed to be that new monster. Must have changed his mind.

CASS

Must have lost his mind. Sticking us on this tub is not a strategy when the threat is to the new hardware.

JP

Remember your Sun Tzu. Choose the battlefield.

CASS

It won't matter since we won't be near the playing field. Jenson will go to top speed as soon as he can.

JP

So take a short cut.

Cass scowls at him, tension changing into less personal. She brings up a graphic on the computer, ignoring his proximity.

CASS  
The Bermuda Pipeline? You'd take  
this crate through those currents?

JP  
I wouldn't challenge that strait in  
anything but a boomer.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

At the SONAR station, ENSIGN DAN PAINTED SKY, (20s) works under head phones.

PAINTED SKY  
Coming out of the pipeline.

CASS  
Brace for impact.

Sinclair comes up to Cass' elbow.

CASS  
That means hold on to something,  
Brigadier.

SINCLAIR  
I've been through rough water  
before, captain.

Sinclair barely gets a hand on a rail before the floor lurches under his feet.

Violent rocking throws people out of their seats, knocks out power. Emergency lights come on.

End Act I

Act II

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Cass maintains her seat, unruffled as the crew picks themselves up.

CASS  
(thumbs an intercom)  
Montgomery, you said we were solid.

INT. STINGRAY - ENGINE ROOM

People scramble to re-route power around sparking boards. CHIEF MONTGOMERY (57), his 6'4" frame crowds the room. He taps the intercom, cigar stub held in strong teeth.

MONTGOMERY  
Nobody said anything about turning  
this old girl into a carny ride.  
Five minutes, cap.

He punches a fluxing panel. It stays lit.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Cass swings her chair 360 to eyeball the stations.

CASS  
Position, Mister Bishop.

LT COM BISHOP (late 20s), crisp but clueless, leans over the holograph table.

BISHOP  
Four point three miles north and  
west of the target coordinates.

LT SANDRA AKERS (28), cool and efficient, hair piled in an elaborate braid, works the communication array.

AKERS  
Captain, I'm not picking up  
anything from the fleet.

CASS  
Try all frequencies. Changing bands  
is the military's oldest trick.

AKERS  
Ah. Got them on 1400 kc. Outside  
the target area about a mile to the  
continental shelf drop-off.



CASS

This is what comes from letting boys set the ground rules. They break them as soon as they can. Full ahead. We can at least enjoy the laser light show.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR - DAY

A manta-shaped submarine settled onto the seabed like its namesake, surrounded by a half dozen small unmanned drones.

INT. REBEL SUB - BRIDGE - DAY

Reynolds studies a battle plan on his phone.

DAVE

One shot? What about the fleet?

REYNOLDS

For the last time, it's all taken care of. Once Constitution links the fleet on 1400 the virus spreads. When they arm weapons it takes them all out, leaving our sitting duck dead in our sights. No worries.

He glares at Dave, daring further objection. Dave shrugs, goes back to his monitors.

Reynolds expands the battle plan to check all sub positions.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE - DAY

Jenson huddles over his phone with the same battle plan. He stuffs the phone away, assumes an authoritative posture.

LT. COM. PETERSON (24), surfer blond and brash, stands at his shoulder, excited, a bit nervous.

JENSON

Communications, broadcast on 1400 kc. We are commencing with the drill. Wolf pack formation.

The radio man works his board, oblivious to a high speed whine underneath the voices.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

At dead slow speed, Constitution leads the five subs spread out in her wake.

The six Drones activate, rise. The manta sub fits into the phalanx. Torpedo doors open.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

Peterson works a tracking console. A silhouette pops up.

PETERSON

Modified Trafalgar Class Four. No response to hail. Pirates have been buying Trafalgars at auction. She's fired on Irish Sea!

JENSON

Launch counter measures.

Peterson touches buttons, executing the decoy, follows the progress. A small EXPLOSION barely ruffles their balance.

JENSON

All craft, bring weapons on line. This is not a drill. Repeat, we are under attack.

The KLAXON sounds. Seconds later, consoles flicker, go dead in a cascade around the bridge.

PETERSON

Weapons systems down. Everything's down.

SONAR

Fish in the water. She's coming at US! Impact in ... Ninety seconds.

Emergency lights come up. Jenson stares at his phone.

JENSON

Hard right rudder, forward bubble up fifteen.

Balentine drags a crewman out of a chair. Quick hands fly over the keyboard to evaluate systems.

BALENTINE

We've been infected. Advise all craft to surface. Go to manual systems and re-boot the computers.

He works at super-human speed. Panic grips the civilians.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

The rebels gather at the forward video screen.

ON MONITOR - Constitution flounders.

DAVE

She's moving right into our shot.

REYNOLDS

As promised. All we do now is wait.  
Drop us to the bottom.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

Balentine brings up a tracking schematic. The ship shows her belly to the torpedo hit, and a fault line pops out - his undefined noise!

BALENTINE

Oh my God. Belay UP maneuver. Flood port ballast tanks. Forward bubble down, down, DOWN! Everybody out of the mid-section. Seal all watertight doors.

PETERSON

The computers won't be up in time.

BALENTINE

That's what all those manual back-ups are for, kid. That one, there.

Peterson jumps to a panel, works a pump handle furiously. Balentine shoves people to manual stations. Jenson jabs at his I-phone, numb with panic.

BALENTINE (CONT'D)

All personnel to escape pods.

SONAR

Sixty seconds.

Reporters stampede off the bridge. Balentine swallows fear, applies muscle to a ballast pump.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

The view screens fill with the floundering Constitution.

AKERS

It's a computer virus across the fleet. They're surfacing.

BISHOP

I can't get a fix on that rogue. He has some kind of negative shield.

## PAINTED SKY

Second fish reads as Mark twenty salvage. That won't even scratch the paint. Impact in five, four, three, two.

A beat, then a crackling EXPLOSION rips the sub in half. Shock petrifies everyone. Cass punches an alarm.

## CASS

All hands, prepare to pick up survivors. Bishop, take us in on the bow. McCarthy, surrender the helm, the aft section is yours.

JP tears out. An ensign slips into his chair. Sinclair remains fixed on the screen, affected strangely.

## BISHOP

Come around on to one three three, even keel. She'll drop in front of us. Chief Thorne to the starboard launch hatch for umbilical docking.  
(to himself)  
She carries over two hundred crew.

## CASS

Then we'd better hope the deodorant holds out. Med Bay, stand by for casualties. Painted Sky, I want that rogue. We're an easy target if he comes about.

## EXT. OCEAN

Amidships, Stingray's side panels retract revealing a service launch in its cradle.

Robot arms lower the launch down and out. Ballast balloons partially fill as the arms disengage.

The craft drops free, speeds for the falling after-section.

Stingray closes on Constitution's auxiliary bow side hatch, lines up the now empty launch access. Grappling hooks extend, bring the ships together. A retractable gangway snakes out.

## INT. STINGRAY - HATCH

Thorne waits out the compression lights. Red. Yellow. Green. He opens the hatch. Men dart through. Muscle unlocks the Constitution's hatch.

Smoke wreathes. Behind flashlights Thorne's team heads in.

EXT. CONSTITUTION - AFT SECTION

The launch settles over a rear deck top hatch. A gangway drops into place, latches on.

INT. LAUNCH

JP waits out his control panel lights. All reds go green.

JP  
You're clear.

In the hold, a CREWMAN opens the floor hatch, drops down a segmented ladder to the Constitution hull.

The hatch is forced and dogged out of the way. He shines a light down. A face comes into the beam. The sailor waves, backs up to call his crew.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

Reynolds leans in over Dave's shoulder as the Sonar pings over the ship halves.

DAVE  
It's a rescue boat.

REYNOLDS  
Just happened to be in the neighborhood, eh?

Dave edges a hand to the torpedo control panel. Reynolds stops the move.

REYNOLDS  
Now, now. Let's not look gift horses in the mouth. They'll clear out all the survivors we won't have to shoot.

Reynolds straightens, eyes each station.

REYNOLDS  
No talking. Just in case. Keep that radio open for any communication. She has to report to somebody.

INT. STINGRAY - LAUNCH BAY

Triage workers bustle about a crowd of wounded. Peterson stands guard over Balentine while medics hustle primary aid. Balentine's a mess of severe burns and shock.

Thorne comes in on the tail end of wounded, Black Box under his arm. He initiates the withdrawal of the gangway.

JP (V.O.)  
Launch coming home.

THORNE  
Status on recovery.

JP (V.O.)  
Full house. Thirty-two with smoke inhalation, minor burns and cuts. No one left behind.

THORNE  
Roger that. You're clear to engage the cradle.

INT. LAUNCH CABIN

JP brings the ship in deal slow, lining up on the cradle arms with instruments and VR glasses. The launch shudders under the arms locking onto the hull.

JP  
Five minutes, people, and the doors will open. Medics are standing by.

He takes the opportunity to look down on the Constitution hull below them as the launch retracts into place.

INT. STINGRAY - PASSAGE WAY

Cass makes her way through the bodies to Thorne.

THORNE  
Lucky for us they were running a short crew. Box might tell us something. Admiral caught the brunt.

He nods her to Balentine.

The launch hatch opens. Walking wounded are directed to the triage personnel.

Exiting last, JP stops when Cass kneels, touches fingers to Balentine's face, sensitive to her tenderness.

BALENTINE  
Leak. Inside leak.

CASS  
Allen. We're here. You're safe.

The medics get Balentine on a stretcher. JP lends a hand to get away. Cass zeroes in on Peterson.

CASS  
You are?

PETERSON  
Kyle Peterson, XO.

CASS  
Where's your captain?

He nods to a medic pulling a sheet over Jenson.

AKERS (V.O.)  
Captain, engineering needs you.

CASS  
On my way.  
(to Peterson)  
Get yourself checked out,  
commander, then we need to talk.

INT. STINGRAY - ENGINE ROOM

Steam hisses from leaking pipes. Water drips. Workers scurry to make repairs. Cass and Montgomery inspect the damage.

MONTGOMERY  
Overload from stabilizing against  
that sinking hull. I can patch it.  
It will take an hour or so. Main  
systems will be off line.

CASS  
Get on it.

She about-faces. Montgomery heaves a sigh.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Cass strides in to chaos. People talking over one another - questions, panic, uncertainty. Bishop is no help and a smug Sinclair stays out of the way.

CASS  
At ease, people!

Quiet restores.

CASS  
We're not off to a good start,  
Mister Bishop. Sonar.

## PAINTED SKY

The rogue has gone to ground.  
Kennedy recovered Constitution life pods and launches.

## CASS

You get to keep your job. Akers,  
get me Kennedy.

Powell comes on screen, stress in every pore.

## POWELL (V.O.)

Captain Dexter.

## CASS

Constitution personnel recovered  
and under treatment. We're holding  
position for repairs.

## POWELL (V.O.)

Well done. The rogue disappeared in  
the confusion. We're holding a  
perimeter as we purge computers.  
Keep me advised. Kennedy out.

The screen blacks out. Cass hands Akers the Black Box.

## CASS

Put this somewhere safe then have  
McCarthy, Peterson and Chief Thorne  
report to the bridge.

## SINCLAIR

You can't seriously intend to sit  
here. Your wounded.

## CASS

Are under care. That rebel took out  
the best boat we have. Do you want  
to me try and fight her before we  
know what we're up against?

## SINCLAIR

No, of course not.

## CASS

Then we stand fast.

He sputters as she fires up the holograph table.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE - LATER

Cass crosses to Akers, confers in low tones.



Peterson comes in. Sinclair nods an impersonal greeting. Bishop makes room for him at the holograph table.

CASS  
(over her shoulder)  
What happened, Mister Peterson?

PETERSON  
A rogue infiltrated the drones,  
fired on the Irish Sea. When we  
armed weapons everything went dark.

CASS  
And all you VR wonders couldn't  
figure out a manual override?

PETERSON  
There wasn't time.

Thorne and McCarthy enter, join the group.

PETERSON  
The admiral thought he found a  
virus, but how would it get into  
our closed system?

SINCLAIR  
Ask the expert.

A wave draws attention to JP. Eyes turn. Voices still.

JP  
Does anybody else hear the theme  
music from JAWS?

SINCLAIR  
Levity will not win you any  
supporters here, McCarthy.

PETERSON  
The Green Alliance sympathizer  
McCarthy?

Sinclair nods. Peterson launches himself for JP's throat. JP counters with an easy martial arts evasion, shoves Peterson face-first into the captain's chair.

PETERSON  
Get off me.

JP  
When you calm down.

SINCLAIR  
You're out of line, mister.

JP  
Brigadier, I don't know you from  
Adam, so which bee is in your  
bonnet?

SINCLAIR  
I sponsored that sky bus you blew  
up. Have you any idea how many  
people I had to mollify over that  
loss of production?

JP  
Must have been a crowd. How did the  
knee pads hold out?

Sinclair purples. Cass turns to the table, ignoring the  
scuffle. Bishop simply shrinks out of danger.

CASS  
Chief?

THORNE  
The boys were just introducing  
themselves, captain.

JP lets Peterson up. Peterson glares retribution.

CASS  
If everyone is ready.

JP puts distance between himself and Peterson. The sub pack  
appears in the hologram. Cass catches the Constitution's  
wobble, scowls over at Peterson.

CASS  
You couldn't feel you were  
ballasting unevenly?

Peterson's bravado falters.

PETERSON  
It was our first time getting wet.

CASS  
And you should have gotten to know  
her instead of hot rodding.

PETERSON  
We. Jenson had it covered. He was  
working from notes.

Cass skewers Peterson with impatience.

CASS

That's what Balentine meant by a leak. Somebody leaked the simulation details.

PETERSON

But. If I knew nobody had live weapons I'd be firing at will. HIS rebel friends ...

JP

MY rebel friends were stingy. These guys fired only two shots because that's all they got paid for.

BISHOP

What kind of strategy is that?

JP

Basic business. Don't give away freebies.

PETERSON

How do we know you're not working with them?

CASS

One, he never made it on board. Two, he couldn't access your systems if he tried.

She shoves JP's sleeve up to show the dormant wrist band. He's intent on the display, frowning.

CASS

What do you see?

JP

Look at the way she split apart. Like the two halves were just welded together.

Thorne leans in low as the image replays.

THORNE

Nothing breaks apart that easy, unless its designed to and somebody knew the exact place to hit her.

He looks up at Cass. They all react to a sudden tension.

CASS  
Jenson was using notes?

PETERSON  
Had the whole drill downloaded. He  
...turned us into that shot. No way  
was he a traitor.

CASS  
No, just a tool. Those rebels  
expected to plunder and vanish  
before anyone knew this was more  
than a random attack.

THORNE  
And we're sitting between them and  
their booty. Easiest action is sit  
tight until our salvagers show up.

SINCLAIR  
Think about the wounded. They  
should be in a hospital not triage.

Cass flips an intercom.

CASS  
Montgomery, progress report.

MONTGOMERY (V.O.)  
Permission to strip one of the  
launches for parts.

CASS  
Make a list. I'll be right down.  
Chief Thorne, maintain full alert.  
Mister McCarthy.

SINCLAIR  
Surely you're not going to leave  
him free about the boat?

JP meets Sinclair's stare poker-faced. Peterson bristles.  
Thorne positions himself for a struggle.

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Sinclair glares insistence around the table.

SINCLAIR

He's a convicted radical. You can't  
be certain he isn't involved.

Cass deliberates, weighing JP's icy reserve. There's  
something wrong here and it isn't JP.

PETERSON

Somebody leaked intel. Who better  
than a renegade?

CASS

Chief Thorne, it seems some house  
cleaning is in order. I want all  
personal phones now.

Peterson jumps when JP plops his phone on the table.

CASS

Have Akers examine each one for  
recent use, and confine the  
lieutenant to quarters.

Sinclair surrenders his phone, exits. Peterson drags his  
phone out, adds it to the table.

CASS

The com is yours, Mister Bishop.  
Commander, you're with me.

She casually pockets JP's phone behind Peterson's back.  
Thorne escorts JP out. Akers sweeps up the other phones.

INT. STINGRAY - ENGINE ROOM

Cass barrels in. Montgomery surrenders a paper.

CASS

That's it?

MONTGOMERY

Bare minimum to maintain systems  
integrity. One launch would cover.

Cass flicks on a monitor, brings the aft section of  
Constitution into focus.

CASS

What can you do in what time by stripping her to the bulkheads?

MONTGOMERY

Well hell, refit the entire cooling system. Replace that activator.

Montgomery's fixed on the monitor, cigar rolling. He pulls a wish list from his pocket, runs a finger down.

MONTGOMERY

Four, five hours. Six if we don't want to blow ourselves to kingdom come when we fire up. I can take the reactor down while I'm there.

CASS

I'll buy us twelve. Could they be after her missiles?

MONTGOMERY

Now that would take balls.

He studies the screen, finally shakes his head.

MONTGOMERY

Logistics nightmare for a Trafalgar to grab even one.

He refocuses the screen to the forward half.

MONTGOMERY

Now if it were me, I'd be after the sensor arrays. Easy to carry. Easy to sell.

CASS

Easy to sneak off after the fact. Son of a bitch!

MONTGOMERY

So we're staying put.

CASS

Damn Skippy.

PETERSON

Wait. You're going to face off a Trafalgar with a thirty-year-old rescue barge? What are you going to do? Threaten them with sanctions?

CASS

Twelve Mark Fifty-two's were loaded  
before we left and Chief will  
provide the speed.

PETERSON

Those rebels won't sit still for  
hours.

CASS

They'll sit so still you wham bam  
thank you ma'am rabbits will go  
crazy with the wait. Do something  
constructive or get out of the way.

She offers him the list. Not liking her, needing to prove  
himself, Peterson takes it.

INT. STINGRAY - MED BAY

Cass moves to Balentine's side, daunted by the isolation and  
IVs. The medic shakes a negative. She touches a limp hand.

BALENTINE

Leak. Find leak.

A look from Cass dismisses the medic. She leans in close.

CASS

Allen, we're onto the mole. Do you  
understand me?

Balentine rouses on sheer will power. Eyes fix on her.  
Comprehension sparks.

BALENTINE

Cass. Short cut?

CASS

Yes sir.

BALENTINE

Smart. Status.

CASS

We evacuated all personnel. One  
critically wounded. That rebel is  
waiting for us to retreat.

He fades, comes back. She carefully tightens her grip.

CASS

Hang on, Allen. We'll get you home.

BALENTINE  
Belay. Do your job.

CASS  
Allen.

BALENTINE  
Brian wanted. You here. Cass. Did I? Any chance?

His eyes fix, clear as a bell.

CASS  
Oh my friend, if we had met first.

He manages a grin.

BALENTINE  
Can't blame. Trying.

His fingers close on hers, then he's out. The medic hurries up as machines beep warnings and read-outs flat-line. Cass squeezes back tears. No time for softness.

CASS  
Let him go. He didn't want to be tied to machines.

She rushes out. The heart-line blips.

The medic stops disconnecting a line, leans in with a stethoscope.

MEDIC  
Some help here. He's a fighter.

INT. STINGRAY - OFFICERS' CABIN

The four man room is empty. Cass opens a locker with McCarthy's name on a strip of tape, searches. She wiggles a microchip from its spot, heart sinking.

Cass checks the bunks. One top bunk is stubbornly pristine. She texts a message.

INSERT Screen text - chief, location

INSERT Screen text - supply room.

INT. STINGRAY - SUPPLY ROOM

Cass enters, nods Thorne back to the door.



Crates and boxes are stacked behind wire mesh nets. A bunk set up on a series of crates. Prone, JP looks over from staring at the ceiling. Who will give in first?

JP

How do you know I'm not involved?  
I could have told them to wait for  
a signal.

Cass pulls out his phone, thumbs through the log.

CASS

Only if you're psychic. This hasn't  
been used since Brian signed you  
in. You didn't even call Grandma.

She tosses it to land on his belly. JP pushes up to sit, rubs fingers over his wristband.

JP

The way this day is playing out I  
didn't want to get her hopes up.  
Brian reinstated me two days ago.

CASS

Well, he picked the right bait.

She shows them the microchip. Thorne takes it for a look. JP shakes his head, discouraged.

JP

That was quick.

THORNE

Where was this?

CASS

His assigned locker in the juniors  
quarters.

JP

Too bad I never got past the door.

THORNE

And I'll vouch for my officers.

CASS

That leaves our guests. And us with  
too much to do in too little time.

JP

You said ... Sneaky, you  
exaggerated our down time in case  
somebody was listening.

CASS

I've had enough of being on the short end of dirty tricks. I have jobs for you both. Follow me.

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN

Small, designed for efficiency. A precisely made bunk, a shallow closet with a hanger rack and set of drawers, desk, chair, computer. A boxing light bag is bolted to the ceiling.

Cass signs on to the Internet. JP makes room for Thorne.

CASS

Chief, histories on our guests. JP, you get to find the mole.

JP

Three years in the stockade does not make me an expert on criminal behavior.

CASS

You know where to start looking.

JP

I'm barred from secured web sites.

He flashes his wrist band.

CASS

You're covered under my ID.

When he balks, Cass turns to him, eyes level and determined.

CASS (CONT'D)

JP, logic.

He resists. She puts on a certain pout and he caves.

JP

Logic, logic, I'm sick to death of logic. Can we at least narrow down the parameters?

CASS

Access to blueprints and that boat. Get busy.

She exits. JP stares at the computer, uneasy.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Cass enters, signals Akers to open channels. The screen comes on. Tension has added lines to Powell's frown. The grief in her face carries and sadness settles on Powell.

POWELL  
Allen. Damn.

CASS  
Chief says we'll be immobile.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

Reynolds grabs a note from Dave.

REYNOLDS  
Twelve hours? Some old timers  
should just be melted down. Well,  
power down, mates, grab some sleep.  
We're here for the duration.

He flops into his seat at the computer.

INT. CONSTITUTION - ENGINE ROOM

Montgomery tags equipment, fittings and such to be scavenged.

His crew works in silence. Bodies are bagged and stored aside. Machinery parts piled on carts for transport.

INT. STINGRAY - SINCLAIR'S CABIN

Sinclair hums as he works his laptop. Personnel files flit. Single out JP's file. Commands isolate a series of dates.

SINCLAIR  
I need a day. Just one. Ah, April  
ninth twenty nineteen. No duty, no  
meetings. Perfect.

That file closes, a video file takes its place.

ON SCREEN - JP, in his Hawaiian shirt accepting a phone from Powell. JP is isolated to a green screen, a reverse shot of Reynolds added and information changes hands.

A convention background pops in. The date on the banner changes to 4-9-2019. JP's informal attire is overlaid by a uniform, details air brushed.

End Act III

Act IV

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN

JP paces as the computer runs password codes, doing his best to ignore Thorne in a corner working on a Tablet.

He taps the light bag, a happy memory surfacing, spots a face-down picture frame.

Picking it up, it's the candid of his younger self and Cass in a pile of leaves. A crack in the glass cuts between them.

He rubs a thumb over his wedding band. Replaces the frame and resumes his seat at the computer.

He makes easy progress through screens then hits a stall. Sweating the wait, fingers poised over the escape and enter keys. A last security screen comes up.

JP hits the enter key. A held breath, then ... password accepted. He's in.

JP  
(sings)  
Money, money, money. It's a rich  
man's world.

Thorne's head comes up, surprised.

INT. CONSTITUTION - ENGINE ROOM

Montgomery takes down the reactor. Ready to throw the final switch, he pauses. The cigar rolls. Abruptly animated, he throws a new sequence of switches.

INT. LAUNCH

Peterson double-takes at the heavy container Montgomery trundles in, especially the radioactive material label.

PETERSON  
You're not.

MONTGOMERY  
The sooner you get us back to my  
girl the less you have to worry  
about any possible radiation leak  
making your boys glow.

PETERSON  
We're out of here.

He practically throws himself into the pilot's seat.

INT. STINGRAY - ENGINE ROOM

Montgomery pins a radiation badge to his shirt before working the reactor controls, salvage container at his feet.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Akers leaves her station for a bathroom break.

Sinclair takes the seat, eyes roving over the busy crew as he slides a flash drive into a port. Seconds to download and he has the flash drive out before Akers returns.

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN

JP's folded up on the desk next to the humming computer, asleep. Thorne sleeps, shoulders against the wall, head up.

Cass steps in. She shakes Thorne first. He's alert instantly.

THORNE

Best way to catch up on sack time  
is waiting on the computer to  
finish up.

He offers the Tablet. She checks his logs.

CASS

You ran JP first?

THORNE

I like to be thorough. Sometimes a  
gut reaction is indigestion.

CASS

We're going to get along just fine.

She touches JP's shoulder.

CASS

John Paul.

He jerks upright, rubs exhaustion from his eyes, checks the time. Hours have passed. Cass pulls up a chair.

JP

Yeah. Sorry. Forty-eight hours of  
adrenalin and no sleep. So, I  
looked at access to design  
approval, service records, and  
certain banks that haven't updated  
their fire walls. What's it like  
between you and Balentine?

CASS  
We're, we were friends.

He looks for more. Cass scowls back.

CASS (CONT'D)  
Friends without benefits. Why?

JP  
A couple of Cayman accounts that  
add up to a cushioned retirement.

CASS  
Allen was not the mole. Good God,  
he died trying to save that boat.

JP  
I can only report what I find.  
Didn't say I believed it.

CASS  
You must have found somebody else.

JP  
Lots of somebodies, too many. Graft  
is crowding out integrity and  
loyalty these days. So thinking  
outside the box, I did find two  
people assigned to Constitution  
that didn't make it on board.

CASS  
You, and me.

JP  
No. Me and ... You were assigned to  
Constitution?

CASS  
She was supposed to be my command.

JP  
But. Well damn. He's not following  
Sun Tzu. He's playing poker. We're  
his pocket aces.

CASS  
So give me the name.

JP  
My number one fan, Sinclair.

THORNE

Too obvious, and convenient since you deep-sixed his pet project.

JP

He jumped ship at the last minute to a boat that wasn't going to be shot at.

CASS

Coincidence.

JP

He goes through disposable cell phones like Lady Gaga through clothes?

CASS

Not funny.

MONTGOMERY (V.O.)

Captain to the engine room.

Cass pushes to her feet.

CASS

We're going to force their hand with a little sabotage of our own. Before we do, chief, inventory the weapons on board. I don't want to be looking over my shoulder while I'm playing chicken with rebels. JP, keep digging. The money's somewhere.

JP

Sure not in my bank account.

Cass reaches for his left wrist, turns the band so she can see the screen.

Inset - LED lights flash: Leavenworth, 6/13/2020, 9/3/2023, charges expunged, fee balance \$360867, PROBATION.

Her grip softens, almost tender. Their eyes meet. Emotions roil, then Cass shuts down, hurries out ahead of Thorne.

JP (CONT'D)

Of all the gin joints in all the world I had to walk into hers.

He turns back to the computer, rubs his eyes, focuses.

INT. STINGRAY - ENGINE ROOM

The graft of new parts to old brings an edgy, cyborg look to the machinery. Cass holds her breath as they fire up. A hum of power. She slaps a high five with Montgomery.

CASS

I like what you've done with the place, but we're playing possum.

MONTGOMERY

Standing ready, captain.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Sinclair closes on Cass as soon as she enters. She nods for Akers to open communications. Powell comes on screen.

CASS

Admiral, I believe the rogue is waiting for us to clear the area so he can salvage Constitution's telemetry.

POWELL (V.O.)

Allen had it right. She was a white elephant. Can you deny him?

CASS

I can send a launch to plant C-4 charges.

Sinclair nearly chokes, moves forward.

SINCLAIR

No! Admiral, that's billions of dollars of technology.

POWELL (V.O.)

Technology that we can't allow to fall into rebel hands. Permission to proceed, captain.

Sadness overwhelms him.

POWELL (V.O.)

Allen requested to burial at sea. You'll take care of that?

CASS

We'll see him off, sir.

The screen blacks out. Sinclair turns on Cass.



SINCLAIR

Captain Dexter, those scavengers  
are not going to let you blow up  
that ship.

CASS

Their call. Akers.

She crosses to communications. Sinclair heads for the door.

CASS

Brigadier, I prefer you remain on  
the bridge. Safest place in a fire  
fight.

Sinclair squints at her, surprised. He shrugs acquiescence.

INT. STINGRAY - PASSAGE WAY

Peterson makes his way through. Up ahead, JP comes out of the  
Mess with a yawn and a coffee cup, cuts into another room.  
Peterson follows.

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN

The barest of CREAKS opens the door. Peterson steps in. The  
room appears empty, the computer running. He crosses over,  
stares at the Caballeros cartoon screen saver, perplexed.

The door thuds shut. JP's materialized out of nowhere.

JP

Most people knock before entering  
the captain's cabin.

PETERSON

So why are you in here?

JP

Ship's business.

PETERSON

Or you're covering your tracks.

Peterson's charge is blind. JP dumps him onto the bunk, tries  
to pin him down.

The computer CHIRPS. Peterson takes advantage of the  
distraction and pushes JP off.

They fall against the desk. Peterson gets a good look at the  
screen. His attention shifts, intrigued by a page of numbers.

PETERSON

Bingo.

He releases JP to take the chair, sweeps a finger across the screen. Nothing happens. Tries again.

PETERSON

What gives with this?

JP

Old systems. Use the mouse.

PETERSON

Prehistoric. My sister's a CPA.  
She'll nail your ass.

He taps the mouse, two fingers a code. A new screen opens.

PETERSON

This is showing. Wow. One percent  
commission on cost overruns? Wait.  
I've seen this before.

He adds a few commands. Brings up a second screen, old news reports. JP leans in over his shoulder.

PETERSON

Yeah. A rebel group protesting  
colony expansion was caught in bed  
with a construction company for  
instigating sabotage that led to  
cost overruns and new construction,  
giving a windfall to the builders.

JP

Must be the new economics.

An internal ship alert flashes across the top of the screen.

PETERSON

We're wanted on the bridge.

JP

I'm not leaving that.

PETERSON

It will automatically save to the  
hard drive. When your name comes up  
at the end of that report, your ass  
is mine.

He rises, coming face to face with JP, makes JP exit first.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Sinclair shadows Cass around the stations. Peterson and JP come in. Sinclair locks on to JP. Everyone turns.

JP

This is going to get old fast.

SINCLAIR

Now we have a scenario. Was it your mission to salvage that technology for your Greener friends while making us believe you destroyed it?

JP doesn't give him the satisfaction of a reaction, looks to Cass for enlightenment.

CASS

Since the lieutenant isn't rated for demolition he wouldn't be leading the mission.

SINCLAIR

Come now, captain, everyone knows how well he handled sabotage against his own command.

JP

No sir, not against my command, around them. That sky bus was isolated. All personnel cleared out. The only people hurt were your investors when that project was exposed as a reckless danger.

It wouldn't take much for either one to start swinging.

PETERSON

She was my boat. I should be the one to finish her off. I'm fully certified. And I'd feel safer if he  
(indicates JP)  
was here under guard.

CASS

The job is yours, Commander. Mister Bishop, you're with him.

BISHOP

Me, captain?

CASS  
You aced every academy drill as I  
recall. We'll move to mask your  
descent.

Bishop swallows his fear, scurries after Peterson. Sinclair  
finds a corner. Under crossed arms he keys his phone.

CASS  
Chief, Lieutenant McCarthy can help  
you make the admiral ready for  
internment.

INT. STINGRAY - MED BAY

Thorne and JP enter, eyeball the isolation tent around  
Balentine's bed. The Medic meets them.

MEDIC  
Stay back. The admiral's critical  
but stable. What do you need?

Thorne casts around at covered bodies.

THORNE  
One of these stiff's Jenson?

MEDIC  
That last one in line. Why?

THORNE  
He's going down with his ship.

MEDIC  
Mazel tov.

INT. STINGRAY - LAUNCH BAY

At the hatch, Peterson goes over the explosives with Bishop.

PETERSON  
Magnetic clamps, five minute  
timers. Plant them and run.

Inside the launch, McCarthy secures a body bag. Thorne exits.

BISHOP  
What is that?

THORNE  
Captain Jenson's going home.

BISHOP

Oh no. Oh no. Oh gross. This is nuts. I didn't sign up for this.

He backtracks. Peterson and Thorne grab from either side. Bishop erupts. Peterson's thrown head first into the bulkhead, sinks to the floor.

Thorne suffers a head butt. JP charges out, slams Bishop with a fist that drops him. He hits an intercom.

JP

Security to launch bay one.

He leans over Peterson as Thorne recovers his breath.

JP

Commander?

PETERSON

I'm okay.

Peterson tries to stand, skids back down the wall, fighting to focus. JP looks to Thorne.

JP

Looks like I'm driving. What kind of charges?

THORNE

C-4 molds, hard wire timers with a five minute delay.

JP picks up the demolition bag with care. Four MP's show up.

THORNE

(points at Bishop)  
Put this one in restraints. Get them both to Med Bay.

He doesn't wait for them to follow orders, darts into the launch, slaps the control button to close.

INT. LAUNCH

JP looks up from stowing the bombs.

THORNE

I'll start the checklist.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

Dave rouses out of a doze to check a sonar blip.

DAVE  
She's moving.

Reynolds stirs, finds a blinking light on his console, taps codes with two fingers, comes fully alert.

REYNOLDS  
Bloody hell! That bitch is going to  
blow our booty to kingdom come.  
Battle stations.

Men stumble to their stations, rubbing sleep from eyes.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

JP drops down the conning tower ladder into ankle deep water.

JP  
Ow, hell. Send him down, chief.

JP reaches for the body coming down on a cable.

EXT. OCEAN

The rebel sub rises from the bottom, torpedo doors opening.

INT. CONSTITUTION - CAPTAIN'S CABIN

Thorne settles Jenson's body on the bunk, throws off a cursory salute.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

JP runs admiring fingers over a console before planting a charge. He pulls another charge from the bag.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Peterson wobbles in, grabs Sinclair's arm for support.

SINCLAIR  
Easy there. You! You're supposed to  
be out there.

PETERSON  
Bishop lost it, bounced me off a  
bulkhead. McCarthy and Thorne took  
the launch.

PAINTED SKY  
I have movement off the bottom.  
Trafalgar class sub.

SINCLAIR

I told you McCarthy would betray us. We're all of us lost.

CASS

Montgomery, put us on line. Mister Peterson, sound battle stations and assume firing controls.

KLAXONS sound. Peterson steps up, shaking off the last of his cobwebs, studies the console.

PAINTED SKY

She's fired on our launch.

CASS

Counter measures. Ready torpedoes.

SINCLAIR

Torpedoes! When did you?

His hand drops into his pocket. Cass notes the action. Sinclair takes note of her notice, brings his hand out empty.

PETERSON

Counter measures away. Make tubes ready in all respects.

EXT. OCEAN

The counter measures intercept the rebel torpedo, but close enough that the concussion rocks the launch on its mooring.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

JP's thrown off his feet. Gasping in the cold, JP gets upright, looks at the cascade of water coming down the hatch access, triggers his radio.

JP

Chief, haul your ass up here. We lost integrity on the hatch seal.

JP checks timers. Four minutes and counting. Thorne wades in.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Cass watches her consoles.

CASS

Standard warning, Akers.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

Reynolds swings away from his monitors.

REYNOLDS  
Bring us about. Show that Sheila  
how rebels surrender.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

PAINTED SKY  
She's aligning rear tubes.

CASS  
I used to have some sympathy for  
these radicals. Are you lined up,  
Mister Peterson?

At the tracking screen, Peterson fine-tunes the controls  
until his tracking solution is a straight line.

PETERSON  
Locked on.

CASS  
Fire one.

EXT. OCEAN

The torpedo speeds out and away.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

DAVE  
Fish in the water.

REYNOLDS  
From where?

DAVE  
That rescue boat.

REYNOLDS  
Bloody hell! Hard left rudder.  
Counter measures. Full ahead.

ALARMS SOUND. Switches are thrown.

EXT. OCEAN

The rebel heels over hard. The torpedo swerves into a decoy,  
EXPLODES.



INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

PETERSON

Damn, he was supposed to fade left.

PAINTED SKY

Revving up to running speed.

CASS

Get it right, Mister Peterson.  
Helm, get on them.

INT. LAUNCH

Blanket around his shoulders, rubbing feeling back into his hands, JP drops in the pilot's seat, peers out the window.

The sea glows with the fleet's laser containment grid. Stingray and the rebel are moving away fast.

Thorne plops into the copilot seat. JP fires the engines, brings up a grid of the currents. He swerves up and away.

THORNE

We'll never get far enough. The  
shock wave will tear us apart.

INT. CONSTITUTION - BRIDGE

The timers run down to the final few seconds.

END ACT IV

ACT V

INT. LAUNCH

ON MONITOR - The EXPLOSION shatters the hulk. Resets with a wave pattern.

JP throttles back.

THORNE  
Oh no, you're not.

JP  
Kowabunga, dude. Hold tight.

Thorne double checks his harness. The shock wave hits. JP guns the engine, barrel rolls to pull the curl. Even so they're rattled brutally. Thorne hangs on for dear life.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Painted Sky works his monitors.

PAINTED SKY  
Concussion shock wave. Brace for impact in five, four, three ...

They're rocked sideways. Sinclair crashes against a railing, goes down breathless.

CASS  
Waiting on that firing lock, Mister Peterson.

He works his console with finesse.

PETERSON  
Got it.

CASS  
Fire two.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

Reynolds hangs onto the periscope well.

DAVE  
Fish in the water!

REYNOLDS  
Bollocks! Heel over starboard.

DAVE  
We'll lose our window.

REYNOLDS  
We can get it back. Starboard!

Men work frantically.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Peterson taps his panel like a pianist.

PETERSON  
Got 'cha this time.

EXT. OCEAN

The torpedo zeroes in, hits well aft.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

PAINTED SKY  
Score! She's lost rudder control.

CASS  
Akers, see if they want mercy now.

AKERS  
Coming on screen.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds appears, bridge filling with smoke.

REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Flaming straight shooting. We're  
taking on water. We surrender.

CASS  
Not so fast. Who are you and who's  
your contact in Navy command?

ON MONITOR - Reynolds snarls his reluctance.

CASS  
Wow. Honor among thieves. Suit  
yourself.

She motions for Akers to cut transmission.

CASS  
Stand ready on three.

AKERS  
Request for open channel, captain.

Cass nods.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds glowers.

REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Name's Reynolds. I have wounded.  
You can't just let us drown.

CASS  
Actually, I can. I'm already  
overloaded with survivors of your  
attack.

Sinclair slithers up beside Cass.

SINCLAIR  
Don't trust anything they say. Blow  
them out of the water now.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds sweats.

REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
All dealings were anonymous. The  
best I can do is a cell number.

CASS  
Cell number, bank account and  
payment drops.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds snarls, reaches to his computer.

REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
Our transceiver's damaged. I only  
have 1400 kc available.

CASS  
Akers, oblige him.

SINCLAIR  
No! Open fire.

Akers opens the channel. The virus activates. Systems  
sputter. The lights fade off and on.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds sneers a laugh.

REYNOLDS (V.O.)  
You thought you were smarter than  
me. Give me a firing lock, boys.

The screen blacks out at Cass' hand signal.

CASS  
All stations, manual override.  
Akers, purge that computer. Sonar,  
echo location. Mister Peterson.

PETERSON  
Compensating. Got her.

CASS  
Fire.

Peterson thumbs the button.

INT. REBEL - BRIDGE

The sonar panel sounds the alarm. Dave traces the course.

DAVE  
Fish locked on. We're dead.

Reynolds leads the scramble for emergency pods.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Systems resume normal activity.

AKERS  
Something to be said for not  
upgrading systems. Unwanted bugs  
can't dig in.

The main screen lights up. The rebel sub disintegrates.

PETERSON  
Target eliminated.

CASS  
Stand down from general quarters.  
Akers, alert Kennedy to pick up  
survivors. Sonar, find our launch.

Painted Sky adjusts his controls.

PAINTED SKY  
The bottom's quiet, captain.

Cass turns to him in disbelief. Fingers fidget her ring.

FLASHBACK

INT. STINGRAY - WARD ROOM

Cass enters behind Thorne. JP jumps up from the table and an idling computer. A glare holds, neither willing to yield.

Simmons comes on screen.

SIMMONS (V.O.)  
 Twelve Mark Fifty-twos are on the  
 truck. ETA ten minutes.

He signs off. JP grabs up the Tablet. Thorne blocks the door.

THORNE  
 Stand fast. Captain, if you're  
 pissed at the admiral over this  
 post, leave it in his office. If  
 it's this character.  
 (indicates JP)  
 Deal with him now. Makes no never  
 mind to me who dumped who. I'm not  
 playing referee. Much obliged for  
 the fire power, LT.

He pulls the door shut. Cass gets a grip on her rage,  
 shutting down. JP rubs his wristband, sighs.

JP  
 Okay, I'll start. A friend  
 convinced me to do something with  
 what was left of my life ...

She won't look at him, not ready for this.

JP (CONT'D)  
 Dammit, Cass, I'm trying to be  
 professional.

CASS  
 You lied to me.

He's momentarily thrown by the change of subject, anger he  
 wasn't aware he had rising to match hers.

JP  
 I withheld certain confidences.

CASS  
 Semantics. That's not the way a  
 marriage works.

JP  
 You would know. Your parents were  
 such great role models.

Her breath catches. His confidence shatters. JP sits heavily  
 on the table.

JP (CONT'D)

That was a cheap shot. Sorry. I'm sorry. This is not how I practiced a reunion.

CASS

You told Brian about us.

JP

Not on a bet. He bleeds conservative.

CASS

What the hell is he up to?

Cass opens the door to Thorne.

CASS

Chief, are we squared away?

THORNE

M-52s coming aboard now.

CASS

We'll be leaving before the speeches are finished.

THORNE

Yes, ma'am.

Thorne backs out ahead of her. Cass stops, half turns to JP.

CASS

You'll have the helm. Nothing but the job at hand. Got it?

She exits before he can respond.

END FLASHBACK

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE

Akers works her board.

AKERS

Captain, I have a video in the rebel's files.

ON MONITOR - Reynolds and JP under a conference banner. Papers exchange hands.

CASS

Shut that down. Now.

The screen goes black. Sinclair stifles a gloat.

AKERS

Admiral Powell on the line. And  
Chief Thorne! The launch lost  
power. They're taking on water.

CASS

Hold off on the admiral. Bring us  
about.

INT. STINGRAY - BRIDGE - LATER

Strained silence. In her chair, Cass drums fingers. Still in  
blankets, JP and Thorne are escorted in by security.

Cass looks her men over for damage, motions for Akers to play  
the video on the main screen.

JP winces, glances at Cass, his last hope crashing. The  
screen splits with Powell on the second half.

JP

Let me guess. The rebels cc'd you.

POWELL (V.O.)

I'm glad you can be so cavalier.

JP

That never happened.

SINCLAIR

Reynolds was under watch for years.  
You can't deny surveillance video.

POWELL (V.O.)

My hands are tied, John. The one  
day your records show no scheduled  
duty.

The date on the banner jumps out at JP. In a flash, he's  
relieved and alarmed.

JP

Admiral, only someone who needed a  
fall guy would pick that day.

Cass locks onto the banner, stifles a gasp.

JP

I don't know where this is supposed  
to be, but I was in Nueva San Juan  
getting married.



POWELL

Married!

SINCLAIR

Not a very convincing lie. Produce  
the woman.

Livid, JP turns to Sinclair, avoiding Cass' eyes.

JP

Wish I could. She's long gone.  
Thanks to your damn sky bus.

Cass reacts to that, regretful, turns back to the screen,  
finds something.

CASS

Akers, bring this up here.

She points to the hands. The image narrows. Sinclair squints.

SINCLAIR

I don't see anything.

CASS

You should.

She nods at JP. He pushes his cuff and wristband up to bare a  
small tattoo on his wrist, 3C outlined by a sombrero, lines  
his arm up under the unmarked screen image.

SINCLAIR

That's your counter-argument? How  
juvenile.

CASS

At the time it made sense. But  
there was tequila involved.

She raises her tattooed wrist - 3C in an old style sailor's  
hat. Sinclair's jaw drops.

SINCLAIR

Admiral!

Powell brings his wrist up, 3C in a straw boater.

POWELL

Graduating class of twenty fifteen.  
Jose.

CASS

Donald.

JP  
And Panchito. The Three Caballeros.

Sinclair gapes, collects himself.

SINCLAIR  
I suppose next you'll say that  
microchip simply appeared in your  
locker.

Cass crosses to Sinclair casually, nodding Thorne into place  
behind him.

CASS  
How did you know about that?

SINCLAIR  
Why. Someone mentioned it.

CASS  
Don't think so. I kept that to  
myself after I found the chip.

SINCLAIR  
His name was as plain as day on  
that locker.

He stops himself, too late.

CASS  
Too bad it was a locker he never  
used.

POWELL (V.O.)  
Put him in irons and get him back  
here. We'll air the rest of this  
out in a court of law.

Sinclair grabs Cass under pistol threat. Nobody moves.

JP  
Oh, bad move.

SINCLAIR  
Indeed. Why?

JP  
You're holding the class boxing  
champ by the wrong arm. She leads  
with her left.

A moment of puzzlement is all he gets. Cass nails in an elbow  
to the diaphragm, swings an uppercut to his jaw.

Thorne envelops Sinclair in a submission hold, hands him off to MPs to march out.

POWELL (V.O.)

Please tell me you have solid evidence.

Peterson checks a console. Cass responds to a blinking light on her captain's console.

PETERSON

We'll have ... Randall Sinclair's? History of kickbacks and graft by the time we dock. There's better than thirty years worth here.

JP

How else do you hide in plain sight? Inherit the family business.

CASS

Admiral, my medics inform me that Allen's still with us, but he's critical.

POWELL (V.O.)

The Diversity Hospital Dome is an hour off your position. We'll meet you there.

He signs off. Cass thumbs her intercom.

CASS

Montgomery, open her up. We have wounded to deliver.

The screen blacks out. Cass takes her chair. Peterson works the chart table.

PETERSON

You really took this cow through the Bermuda Channel?

CASS

Better not let Chief Montgomery hear you talk about his lady like that.

Everyone gets busy, leaving JP odd man out. He backs to the hatch, slips out.

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN - DAY

In complete dejection, JP leaves his ring next to the computer keyboard.

INT. STINGRAY - CASS' CABIN - DAY

Cass drags in, dog tired, pulls out her sleepwear and starts to unbutton her top. Spots the ring.

She drops in her chair. Activates the computer.

JP comes on screen. She holds the ring up where he can see.

CASS  
Lose something?

He's hard put to find the right words, sighs.

JP  
I figured a quick surrender would  
simplify things.

CASS  
You don't get to unilaterally  
decide what's best for both of us.

The door opens. Powell enters. His posture is imposing even in parade rest stance. Cass glares at him, turns back to JP.

CASS  
I'll get back to you.

She ends the call, gives Powell her undivided simmering rage.

FADE OUT.