Bear looks up.

BEAR
How can I help you?

HUNTER
Sir... I have the Missile Drill results.

He hands over the papers. The Bear scans them...

BEAR
Is this the best they can do?

Hunter looks over his shoulder, to see which section he’s on.

HUNTER
No, sir. But that’s what they did.

BEAR
It should not take seven minutes to pressurize the launch tubes!

HUNTER
Aye, sir.

BEAR
I want this down to five.
(hands papers back)
Train on it. And tell your buddy WEPS that we’re gonna do it again... and keep on doing it... until he gets it right.

HUNTER
Aye, sir. Will do.

But as Hunter turns to go, he pauses at the door...

HUNTER (cont’d)
By the way, sir. I just witnessed a little fight. The men are on edge, a bit ragged from what we’re going through right now.
(pause)
I was thinking... maybe they could benefit from one of your famous pep talks.

BEAR
A pep talk, huh? Welll... since you have the pulse of the men...

(CONTINUED)
He walks over to the intercom 1MC. Stepping up, he toggles the 1MC, to address the ship en masse:

BEAR
(on 1MC)
May I have your attention, please.
(pause)
It has been brought to my attention... that morale may be a bit low. That you may be a bit “on edge”.
(pause)
So what I suggest is this...
(pause)
Any crew member who feels... that he can’t handle this situation... can leave the ship right now. Gentlement, we are at DEFCON THREE. This is the Captain. That is all.

Clicking off the 1MC, he turns to face Hunter. Silence.

BEAR (cont’d)
How’d you like my pep talk?

HUNTER
Very inspiring, sir.

Silence. Hunter exits. As the Bear’s eyes narrow, WE HEAR; a RHYTHMIC CLICK AND WHEEZE.

MISSILE PLATFORM - LEVEL FOUR

Hunter sits on a rowing machine, sprinting, working hard. COB climbs down the ladder, wearing a sweat suit. He looks down...

COB
Mind if I join you sir?

Hunter grunts and keeps rowing. COB sits on the rowing machine beside him. They row side by side, until Hunter’s sprint ends and he drapes over his oars, exhausted.

HUNTER
You hear the Captain’s little speech?

COB
(still rowing)
Aye, sir...

HUNTER
(looks over)
What do you think?

(CONTINUED)
COB
I think the Bear just seems to know...
what his men seem to need -- a pat on the
head, or a kick in the ass.

COB’s words are directed at Hunter.

HUNTER
He done much head pattin’ lately?

COB
With all due respects, sir...

HUNTER
Go ahead...

Hunter stands. COB stops rowing. The gloves are off.

COB
I pat my own head when I need it.

HUNTER
If he doesn’t want my input, he doesn’t
have to use it.

COB
Right.

(pause)
Look... the Bear doesn’t want you to be
his friend. he wants you to follow him,
’cause you trust him -- ‘cause he’s
dedicated to his mission -- and that’s
all the man is about.

(pause)
I mean, do you want your own ship or not?
If you do... you say: “Yes, sir, no sir.”
Just like they taught you.

(pause)
His speech made sense to me.

As COB stares at Hunter...

FADE TO:

UNDERWATER.

The U.S.S. ALABAMA cruises through a silent empty sea.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: THE EMPEROR SEAMOUNTS -- a dramatic
deep sea mountain chain far beneath her keel.
Rodriguez and his sonarmen are hunkered down at their screens. Then, suddenly...

**SONARMAN #2**
SUP -- c’mere.
(pause; he listens)
You hear that...?

Both men listen, intent. They strain to catch the sound, until...

**RODRIGUEZ**
(quietly)
Oh, my God...

**SONARMAN #3**
I have a narrow band tonal Bearing zero-4-7 Tracking C 1-9-8 Hertz assigning Tracker Sierra in ATF and AFT...

**RODRIGUEZ**
(on phone)
CONN/SONAR: Possible submerged threat, Bearing zero-4-7. Designate contact: MASTER 2-8.

**OOD**
(on phone)
SONAR/CONN: Aye...
(on P.A.)
Man Battle Stations Torpedo. Rig for Silent Running.

He hits the GENERAL ALARM! As it BONGS for 19 seconds...

**QUICK CUTS** (ALARM OVER)

- OUTSIDE THE CAPTAIN’S STATEROOM: Hunter and the Bear exit past men racing down the passageway. (As always, in an emergency, pants are tucked into socks.)

- Teams rush into the TORPEDO ROOM: where Cignetti is on the phone.

**BEAR**
(crossing to SONAR; to TSO)
What’s our battle load?

(CONTINUED)
TECHNICAL SYSTEMS OFFICE
Battle load is 4 Mark-48’s, sir.

BEAR
Very well.

81 IN SONAR - AS THE BONGING STOPS

OOD (ON P.A.)
Man Battle Stations Torpedo. Rig for Silent Running.

BEAR
(enters)
What’s going on?

RODRIGUEZ
Sir... we have a possible submerged threat. Bearing zero-4-9. Designate Master 2-8.

BEAR
Determine best depth for evasion.

RODRIGUEZ
(checks instruments)
Best depth for evasion, sir, is 8-3-1 feet.

HUNTER
We’ll be out of VLF radio range...

BEAR
(on phone)
CONN/SONAR: All ahead standard. Left 2/3’s rudder. Make your depth 8-3-1 feet, smartly.
(leaving, to Rodriguez)
You find out who that is...

Hunter follows the Bear out. The SONAR team is sweating bullets.

81A OUTSIDE UNDERSEA

The ’BAMA turns and DIVES! The RADIO BUOY is dragged down.

But suddenly...

BEEP - BEEP - BEEP
AT CONN (DIVING ANGLE)

THE FLASH TRAFFIC ALARM LIGHT FLASHES AND BEEPS!

ROSE (V.O.)

IN RADIO ROOM (DIVING AT MAXIMUM ANGLE)

ROSE
...Recommend Alert One.

The FLASH TRAFFIC ALARM LIGHT FLASHES AND BEEPS as Rose types the top line into the DECRYPTING DEVICE.

OOD (ON P.A.)
Attention: Alert One. Alert One.

As the decoded E.A.M. prints out...

ROSE
(reads it; terrified)
Oh, shit...

Waiting, then ripping out the E.A.M....

ZIMMER
Keep this to yourself.

Zimmer hurries to the OPCON with Lt. Foster -- the message held in both their hands.

AT OPCON (DIVING ANGLE)

The Bear, Hunter, and two Lieutenant j.g.’s wait in the crowded passageway.

ZIMMER
(enters from RADIO)
Sir... we have a properly formatted Emergency Action Message... from the National Command Authority...
(pause)
For Strategic Missile Launch

FOSTER
(face ashen)
I concur, sir.

The men in the tiny room stare at each other, stunned -- in near total disbelief. Zimmer continues, in a sweat, trying to maintain a professional demeanor.

(CONTINUED)
Zimmer
Sir... request permission to get the Authenticator.

Bear
Permission granted. Get the Authenticator.

Zimmer opens the outer safe, then Foster opens the inner safe as the Bear heads back into ...

Bear
Chief of the Watch: Man Battle Stations
Missiles for Strategic Missile Launch.
Spin up all Missiles

Hunsicker
Man Battle Stations Missiles for
Strategic Missile Launch. Spin up all
Missiles. Aye, sir.

AT MISSILE PLATFORM - LEVEL TWO (DIVING ANGLE)

WE SEE: the fear in the young men’s eyes as they hear the fateful words:

Hunsicker (V.O.)
Man Battle Stations Missiles for
Strategic Missile Launch. Spin Up All
Missiles.

The MISSILE LAUNCH SIREN WHOOPS EERILY -- continuing for 19
seconds. The Missile Platform springs to life.

Armageddon has come to the ALABAMA.

AT THE CONN -- AT CAPTAIN’S INDICATOR PANEL (DIVING ANGLE - 86 ALARM OVER)

The Bear has repositioned his team. Returning with Lt. Foster, the authenticating card and message held in both their hands...

Zimmer
Captain... request permission to Authenticate.

Bear
Permission granted. Authenticate.
Tearing open the plastic packet, Zimmer reads the CODE from the message, held with Foster in shaking hands...

ZIMMER
Brave, Echo, Echo, Charlie, Alpha, Tango, Alpha.

FOSTER
(checks CODE next)
Bravo, Echo, Echo, Charlie, Alpha, Tango, Alpha.

THE ALARM STOPS

HUNSICKER (V.O.)
(on P.A. in bg)
Man Battle Stations Missiles for Strategic Missile launch. Spin up all Missiles. etc.

An eerie silence takes hold.

ZIMMER
(looks up; stunned)
Message is authentic.

FOSTER
I concur, sir.

LT. J.G. #1
I concur.

LT. J.G. #2
I concur.

HUNTER
(reads the message)
Sir... I concur.

The Bear checks it for himself, then looking up at the men in the room...

BEAR
Gentlemen. This message is authentic.

CLICKING HIS STOPWATCH ON.

BEAR (cont’d)
(on P.A.)
WEAPONS/CONN: Set Condition 1SQ for Strategic Missile Launch. Spin up Missiles One through Five and Twenty through Twenty-Four.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
BEAR (cont'd)
The release of Nuclear Weapons has been authorized. This is the Captain.

HUNTER
(on phone; repeats)
WEAPONS/CONN: Set Condition 1SQ for Strategic Missile Launch. Spin up Missiles One through Five and Twenty through Twenty-Four. The release of Nuclear Weapons has been authorized. This is the XO.

The shock has not worn off. Only their training carries them now. They have drilled this hundreds of times. As the ship continues to dive, Foster and Zimmer return to OPCON and Hunter reads the E.A.M.

INSERT: CLOSEUP: WE SEE...

XREEBABA..........EMERGENCY ACTION MESSAGE (300)

From: NATIONAL COMMAND AUTHORITY

TO: U.S.S. ALABAMA (SSBN 731)

SUBJECT: NUCLEAR MISSILE LAUNCH

REMARKS: Launch Codes of rebel-controlled assault missiles compromised. Russian Army assault repelled. Dissidents threaten launch at continental United States.

1. Retarget and Strike.

2. Immediate Sortie Ten (10) Trident Missiles.

3. Target Package SLM 64741/2

AUTHENTICATION CODE: #BEECATA

87-89 QUICK CUTS - MUSIC OVER (DIVING ANGLE)

- As the 'BAMA DIVES (and the RADIO BUOY is pulled in)...

- The Bear enters his STATEROOM: opens his safe and removes the 24 FIRING UNIT KEYS. A Runner at the door takes them. As the Bear exits...

- Zimmer and Foster re-open the OPCON SAFE to get the CAPTAIN’S INDICATOR PANEL KEY.
WEPS (on phone)
CONN/WEAPONS: Estimated time to Strategic Missile Launch is fourteen minutes, sir.

BEAR (on phone)
Very well.

Zimmer and Foster walk up -- the CAPTAIN’S KEY in both their hands.

ZIMMER
Sir... your Captain’s Key.

The Bear puts the key (on its string) around his neck.

CLOSEUP: THE CAPTAIN’S KEY FALLS NEXT TO HIS STOPWATCH. TICKING.

The DRONE of TECHNICIANS rises... as the RUNNER distributes the FIRING UNIT KEYS, which are inserted into the GAS GENERATOR CONSOLES. As the GENERATOR CONSOLES LIGHT UP GREEN...

COB (V.O.)
5-5-0 feet... passing 600 feet.

ROSE (on phone)
CONN/RADIO: Sir... we’re out of Very Low Frequency radio range.

HUNTER (on phone)
RADIO/CONN: Extend the Extremely Low Frequency Antenna.
IN RADIO ROOM

ROSE
(on phon)
RADIO/CONN: Extend the Extremely Low Frequency Antenna.

UNDERWATER.

From the stern planes, aft, a long black cable is played out — to trail behind the diving 'BAMA.

IN SONAR (DIVING ANGLE)

AN ALARM BEEPS. A SONAR SCREEN STARTS TO BLINK as it classifies a hostile sub!

RODRIGUEZ
Oh, Jesus... Oh, God...
(on phone)
CONN/SONAR: Captain... we’ve got his I.D...

Rodriguez waits, holding his breath as the Bear storms in, followed by Hunter.

BEAR
Well?

RODRIGUEZ
Sir...
(the I.D. appears on SONAR screen)
Master 2-8 is classified as a Russian AKULA class hunter-killer. He’s coming with us, sir. Bearing 1-9-6.

BEAR
How the hell did he pick us up? What the fuck have you people been doing in here?

No answer. The men sit numb as the Captain goes.

HUNTER
(reassuring)
Stay on him.

RODRIGUEZ
Aye, sir.

Hunter heads back into...
CONTROL (DIVING ANGLE)

COB
(to Helmsman)
800 feet... zero bubble at 8-3-1.

From his spot at the Missile Indicator Panel:

BEAR
Continue dive, 5 down.

COB
(looks back; surprised)
Continue dive, 5 down, aye, sir.
(to Helmsman)
Continue dive, 5 down.

Something in COB’s delivery lets us know that this makes him nervous. As the DIVE ANGLE is modified (LESS STEEP, but still descending)...

BEAR
(on P.A.)
Gentlemen... this is the Captain.

ALL AROUND THE SHIP - AT BATTLE STATIONS MISSING (DIVING ANGLE)

WE SEE: Barnes in the ENGINE ROOM; Danny Rose in the RADIO ROOM; and WEPS in MISSILE CONTROL, as...

BEAR (V.O.)
(on PA)
There’s an AKULA class sub out there. It could be controlled by hostile forces. The Russian Army has been repelled in their attempt to retake that base, and renegade army forces have threatened to lunch at our country. We have orders to launch our missiles.... which is what we are going to do...

IN TORPEDOS (DIVING ANGLE)

BEAR (V.O.)
Rig for Ultra Quiet... and Man Your Stations. That is all.

When the P.A. clicks off, standing with their pants tucked into their socks (as they must for all fire and battle stations alerts)...

(CONTINUED)
KENNEDY
(quietly)
Holy shit...

JACKSON
(aside)
Hey, T. -- if I die and you don’t?
(beat)
Pull my pants outta my socks. I don’t wanna look fuckin’ stupid.

OUTSIDE UNDERSEA

The BAMA continues her gradual dive as COB counts off her depth.

COB (V.O.)
Passing 900 feet... 9-5-zero... passing one thousand feet.

The uppermost peaks of the Emperor Seamounts form an eerie seascape, below.

CLOSEUP ON: THE DIVING ‘BAMA

Her HULL PLATES creak and groan.

IN THE ENGINE ROOM (DIVING ANGLE)

Barnes watches a DIGITAL DIAL that shows her descending past 1050 feet.

IN CONTROL ROOM

COB watches the depth dial, tense. The sounds of metal stress are scary. The unnatural condition of a submarine has never been more apparent than now.

PLANESMAN
(quietly)
How deep is he gonna go...?

HELMSMAN
(quietly)
The hull plates undergo plastic transformation at around 1300 feet.

COB
(to both)
When he tells you to stop, you stop.
(reads out)
Passing twelve hundred feet...
AS THE BAMA DIVES, CLOSEUP: SILENTLY TRACK AFT FROM HER STERN...

Down the long EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY antenna cable -- streaming out far behind. This antenna receives ELF radio signals at great depths... but with low efficiency.

SONARMAN #1
He’s gone.

RODRIGUEZ
Like hell. He’s up there...

MISSILE CONTROL CENTER (DIVING ANGLE)

(through phone)
MISSILE FORWARD/LAUNCHER: Stand by to pre-pressurize Missile Tube One.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
LAUNCHER/MISSILE FORWARD: Stand by to pre-pressurize Missile Tube one.

STILL TRACKING BACK ALONG THE ANTENNA... we see how far away the BAMA really is! The ELF antenna cable stretches aft for nearly a mile. It’s designed to receive EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY signals... bearing very little information, and...

ONE IS COMING IN NOW. BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP.

A “Z” slowly appears on the ELF CONSOLE SCREEN:

ROSE
(on phone)
CONN/RADIO: Receiving Transmission on Extremely Low Frequency radio.

COB
(in bg)
One-two-five-zero

(CONTINUED)
HUNTER
(on phone; at CONN)
Very well...
(to BEAR)
Sir... incoming message on ELF.

BEAR
(at panel; looks back)
Very well.

IN RADIO (DIVING ANGLE)
Rose waits in silence. BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP.

ON RADIO SCREEN: A second letter appears: “ZX.”

OUTSIDE UNDERSEA - LOOKING STRAIGHT UP
The ALABAMA slowly descends. Her Propeller cuts silently through the sea. The antenna trails out behind... a silent thin black line, as...

BEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE...

IN RADIO (DIVING ANGLE)

...EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEP.

ROSE
Sir!

Zimmer races over to see: “ZXD” -- on the ELF screen.

ZIMMER
Pull up the code.

Rose type ZXD -- then enters the callup command, and gets a readout on the ELF SCREEN!

INSERT -- WE READ

“EXTREMELY LOW FREQUENCY -- MESSAGE CODE
ZXD: Come to VLF Communications Depth to receive High Priority Message”

ZIMMER (cont’d)
(on phone)
CONN/RADIO: Extremely Low Frequency Message Code: ZXD -- Come to Communications Depth to receive High Priority Message.
HUNTER
RADIO/CONN: Very well...
(to Bear)
Captain... we have received an ELF transmission ordering us up to receive a
High Priority Message.

BEAR
With that sub sill up there?
(to COB)
Zero bubble.

COB
Zero bubble, aye, sir.
(to Helmsman)
Zero bubble at 1-2-7-5 feet.

THEY LEVEL OFF...

BEAR
(to Hunter)
When our Missile Systems are ready... my intention is to rise to launch depth --
launch our birds, then get the hell out.
(pause)
But I’m not going up until then. I’m not going to jeopardize the ship’s safety.

HUNTER
We could float the buoy from here, sir.
We’ve got enough cable.

BEAR
Try it.

HUNTER
Chief of the Watch; prepare to Float the buoy.

HUNSICKER
Prepare to float the buoy, aye, sir.
(he consults his dials, then)
Sir... we have not met the parameters to float the buoy.

HUNTER
Float it anyway, Captain?

BEAR
Aye. Float the buoy.
Normal depth constraints for the buoy just don’t apply. The need to know is urgent.

HUNSICKER
Float the buoy. Aye, sir.
(to me)
Float the buoy.

SAILOR
Float the buoy, aye.

The RADIO BUOY is floated up -- tethered by a steel cable, just aft of the missile tubes.

HUNSICKER (V.O)
Buoy deploying, sir. Tension 2000 pounds. (etc.)

HUNTER (V.O.)
Very well.

The buoy floats up rapidly. One can almost feel the intense sea pressure and tension exerted on its line. As it bobs up hundreds and hundreds of feet, with its pigtail extension line bobbing up even higher -- there is a sudden, horrible CREEAAAKKK!!!