1969 A SPACE ODYSSEY or:
HOW KUBRICK LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LAND ON THE MOON

by

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The following is inspired by true events surrounding the moon landing in 1969....

...or maybe it's all made up.

A CRESCENT MOON AGAINST A BLUE SKY

The moment where the sun and moon are visible together.

ANGLE DOWN TO:

EXT. CAPE KENNEDY LAUNCH COMPLEX - DAY

A massive rocket rising from the horizon. Taller than a skyscraper. The biggest thing for miles.

TITLE: Apollo 1 Test Launch - Cape Kennedy, 1967

Astronauts DAVE GRISSOM, ED WHITE and ROGER CHAFFE stand at its base. They're wearing space suits, helmets tucked under arms. American heroes looking like mere ants against this tribute to exploration.

JULIAN SCHEER, 40. He's good looking, charming and quite aware of these things. Camera around his neck. "NASA Public Affairs" written on his ID badge.

JULIAN
How about a photo of the first men landing on the moon?

The astronauts stand beside each other with smiles of pure joy. They have the best job in the world.

Julian snaps the photo. The astronauts break their pose.

ED WHITE
Can I get a copy for my kids?

Julian nods.

JULIAN
You guys better get up there before Deke freaks. You know how he is about staying on schedule.

The astronauts laugh at this and quickly return to business. They do a final check of their suits. Helping each other with a few straps. These guys are a team. Family.

DAVE GRISSOM
Ready?

Ed and Roger nod. Together the astronauts step on the elevator that will take them to the launch pad. It's a long way up.

INT. COMPLEX 34 MISSION CONTROL ROOM - DAY

CHIEF OF ASTRONAUTS DEKE SLAYTON wears a headset. White button down shirt and black tie. Classic looks. 43. A good ol' boy to his core.

DEKE
We're behind schedule. Let's get moving!

TITLE: Kennedy Space Center Mission Control

Deke sits at a control panel. Radar screens, dials and flashing buttons: the height of technology, 1967. A HALF-DOZEN OPERATORS in similar headsets surround him.

FLIGHT ASSISTANT GENE KRANZ, 34, sits at Deke's side. Same white shirt and black tie. A harsh military haircut that belies the teddy bear underneath.

GENE
Roger. Initiating communication.

DEKE
Apollo 1, this is CAPCOM -- how do you read me?

A crackle over the speakers and:

DAVE GRISSOM (V.O.)
Reading you loud and clear.

Kranz and Deke exchange a smile. So far so good.

DAVE GRISSOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Deke, we've got a strange odor in here. Smells like sour buttermilk.

DEKE
You sure it's not that bologna you had for lunch?

DAVE GRISSOM (V.O.)
(laughing)
Negative, Deke. No bologna.

Deke smiles.

DEKE
Roger. We'll get someone from operations to take a look. Stand by, buddy.
(under his breath)
More fucking delays.

Kranz shoots Deke a nervous look.

DEKE (CONT'D)
You want a Soviet beating us to the moon?

Kranz knows better than to answer when Deke is like this.

OPERATIONS (V.O.)
Deke? Air seems fine in the capsule. You are clear for test launch. Over.

DEKE
Thank you, Lord.
(into headset)
Apollo 1, we're initiating test launch countdown. T-minus ten, nine, eight, seven --

GENE
-- we have loss of signal.

Deke throws down his headset in frustration.

DEKE
How are we getting to the moon if we can't talk to our astronauts sitting a couple hundred yards away?

The speakers crackle. Going in and out. Barely audible:

DAVE GRISSOM (V.O.)
Fire...in the cockpit --

DEKE
(scared)
Dammit.

GENE
All communication down.

EXT. LAUNCH COMPLEX - DAY

Julian holds his camera up to snap a photo of the rocket -- he lowers the camera. Panic on his face.

EXT. APOLLO 1 COMMAND MODULE - DAY

The smoke and flood lights give the feel of a dream. CLOSE ON the capsule window. Hands desperately beating against it to get out. Please God, open --

EXT. COMPLEX 34 BUILDING - DAY

Deke runs from the nondescript building. He stops. Staring straight ahead in shock. He's going to be sick from what he sees --

EXT. APOLLO 1 COMMAND MODULE - DAY

FIREMAN and EMERGENCY PERSONNEL in gas masks approach the capsule. Surreal. Time disjointed.

QUICK CUTS: The capsule window. Nothing moving on the other side. The door removed. Smoke escaping. Everything black within. No one could have survived --

We follow the tendrils of smoke up to:

A CRESCENT MOON IN THE LIGHT GRAY WINTER SKY

PRESIDENT NIXON (V.O.)
As we explore the reaches of space,
let us go to the new worlds
together --

TITLE: Two Years Later - Nixon's Inaugural Address

ANGLE DOWN TO BARBARA PENN. Late 20's. Fashionable bouffant, long wool coat with wide sleeves, giving the appearance of a typical Washington DC socialite.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - WHITE HOUSE - MORNING

She stands at the far edge of a MASSIVE CROWD. Nose bleed seats. Everyone looking straight ahead. But not Barbara. She gazes to the moon. There's nothing typical about Barbara.

PRESIDENT NIXON (V.O.)
-- Not as new worlds to be
conquered, but as a new adventure
to be shared.

PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON barely perceptible on the stage in the distance. VIETNAM PROTESTORS behind trying to shout over:

PRESIDENT NIXON (CONT'D)
(over the loud speaker)
With those who are willing to join, let us cooperate.

The CROWD applauds, startling Barbara from her sky gazing. She politely CLAPS. The PROTESTORS become louder --

-- as we TRANSITION TO ARCHIVE FOOTAGE of the event on a 1969 color television in --

INT. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - WIDER - DAY

HERBERT G. KLEIN, Nixon's 51-year-old DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS shuts off the TV. Runs his hand through his graying hair. Deep lines of stress on his face. He does not have an easy job.

TITLE: White House Public Affairs Office

HERBERT
Has Nixon ever watched the news? He wants us to sell "peace" to the public after we just came out of the bloodiest year in Vietnam. Any ideas? Miracles?

Herbert addresses a table filled with young men in conservative suits: WHITE HOUSE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSISTANTS.

BARBARA (O.C.)
Maybe we need to change the news.

All heads turn to Barbara. She sits along the wall. No room at the table.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
When I was the Vice President of marketing at Singer --

HERBERT
-- we aren't selling sewing machines.

A few nervous laughs. Eyes avert in the hope she'll go away, but Barbara isn't going.

BARBARA
People want to see we can do more than destroy each other. We need people focused on the moon landing.

DIRECTOR HELMS (O.C.)
That's what I'd like to discuss.

CIA DIRECTOR RICHARD HELMS steps forward. 56. A striking figure. Hard to believe he's been in the corner the entire time. Watching and waiting like any good spook.

Herbert Klein less than pleased to have the CIA at his meeting.

HERBERT
Right. This is Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms. Nixon wants us working with the CIA on our press efforts for the moon landing.

A few murmurs of confusion from the table. CIA Director Helms goes to the far wall and pulls down a screen. Dims the lights, CLICKS the remote connected to the projector on the table --

A picture of a grandfatherly looking MAN in his 60's fills the screen.

DIRECTOR HELMS
This is Vasili Mishin. He's been put in charge of the Soviet rocket program by --

CLICKS to the slide of MIKAHIL SUSLOV, 67. An old hardliner. Slicked back white hair and angry as all hell.

DIRECTOR HELMS (CONT'D)
-- Mikahil Suslov. When the commies took over Russia, Suslov carried out the slaughter of millions of his own people. If you thought the Nazis were bad, this guy is worse.

Director Helms CLICKS the slide of a young couple on their wedding day. Blonde. Blue eyes. Classic Americana.

DIRECTOR HELMS (CONT'D)
This is Cindy and Howard Marcus. Our CIA operatives in Moscow posing as tutors in the Suslov household. Yesterday they discovered Suslov's plans to launch a manned lunar landing before the end of the month.

PR ASSISTANT #1
Isn't NASA scheduled to launch in the spring? That puts us at least four months behind the Soviets.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Suslov has been very outspoken about his distaste for the current nuclear stalemate between our countries. I'm going to be blunt -- if Suslov wins the space race, he will come to power and will not hesitate to launch an attack against us. The Soviets cannot be allowed to win the moon.

The thought makes everyone uncomfortable.

HERBERT
What do you want from my public affairs team?

DIRECTOR HELMS
NASA is doing what it can to get us there first, but winning the Cold War will largely depend on public perception. We need you to create press materials that reinforce America will land on the moon first.

HERBERT
You want propaganda?
(Helms nods)
And what am I supposed to create these "press materials" with? Have you seen the photos NASA shot in space?

He holds up a flat and blurry black and white photo from the table.

BARBARA
Excuse me, I think it would be more productive to focus on what we can do. We need to remind people of Kennedy's words: "We choose to go to the moon not because it is easy, but because it is hard. Because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win."

Herbert looks to the grainy black and white photo of the moon's surface.

HERBERT
Not inspiring press material.
And Nixon is no Kennedy.

He tosses the grainy picture of the moon on the table. The picture TRANSITIONS TO --

THE MOON IN THE NIGHT SKY

WE ANGLE down to quaint street lamps lighting a city park. A huge monumental structure with Corinthian columns looms at the entrance. A testament to Communist aesthetic.

TITLE: Gorky Park - Moscow, USSR

On a bench sits CINDY MARCUS, 21, the lovely young bride we saw in the CIA photo. Her husband, HOWARD MARCUS, 25, seated beside. They tightly hold hands. A reassuring smile exchanged, but neither one really buying it.

A SOVIET GUARD approaches. Cindy tightens her grip on Howard's hand, giving the only hint of danger. The guard gives a friendly nod in their direction and keeps walking.

Cindy begins to relax, as a man in a nondescript suit takes a seat beside them. This is AGENT MILES HARRIS, 25. Wet behind the ears and even more nervous than our couple. Speaking in lowered voices:

CINDY
Suslov suspects we're working for the Americans. He is having our activities closely monitored.

Cindy casually gestures to the man across the lawn in a KGB UNIFORM.

HOWARD
I've requested extraction.

AGENT HARRIS
Your extraction request has been denied.

HOWARD
If Suslov realizes I worked with NASA, he will use me to advance their rocket program.
(MORE)

HOWARD (CONT'D)
If that happens, you can guarantee the Soviets will beat us to the moon and that puts us all in serious danger.

AGENT HARRIS
We know the risks. Suslov is a priority target. You are to continue monitoring his activities and gathering intelligence. Those are your orders.

Agent Harris gets up with an awkward:

AGENT HARRIS (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

Cindy and Howard watch him walk away. Howard pulls Cindy close. Seeking any kind of comfort in each other's arms.

CINDY
We could disappear.

They pull away from each other.

HOWARD
And who would stop Suslov? It would take years for them to get someone this close again.

She knows he's right.

HOWARD (CONT'D)
We have to stay. Just a little longer.

CINDY
We're doing the right thing?

HOWARD
I won't let anything happen to you.

She believes him. They stand and walk forward. Hand in hand. Like any couple out for an evening stroll.

A STRING QUARTET plays to a few ONLOOKERS. Cindy and Howard stop to watch. The classical melody easing their nerves --

TWO MEN in official KGB uniforms approach --

Cindy looks up. Sees the men. She releases Howard's hand. Too late --

Howard and Cindy grabbed from behind. The KGB forces them to the ground. The MUSIC stops. Howard and Cindy on their knees. Arms up in surrender --

AGENT HARRIS watches from a few yards away. Helpless to intervene --

Cindy and Howard dragged to their feet. SCREAMING as they are escorted god knows where.

The QUARTET starts again like nothing happened. Arrests like this are common.

HARRIS continues down the sidewalk. Howard and Cindy's SCREAMS ring in his ears. But he can't look back.

THE MUSIC crescendos taking us into --

INT. CONGRESSIONAL COUNTRY CLUB - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Barbara dressed in an elegant cocktail dress moves through a CROWD of old money and Washington elite.

A young girl in a party dress and a boy in a suit run up.

DAVID
Mom!

This is KIMBERLY (4) and DAVID (3). The spitting image of Barbara. She bends down and wraps her arms around them in a big hug. Releases. Little Kimberly gives her a stern look.

KIMBERLY
Grandma is mad you're late.

BARBARA
I was tied up at work.

KIMBERLY
She thinks you should stop trying to be better than everyone. She says it's a wife's duty to support her husband.

BARBARA
How about we play a little game tonight? It's called hide from Grandma. Now, I'm going to need both of you to keep an eye out for her, okay? And we'll hide every time she gets close.

Kimberly and David nod. They're up for it.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Where's Dad?

KIMBERLY
With Mr. Kissinger.

Kimberly points to a WALTER PENN. 30. Boyish good looks in a conservative suit. He stands beside his father HAROLD PENN, 60, and NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR HENRY KISSINGER.

Barbara waves to Walter. His face lights up at seeing her and he gives a little wave back, obviously he can't talk right now.

BARBARA
It's going to be a long night.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walter carries sleeping Kimberly in his arms. Barbara carries sleeping David. In hushed voices:

WALTER
I think Dad enjoyed his birthday.

BARBARA
I'm glad he likes something.

Walter sets Kimberly in a bed with pink bedding.

WALTER
You can't let my parents get to you. They're old-fashioned. They dislike anyone who didn't fight in World War II.

Barbara sets down David in the bed with blue blankets.

Walter takes Barbara in his arms. Holds her close. The first intimate contact they've had all night.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I miss you. We don't have to work this hard.

BARBARA
Yes we do. We like it.

Walter releases Barbara. She's right.

WALTER
Be glad you missed the conversation I got dragged into tonight.

BARBARA
With Henry Kissinger?

WALTER
How that guy got put in charge of National Security is beyond me. He wants U.S. Aeronautics to give up on designing rockets for NASA and get back to making more effective missiles. He actually had the nerve to tell me NASA couldn't get us to the moon.

BARBARA
Can they?

WALTER
Of course they can. I don't know what it's going to take for these guys in Washington to believe it.

DAVID (O.C.)
Mom?

Barbara goes to David.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Will you read me a story?

Barbara takes a seat at the edge of his bed. Walter joins.

WALTER
It's late, so only a couple pages, okay?

David nods. Barbara looks to the bookshelf:

BARBARA
How about *Peter Pan*?

DAVID
What's it about?

BARBARA
A boy from a magical place that can fly.

DAVID
I don't believe that story. It's silly.

BARBARA
Why?

David crosses his arms. Determined.

DAVID
Mommy, it's only true if you see it. Boys don't fly.

Barbara considers this. The wheels turning in her head.

INT. WEST WING - DAY

Herbert walks at a fast clip. Barbara close behind. A sealed blue file in her hand.

BARBARA
Director Klein, I think you should look at this research.

Herbert not slowing.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
They're projecting the Apollo 11 moon landing will have over 12 million TV viewers worldwide.

HERBERT
I know.

BARBARA
Then you know we'll have a big problem when the landing airs.

HERBERT
If we ever land.

BARBARA
Why take that risk? NASA hasn't been able to get their cameras to consistently work under extreme lunar conditions.

Herbert walks faster. Barbara struggling to keep pace in her heels.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Sir, I believe we will land on the moon and when we get up there, we'll have nothing to show for it. You heard what Director Helms said, winning the Cold War depends on public perception.

HERBERT
Exactly. So get the CIA off my back with a happy press release that says everything at Kennedy Space Center is swell.

BARBARA
12 million television viewers is bigger than any press release. People need to see the moon landing, or it will be like it never happened. Seeing is believing.

Herbert steps through his office door. Barbara spots SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS waiting inside. Late 50's and reeking of nervous paranoia.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Is that the Secretary of State?

Herbert attempts to slam the door in Barbara's face. She forces it back open and whispers:

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Sir, I think we need to consider faking the moon landing.

It takes a second for this to register.

HERBERT
That is the most idiotic thing I've ever heard.

The door SLAMS in Barbara's face.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Barbara takes off her heels. She massages her feet that are rubbed raw from her chase of Herbert.

A SECRETARY exits a stall and joins Barbara at the mirror.

SECRETARY
Looks like we're both in trouble.

Barbara looks over -- a giant run down the side of the secretary's pantyhose.

Barbara reaches into her purse and hands the secretary a balled set of extra pantyhose.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)
Thanks. Sorry I can't return the favor. You should invest in a set of wedges. Makes it easier to chase the boys.

Barbara considers this.

BARBARA
Are you taking notes in the meeting with Secretary of State Rogers?

The secretary nods. She hands her blue file to the secretary.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Could you give this to him in front of Public Affairs Director Herbert Klein?

SECRETARY
What's in it?

BARBARA
You'll have to keep it sealed.

SECRETARY
Will it get me in trouble?

BARBARA
Not any more than torn pantyhose.

The secretary smiles at this. Barbara SLAMS her heel against the counter, breaking it off --

INT. WEST WING SITUATION ROOM - DAY

SECRETARY OF STATE WILLIAM P. ROGERS and CIA Director Richard Helms sit at a table. Barbara's blue folder to the side. Pictures of the Soviet facilities and maps on the walls.

ROGERS
You want to tell me why the CIA is going behind my back and meeting with public affairs?

DIRECTOR HELMS
Secretary, two of our operatives in Moscow have been captured by the KGB. We believe they are still alive.

Helms sets photos of Cindy and Howard on the table.

DIRECTOR HELMS (CONT'D)
We sent Howard Marcus on this assignment because of his experience with our rocket program. He knows all our designs. If the Soviets break him, there's no question about it -- we'll lose the space race and Suslov will have enough public support to stage a nuclear attack.

ROGERS
Can we get our spies out?

DIRECTOR HELMS
Not at this time. Any extraction attempt would be perceived as an act of war. We can't risk it. We're exploring other options.

Rogers shoves Barbara's blue folder at Director Helms.

ROGERS
Is that what this is?

Helms eyes the contents of the folder. Surprised.

ROGERS (CONT'D)
You want to fake the lunar landing?!

DIRECTOR HELMS
Secretary, I only asked public affairs for some propaganda materials --

ROGERS
Did Kissinger put you up to this joke? I know he wants my job.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Secretary, we currently have no plan to fake the moon landing, but given our situation, it may be worth considering --

ROGERS
The President tasked me with overseeing troop withdrawal from Vietnam. So I don't care about an old Russian making a power grab, or two captured spies, and I sure as hell don't care about the moon. Get the CIA focused on Vietnam!

Frustrated, Director Helms scoops up his documents along with Barbara's blue folder.

INT. WEST WING CORRIDOR - DAY

Barbara waits outside the closed door. She shifts her weight from one foot to the next, testing her newly created flats.

The door opens. Barbara quickly positions herself to make it seem she's casually walking by.

Director Helms and Rogers walk out.

BARBARA
(acting surprised)
Secretary Rogers, did you get my folder?

ROGERS
I did.

Rogers continues down the hall. CIA Director Helms holds back and watches Barbara stick by Rogers side with ease in her "new" shoes.

BARBARA
It would probably be best to discuss this in private. I can have our office arrange a meeting.

ROGERS
I'm busy.

Rogers steps onto an elevator. A SECRET SERVICE AGENT blocks Barbara's way forward.

BARBARA
Secretary Rogers, I --

The doors close. She can't hide her look of frustration.

Director Helms looks from Barbara to the blue folder in his hand.

INT. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara walks in and stops in her tracks. All the desks empty. Only the female secretary from earlier still at her post.

BARBARA
Is it a holiday?

SECRETARY
They take off early every Friday for a “strategy session” at the bar round the corner.

Barbara obviously not invited. She picks up her purse from her desk and walks out. Led Zeppelin coming in loud --

INT. BAR - NIGHT

The MUSIC plays on the jukebox. News footage of Vietnam on the TV behind the bar. Herbert watches the news from his table. Glass of whiskey in hand. Holding court with his press assistants.

HERBERT
You ever think you made the wrong choice?

PR ASSISTANT #1
Like picking this place? Scotch is watered down.

HERBERT
No. I’m talking big picture. Life choices. Sometimes I wonder how the hell it got like this. I’d originally set out to be a sports writer. Loved sports. Who doesn’t? Sports make sense. They have rules, uniforms, a clear winner, a clear loser...but once I got into politics, it stopped making sense --

Gestures the news footage of Vietnam.

HERBERT (CONT’D)
-- who the hell is even winning?

The men at the table look up at something behind Herbert. Herbert turns and finds Barbara standing there.

BARBARA
I thought this might be a good opportunity to talk.

She pulls up a chair and sits. The tone at the table turns tense. Barbara not letting it have an affect, until --

HERBERT
This another one of your stunts?

BARBARA
Excuse me?

HERBERT
That folder you got in Secretary Rogers hands-- what? You think I wouldn't notice?

BARBARA
I want you to notice. NASA will land us on the moon, and we need a plan to show it --

HERBERT
Wake up. We can't land on the moon. Secretary Rogers is about as interested in your ridiculous plan as I am.

BARBARA
It's this outdated, negative thinking that will cost us the space race.

HERBERT
Look sweetheart, Nixon's Task Force on Women's Rights and Responsibilities forced me to hire you, but I sure as hell don't have to sit here and drink with you.

Yeah, that's awkward. The WAITRESS walks up.

WAITRESS
Herbert Klein? You have a private call.

Herbert gets up and goes to the phone at the bar. Barbara looks to her coworkers at the table. No eye contact. No one knows what to say. For the first time, this is getting to Barbara.

Herbert returns to the table with a glass of whiskey in hand.

HERBERT
You're up, Barbara.

He places the glass of whiskey in Barbara's hand. She smiles.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
Someone read your little blue file, and thinks it's a good idea. You leave for Kennedy Space Center in the morning.

Barbara takes a triumphant sip of whiskey and attempts to hide her disgust at the taste.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
God help us.

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY

Barbara perfectly put together with a small overnight bag at her feet, stares at the massive rocket reaching into the sky. Unable to hide her amazement.

Julian Scheer joins Barbara. A little more disheveled than when we saw him last.

JULIAN
You Barbara?

She peels her eyes away from the rocket and looks to him.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm Julian. NASA Public Affairs. We'll be working together.

Barbara shakes his hand. Firm.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
For future reference, you're required to wear a hard hat in the launch area.

BARBARA
You're not wearing one.

JULIAN
I don't look good in one. And if that rocket malfunctions it won't matter what you have on your head.

Barbara looks to the rocket again. It suddenly seems more ominous.

INT. NASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara and Julian enter. Two desks. One typewriter. A giant NASA wall calendar. The days marked off in red leading to the moon launch -- there isn't much time.

JULIAN
This is NASA Public Affairs.

Julian sets down her bag.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
So who'd you burn to get stuck on moon watch?

BARBARA
It was my idea. You "burn" someone?

JULIAN
Ruffling feathers is my specialty. I think Public Affairs Director Herbert Klein secretly hopes I get shot into space down here.

BARBARA
That goes for both of us.

Julian smiles and points to the desk along the wall.

JULIAN
Clear off a spot and it's yours.

Barbara wipes the sweat from her brow and goes to the desk. The surface littered with photographs of astronauts standing in various desert locations. Camera equipment strewn about. Barbara picks up one of the photos.

BARBARA
What are these?

JULIAN
Camera tests I did under simulated lunar conditions. Had a guy here from Kodak. Thought he was going to cry when I told him we needed to be able to shoot at negative 200 degrees.

BARBARA
Some of these came out.

JULIAN
Some isn't good enough. The cameras aren't reliable, and if they fail up there -- it's game over. There's no do over.

Julian sits at his desk. Casually kicks his feet up.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Babs, so tell me, how the hell did you get the suits in DC to pay attention to NASA's publicity issues?

BARBARA
The CIA should have sent you the dossier on the mission. I have a copy --

Barbara takes a manila envelope from her bag stamped: CLASSIFIED.

JULIAN
Right. I didn't read it. You have any idea how many of those we get? The Soviets change their rockets, so we have to change ours and it goes round and round --

Barbara tosses the envelope on his desk.

BARBARA
Read it. We have two captured spies in Moscow. Their lives and the fate of the free world depends on us televising the moon landing before the Soviets.

Julian laughs. Off Barbara's expression:

JULIAN
You're serious?
(shit)
So what's the plan? Are we going to fake the moon landing?

BARBARA
I know it sounds crazy --

JULIAN
It is crazy. And I already tried. Take another look at those photos. They look fake as hell. You have another trick up your sleeve?

BARBARA
I don't need tricks. I have Nixon's full support on this.

JULIAN
Really? What's your title?

BARBARA
Public Affairs...assistant.

Julian laughs. Barbara bristles.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
It's a step down from my last position, but I wanted an opportunity to work in government.

JULIAN
Sorry, Babs. Honestly, I mean no offense. But if Nixon really cared about people seeing the moon landing, he'd sent his top dog. That windbag never got he lost the election to Kennedy because he looked like an ass on TV.

Julian puts down his feet. Leans forward. Very serious.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
It's up to you and me to make this look good -- we're on our own.

Deke Slayton storms through the door. Now 45. Still intense.

Without saying a word, Deke picks up a red marker from Julian's desk and changes the launch date on the wall calendar. Much less time. Deke walks out. The door slamming behind.

BARBARA
What was that?

JULIAN
Deke Slayton. Our Flight Director. He's just worried more people are going to die around here...the stress can get a little intense.

Julian pulls a joint from his pocket.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
We have the highest workplace divorce and suicide rates in the nation.

Julian places the joint between his lips and lights. Takes a hit. He hands the joint to Barbara.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Welcome to Kennedy Space Center.

A Pink Floyd song kicks in, taking us to --

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Barbara's head hangs out the window of a 1969 Camaro. She smiles up to the stars in the night sky.

Julian drives. He takes the joint from his mouth and holds it to Barbara. She takes a long drag. A smoky haze gives way to a movie theater ahead -- On the marquee: **2001 A SPACE ODYSSEY. A FILM BY STANLEY KUBRICK.**

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Barbara leads Julian into the darkened theater. Smoke mysteriously rising from the front row --

A DOZEN HIPPIES sprawled out in front of the screen. Barefoot and smoking weed. A blonde HIPPIE GIRL with daisies in her hair slowly waves over Barbara.

Barbara, almost in a trance, takes a seat. Julian sits beside. The girl passes Barbara a joint and the classical "Thus Spake Zarathustra" takes us into BARBARA'S POV:

-- The apes in *2001* screech and howl at the black monolith and we TRANSITION to:

-- The Soviet N-1 rocket towering overhead. Wider and taller than what we've seen at Cape Kennedy. A large red hammer and sickle painted on its side. TRANSITION to:

-- A red hammer and sickle painted on the wall. Howard and Cindy stand below. Cindy has Howard's hand in hers, holding tightly as they walk towards COMMUNIST PARTY CHIEF MIKHAIL SUSLOV, the man that would have no problem nuking the world, and we TRANSITION INTO:

-- Dave in *2001* walks in the circular module as Hal speaks:

HAL
I'm sorry, Dave. I can't do that.

-- Deke paces in empty mission control. Tense. He looks to the golden Apollo 1 pin he wears on his lapel in memoriam of his lost friends. The moon launch map on the wall ahead as we MOVE INTO --

-- *2001*'s final sequence. The STAR CHILD approaches Earth with "Thus Spake Zarathustra" coming to an apex.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Barbara and Julian exit the theater. Barbara reaches to the sky.

BARBARA
God, what I wouldn't give to capture images like that up there.

She sits on the curb.

JULIAN
Hey, you all right?

BARBARA
I'm thinking.

JULIAN
Don't. We work in government.

Julian sits beside her. Reminiscent of two conspiring kids.

BARBARA
If we want something to look real, we need someone that can fake it...professionally.

JULIAN
And who is this magical person that will give us perfect moon landing?

BARBARA
Stanley Kubrick.

INT. UPPER EAST SIDE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

CHRISTIANE KUBRICK, 37, with light brown hair she likes to keep short, paints in front of large windows overlooking Central Park.

A MAN in khakis with a button down shirt comes up behind. Thick black beard and shaggy hair in all directions. Intense eyes examining her painting over her shoulder.

This is STANLEY KUBRICK. With a slight Bronx accent:

KUBRICK
How do you think it would look with a little more red on the right?

A phone RINGS. Speaking with a German accent:

CHRISTIANE
If it needed red, I would have painted it with more red.

KUBRICK
Are you sure?

Christiane sets down her brush.

CHRISTIANE
Don't touch it.

Christiane gets up. She answers the phone out of view. Kubrick doesn't move, analyzing her painting.

Christiane returns with the phone. She holds it out for Kubrick.

CHRISTIANE (CONT'D)
It's a woman from NASA.

Stanley backs away from the phone like it's going to bite.

KUBRICK
Are they upset about *2001*?

CHRISTIANE
Why would NASA be upset?

KUBRICK
Maybe they didn't understand the ending? I hate explaining that shit. They probably think it's inaccurate.

CHRISTIANE
Stan, I don't think NASA called to criticize your work.

KUBRICK
Why else would they call? People need to find their own truth. You tell her that.

CHRISTIANE
(into phone)
He is unavailable. Yes, he usually doesn't take meetings, but I will let him know.

Christiane hangs up the phone.

KUBRICK
What did they say?

CHRISTIANE
She wants you to call her back.

Christiane sits at her painting. She SLAMS down her brush.

KUBRICK
You think I should have talked to NASA?

CHRISTIANE
No...I don't know -- I'm upset because you're right; it needs more red.

Kubrick comes up behind and gives her a warm hug. She relaxes into his embrace.

INT. NASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara hangs up.

BARBARA
Kubrick won't talk to me.

She looks to Julian seated at his desk. The calendar counting down the days on the wall behind. A constant reminder.

JULIAN
Maybe we could get the guy that directed *Barbarella*? What's his name?

Barbara doesn't laugh.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Come on, it was an out there idea. We'll figure something else out.

BARBARA
We have nothing else.

JULIAN
Hey, don't beat yourself up over it. This is a losing battle. You gave it your best shot.

Did she?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Barbara rings the bell on a large wooden door of an upscale penthouse. A cacophony of dogs BARKING responds on the other side. A gruff Bronx accent yells:

KUBRICK (O.C.)
Can you be quiet!?

The door swings open to Stanley Kubrick. A few inches shorter than Barbara. Looking like he never sleeps and wearing the same khakis, tennis shoes and white button down shirt he will always be wearing.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick?

Kubrick will always be chewing gum or smoking. Right now, he's chewing gum.

KUBRICK
You're NASA?

BARBARA
Yes, I'm Barbara Penn --

KUBRICK
You were told I don't take meetings.

Kubrick goes to shut the door -- Christiane walks up behind and pulls it open. A warm contrast to her husband.

CHRISTIANE
Please, Ms. Penn, I'm Stanley's wife, Christiane. Come in. You'll have to excuse the mess, we're in the process of moving.

Christiane scoots Kubrick aside so Barbara can walk through.

INT. ENTRYWAY - DAY

Dozens of cats lounge on the staircase and in the window sills. TWO YOUNG GIRLS run by screaming and chasing each other, followed by a pack of eight dogs that rush Barbara. All sizes and breeds. Jumping. Licking.

Kubrick making no effort to help.

KUBRICK
We collect strays.

INT. BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY

Christiane motions Kubrick and Barbara inside. She gives a polite nod and shuts the pocket doors, blocking out the chaos of the rest of the apartment.

KUBRICK
Would you sit here?

Kubrick motions to the chair at the table set with only a chess board. Barbara takes a seat in the chair. She doesn't really have a choice.

Kubrick sits across, leaning back and chewing loudly on his gum.

BARBARA
Before we start, let me say that I love your work --

KUBRICK
-- do you think I care?

BARBARA
I'll get straight to the point.

KUBRICK
Would you?

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick, we saw what you did in *2001* and we believe you can solve a problem for us.

Barbara stands. Checks the door.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Can anyone hear us in here?

KUBRICK
Of course not.

Barbara goes to the window. She closes the drapes to keep out watchful eyes.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

She sits. Very serious.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick, your country needs you to film the moon landing.

KUBRICK
In *2001: A Space Odyssey* I filmed the moon and the entire universe. Why would I do it again? I move forward in my work, Ms. Penn.

BARBARA
I can assure you, you've never done anything like this.
(lowers voice)
NASA and the CIA want you to film a fake moon landing.

Kubrick takes this in for a long moment.

KUBRICK
How about a little game?

Barbara nods. She reaches for the black pawn on the chess board.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Would you be white?

Barbara takes the white pawn and movies it forward. Kubrick moves his knight. They will continue to play as they discuss:

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Has NASA cancelled the real moon landing?

BARBARA
NASA has every intention of landing on the moon, but we've had a lot of problems with our cameras. The harsh conditions on the lunar surface make it very difficult to film. It's essential the public see the landing on TV --

KUBRICK
You mean the Soviets? That's what this is really about. Don't bullshit me, Ms. Penn. I have a short wave radio where I monitor the broadcasts from Russia. Usually it's chatter about Vietnam, but lately it's been about beating us to the moon, and this Suslov character.

Barbara takes her turn on the chess board.

BARBARA
Will you help us?

KUBRICK
Ms. Penn, reality in art is always boring. But outside of art, the only immorality that exists is dishonesty. There is no art in faking the moon landing. It is simply dishonest.

BARBARA
I understand your position, but if we lose the moon, we will lose the Cold War. That Suslov character will come to power and he will not hesitate to launch nuclear weapons against us.

Kubrick captures one of Barbara's pieces.

KUBRICK
A fake moon landing is still dishonest, Ms. Penn.

BARBARA
I'm giving you an opportunity to inspire generations. Show them we can work together to achieve something other than war. These are all very honest motives, Mr. Kubrick.

Kubrick captures her bishop. A smile crosses his lips.

KUBRICK
You are not very good at chess.

Kubrick leans back.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I won't fuel your government deception.

BARBARA
I've read your file, Mr. Kubrick. The CIA and FBI have you classified as "dangerously subversive."

KUBRICK
I like that.

BARBARA
They've also had you under surveillance for years. They know you've been experimenting with filming at extremely low-light levels for a film you want to do on the life of Napoleon. It's your obsession.

Barbara leans forward.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Can you imagine it? An entire film shot with only candlelight?

He can.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
NASA has a camera that can capture images in dark space at low light levels -- it's not much use to us in filming a moon landing, but I can give you this camera lens...if you work for us.

She has him.

INT. TWA FLIGHT CENTER - DAY

TITLE: JFK Airport

This looks nothing like a modern airport. Its fancy decor can only be described as an attempt at space age modern.

Kubrick sits at a bar in the center made of aerodynamic white plastic, looking like something out of the opening of *Clockwork Orange (*without nude mannequins).

Barbara keeps an eye on him from the pay phone, as she places a call --

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - U.S. AERODYNAMICS - DAY

Walter stands in an expensive suit stands over a desk covered with rocket design plans. He answers his phone:

WALTER
Barb? Hi, beautiful.

INTERCUT BARBRA AND WALTER'S CONVERSATION:

BARBARA
Sorry I didn't call earlier. I'm not going to be able to come home this weekend. Something has come up.

WALTER
That makes two of us. NASA has moved up the launch date again. Do you know what's going on there?

Barbara looks to Kubrick. He is inspecting one of the white stools at the bar.

BARBARA
(lying)
Not a clue. I've been stuck writing press releases.

WALTER
Well, keep me in the loop. U.S. Aeronautics needs this contract...you sure you're all right?

She hates lying to him.

BARBARA
I'm tired.

WALTER
Me too. I love you.

BARBARA
Love you.

She hangs up and joins Kubrick at the bar. He doesn't look up. Completely absorbed in writing in a little black notebook.

KUBRICK
I'm not getting on the plane, Ms. Penn.

Kubrick looks up.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I never fly.

BARBARA
You might have mentioned that in the taxi ride here.

KUBRICK
You needed to make a call, and I wanted to see the new terminal. Done.

BARBARA
Are you afraid of flying?

Kubric walks away. Barbara quickly at his side.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Your CIA file stated you had a pilot's license --

Kubrick stops. Faces Barbara.

KUBRICK
Ms. Penn, will you always be referencing my file?

BARBARA
No.

KUBRICK
Did my file tell you I crashed?

It didn't.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I destroyed my plane. I almost died because I forgot to flip one switch.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick, this is a commercial airliner --

KUBRICK
Every time I fly, I wait. I listen. There will always be a loud click from under the wing when we leave the ground. If you don't hear that click -- it means the pilot forgot to turn on the flap, and we are going to die.

BARBARA
I'm sure they have safety measures in place.

KUBRICK
One click...everyone is capable of fatal errors, Ms. Penn. I can't be trusted and neither can you.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Kubrick stands at the curb diligently writing in his notebook. Barbara pulls up in a yellow VW bug. Kubrick looks up.

KUBRICK
That is a ridiculous car, Ms. Penn.

BARBARA
One click, Mr. Kubrick.

Kubrick gets inside.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The VW moves along the winding road. The CAMERA TRACKS along with it. Reminiscent of the opening of Kubrick's *The Shining*.

INT. VW BUG - DAY

Barbara sits behind the wheel. Kubrick beside, writing in his notebook. He furtively glances to the speed gage.

KUBRICK
A little fast, don't you think?

BARBARA
I'm barely going 40.

KUBRICK
You shouldn't drive at speeds over 35 miles per hour.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick, I've got to get you to the Space Center. You refused to fly, so we're going to have to drive a little fast.

KUBRICK
Did you know studies show you are far more likely to hydroplane and skid off the road at speeds over 35 mph?

BARBARA
The road isn't wet. It's a clear day.

Kubrick gives her a look.

KUBRICK
Why be unprepared?

Barbara starts to realize there is no winning with this guy. She slows down.

We follow the VW bug down the highway and TRANSITION TO:

A TRANSPORT TRUCK bumping along a dirt road --

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - WIDER - DAY

The truck comes to the stop at the base of the huge Soviet N-1 rocket.

TITLE: Soyuz Launch Pad, USSR

A SOVIET GUARD gets out. He walks to the back. He pulls open the door and helps down our spy couple, Cindy and Howard Marcus --

Stretching before them are DOZENS OF PRISONERS in gray uniforms. They work around the massive Soviet N-1 rocket like a nest of ants.

Cindy's hand instinctively grabs Howard's.

VASILI MILSHIN, 50, the rocket scientist we saw in the CIA debriefing, walks up.

VASILI
You are to help me with the rocket, yes?

He hands them each a gray prison uniform and leads them to where Communist Party Chief Suslov stands. TWO ARMED MEN stand at his side.

Vasili gives Suslov a half-hearted salute. Suslov's eyes on Howard.

SUSLOV
I know who you are and what you can do.

Cindy suddenly aware of her tight grip on Howard's hand.

SUSLOV (CONT'D)
You'll find it is in your best interest to cooperate with us.

Suslov walks away. Howard watches him go with concern.

VASILI
Suslov is the least of your problems. The man in charge of the rocket program before me died of a heart attack brought on by the poor living conditions in this camp, and he wasn't even a prisoner. For all our sake, I hope you will cooperate quickly.

The guards push Cindy and Howard forward. Under the shadow of the massive Soviet N-1 rocket --

INT. YELLOW VW BUG - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises. Barbara rubs her eyes, fighting back her exhaustion. She's been driving all night.

BARBARA
There it is, Mr. Kubrick.

Kubrick looks up from his notebook. The rising sun majestically profiling the Saturn V rocket in silhouette on the horizon, much like the black monolith in *2001*.

KUBRICK
Oh yes, I'm happy now.

Barbara unsure if this is a good or bad.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - DAY

The yellow bug pulls up in front of a chain link fence with the sign, "No Hardball Playing in Launch Area."

Kubrick gets out and runs.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick? We need you to be fully debriefed by the CIA. Mr. Kubrick!

Barbara gets out -- Kubrick pressed against the chain link fence, looking up in awe at the rocket.

KUBRICK
It's like I created it myself.

Julian walks up in a hard hat.

JULIAN
Weren't you supposed to be on a flight yesterday? What happened?

Julian eyes the yellow bug.

BARBARA
Long story.

JULIAN
What is our mysterious directing legend doing?

Barbara looks over -- Kubrick has climbed halfway up the fence. His hand reaching up to touch its thruster.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick!

Kubrick looks over.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Please, come over here.

Kubrick jumps down and strolls over to Julian and Barbara. In no hurry. Julian holds out his hand to shake --

JULIAN
Julian Scheer. NASA Public Affairs. This is an honor.

Kubrick looks to Barbara.

KUBRICK
I don't want him on my location.

JULIAN
This isn't your film set.

BARBARA
I'll show you what we were thinking.

Kubrick looks up to the rocket and sighs. Sad to lose such a stunning prop. He motions to Julian.

KUBRICK
He is still banned from my set.

Julian shoots Barbara a - wtf? Barbara shrugs.

INT. EMPTY WAREHOUSE - DAY

The heavy metal door slides open to Barbara and Kubrick standing in the doorway.

KUBRICK
How long do I have?

BARBARA
Apollo 11 is scheduled to launch in less than a month. It's not much time.

Kubrick walks into the completely empty warehouse.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You can you do it, can't you?

Kubrick looks to Barbara and gives Cheshire grin that tells us: "Don't worry."

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

DEKE
Where the hell is Kubrick?

Julian, Deke, CIA Director Richard Helms and our famous Apollo 11 astronauts: NEIL ARMSTRONG, BUZZ ALDRIN and MICHAEL COLLINS sit around the table. Waiting.

DEKE (CONT'D)
These boys need to get back in flight sim.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Director Slayton, the President has asked for all our cooperation on this.

DEKE
Maybe the President should have more faith in our moon program?

Deke settles in his chair with an expression of absolute distaste.

Barbara enters with Kubrick. He furiously writes in his notebook. Without looking up, Kubrick takes a seat at the table with Barbara.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Welcome to Kennedy Space Center, Mr. Kubrick. I'm --

KUBRICK
I know who you are. You make files.

DIRECTOR HELMS
All right. This is our NASA Flight Director, Deke --

DEKE
-- I've met Mr. Kubrick before. He and Arthur C. Clarke contacted me about that *2001* film they did. Mr. Kubrick, I have some thoughts on your interpretation of NASA's research.

Kubrick suddenly stops writing and looks up. Uh-oh.

BARBARA
Hey, how about we introduce our Apollo 11 astronauts?

DIRECTOR HELMS
Yes. This is Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

KUBRICK
They'll do nicely.

BUZZ
Mr. Kubrick, if you don't mind me asking, at the end of *2001,* were you saying God is merely an advanced alien intelligence?

KUBRICK
What do you think?

BUZZ
I want to know your intentions.

Kubrick returns to writing.

MICHAEL
I thought it was a silly movie.

DEKE
This whole thing is silly. NASA's budget is limited, and you're wasting it on what? A movie? This is insulting.

DIRECTOR HELMS
My people's lives are riding on this.

DEKE
So are mine.

Deke stands. The astronauts follow his lead and walk out. Neil hesitates a moment in the doorway. A quiet strength about him. A total class act.

NEIL
Mr. Kubrick, thank you for coming. It's a real honor to have an artist of your caliber here.

Kubrick nods. Neil leaves with the others.

CIA Director Helms stares down Kubrick.

DIRECTOR HELMS
It should go without saying the public can never know we are faking the moon landing.

KUBRICK
Does the public know anything?

Helms leans forward. Intimidating.

DIRECTOR HELMS
If you ever speak a word of this, it will be considered an act of treason. We have ways of dealing with traitors.

Kubrick smiles. Hard to shake.

INT. NASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara leads Kubrick and Director Helms inside.

BARBARA
These are our offices, Mr. Kubrick. You can use my desk --

Kubrick sits at Julian's desk.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
-- or that's fine.

KUBRICK
What lenses do we have?

Kubrick gestures to the cameras and lenses on Barbara's desk.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Will you bring those over? I want to see that special low-light lens I am to have.

DIRECTOR HELMS
What lens?

BARBARA
It's the Zeiss f/0.7.

DIRECTOR HELMS
The what?

Barbara scoops up the equipment and sets it in front of Kubrick. He looks them over.

DIRECTOR HELMS (CONT'D)
Mr. Kubrick, we still need to discuss the logistics with your film crew. Given the classified nature of this project, we can only have our people working on this.

KUBRICK
Ms. Penn, I do not see the lens I am to have. These are all very standard.

BARBARA
You'll get the Zeiss f/0.7 lens when we're finished.

KUBRICK
These standard lenses won't do. We'll have to jury rig something.

Annoyed, Kubrick hands Barbara and Helm camera bodies and lenses.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I want my set designer. He worked on *2001: A Space Odyssey,* and knows more about NASA's designs than NASA. I also want Ms. Penn to produce.

Helm hands his lens and camera to Barbara. Her hands full.

BARBARA
Thank you, but I have never produced --

KUBRICK
Do you think a bunch of CIA agents running around my set will know what they are doing? You will manage them, Ms. Penn, so that I don't have to.

DIRECTOR HELMS
All right. Ms. Penn will produce. We will give you one set designer that will be vetted by the agency. Is this acceptable?

KUBRICK
Ask my producer.

BARBARA
Yes.

Director Helm leaves. Barbara sets the cameras and lenses on the edge of the desk and tries to attach a lens.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
It doesn't fit.

KUBRICK
Are you even trying, Ms. Penn?

Kubrick hands her another lens.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

ON THE TELEVISION: the evening news plays with Walter Cronkite addressing the nation --

Barbara crosses in front of the screen wearing her bathrobe. Phone to her ear:

BARBARA
Hello, Walt? I love you too...yes, everything is on track here. It is very exciting --

A LOUD KNOCKING at the door comes as a welcomed interruption. She can't keep lying to him like this.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Sorry. I have to go... give Kimberly and David big hugs.

She hangs up and opens the door to --

Stanley Kubrick standing on the other side. A chess set tucked under his arm.

KUBRICK
How about a little game?

He walks inside without an invitation and gestures to a small table and two chairs by the window.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick, aren't you exhausted from the drive?

He isn't. Kubrick lays out the chess board on the table and takes a seat.

KUBRICK
How about you take the white pieces?

Too tired to argue she takes a seat across. Kubrick makes the first move.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I used to play chess for quarters in Central Park. I was good.

Barbara makes her move.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
But Arthur Feldman. He was the best...funny, his is the only name I can recall from those days. I find most people are forgettable, except the ones that are better than me. I always remember those.

BARBARA
Is this memorable for you?

Kubrick takes his move.

KUBRICK
Arthur Feldman would never ask that.

Barbara makes her move and leans back in her chair.

BARBARA
Can we finish this later? It's getting late.

Kubrick nonchalantly takes his next move.

KUBRICK
I need my assistant, Kara Downs, brought here.

BARBARA
I'll have to run it by the CIA.

Barbara moves her chess piece. Kubrick takes his move.

KUBRICK
Check. That was not a good move, Ms. Penn. Do you always ask for permission?

Barbara moves her piece.

BARBARA
If I asked for permission, I wouldn't be here.

Kubrick captures her king --

KUBRICK
Checkmate. And you might want to look behind you.

Kubrick gestures to the TV. Barbara looks. It is not good:

WALTER CRONKITE
The Soviets have successfully landed a probe on Venus, venturing further than any known object into our solar system --

KUBRICK
Pay attention to the details or you lose the bigger game, Ms. Penn.

A map of the solar system on the screen TRANSITIONS TO:

THE MAP ON THE WALL IN --

INT. RKA MISSION CONTROL CENTER - DAY

This place strangely resembles launch control at Cape Kennedy.

TITLE: RKA Mission Control - Korolyov, Moscow

Suslov steps in front of the map, addressing the rows of MEN in headsets monitoring the Venus probe on their screens.

SUSLOV
(in Russian)
The successful landing of the Vesena 5 probe makes this a great day in Soviet history...

The room erupts in applause. Vasili slips out the back.

EXT. CORRECTIVE LABOR COLONY - DAY

Vasili stares forward. He takes a long, hard sip from his flask. It's not to celebrate. He looks forward with a mixture of curiosity and sadness. We follow his gaze to --

The massive Soviet N-1 rocket on the horizon.

TITLE: Soyuz Launch Pad, USSR

Suslov joins Vasili. Speaking in Russian:

SUSLOV
A probe on Venus is nothing. A man on the moon, that is how you make history.

They watch CINDY AND HOWARD scrub the concrete with a DOZEN PRISONERS in similar gray work clothes. Chains on their ankles and wrists. Thin and dirty.

SUSLOV (CONT'D)
What have they told you?

VASILI
It is my job is to make rockets. Not interrogate spies.

SUSLOV
Your job is what I say it is.

VASILI
Does General Secretary Brezhnev know they are being kept here?

SUSLOV
Brezhnev has other concerns.

Cindy slips on the wet cement. Howard instantly at her side, helping her to stand.

SUSLOV (CONT'D)
Torture his wife and he'll talk.

The sound of typewriter keys TRANSITIONS TO:

INT. JULIAN'S OFFICE - MORNING

The office completely transformed into a production trailer. Storyboards, camera equipment and production schedules everywhere.

Julian walks in and startles to find a CIA AGENT seated at his desk TYPING. Kubrick stands over him.

KUBRICK
Exterior lunar module...Stop. Do you think that's how you spell lunar? And what the hell is "Snoopy"?

AGENT
The astronauts are calling the lunar module Snoopy.

KUBRICK
They are naming the greatest technological achievement in history after a cartoon dog? These people have no vision. They should call it something regal. Something American - Eagle. Yes, "the Eagle has landed." That's good -- move.

JULIAN
You can't rename the lunar module.

Kubrick makes the young agent get up. Takes his seat and starts typing. He gives Julian a side glance.

KUBRICK
Haven't you been banned?

JULIAN
This is my office.

Julian spots Barbara asleep at her desk. He shakes her awake.

BARBARA
He never sleeps, Julian. He's a machine.

A very pregnant woman in her 20's walks in. This is KARA DOWNS. She sets a hundred page file in front of Kubrick.

Julian points in her direction:

JULIAN
Who is that?

BARBARA
She's his assistant.

Kubrick thumbs through the file.

KUBRICK
I need more. I want to know exactly what the lunar module looks like, how it feels and smells -- everything!

Kara nods and takes back the file.

JULIAN
Stan, you think it's a good idea to have your assistant working in her condition?

KUBRICK
She is pregnant. Not retarded. And only friends refer to me as, Stan.

Kara hands Kubrick a bag of dirt.

KARA
That's the moon dust. We washed it three times and painted it gray, just like you asked.

Kubrick dumps the dirt on Julian's desk beside the typewriter.

JULIAN
Oh, come on.

KUBRICK
(re:dirt)
No. It needs to be more fine. More gray. And I don't like how it smells.

Kubrick scoops up the dirt from the desk.

JULIAN
Thank you.

He hands the dirt to Julian.

KUBRICK
Why don't you wash this? Go. Get out of here.

Kubrick shoos Julian over to Kara by the door. She takes the dirt from Julian.

JULIAN
Why do you put up with him?

KARA
He's Stanley Kubrick.

Julian looks to Barbara with concern.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Kara walks around the table handing typed scripts to Barbara, Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

Kubrick sits at the far end. He types furiously on a portable typewriter. The annoying CLICK of keys over:

BARBARA
You want us to start reading the script?

Barbara looks to Kubrick for an answer. Kubrick keeps typing.

BUZZ
Right. Okay, so --
(reads)
We've landed on the moon --

NEIL
-- excuse me, I'm sorry. This direction here, it says Buzz steps on the moon first?

BUZZ
Makes sense. I do have the most experience.

NEIL
As the mission commander --

BUZZ
Are you pulling rank on this?

NEIL
No. I just think this should be accurate. It only makes sense I would walk out first. I'll be seated closest to the door.

MICHAEL
It's a script, Buzz. It's not real. Barbara, do I have to be here? I'll be waiting in orbit around the moon when those two land on the surface.

They all look to Kubrick for an answer. He keeps typing.

BARBARA
Michael, you can go.

Michael walks out, relieved to be getting out of this insanity.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
And if it technically makes sense for Neil to step out first...then I don't see why not?

Buzz leans back, frustrated with this process.

NEIL
What do you want me to say when I step out?

KUBRICK
Say what you feel.

NEIL
I feel a little stupid reading a script.

Kubrick stops typing.

KUBRICK
You think stepping onto the moon is stupid?

NEIL
No. I think it is probably the most important thing I'll do in my entire life.

KUBRICK
Then start acting like it.

Neil bristles.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
You must have been planning for months what you wanted to say.

BUZZ
So you've been planning for months to step on the moon first?

NEIL
Of course not. I mean, I did write something.
(softly recites)
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)
This is one small step for a man and one giant leap for mankind....what do you think?

KUBRICK
Yes, say that! But better.

Kubrick pulls the paper out of the typewriter and hands it to Barbara.

BUZZ
Are we done? We're expected in flight sim, and Deke Slayton decides who steps on the moon first.
(points to Kubrick)
Not him.

Barbara distracted by what she's reading from Kubrick.

BARBARA
Yes, you can go. Thank you.

Neil and Buzz leave. Barbara locks eyes with Kubrick. She gestures to the memo he typed.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You want me to find out the average barometric pressure at noon on Wednesdays?

Kubrick nods.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Why?

Kubrick stands and walks out without saying a word.

KARA
His art is very important to him, Barbara. But he is a good man.

INT. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara enters to find Julian picking dirt out of his typewriter.

JULIAN
How's the film?

BARBARA
Kubrick has stopped speaking to me. His assistant hands me these bizarre typed memos.

CIA Director Helms walks in and takes one look at the mess:

DIRECTOR HELMS
What the hell happened here?

JULIAN
Stanley Kubrick.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Barbara, I will need to review Kubrick's work.

BARBARA
You can't. He hasn't filmed anything.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Then what the hell are you doing?

BARBARA
Rehearsing --

DIRECTOR HELMS
We have to get Kubrick's moon landing on the air. Every day you waste puts my people at greater risk. If Suslov announces before us --

BARBARA
I understand. I'm getting Kubrick to work as fast as he can.

DIRECTOR HELMS
The information we have on Kubrick hints at some communist leanings. It might explain why he's taking so long.

JULIAN
(laughs)
You think Stanley Kubrick is a Soviet spy?

One look from Helms and Julian is quiet.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Don't let Kubrick out of your sight. I want a full progress report first thing tomorrow.

Director Helms storms out. Barbara exchanges a look with Julian.

JULIAN
You've got to reign in our genius director.

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - DAY

Kubrick sits on his director's chair like a king overseeing his kingdom. Protective black gloves over his hands giving him a Dr. Strangelove-look.

KUBRICK
Looking good.

TWO MEN in NASA jumpsuits hang a beaded backdrop overhead. A British man with white hair and a kerchief around his neck directs them. This is PRODUCTION DESIGNER TONY MASTERS.

TONY
Not a wrinkle. We're going to need to light this entire bastard from the front.

Kubrick rises. With his gloved hands, he adjusts a 10K light to hit the backdrop, revealing the night sky.

KUBRICK
Excellent, Tony. Watch the dust behind you.

TWO MEN in NASA jumpsuits are on their hands and knees spreading gray moon dust across the floor with hand brooms.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
What are you doing? Stop with the brooms. Blow on the dust. You think there are sweep marks on the moon?

The two men exchange a look - is he serious? Yup. They set down the brushes and start blowing. Kubrick looks over to Kara.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
We'll need to wash the dirt again.

A HALF DOZEN MEN enter, carrying the spider-like lunar module (The Eagle). They set it down on the dust.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
It's very light. Tony, are you sure this an exact replica?

TONY
It's the real thing, Stan. They made a few of them for testing and such.

Barbara enters behind. Stopping suddenly. Taking it all in --

BARBARA
This is the moon?

And we see what has Barbara stopped in her tracks. This looks awful. It's like The Eagle has touched down in a high school dramatization of the moon landing.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
We can't use this. Do you even have the camera set up?

KUBRICK
Kara, tell Ms. Penn the main camera is over there.

Kubrick gestures to a two way mirror set at a 45 degree angle that reflects Barbara and Kubrick as if they were in a fun house.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Tell her, I also have six TV cameras.

KARA
Ms. Penn --

BARBARA
I heard. Thank you.

Kubrick removes a glove and calmly puts a stick of gum in his mouth. He silently walks from the set into a darkened area of the soundstage. His disembodied voice:

KUBRICK (O.C.)
Kara, tell Ms. Penn to join me in mission control.

KARA
He wants you to --

Barbara follows his voice into the shadows.

INT. KUBRICK'S MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Barbara walks up behind Kubrick seated in the middle of a bank of six TV monitors, all showing different angles of the set.

Kubrick speaks into a microphone. His disembodied voice giving instructions to the crew:

KUBRICK
Tony, Ms. Penn wants you to tear it all down and start from scratch. She doesn't like it.

Tony nods. Shouts out:

TONY
Tear it down!

BARBARA
Wait. How long will it take to rebuild?

KUBRICK
Kara!

Kara runs up behind.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Ask Ms. Penn if she wants this done right?

KARA
Barbara, he wants to know --

BARBARA
He can ask me himself. This is ridiculous and completely unacceptable --

Kubrick stands. His voice never rising.

KUBRICK
This is unacceptable? No, Ms. Penn. You are unacceptable.

TONY (O.C.)
Are we still tearing it down?

Kubrick glares at Barbara. He's intimidating.

KUBRICK
Kara, tell Ms. Penn this is my movie.

Kara SCREAMS. Everyone on the TV monitors freezes. What was that?

KARA
Sorry. I'm so sorry. My water broke. Sorry.

Barbara instantly at Kara's side. Helping her stand.

BARBARA
It's okay. Stop apologizing. We'll get you to the hospital.

Kubrick glances over. Not impressed.

Off Barbara's look, Kubrick sighs and addresses the crew in his omnipotent microphone:

KUBRICK
That's a wrap for today.

He turns to Kara.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Tell Ms. Penn, I'm afraid this delivery will delay our production schedule further.

Kara's SCREAM of labor pain takes us to --

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

ON KARA wheeled in on a gurney. A DOCTOR checking her pulse. She SCREAMS out again.

Kubrick at her side with notebook in hand. Writing. Barbara close behind.

KUBRICK
Don't worry, my dear...I'm making a list of what we will need for tomorrow.

Kara SCREAMS in pain. Sweat pouring down her face.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
We'll need more lights. I want to see the details on the astronauts' faces.

KARA
(breathing heavy)
Won't they be wearing helmets?

Kubrick folds up the list and puts it in Kara's hand. She's wheeled into the delivery room.

KUBRICK
(calls after)
And I'll need that moon dust washed again tonight!

The delivery room doors close. Kubrick looks to Barbara --

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Is something wrong?

Barbara unsure how to answer.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Would you like to see a movie?

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

This is the same place Barbara first saw *2001*. The theater empty. Kubrick seated beside her. He signals to the projection booth and the reel starts to play on the screen.

Barbara's expression reveals something miraculous has happened --

ON THE SCREEN: The strange set we saw looks like the surface of the moon. It's beautiful. The screen goes dark.

KUBRICK
What do you think?

BARBARA
I think you may have just won the Cold War.

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
Shall we celebrate?

BARBARA
What do you mean?

KUBRICK
What do you think I mean? Let's grab a drink.

EXT. PATIO BAR - NIGHT

A cheesy tiki bar that overlooks the ocean.

Barbara stands at the edge looking to the full moon in the sky. Whiskey in hand.

Kubrick walks up behind.

BARBARA
I don't know if we should be in public like this. If word got out --

KUBRICK
You need to lighten up, Ms. Penn. All work and no play will make you very dull.

He takes the drink out of her hand and sets it down.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Do you dance?

Barbara nods. Not sure what to make of this. Like a perfect gentleman, Kubrick takes Barbara by the hands and leads her across the floor. This guy can dance.

Kubrick pulls away from Barbara and hands her back her drink.

He looks up to the clear night sky with a full moon.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
It's a shame we'll never make it up there.

BARBARA
We'll make it up there.

KUBRICK
I've seen NASA's technology. What they're landing on the moon is no better than that plane I crashed. Apollo 11 has too many opportunities for human error. We will fail.

BARBARA
We won't fail. Humans can accomplish great things when they work together. Neil Armstrong will be the first man to walk on the moon, you'll see.

KUBRICK
Do you know what happens to idealists in my movies?
(beat)
They die.

BARBARA
Maybe your movies would be more popular if they lived.

Maybe she's right. Kubrick smiles and goes to the bar. Barbara watches as he kindly offers the BARTENDER one of his cigarettes. Kubrick can be charming when he wants.

JULIAN (O.S.)
Babs?

Julian walks up holding a cocktail with a pink umbrella.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

BARBARA
Keeping Kubrick out of trouble.
You?

JULIAN
I'm meeting Deke for a drink.

He looks from his drink to Barbara's straight whiskey --

JULIAN (CONT'D)
I should order something with less pink.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Julian and Barbara stand at the bar. Julian gestures the BARTENDER to give him the same as her.

JULIAN
Heard you got the set built today.
I was worried, but you seem to be managing Kubrick all right.

Barbara glances to Kubrick at the end. He intently watches the TV ABOVE: FOOTAGE of COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV addressing the cameras about the Soviet rocket launch. Suslov stands at his side.

WALTER CRONKITE (V.O.)
The Soviets say they will land a man on the moon in a few weeks --

Kubrick walks up behind. Cigarette in his mouth.

KUBRICK
We have to go. Deke Slayton is here.

Julian waves over Deke seated in a booth.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
What are you doing? He hates me.

JULIAN
(smiles)
I know.

Deke walks up. Old Fashioned in hand. A little drunk.

DEKE
Stanley Kubrick. Won't this be fun?

Deke gestures to the gold astronaut pin on his lapel.

DEKE (CONT'D)
You know what this is?

KUBRICK
Jewelry.

DEKE
It's the Apollo 1 astronaut pin. Gus Grissom gave it to me. You know who he was?

KUBRICK
He was killed during a test launch.

DEKE
He was. I was in training with Gus. Was supposed to be in that capsule with him.

KUBRICK
Why weren't you?

DEKE
I developed a heart murmur. NASA had me grounded and placed me in a less stressful job.
(laughs)
Shit. I miss Gus. He'd always say -- no matter what happens during your mission, you gotta keep believing it can be done, or what's the point?

Deke takes a sip of his Old Fashioned and gestures to Kubrick and Barbara.

DEKE (CONT'D)
I find your lack of faith in what we're trying to do here disgusting.

BARBARA
Deke, we're on your side. I believe Apollo 11 will land on the moon. We only want to make sure the world can see it.

DEKE
What do you believe, Stanley?

KUBRICK
I believe people like a spectacle. And if you don't deliver one, they will turn on you. You can never let them turn. You keep their attention, and they will believe anything.

Kubrick walks away. Deke watching him go with a glimmer of appreciation.

Barbara gives a nervous glance to the television report and we TRANSITION into:

The real-life moment --

EXT. SOYUZ LAUNCH PAD - DAY

Signs with communist slogans. A wild CROWD cheering with excitement.

ON THE STAGE: COMMUNIST PARTY LEADER LEONID BREZHNEV raises his arms to accept their applause.

Suslov abruptly steps in front. He announces in Russian with subtitles:

SUSLOV
The Soviets will conquer the moon!

The crowd getting more excited. Out of control.

Suslov walks off to roaring APPLAUSE. Brezhnev watches him with concern. An ADVISOR joins Brezhnev on stage and follows his gaze.

ADVISOR
Secretary Brezhnev, I fear Suslov will become popular enough to stage a coup -- he wins the space race, and you will lose.

Brezhnev considers this.

INT. SMALL ROOM - SAME

Cindy watches the rally outside through a small barred window.

CINDY
They held me down and poured water down my throat. I couldn't breath. I was drowning...

Cindy shakes at the thought. Howard goes to her side. Both thin and weak.

HOWARD
They are trying to wear us down.

She cradles her badly bruised and cut hands.

CINDY
They're wearing me down.

Howard gently takes her hands in his. Giving a little comfort.

CINDY (CONT'D)
You're the one I'm worried about.

HOWARD
Don't. I won't tell them anything. Our people will get us out.

Cindy gazes out the window. Afraid. The crowd outside growing louder as they CHANT Suslov's name.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Julian's Camaro pulls up to the parking lot of this very budget Florida motel. He gets out and opens the door for Barbara. She gets out and it's obvious she's had a little too much.

BARBARA
Thanks for the ride.

Barbara stumbles to her door, fumbling for her key.

Julian close behind to help. She drops the key. Julian picks it up and places it in the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Julian walks in with Barbara. The light on the night stand suddenly comes on. Julian jumps back.

Kubrick sits on the bed.

KUBRICK
Ms. Penn, I just got off the phone with your husband.

Julian nods.

JULIAN
I'll catch ya tomorrow, Babs.

He quickly leaves. Barbara left staring at Kubrick like a scolded child.

BARBARA
How did you get in here?

KUBRICK
The nice man at the front desk let me in.

BARBARA
Why are you answering my phone?

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
It was ringing.

BARBARA
What did you say to my husband?

KUBRICK
He seems very nice. He'll be down here tomorrow. The rockets his company made for NASA have not been working properly. I had no idea he owned the company that supplied those things.

BARBARA
You didn't tell him why you're here?

KUBRICK
Of course not. But he's suspicious. And so am I. What are you hiding, Ms. Penn?

BARBARA
The only thing I'm hiding is my frustration. We need to talk about the film.

Kubrick sits at the table by the window. The chess board already set for a game.

KUBRICK
Will you be white?

Barbara takes her seat across and they start to play. Barbara makes the first move.

BARBARA
You are going to have to work faster. You have to film more. We can't afford to waste any more time.

Kubrick makes his move.

KUBRICK
You know why you never win at chess, Ms. Penn?

They continue to play as they discuss:

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
You trap yourself. You assume there is a limit to the possibilities.

BARBARA
There are a limited number of moves in chess.

KUBRICK
Are there? You can always go further. Do more.

BARBARA
We have limits.

KUBRICK
Checkmate.

Game over. Barbara shocked she lost so fast. Kubrick packs up the board.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I will not rush my film because of your limits. I already failed with *2001*. I wasn't exact enough then. Too many false notes in the details, and people can feel it -- why else is it considered as a ridiculous drug movie.

BARBARA
Is that what you think?

KUBRICK
That's what I know.

Kubrick leans back, takes a cigarette from his pocket and lights. He offers one to Barbara. She waves it off.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
People always sniff out a fake, which is why I must be exact in everything I do. There is no margin for error. One false note and the illusion will shatter.

He stands.

BARBARA
Do you have any idea what's at stake?

KUBRICK
Yes, a mad old Russian that wants to nuke the planet.

Kubrick reaches into his breast pocket. Pulls out a typed memo. He places it in Barbara's hand and walks out.

Barbara SLAMS the door behind him in frustration.

She takes a deep breath and reads the memo: *You're doing a good job. Yours sincerely, Stan*

Barbara unsure how to take this.

KUBRICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Action!

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - DAY

Kubrick watches from his director's chair. His eyes filled with excitement.

KUBRICK
Yes! Good. Move like you are part of the great cosmic dance. Beautiful.

Neil and Buzz stand in their space suits. They awkwardly strike a ballet pose. A stern looking BALLET INSTRUCTOR oversees the astronauts' every move.

INSTRUCTOR
Straighten your back. Now pirouette.

Buzz throws up his arms in frustration.

BUZZ
Why are we doing this?

KUBRICK
The moon's gravity is 83.3% less than Earth's. Wires can only do so much to create this effect. You will have to realistically move. Ballet helps you to float on the surface.

NEIL
Stanley, we've been at this all morning. How much longer will this take?

KUBRICK
It takes as long as it takes.

BUZZ
This is ridiculous. We'll never finish. We learn our lines and immediately writes new ones. It never stops. Hell, Neil's so tired from these rehearsals, he crashed the simulation yesterday.

NEIL
I'm fine.

BUZZ
You sure? What's going to happen when we're really up there?

NEIL
I won't crash.

BUZZ
Neil, you have to know when to abort the mission. Our lives will depend on you making the right call at the right time. I've been in space before. I know you've got to follow your gut and make tough choices fast, and I need to know you're going to make the right choice. I'm serious. I want to come home.

NEIL
Stanley, maybe we should give the rehearsals a rest for awhile?

KUBRICK
What's your line, Neil?

NEIL
(recites)
One small step for man --

KUBRICK
Wrong! It's "a" man...say the line again.

NEIL
I'm sorry. I'm awful tired --

BUZZ
That's it! We're finished.

KUBRICK
What's your line, Neil?

BUZZ
Do you have any idea what you're doing?! Because from where I'm standing, you're nothing but a crackpot that made a bad science fiction movie. I hated *2001*.

Kubrick stares at Buzz a moment. The entire crew holds their breath for his reaction.

KUBRICK
How about we try the scene again?

Kubrick smiles as if there never was an outburst.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Tony! I want them on wire. Kara! Get them in helmets. Neil, get your line right.

Barbara walks in as Kara rushes in with two space helmets, placing them over Neil and Buzz's head.

BARBARA
Kara's back? What did she have?

KUBRICK
A child.

Tony attaches piano wires to the back of Buzz and Neil's suits.

BARBARA
The CIA is demanding we show them what you shot today.

BUZZ
(calls over)
He hasn't shot anything.

BARBARA
Is that true?

KUBRICK
We will keep rehearsing until Neil Armstrong can remember his line.

Kubrick goes to his mission control area with his wall of TV monitors. Barbara follows.

Kubrick points to the TV monitors. Neil and Buzz in position on set. Kubrick leans into the microphone:

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Tony, let's get Neil on the ladder of the Eagle.

Tony Masters signals two of the CIA AGENTS/CREW. They grab onto the end of the piano wires attached to a spool and pull.

Neil yanked of the ladder into the air by the wire.

TONY
Gently! Put him down.

They let go of the wire.

Neil plummets. His head and shoulder smacking against the metal ladder of the Eagle.

TONY (CONT'D)
For fuck's sake!

IN KUBRICK'S MISSION CONTROL: Barbara watches the TV screen in horror. Neil isn't moving.

ON SET: Buzz removes his helmet. He tries to go to Neil's side, but he's held in place by his own wire.

BUZZ
Get this off me!

Tony cuts Buzz's wire. Instantly he's by Neil -- Buzz's face reflected in his visor. His commander is in bad shape.

BUZZ (CONT'D)
(covering)
It's going to be okay, buddy.

Barbara runs over. Buzz carefully removes Neil's helmet. Neil is conscious, but -

NEIL
I can't move.

BARBARA
Call a doctor!

Kara gets on the phone and dials.

KARA
Paramedics are on the way.

Kubrick runs over.

KUBRICK
Buzz, do you think you will you be ready for another take?

Buzz clenches his fist. Barbara steps between him and Kubrick to prevent a fight.

BARBARA
Stanley, don't be insane. Neil's hurt. We're done --

KUBRICK
We aren't done. What do you expect me to do?! This wouldn't happen if people learned their lines and knew what their job is supposed to be!

BARBARA
Their job is to land on the moon.

Julian runs in with two PARAMEDICS pushing a gurney. The paramedics go to Neil. They lift him onto the gurney and wheel him out with Buzz following. He's not leaving his friend and commander.

JULIAN
Babs --

BARBARA
I know. This is bad.

JULIAN
It's worse. I had to tell Deke.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Barbara and Kubrick stand outside the window of Neil's room. Buzz stands at his bedside. Concerned. Even with their disagreements, it's clear these guys care about each other.

Deke runs up. His intensity turned to panic.

DEKE
Where the hell are my astronauts?!

BARBARA
Buzz is in there with Neil.

Deke looks in the window.

DEKE
How could this happen?

KUBRICK
Our luck was put under too great a strain.

DEKE
Fuck off, Kubrick. Do you think I can train another commanding astronaut in time for launch? Not to mention, you may have killed one of the greatest men I know.

Getting in Kubrick's face.

DEKE (CONT'D)
When the Soviets beat us up there, I'll make sure the whole world knows it's your fault.

Deke goes into Neil's room. For the first time, we see the cracks showing in Kubrick's calm facade.

BARBARA
Accidents happen.

KUBRICK
They shouldn't.

Kubrick walks out, leaving Barbara alone in the hall.

INT. NASA PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - LATER

Barbara attempts to organize the trailer. There's "moon dust" everywhere. Julian enters.

BARBARA
How's Neil?

JULIAN
The doctors say he'll recover quickly. He only has a mild concussion and sprained shoulder. He can return to work tomorrow.

BARBARA
Good. Will Kubrick and I return to work tomorrow?

JULIAN
I don't know. Deke is pushing to have our operation cancelled.

BARBARA
Can he do that?

JULIAN
His opinion holds a lot of weight in high places.

Director Helms storms in.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Did Stanley Kubrick kill Neil Armstrong?

JULIAN
Neil is fine.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Given the constant production delays and today's accident -- are we sure Stanley Kubrick isn't working for the enemy?

BARBARA
Kubrick works for Kubrick. I'll handle it.

INT. DEKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Deke stands behind his desk. Too nervous to sit. Smoking a cigar as he talks on the phone:

DEKE
I got a right rocket engine that isn't firing and a launch in less than a week.

Barbara walks in and takes a seat across. She eyes the picture on his desk: Deke posing in a space suit for a flight he'll never take.

DEKE (CONT'D)
The head of U.S. Aeronautics is on his way...what's the cost?

Deke writes down the number. SLAMS down the phone. His anger now focused on Barbara.

DEKE (CONT'D)
You're done. I'm officially shutting down your fake moon landing.

BARBARA
You have no authority to shut us down. Director Slayton, I can assure you we pose no danger to the launch.

DEKE
Danger? Hell, if I stopped things around here because they were dangerous, the whole Space Center would be empty.
(leans forward)
I can no longer afford you. I had to cut the entire "public affairs" budget. Whatever you filmed already is going to have to do -- Look, I gotta keep my eye on the ball here, and it's more important we pay for a working rocket engine.

Barbara considers this.

BARBARA
How much is my husband charging you for a new engine and modifications?

DEKE
Excuse me?

BARBARA
My husband owns U.S. Aeronautics. What is he charging you?

Deke shows the number he'd written on a paper.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
NASA can pay him forty percent less and he'll still make a profit. Move the forty percent into the public affairs budget so we can finish the moon landing.

Deke considers this.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I promise Kubrick will finish tomorrow.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Barbara steps out of Deke's office. Julian waits for her against the wall.

JULIAN
Why have you never mentioned your husband?

BARBARA
I want to keep things professional.

JULIAN
This has all gone way beyond professional -- especially with Kubrick. What the hell is he holding over you?

Barbara can't answer. Julian walks away.

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - NIGHT

Barbara walks in and finds Kara on her hands and knees bagging up the moon dust.

BARBARA
Why are you here?

KARA
Stan wanted the sand washed again to make it more real.

BARBARA
Do you know where he is?

KARA
If he's not here, he'd be at the movies. That's his life. Making movies and watching them. He's not very good at much else, but he is pretty amazing at those two things.

BARBARA
How's your baby?

KARA
Beautiful. Her Dad's taking care of her right now. He understands that I have an important job.

BARBARA
So does my husband. I miss him and my kids.

Kara stands, balancing the bag of sand on her back.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
Is this important?

KARA
This is the closest people like you and me will ever get to greatness. This is the little magic I get in my life.

Kara walks out with the bag of sand.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Kubrick sits in the back smoking cigarettes. A group of HIPPIES gathered up front as *2001* plays on the screen.

Barbara takes a seat beside Kubrick.

BARBARA
It's awful late.

KUBRICK
Men like us don't sleep.

Barbara smiles at this. A DRUNK HIPPIE sitting up front yells at the screen:

HIPPIE
Man, I don't get it. Does anybody talk in this?

Kubrick bristles. Someone shushes the Hippie.

BARBARA
You were very wrong today. Deke almost cancelled the project. I had to tell him how to out negotiate my own husband, and I'm still not sure he's going to let us continue.

HIPPIE
(at the movie)
Boring.

KUBRICK
I'll smooth things over with Deke.

HIPPIE
(at the movie)
It doesn't make any sense --

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
It's people like you that drive my hope there is more intelligent life in the universe.

Barbara sinks in her chair.

INT. DEKE SLAYTON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rocket plans cover the desk. Deke looks at his astronaut portrait with regret. He removes the Apollo 1 pin from his lapel and sets it by the photo.

DEKE
God dammit.

There's a SOFT KNOCK at the door. Deke quickly regains composure.

DEKE (CONT'D)
Come in.

Kubrick walks in. He sits across.

KUBRICK
I came to discuss what happened on my set today.

DEKE
No disrespect, Mr. Kubrick, but you're the least of my problems.

KUBRICK
None taken. But you have my word we will wrap production tomorrow and stay out of your way, however, I would like to ask one favor?

DEKE
What?

KUBRICK
I find it odd that I haven't seen this satellite lens you have for me. I would like to test it --

DEKE
-- what lens?

KUBRICK
The one that can shoot at extremely low light levels. I believe it is the Zeiss f.07?

DEKE
No. The Zeiss is still in development. Won't be ready for a couple years.

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
It's always the same. Isn't it? It's human nature that evil and vice will always win. Hope and virtue -- they are never possible.

Kubrick walks out. SLAMMING the door behind.

DEKE
(shaking his head)
God damn artists.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara lies across the bed. Still in her clothes.

There's a KNOCK. Barbara sits up. You have got to be kidding me. She goes to the door and opens it to Stanley Kubrick waiting outside. His chess board tucked under his arm.

BARBARA
I don't want to play. Not tonight.

He doesn't even ask. He steps in and turns on the light, taking his seat at the small table by the window.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I don't even like chess.

KUBRICK
What do you like?

BARBARA
Checkers.

KUBRICK
Checkers is a game for idiots.

BARBARA
Then I'm an idiot, Mr. Kubrick. Do you think I want to be here? Constantly baby sitting you? I should be taking care of my own children.

KUBRICK
Work also pulls me away from the family I love.

BARBARA
It's not the same. You get to leave home and know everything will be fine when you get back. You have Christiane to take care of everything. You are allowed to leave and do whatever you want. I'm not. I go to work, and no one sees me as an ambitious hero like you, or my husband, or Julian -- I'm a horrible woman that has abandoned her family.

KUBRICK
I'm afraid I never really understood women.

Kubrick turns the chess board and presents the black pieces to Barbara. Barbara intrigued by the change.

She takes a seat across and makes the first move with the black pawn. They continue to play as they discuss:

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Ms. Penn, where did you go to school?

BARBARA
Harvard. Why?

KUBRICK
Do you believe it made you smarter?

BARBARA
It makes other people think I'm smarter.

Barbara makes a dramatic move.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
(getting excited)
Check.

KUBRICK
I barely graduated high school. What do people think of me?

Barbara makes her final move. She's stares at the board a moment. In shock.

BARBARA
Checkmate...I don't believe it -- I won.

Kubrick coldly stares at Barbara. Clinical.

KUBRICK
You only won because I let you. I have no respect for you, your game or your intellect.

He shoves the chess board off the table. The pieces scatter across the floor. Kubrick leans across the table. Menacing.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
The lens you promised me does not exist.

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I hate dishonesty, Ms. Penn.

BARBARA
Where are you going? Are you quitting?

KUBRICK
I am walking away from a liar.

BARBARA
Don't blame me for you quitting. Fine, go! You think I want to work with a man that can only express himself in childish, typed notes? It's all about you -- your film, your landing, your set, your rocket --

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
-- one man writes a novel. One man makes a symphony. And it is essential for one man to make a film.

BARBARA
No. It's not essential. We're all making this. Me, Neil, Buzz, Julian, Deke, Director Helms, Kara -- hell, you don't even know if Kara had a boy or a girl...what kind of man are you? You treat people like they are pawns on your chess board. But you know what I think? I think you over estimate your talent and importance, Mr. Kubrick.

KUBRICK
She had a girl.

Kubrick walks out the door --

EXT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Kubrick walks right into Barbara's husband, Walter Penn.

WALTER
(not believing)
Stanley Kubrick?

KUBRICK
Mr. Penn?

Walter nods.

WALTER
That really was you on the phone. I thought Barb was pulling my leg...did you just come out of her room?

KUBRICK
We are not having an affair. I'm an insanely happily married man. You on the other hand, you should ask your wife why NASA is now paying you forty percent less for your rockets.

Kubrick walks off, leaving Walter to process what he just learned.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door to the room opens. Barbara sits on the bed. Her eyes swollen. She's been crying. Walter walks inside, softly closing the door behind.

He sits beside Barbara. She puts her hand over his.

BARBARA
I'm so glad you're here.

WALTER
I ran into Stanley Kubrick outside... You're faking the moon landing, aren't you? Why else would he be here?

BARBARA
I can't say.

Walter pulls his hand away from Barbara.

WALTER
How many times did you assure me everything was fine? You were lying to me. You knew the space program was in trouble.

BARBARA
What could I tell you? Everything I'm doing here is classified.
(MORE)

BARBARA (CONT'D)
You need to have faith I'm properly handling this.

WALTER
Faith? I've always had faith in you. I stood by you when you wanted to go to university, I stood up to my parents when you went to work for Singer instead of staying home to take care of the kids. I even pulled strings to get you in Nixon's government program for women. I've always had faith in you, but do you have the same belief in me?

BARBARA
You're a good man.

WALTER
Then why did you tell Deke Slayton he could pay us less? Why sabotage your own family's profits like that?

BARBARA
Walt, please understand that I'm doing my job. Just like you.

WALTER
No. Not like me. You've gotten so comfortable creating lies for a living that you are starting to believe them. Do you even know what's important any more?

Walter heads for the door.

BARBARA
Walt, don't go. Let's talk.

WALTER
About what? You're not allowed to talk. It's all classified.

Walter walks out.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

Barbara frantically KNOCKS on the white door of this cookie-cutter house. Julian's Camaro parked in the drive.

A WOMAN opens the door. A LITTLE BOY and TWO GIRLS chase each other in the room behind. Barbara taken aback.

BARBARA
Does Julian Scheer live here?

WOMEN
Yes. You are?

BARBARA
We work together.

WOMAN
(calls out)
Julian.

Julian steps up. The woman kisses Julian on the cheek.

JULIAN
This will take just a minute.

The woman nods. Julian joins Barbara on the front porch, closing the door behind.

BARBARA
Why did you never mention your wife and kids?

Julian runs his hand through his hair. Nervous. Like a teenager on a first date.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
I shouldn't have come here.

JULIAN
Why are you here, Babs?

BARBARA
Kubrick quit.

JULIAN
He was more trouble than he was worth.

BARBARA
Was he? God Julian, I wish you'd seen it. I've never seen anything like what he filmed...but we have no shots of the astronauts actually walking on the moon.

JULIAN
That bastard did that on purpose.

BARBARA
I don't know. I can't find him anywhere. He checked out of the hotel. I searched the base, the movie theater -- you have to help me find him. I don't want the CIA to know he's gone missing. Helms already thinks he's a spy --

JULIAN
Babs, I'm not going on some wild goose chase to find Stanley Kubrick tonight.

BARBARA
We don't have a choice.

JULIAN
Sure we do. If I'm going to make stuff up for a living, it should be fun. Lying to the public like this, it's not fun. It's wrong. All of this has been wrong.

BARBARA
And what about stopping a nuclear threat and bringing home our captured spies? Is that wrong?

JULIAN
Go back to DC, Barbara. Go home.

Julian goes inside and closes the door --

INT. MOON SET - NIGHT

An ARMED GUARD opens the door for Barbara and turns on the overhead lights.

Barbara walks onto the set. None of it looks real. She picks up a Polaroid camera from a table and takes a photo.

The camera shoots out the print. Barbara shakes it and the image that comes into focus looks awful. No one can film this but Kubrick.

BARBARA
Son of a bitch.

She sets down the camera. Takes one last look at the set and shuts off the lights.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

It's dark. Our spy, Howard Marcus curled in the fetal position on the concrete floor. His writs in shackles. Bruised, dirty and unshaven.

TITLE: Somewhere in the USSR

The door opens. Suslov's two guards enter and pull Howard to his feet. They sit him at a small wooden table.

Vasili walks in. The guards exit and lock the door behind.

Vasili sits across from Howard, setting a full bottle of vodka between them.

VASILI
I am sorry for the treatment you have received.

HOWARD
Where is my wife?

VASILI
Please, have a drink.

Howard coldly stares at Vasili.

HOWARD
What did you do to Cindy?

VASILI
She's alive. Brezhnev had her released. He wanted to stick it to Suslov. Show him who is in charge.

HOWARD
Why am I still here?

VASILI
Suslov moved fast. Had you brought here before Brezhnev could track you down. No one gets found here.

Vasili takes a swig of vodka from the bottle. He holds it out to Howard. Howard takes a swig and coughs. Vasili takes the bottle back and laughs.

VASILI (CONT'D)
You and I have a lot in common. It was the Nazis that first forced me to work on rockets, and when the war ended it was the Soviets doing the same.
(MORE)

VASILI (CONT'D)
Two very different ideologies, but they are all the same. If there is one thing I have learned, it's that owning your life is far more important than protecting an idea.

Howard considers this.

VASILI (CONT'D)
You know I can't get our lunar module to work. And we can't land on the moon without one...I know you can help me -- I can convince them to release you, if you help me build.

HOWARD
If you don't believe in the Soviet cause, then why the hell do you care?

VASILI
I care because I don't want to stop owning my life -- you should care too.

Vasili unrolls a set of rocket plans on the table. Howard takes one look and is intrigued.

HOWARD
I see what you're doing.

VASILI
As one scientist to another -- I need your help.

INT. WEST WING SITUATION ROOM - DAY

Barbara, Public Affairs Director Herbert Klein, Deke Slayton, CIA Director Helms, Secretary of State Rogers and Cindy Marcus sit around the table.

TITLE: Situation Room, White House - Washington DC

CINDY
Howard and I put our lives on the line in Moscow to stop Suslov.

DIRECTOR HELMS
I'm very sorry.

CINDY
Stop being sorry and do something. Howard is still there and I don't know how much longer he can hold out. The Soviets are close to developing a working lunar module and their rocket is twice the size of ours. I saw it. We need to get Howard out of there.

ROGERS
I'm afraid we can't do that. I don't believe Mikhail Suslov or the Soviet moon program is a viable threat.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Suslov has publicly threatened to launch a nuclear strike against us, and he will gain power if he wins the moon for the Soviets.

ROGERS
What makes you think you can land on the moon? You can't even fake a moon landing. We need to focus on something we can win - Vietnam. I am advising the President to cancel the space program.

Rogers walks out. Barbara looks to Deke. Do something.

DEKE
It's in the President's hands now.

BARBARA
What if I get Kubrick here --

DIRECTOR HELMS
That commie lover moved to the UK. It's over, Barbara.

Everyone rises from the table. There's nothing left to discuss. Director Helms and Deke file out. Cindy pulls Barbara aside.

CINDY
Your plan would have worked. I don't understand. Why didn't you finish?

BARBARA
I don't know what to say. I feel horrible about what happened.

It’s not enough. Cindy walks away.

INT. BARBARA’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Barbara walks in. Shoulders bent in exhaustion. David and Kimberly run up. CHELSEA, their middle-aged nanny, close behind.

CHELSEA
You’re home early. Everything all right?

BARBARA
Yes, thank you.

CHELSEA
Is Mr. Penn expected back?

BARBARA
He’s still in Florida.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The *Brady Brunch* plays on the TV. Barbara sits on the couch. David on one side. Kimberly on the other.

KIMBERLY
Is Dad still working on the broken rockets?

BARBARA
Yes, your Dad is very stubborn. He doesn’t give up.

DAVID
Are we really landing on the moon?

KIMBERLY
Nobody at school thinks we can do it.

Barbara looks at the TV and considers it for a moment.

EXT. KUBRICK’S ENGLISH ESTATE - DAY

Christiane opens the door. This time Barbara is prepared. She bends down to greet the rush of dogs and cats.

CHRISTIANE
I’m so sorry you came all this way. You know he --

BARBARA
-- doesn't take meetings. Could you give this to him?

Barbara hands Christiane a typed memo.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Christiane walks in. Kubrick sits in a chair reading *A Clockwork Orange*.

CHRISTIANE
The least you could do is see her.

KUBRICK
I don't work with liars and thieves.

Christiane hands Kubrick the memo and walks out. Kubrick reads the one typed word on the page: CHECK.

Kubrick sets down his book. He goes to the window: Barbara stands at the front door -- Deke stands at her side. Kubrick is intrigued.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Invite them in.

Kubrick takes a seat in his chair. Deke and Barbara enter.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Would you sit there?

Kubrick gestures to the couch across. They take a seat.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
What is this about?

DEKE
The Secretary of State felt like NASA and the CIA went behind his back with you filming a fake moon landing. Now the big wigs are threatening to shut down the entire space program.

KUBRICK
Are you holding me responsible for NASA's failure?

DEKE
Maybe a little.

KUBRICK
That's the most honest thing I've heard yet.

DEKE
Mr. Kubrick, the space program is everything good about our country. Hell, it's the only good thing we got right now. Me and countless others put our lives on the line. I've lost brave men, and my closest friends to this mission -- we've sacrificed everything for this moon landing, and I don't want it be for nothing. I owe it to Grissom, White and Chaffe to see this through. Now, I'm going to get Apollo 11 safely landed up there, but as much as I hate to say it -- I need your help, Mr. Kubrick. Barbara is right, we need to guarantee people can see this damn thing happen. If the public sees a moon landing, whether it's real or not, they'll realize that us little humans down here can do pretty much anything. The universe is out there to explore, and gettin' people to believe in something like that is worth a little deception.

Kubrick stands.

KUBRICK
I appreciate your candid optimism, but hope is a belief in dumb luck -- I wish you nothing but the best.

CINDY (O.C.)
Mr. Kubrick?

Cindy Marcus walks in. Kubrick eyes her up and down like a specimen.

KUBRICK
What is this?

CINDY
I'm Cindy Marcus. My husband and I were working for the CIA in Moscow. We were captured by Mikhail Suslov. He still has my husband in custody.
(MORE)

CINDY (CONT'D)
Mr. Kubrick, if Suslov believes the Americans have won the space race, he'll no longer need my husband and there's a good chance Howard will be released. I know it's a long shot, but I don't know what else to do. I have to believe this will work. Please. I need you to show the world we've won the moon. I can't lose him.

Kubrick to Christiane in the hall behind, the wife he adores, and his look says it all. Cindy got to him.

Barbara hands him another typed note. Kubrick opens it to: CHECKMATE.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Kubrick nervously watches the pilot take his seat in the cockpit. He raises an orange pill bottle of quaaludes to his lips. Empties its contents into his mouth.

Barbara and Cindy sit beside him. Deke in the seat in front.

CINDY
Is he okay?

Barbara nods. She turns to the BUSINESS MAN seated across the aisle. He's in worse shape than Kubrick. A nervous wreck.

BARBARA
Excuse me, if you don't hear a loud click from under the wing when we leave the ground -- it means the pilot forgot to turn on the flap, and we are going to die.

The business man starts to breath heavily. His panic rising.

Kubrick gives Barbara a devilish smile and relaxes into his seat. He closes his eyes.

KUBRICK
Thank you, Barbara.

BARBARA
You're welcome, Stan.

OFF THE ROARING SOUND OF THE JET ENGINES CUT TO:

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Crowds everywhere.

TITLE: Cape Canaveral Air Force Base, Florida

A black Cadillac slowly moves down the congested road.

INT. BLACK CADILLAC - DAY

Deke sits passenger and takes it all in.

DEKE
No way Nixon can cancel us now.

Kubrick, Barbara and Cindy in back. The impact of the event sinking in:

KUBRICK
This will be my most popular film.
(beat)
And no one will know I made it.

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - DAY

The heavy metal door slides open to Barbara, Cindy and Kubrick standing in the doorway.

Kubrick turns on the overhead lights. Cindy taking her first tentative step onto the set.

CINDY
This is it?

BARBARA
It looks much better on screen.

KUBRICK
It does. I'm a genius.

BARBARA
And modest.

KUBRICK
Modesty wastes time.

Kubrick turns on a 10K light illuminating the fake star-filled sky that TRANSITIONS into the real night sky --

ANGLE DOWN TO:

EXT. SOYUZ LAUNCH PAD - NIGHT

Vasili stands with flask in hand. A little drunk.

TITLE: Soyuz Launch Pad - USSR

He calls out to Howard:

VASILI
Do you see the part?

Howard's head is inside a panel on one of the rocket's thrusters, working away.

HOWARD
(muffled)
Not yet.

APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. Vasili quickly hides his flask in his coat. He turns -- Suslov's guards walk up. What are they doing here? Vasili tenses.

They walk past Vasili to Howard. They grab him from behind.

VASILI
(in Russian)
What are you doing? He is cooperating!

Howard flails and SCREAMS to break loose.

Vasili watches the guards violently pull Howard into a small concrete building. He can still hear the SCREAMS.

INT. JULIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Julian at his desk. His head down. The wall calendar behind. All days marked off. It's down to the wire and Julian is hiding in his office.

Kubrick and Barbara walk in letting the intense sound from the crowd outside in --

JULIAN
NASA Public Affairs is closed.

Julian looks up. Surprised to see Barbara and Kubrick.

BARBARA
Julian, I need you to stand up for me? Can you do that?

JULIAN
Always. Babs, I didn't mean --

BARBARA
I meant, can you stand up? Now.

Julian stiffly stands. Barbara looks him up and down.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
He'll fit.

KUBRICK
He lacks character, but he will do.

BARBARA
You ready to have some fun, Julian?

Julian not so sure.

KUBRIC (V.O.)
Action!

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - DAY

Kubrick sits in his mission control, intently watching the screens and covering all angles --

TWO ACTORS in full NASA space suits stand at the edge of the set.

Neil, Michael and Buzz watch this nearby. All of it a little too surreal for the astronauts. The impact of what they are about to do hitting hard --

Kara walks up to the ACTORS in the suits. She hands one an American flag.

The astronauts step forward onto --

THE LUNAR SURFACE ON KUBRICK'S MONITOR

And if we didn't know better, we'd think we were watching the real thing --

Kubrick watches the scene on the monitors. A wide-eyed grin on his face.

KUBRICK
I'm happy now.

Kubrick grabs a 16mm handheld camera from his table.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Cut!

Kubrick runs over to where the astronauts stand. Neil and Buzz tense, expecting the worse. He grins at them like an excited child.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Any of you know how to work a camera?

BUZZ
You retiring?

KUBRICK
Never.

NEIL
I can.

Kubrick hands Neil the 16mm.

KUBRICK
I'm curious to see if my camera will work on the moon. Give it a try, would you?

NEIL
Thank you.

KUBRICK
Don't get killed. I'd like my camera back.

BUZZ
Jesus, Stan.

But Kubrick has already moved on to something else. His focus on Cindy at the door. She's speaking to CIA Director Helms. Her shoulders shaking with sobs.

KUBRICK
What's that about?

KARA
Her husband has gone missing from the prison labor camp. They think Suslov got the designs he needed.

BUZZ
Kubrick, don't you screw up either.

What's at stake beginning to dawn on Stanley Kubrick. A half-hearted command to the set:

KUBRICK
Tony, let’s reset and go again.

TRANSITION TO ARCHIVE FOOTAGE: Walter Cronkite's live July 20, 1969 CBS News broadcast from Kennedy Space Center:

WALTER CRONKITE
Good morning, man is about to launch himself to the moon with the expectation of landing there from this Florida launch complex aboard that Saturn Rocket --

INT. MISSION ROOM - DAY

Deke stands at a podium. His audience is the entire FLIGHT CREW TEAM. Buzz, Neil and Michael seated in front.

Deke clears his throat. The shadow of the past tragedy darkens his face.

DEKE
First and foremost, we must remember our mission objectives...

INT. SMALL ROOM - SAME

It’s dark. The outline of Howard barely visible. Face down on the concrete.

DEKE (V.O.)
Perform a manned lunar landing and return.

The door opens casting light on Howard in a pool of his own blood. He’s taken quite the beating.

DEKE (V.O.) (CONT’D)
Perform selenological inspection and sampling.

TWO FIGURES approach.

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - SAME

Kubrick watches his six monitors: the actors pantomime the moon landing. Kubrick eyes darting from side-to-side, taking in every angle, not missing a thing. This has to be perfect.

DEKE (V.O.)
But other than the mission objectives -- you are risking your lives for a chance at greatness --

INT. SMALL ROOM - SAME

Howard painfully lifts his head. His expression hard to read under his bruises.

DEKE (V.O.)
You're fulfilling a promise that President Kennedy made to the world almost a decade ago --

Howard lifted to his feet by two unseen MEN.

INT. MISSION ROOM - SAME

DEKE
A promise that we will go to the moon.

Deke getting emotional as he looks to his astronauts seated in front.

DEKE (CONT'D)
Go with God, and go with your country. You're dismissed.

TRANSITION TO ARCHIVE FOOTAGE: Walter Cronkite's live July 20, 1969 CBS News broadcast from Kennedy Space Center:

WALTER CRONKITE
The astronauts are going through all the checkpoints to make sure they are good to go. At 9:32 AM that six story rocket is scheduled to thunder to life --

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - SAME

TITLE: Kennedy Space Center

Deke sits at the control panel. Gene seated behind. Headset on. This is it.

DEKE
Apollo 11, standby for final status check.

NEIL (V.O.)
Roger.

GENE
Status check complete.

DEKE
We're go for flight.

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - SAME

Kubrick intently watches the monitors as his "astronauts" plant the American flag on the moon --

CUT TO:

ARCHIVE CBS NEWS FOOTAGE: A shot of the Apollo 11 rocket with a rudimentary digital clock on the bottom of the screen counting down: 3, 2 --

INT. COLUMBIA COMMAND MODULE - SAME

Buzz, Neil and Michael strapped in their chairs. Ready. The thrusters shake the cabin. Harder and harder --

Neil shifts in his seat. Buzz grabs his hand. Jesus that was too close. Neil's arm inches away from hitting the abort button.

Buzz and Neil exchange a look of relief. They got each other's backs. The shaking quickly becoming too intense to see any detail --

CUT TO:

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE of the APOLLO 11 launch. Smoke billows from its massive thrusters. It's leaving Earth --

INT. VASILI MISHIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Vasili looks out his window to the N-1 rocket. Smoke billows at its base just like the American rocket. Shit. The Soviets are launching too.

VASILI
(mumbles)
Luna 15. First to the moon.

Vasili holds a half-empty bottle of vodka in one hand.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

The desks, panels, walls and floor shake with take off. All eyes on the screens ahead: ARCHIVE FOOTAGE of Apollo 11 arching into the sky --

KRANZ
Ascending 195 feet per second.

A tense moment of waiting, and then --

DEKE
We are all clear.

Deke removes his headset and stands. A collective sigh of relief.

DEKE (CONT'D)
I've handed comm over to Houston.

The room erupts in applause.

DEKE (CONT'D)
Good job, everyone. We had a successful launch today, but this is just the first of many hurdles. We still have to land on the moon. But don't let that stop you from celebrating this small victory.

Bottles of champagne are opened. Walter (Barbara's husband) stands at the side. He is handed a glass of champagne by one of his engineers.

He looks to CIA Director Helms watching and standing at the back of the room. Not celebrating. Walter joins him.

WALTER
I know who you are.

DIRECTOR HELMS
I know who everyone is.

WALTER
Is Barbara here?

Director Helms doesn't answer.

WALTER (CONT'D)
I just want to know if she's all right.

Director Helms gestures for Deke to follow him and walks out.

Walter sets down his champagne and nervously looks to the launch map ahead. Too worried to celebrate.

INT. DEKE DEKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Deke sits behind his desk. Director Helms sits across.

DEKE
What's this about?

DIRECTOR HELMS
We got word the Soviets have also launched a rocket.

DEKE
Do I have to worry my astronauts will be under Soviet attack up there?

DIRECTOR HELMS
It's a possibility. Given that Stanley Kubrick has been classified as dangerously subversive and his communist leanings --

DEKE
What the hell does Kubrick have to do with shit?

DIRECTOR HELMS
I believe he informed the Soviets we were launching today.

DEKE
You got proof? Maybe it was just dumb coincidence.

Director Helms rises.

DEKE (CONT'D)
Where you going?

DIRECTOR HELMS
To take Stanley Kubrick in for questioning.

DEKE
This is bullshit. Even if he is a commie, what good will interrogating him do? We got 600 million viewers waiting to see us land. We need Kubrick --

Director Helms walks out. Deke picks up his phone --

KUBRICK (V.O.)
Cut!

INT. WAREHOUSE/MOON SET - SAME

A phone RINGS in the background --

The astronauts remove their helmets. The illusion of the moon landing shattered as Julian and Barbara are revealed underneath.

They look to Kubrick seated in his director's chair.

KUBRICK
Someone shut up that phone!

Kara picks up the phone from the table, hangs up and leaves it off its receiver.

Julian unscrews his glove. Checks his watch.

JULIAN
Done with time to spare. Apollo 11 won't land on the moon for another 48 hours.

KUBRICK
I can't edit in 48 hours. This makes the filming of *Spartacus* seem like a quaint vacation --

Director Helms walks in behind with TWO AGENTS.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Spartacus is my favorite film.

KUBRICK
Of course it is.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Mr. Kubrick, have you been in contact with the Soviets?

Helms' agents step behind Kubrick. He's trapped. Barbara steps up.

BARBARA
What is this?

KUBRICK
He’s asking about the Soviets. Who are honestly far more advanced than us when comes to treatment of our fellow creatures. The Soviets don’t strap bombs to helpless dolphins and use them as weapons of war.

JULIAN
We do that?

Kubrick nods. The agents place handcuffs on his wrists.

BARBARA
Mr. Kubrick is not a spy.

Kubrick pulled away. Barbara about to run after. Julian puts a hand on Barbara’s shoulder - don’t interfere. Kubrick is gone.

Barbara pushes off Julian and runs to Kubrick’s mission control wall of monitors.

BARBARA (CONT’D)
We can’t finish this.

INT. KREMLIN - DAY

Communist Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev sits at a cheap wooden desk in a room fit for a Czar. Ornate chandeliers from the ceiling. Gold etching along the walls. Communist aesthetic meets old world opulence.

TITLE: The Kremlin, Moscow

Mikhail Suslov stands across from Brezhnev. The contrast between the leaders evident. Suslov brash and confident. Brezhnev small and soft spoken. The following in Russian:

BREZHNEV
I don't recall giving you authorization to launch.

Suslov leans across the desk. He means business.

SUSLOV
You should not have released Cindy Marcus. It showed weakness. It's time we took a stand. Show the Americans our power. We will execute Howard Marcus and claim the moon for the USSR.

BREZHNEV
Are you insane? There has been no execution of spies on either side since 1953. Do you know what an execution will start?

SUSLOV
Nuclear war.

Suslov storms out. The full extent of his madness dawning on Brezhnev.

INT. DEKE DEKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Deke sits with the phone to his ear. Cigar in his mouth. Julian and Barbara walk in. Deke slams down the phone.

DEKE
Why the hell weren't you answering? Helms is on his way to arrest Kubrick.

JULIAN
He got him.

DEKE
Please tell me Stan is not a commie spy.

BARBARA
He is not a spy. We need him released. We can't finish the moon landing without him.

Walter walks in.

DEKE
What now?

WALTER
I wanted to talk to you about the thrusters --

DEKE
Are they working?

WALTER
Yes, but --

DEKE
Then I don't give a shit.

Walter starts to walk out. Barbara grabs him by the arm.

BARBARA
Wait. Are you still in contact with Kissinger?

WALTER
(disappointed)
That's what you want?

BARBARA
I need you to contact him and tell him Kubrick has been taken into custody by the CIA without cause. You'll have to let Kissinger know that releasing Kubrick would be bad for the CIA and the current Secretary of State. Kissinger is angling for the Secretary's job?

WALTER
I'll see what I can do.

BARBARA
Thank you.

Walter hesitates, hoping for something more. She doesn't know what to say. He walks out.

Deke and Julian shoot Barbara a look.

BARBARA (CONT'D)
(covers)
We're fine.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

Kubrick is handcuffed to a wooden chair. A GUARD seated at a table nearby.

KUBRICK
What's it like to guard prisoners?

GUARD
It's a job.

KUBRICK
You ever kill anyone?

The guard looks over to Kubrick. He's liking the attention.

GUARD
No. But I've had to knockout a few.

KUBRICK
I'm fascinated by violence. How hard did you hit them? What did it feel like? How did it make you feel?

GUARD
Good, I guess. You want me to hit you?

The guard walks over to Kubrick and makes a fist. Kubrick is sweating it --

The door behind opens. Director Helms walks in. The guard sits down.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara sits on the bed nervously staring at the old magnetic tape editing machine set up at the center of the room. She doesn't have clue what to do with it.

The door opens. Kubrick enters with Director Helms. Barbara can't hide her relief. She gives Kubrick a hug.

BARBARA
You're okay!

Kubrick uncomfortable with the out pouring of emotion. He looks to Director Helms --

KUBRICK
Will you tell her I'm fine. She can let go.

BARBARA
I heard him.

She releases Kubrick.

DIRECTOR HELMS
Be glad your coconspirator has friends in high places.

Kubrick eyes Barbara with appreciation.

KUBRICK
Is she "dangerously subversive" too?

DIRECTOR HELMS
I don't care what Kissinger says about you, Stanley.
(MORE)

DIRECTOR HELMS (CONT'D)
You’re not playing for our side. And when you screw up, I will be there to take you down.

Director Helms leaves. Barbara and Kubrick look at each other. They bust up laughing.

KUBRICK
(imitates)
I will take you down.

BARBARA
It’s good to have you back.

Kubrick takes a seat at the editing machine and starts playing the tape. Getting to business.

KUBRICK
How much time do we have?

BARBARA
A few hours.

This is killing Kubrick.

KUBRICK
It’s not enough. It won’t be perfect.

BARBARA
Reality is not perfect.

KUBRICK
Reality is boring.

BARBARA
Please, just finish.

Kubrick gets to work. Barbara turns on the television --

ARCHIVE CBS NEW FOOTAGE.

WALTER CRONKITE
We are getting word from Mission Control in Houston that Apollo 11 is clear for landing...

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

Deke walks in. His team back at their monitors. Headsets on.

DEKE
Houston’s got this under control --

NEIL (V.O.)
Houston, we have a problem. We seem to have lost a piece of the Eagle.

Deke throws on his headset.

DEKE
Neil? What the hell just happened? Over. Are you under attack?

Everyone looks up from the monitors in shock. Under attack?

INT. EAGLE LUNAR MODULE - SAME

Neil and Buzz look out the small window -- the lunar surface approaching. Beautiful and serene...a good-sized piece of metal floating by --

An emergency ALARM sounds.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - SAME

ALARMS sound. Deke addresses his crew.

DEKE
The Soviets launched the same time we did. There is a chance they could have launched a missile at Apollo 11.

Gene listens on his headset:

GENE
Houston is reporting the Eagle's fourth thruster is failing.

Walter looks up from his screen.

WALTER
Our sensors are saying it's going down.

INT. EAGLE - SAME

All ALARMS sound. Buzz and Neil look out the window -- the moon's surface rapidly getting closer.

INT. AMERICAN HOME - SAME

A FAMILY watches Walter Cronkite's live broadcast:

WALTER CRONKITE
We're still waiting on final word from Mission Control...

TRANSITION TO the broadcast on the TV in:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Kubrick and Barbara collect up the tapes into a duffel bag.

BARBARA
Is that all of them?

Kubrick nods. Barbara and Kubrick run out the door.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY

A cargo truck pulls up and stops.

TITLE: Somewhere in the USSR

TWO MEN get out of the front. They unlock the back. Howard in the fetal position inside. His eyes blink open. The men pull him out.

His eyes adjusting to the light. He looks up to the blue sky. HOWARD'S POV:

THE MOON AND THE SUN OUT AT THE SAME TIME

He's dragged forward...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

Cindy sits alone the edge of a twin bed. Nervously wringing her hands as she watches NEWS REPORTS OF THE LANDING. Waiting for final word. Are they going to make it?

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL AIR FORCE BASE - SAME

Kubrick and Barbara maneuver through the massive crowd of onlookers in the yellow VW bug.

Barbara stops the car. A gate blocks the way forward. A PRIVATE knocks on Barbara's window. She rolls it down.

PRIVATE
Do you have press credentials?

KUBRICK
I’m Stanley Kubrick.

PRIVATE
Your credentials?

Kubrick grabs the bag of magnetic video tapes from the back seat.

KUBRICK
Barbara?

BARBARA
Yes, Stanley.

KUBRICK
Run!

He slings the bag over his shoulder, pushes open the door and runs --

PRIVATE
Sir! Stop!

Kubrick keeps running.

BARBARA
Sorry.

She climbs out the passenger side and runs after Kubrick. Both of them sprinting as fast as they can through the throngs of PRESS.

INT. BARBARA’S HOME - SAME

Kimberly and David (Barbara’s kids) watch the CBS NEWS FOOTAGE OF THE MOON LANDING. WALTER CRONKITE LIVE AT THE KENNEDY SPACE CENTER. The biggest moment in history about to happen --

KIMBERLY
Mom?

Barbara and Kubrick barely visible in the background as Cronkite reports --

EXT. LANDING STRIP - SAME

Howard led inside a rusted airplane hangar. This is where it’s going to end for him --

INT. EAGLE - SAME

The ALARM SOUNDING. Apollo 11 crashing --

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SAME

Kubrick and Barbara run in.

Kubrick pitches forward from the exertion. Barbara catches him. Kubrick nods. His breath returning to normal.

Barbara looks across the control room. All eyes on her and Kubrick. Walter standing beside Deke --

Kubrick and Barbara run through to get the footage on the air.

INT. EAGLE - SAME

The ALARMS suddenly stop. The landing suddenly peaceful. Neil and Buzz not able to contain their relief.

NEIL
Houston, it was a sensor malfunction. We are clear for landing.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - SAME

The room erupts in applause. Deke raises his hands to silence the clapping.

DEKE
Settle down, folks, we're not out of the woods yet.

All focus on the TV screens up front. Nothing showing yet.

INT. BROADCAST ROOM - SAME

Barbara and Kubrick run in with the bag of tapes.

BARBARA
We need to get this onto the live feed to the networks --

They look up to the wall of TV screens ahead. And Kubrick's expression says it all -- oh, shit.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - SAME

ON THE SCREENS UP FRONT: The moon landing we all know.

ARCHIVE BLACK AND WHITE FOOTAGE OF THE MOON LANDING.

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE OF PEOPLE WATCHING ACROSS THE GLOBE.

CLOSE ON KUBRICK

INT. BROADCAST ROOM - WIDER

BARBARA
It's amazing.

KUBRICK
This looks awful. This is not my work.

ON THE SCREEN: Neil takes the first step on the moon --

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
(under his breath)
Say it right.

NEIL
This is one small step for man, and one giant leap for mankind.

KUBRICK
Unbelievable. It's one step for "a" man...

Kubrick pulls a tape out of the bag and waves it at a TECHNICIAN.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
Hurry. Play this. It's a much more accurate portrayal --

Barbara takes the tape from him.

BARBARA
Stan, this is real. Look. We're on the moon.

And he can't help but smile.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - SAME

The room ERUPTS in applause.

ARCHIVE FOOTAGE OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD CHEERING AND CELEBRATING THE LANDING. Man has landed on the moon.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Cindy can't stop herself. She cries. Happy and terrified at once.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY

Howard is led forward by his two captors. He's made peace with what is going to happen. He looks up to his executioner -- it's wet-behind-the-ears Agent Harris.

AGENT HARRIS
We're taking you home.

Howard's face flooded with relief.

INT. VASILI MISHIN'S OFFICE - DAY

He watches the Apollo 11 landing on his television. No vodka. Very sober.

Vasili applauds as he watches Neil take his first steps. And we clearly see the rocket designs on his desk marked as -- UNMANNED SOVIET PROBE, LUNA 15 --

INT. KREMLIN - DAY

Brezhnev shuts off the broadcast of the Apollo 11 landing. Suslov storms in. Brezhnev addressing him in Russian:

BREZHNEV
Howard Marcus has been released.

SUSLOV
Did you know Howard was conspiring with Vasili? There were never cosmonauts on my rocket. Luna 15 was nothing but an unmanned probe. It was a hoax.

Brezhnev doesn't answer.

SUSLOV (CONT'D)
It was stupid to sacrifice our space program to get rid of me. Do you have any idea what you cost us?

Brezhnev looks over to his aide and nods. TWO GUARDS enter and escort Suslov out.

INT. LAUNCH CONTROL - DAY

Deke passes out cigars like a proud father. Julian pops a bottle of champagne and pours glasses for Walter and Gene.

Barbara and Kubrick stand at the back. Unsure how they feel about all this.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY

Cindy watches as a small propeller plane lands.

Howard steps out of the plane with shaky legs.

Cindy runs to his side and helps him down. Holding each other in their arms. They kiss like it's the first and last time. Not letting go.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Deke joins Barbara and Kubrick. Not good with sentiment. He hands Kubrick a cigar and one to Barbara. He nods and walks away.

Barbara looks to Walter. His back his to her. He's headed for the door --

KUBRICK
Are you going to let him leave?

BARBARA
I don't know what to say.

KUBRICK
My best piece of direction is to always speak the truth.

Barbara walks up to Walter. He stops looks down to her. Barbara searching for the perfect words --

BARBARA
I'm so sorry.

Walter and Barbara hug. It's a start.

Kubrick watches their exchange with a little smile. Julian hands him a glass of champagne and follows his gaze --

KUBRICK
I would have made her do another take.

INT. MOON SET - DAY

Kubrick watches the CIA pack his moon set into crates marked CLASSIFIED.

KUBRICK
What are you going to do with my film?

No answer.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I have a very precise filing system for all my work. If you won't let me have it, I'll...

Kubrick searches his pockets. Takes out his cigarette lighter.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
I'll burn it. I'll burn it all!

The men ignore Kubrick and wheel out the crates. Barbara walks up behind.

BARBARA
You should try to focus on your next film.

KUBRICK
I can't.

Kubrick puts away his lighter and faces Barbara.

KUBRICK (CONT'D)
It's looking like my epic representation of Napoleon's life will never be made...I am not good at letting go.

BARBARA
I know, Stan. I'll still send you the lens I promised when it's ready.

KUBRICK
I trust you will. Do you like working for the government?

BARBARA
I don't do it for enjoyment. I guess I took this job to see if I could do it.

Kubrick smiles. He understands.

KUBRICK
There's infinite possibilities for you, Ms. Penn. Choose one that wins the game.

Barbara watches him walk out the door.

INT. WEST WING - DAY

Barbara walks by the Situation Room in a pair of wedge heels. The door suddenly opens.

Secretary Rogers hands her a box filled with audio tapes. CIA Director Helms a few steps behind. President Nixon seated at the table inside.

She glances at a few of the labels: Ted Kennedy, Leonid Brezhnev...

BARBARA
Has the President been recording these people's conversations?

Rogers squints at Barbara.

ROGERS
You're not my secretary?

He quickly snatches the box back.

DIRECTOR HELMS
We'll be needing your publicity skills to handle this. I'll be in touch.

Barbara nods and continues down the hallway. Unsettled.

INT. PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE - DAY

Barbara walks in. Public Affairs Director Herbert Klein and the other assistants all there. They left an open seat for her at the table. Barbara takes the seat.

INT. BARBARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Barbara walks in the front door. She sets down her briefcase. Walter walks up in jeans and T-shirt.

WALTER
You're home early.

BARBARA
So are you.

WALTER
It's been a rough couple of months.

BARBARA
I quit, Walt. I don't want to keep cleaning up other people's messes.

WALTER
What do you have in mind?

BARBARA
I think I want to go into business for myself.

Walter considers this.

WALTER
I think we can make it work.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Barbara, Walter, David and Kimberly lay on their backs. Relaxed and staring up at the night sky.

A FULL MOON ABOVE

DAVID
Mom, how did we land on the moon?

Barbara thinks about it a moment.

BARBARA
Let me tell you a story...

THE END.