VERVE

The Shark Is Not Working

The story of the making of "Jaws"

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LEGAL NOTICE

Although the following story dramatizes events surrounding the making of Steven Spielberg's "Jaws", in all scenes depicting the production of the film, crew members and equipment will be visible at all times.

No scenes from the film will be duplicated, and no lines of dialogue from the "Jaws" screenplay will be spoken.

THANK YOU

"When I think of *Jaws* I think of courage and stupidity. And I think of both of those things existing underwater."

- Steven Spielberg

EXT. SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS - DAY

Barren, sun-baked slopes rising above Los Angeles.

Perched atop Mount Lee, gleaming white letters on a scorched earth background shimmer in the hazy heat.

The Hollywood sign. Magnificent, full of promise.

SUPER: 1964

EXT. NORTH BEACHWOOD DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

A rattletrap Cadillac Series 62 convertible, all rust patches and dents, cruises down the long road.

INT. CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS

Behind the wheel, a TEENAGE KID nattily attired in blue sports coat, black pants, scarf. He stares at the Hollywood sign in the distance as if taking in a deity.

STEVE SPIELBERG, aged 16 years.

EXT. LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

The entrance to Universal Studios. Steve slows the Cadillac, gets a good look... carries on driving.

EXT. LANKERSHIM BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Steve parks way out of sight, starts the long walk back.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - MOMENTS LATER

A bored, heavy-set GUARD (40s) sits in the small gate house at the studio entrance.

Steve appears at the window, brimming with enthusiasm.

STEVE
Hey there! I'm Steve Spielberg, here to see Chuck Silvers.

The guard checks a register.

GUARD
Editorial department. Down to the right, second building.

Steve pauses at the gate, basking in the enormity of the world that lies beyond. He turns back to the guard.

STEVE
I'm gonna make movies here one day.

The guard stares blankly. Awkward beat.

STEVE
Well, see you around!

Steve notices big muddy tracks on the ground, the aftermath of construction. He gives the mud a wide birth, careful not to get any on his highly polished shoes...

A black Lincoln blasts by, spraying mud all over him.

GUARD
Watch out for the mud, Selznick.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS BACKLOT - MOMENTS LATER

Steve searches frantically for a restroom, desperate to get cleaned up before someone spots him.

A studio tour tram full of TOURISTS pulls up. Tourists pull out their cameras, start snapping photos.

TOURIST #1
Is he famous?

TOURIST #2
Nah, just some kid.

The tourists snap away, capturing Steve's embarrassment in a thousand family photos. The tram drives off.

INT. RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steve attempts to clean the mud off with water and tissues. He just smears it around, making it worse.

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

CHUCK SILVERS (42), an avuncular little man, leads Steve through a maze of corridors. Steve's wide-eyed, desperately trying to take in every little detail.

CHUCK
There's a certain amount of scut work you can do that's not involved with the union -- take calls, tear purchase orders, run errands. It's unpaid so you're officially a guest of the studio, understood?

STEVE
Yes, sir.

Chuck stares at the kid in the mud-flecked clothes, all nervous energy and earnest enthusiasm. There's something about him, but Chuck can't put his finger on what.

CHUCK
Why movies, son?

Steve pauses, struggles to find the words.

STEVE
I can't really explain it, sir. From the first time I picked up my dad's Super-8 and looked through the lens, I knew there was nothing else in this world for me.

Chuck considers this, smiles.

CHUCK
That's about as good a reason as I've ever heard.
(re: the mud)
What happened here, then?

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Steve runs various errands with intense eagerness, going about his duties with boundless energy.

EXT. UNIVERSAL BACKLOT - DAY

Steve walks down a street that's been dressed to look like downtown New York. He stares around in wonder. To him this is pure magic, a world where dreams come true.

EXT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

CREW MEMBERS exit a sound stage. Steve waits until they're out of sight before approaching the building.

INT. SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Steve cracks open the door. His eyes widen in amazement. Lights, cameras, ACTORS! He creeps inside, skulking through the shadows to get a better look...

His young heart skips a beat.

Standing in front of the set lights, visible only by that unmistakable silhouette, is none other than ALFRED HITCHCOCK! The great director looks pensive, philosophical.

STEVE
(under his breath)
The Master!

Steve watches from the darkness, analyzing every movement, every gesture of his hero. Savoring every detail...

An ASSISTANT DIRECTOR storms over.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Closed set kid, you gotta leave.

STEVE
But I was just --

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Scram!

Steve's marched out. He steals one last glance at Hitchcock before the door slams in his face.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Steve gets thrown off more sets, kicked out of offices, screamed at, and generally ignored.

Montage ends with Steve sitting alone on the lot, eating a packed lunch, watching people come and go. An outcast peering in on a world he desperately wants to be a part of.

STEVE (PRE-LAP)
The sad part of the story is I should've had this Orson Welles sandbox, this great playpen to learn about filmmaking, and all the opportunity in the world to use it. But it wasn't like that. Truth is, it was a very bad experience.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHATEAU MARMONT, WEST HOLLYWOOD - DAY

SUPER: 1974 (TEN YEARS LATER)

STEVE SPIELBERG (26) recounts the story to a REPORTER. This isn't the Spielberg you're picturing. This is a clean-shaven kid with tousled hair, big sunglasses, and a self-awareness so far beyond his tender years, it's almost eerie.

REPORTER
The critics love *Sugarland*.

Steve gazes out the window, lost in the past.

STEVE
Sorry?

REPORTER
Getting such glowing reviews for your first feature? Looking back, you must feel vindicated.

Steve turns, looks directly at the reporter.

STEVE
Critical recognition's great, but I'm more interested in audience appeal. I don't want to be another Antonioni or Fellini -- I want the world to enjoy my films.

EXT. SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY

Los Angeles, 1974. Blue skies, sunshine, palm trees; billboards like works of art, painted masterpieces urging us to drink, smoke, listen to rock 'n' roll. The hippie culture has waned, giving way to atomized individualism.

Steve cruises down the road in a green convertible Mercedes, *Kung-Fu Fighting* on the stereo. GIRLS in mini-skirts stare as he passes by, but Steve looks away, self-conscious.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Same guard from ten years ago in the gate house, less hair, but otherwise unchanged. Steve's Mercedes pulls up.

GUARD
Mr. Spielberg, how are you today?

The gate's arm lifts and Steve guns onto the lot, parking in a reserved space. Accepted at last!

INT. DICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Steve with DICK ZANUCK (40), second generation movie mogul. Blonde and tan with boundless energy, what this guy doesn't know about filmmaking isn't worth knowing.

Dick reads aloud to Steve from a copy of *The New Yorker*.

DICK
"One is apt to fear for the second film of a promising young director, but for once the anxiety was unnecessary. Spielberg could be that rarity amongst directors: a natural born entertainer, the new generation's Howard Hawks."

Steve's sheepish, but glowing from the praise.

DICK
The whole studio's buzzing, kid. They think *Sugarland*'s gonna win the Academy Award for best <u>everything</u>. The test screening's in San José next week, on a double-header with *Paper Moon*.

STEVE
Paper Moon? I love Bogdanovich!

DICK
Screw him, this is about you. You're the hottest new talent in the business, and this picture's gonna prove it to the world.

Steve takes in his mentor with great fondness. The bond clearly runs deep between these two.

STEVE
I owe you a lot, Dick.

DICK
Bullshit, you earned this.

Steve nods, but there's uncertainty in his eyes. Dick checks his gold wristwatch, realizes the time.

DICK
I'm late for a lunch across town.

STEVE
Mind if I make a quick call?

DICK
You're a features director, kid. Do whatever the hell you want!

Dick punches Steve's arm playfully, exits.

Steve sits at the desk, reaches for the phone. A large block of pages by the phone catches his eye.

On the top sheet is one word, floating in white space:

"*JAWS*"

INT. THE BISTRO, BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Elegant decor, beautiful food, high-powered clientele.

Dick sits at a table with his partner DAVID BROWN (51) and PETER BENCHLEY (34). David's the elegance to Dick's energy, a bow-tied gentleman with a bushy white mustache; Peter's tall and awkward, with a palpable air of superiority.

DAVID
We love the book, Peter. We think it'll make a great movie.

PETER
This is all rather exciting.
(hesitant)
How are you going to make it, exactly? Has this kind of thing ever been done before?

DICK
That's what we're here to discuss.

DICK RICHARDS (38) enters, heads for their table. With two Dicks in this scene, we'll refer to Dick Richards by his full name for clarity; plus, this Dick's insane.

DICK
Peter, allow me to introduce Dick Richards, one of the finest action directors in the business.
(to Dick Richards)
Dick, this is Peter Benchley -- author of *Jaws*.

Dick Richards pumps Peter's hand vigorously.

DICK RICHARDS
Great to meet you, Pete. Your book penetrated me deeply.

PETER
It’s Peter. And sorry about that.

DICK RICHARDS
Don’t be. Not for a second.

Dick Richards sits at the table.

DICK
Dick, why don’t you start?

Dick Richards stares at them for an intense beat. He’s full of weird energy, incredibly intense.

DICK RICHARDS
First off, I don’t see this as a Hollywood picture. It’s the subtext I gravitated to, man battling his own inherently animalistic nature. That’s what the whale represents.

PETER
Shark.

DICK RICHARDS
Come again?

PETER
Shark. You said whale.

DICK RICHARDS
Quite right. It must be massive, over-powering; a great phallus rising up from the depths. I want the audience to feel violated when they leave the theater, as if the whale has exploded inside them.

DICK/DAVID
Shark.

Dick, David and Peter exchange concerned looks.

DICK RICHARDS
The whale represents our deepest repressions, our darkest fantasies. It’s sexual and violent.

DICK/DAVID/PETER
Shark.

Concern turns to exhaustion at the table. Oblivious, Dick Richards continues his sweaty pitch.

DICK RICHARDS
Fundamentally, this isn't a story about man versus whale. It's about whale and man as one, surging with instincts too powerful to resist.

Dick Richards holds up his left hand, fingers splayed.

DICK RICHARDS
Whale.

Holds up his right hand.

DICK RICHARDS
Man.

Dick Richards brings his hands together, fingers locking tightly, knuckles whitening.

DICK RICHARDS
Man and whale as --

Dick leaps up from the table, unable to take anymore.

DICK
For Christ's sake, man, it's a fucking <u>SHARK</u>!

EXT. THE BISTRO, BEVERLY HILLS - MOMENTS LATER

A shell-shocked Peter Benchley climbs into a cab and drives away. Dick and David watch him go.

DICK
Friedkin?

DAVID
Booked. So's Peckinpah, Roeg, Coppola... there's no one.

Dick's struck by an idea.

DICK
What about the kid?

David considers this prospect, clearly intrigued.

DAVID
You think he's ready?

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

A lopsided A-frame on Nicholas Beach, down the road from trendy Malibu. YOUNG FILMMAKERS grill steaks, drink wine and smoke joints as they stare at TOPLESS SUNBATHERS.

Amongst those present are four young lions taking Hollywood by storm: BRIAN DE PALMA (34), JOHN MILIUS (30), MARTIN SCORSESE (32), and GEORGE LUCAS (30). And then there's Steve, the youngest, sipping a Coke, listening intently.

DE PALMA
I'm telling you, this town's got no idea what audiences want anymore. This is the great unknown, they're looking to us for guidance.

MILIUS
For now, maybe.

DE PALMA
You're paranoid, John!

MILIUS
You think they're just gonna give up, play golf? The gates have swung open, the citadel may look empty -- but it's just an illusion. Soon as they figure out how to make money without us, we're fucked.

SCORSESE
The inherent dichotomy between the economic imperatives of capitalism and the bravery of true artistic endeavor. It's a dichotomy, is what it is. We're facing a dichotomy.

DE PALMA
The studios need us more than we need them. All they know is movies, they've got no idea how to make films. This is our time.

STEVE
What if people want movies?

They all turn, look at Steve.

STEVE
Artistic expression's all well and good, but don't you wanna reach normal, everyday folks -- the kind of people you grew up with?

DE PALMA
No offense, Steve, but you're part of the system.

STEVE
What's that supposed to mean?

DE PALMA
You're a studio guy, always talking about grosses and shit.

MILIUS
Hell, Stevie's more conservative than the fucking suits! Didn't they have to talk you out of giving *Sugarland* a happy ending?

Steve's clearly offended, but nobody seems to notice except George Lucas. De Palma drains his wine.

DE PALMA
Screw this, let's go for a swim.

They all set off down the beach towards the ocean, except for Steve, who hangs back. George notices.

GEORGE
You coming, Stevie?

STEVE
I don't like the water.

George nods, understands.

GEORGE
Never know what's down there, huh?

George runs off to catch up with the others. Steve sits down in the sand alone, deep in thought.

EXT. STEVE'S HOME - NIGHT

A modest single-level house on a quiet street.

INT. STEVE'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

A Spartan shrine to filmmaking. Movie posters provide the only decor, film reels are stacked precariously everywhere, a projector stands where the couch should be.

Steve enters the small kitchen, opens the fridge. Nothing inside but Twinkies, Oreos, milk.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve sits cross-legged on the floor, wearing white crew socks and T-shirt, dunking Twinkies in milk, watching movies. The only light comes from the projector, bathing his boyish face in a soft blue glow. Lost in the magic.

INT. BOARDROOM, UNIVERSAL TOWERS - DAY

Dick and David sit at a large table. Seated opposite are studio president LEW WASSERMAN (60), immaculately dressed in an Italian suit, eyes hidden by huge dark glasses; NED TANEN (43), looks like he's carved from granite; and SID SHEINBERG (33), a tall Texan with a calm and contemplative air.

DICK
Well fellas, whaddya think?

Ned glares at Dick and David. Tense beat, then:

NED
Have you lost your fucking minds? This isn't some art house bullshit, it's a major production!

Lew glances at Ned, silencing him. Thinks it over.

LEW
Maybe we'd be better off with a safe pair of hands, someone who's done this kind of thing before.

DICK
All due respect, Lew, but that's precisely what we don't want. The kid can bring something fresh, a visual excitement we haven't seen.

Lew turns to Sid, a simple gesture that wounds Ned deeply. Sid shrugs his broad shoulders.

SID
Everyone loves *Sugarland*. And he did great on *Duel*. Swap the truck for a shark, it's the same story.

DICK
You see? The kid's a proven entity, he's already made this picture!

Dick's distorted reflection stares back at him from the twin surfaces of Lew's huge dark glasses.

LEW
It's a B-movie horror flick, at best. We don't even know if the book's gonna hit.

Lew walks quickly out. Dick and David aren't sure what just happened, turn to Sid.

DICK
So... do we have our guy?

SID
We've got *Hindenburg*, *Airport '75* and *Earthquake* in play. Bottom line, this just isn't a priority. You want the kid? Go get him.

Dick and David beam. Ned simmers with rage, turns to Sid.

NED
This is a giant fucking mistake.

Ned storms out, slams the door. Dick and David look a little shell-shocked. They go to leave.

SID
Just do it the Universal way, gentlemen. On time, and in budget.

Dick and David nod, exit.

EXT. HOTEL BEL AIR - DAY

A pink palace in the wooded wealth of Bel Air.

INT. HOTEL BEL AIR - CONTINUOUS

An airy dreamscape filled with colorful flowers and antiques. Dick and David sit opposite Steve, staring expectantly at him over a well-worn copy of the *Jaws* manuscript.

DICK
Well, kid, whaddya say?

Steve slides the manuscript across the table.

STEVE
I'm gonna pass, fellas.

Dick and David are caught unawares.

DAVID
May we ask why, Steven?

STEVE
This isn't the picture I wanna do next. I'm talking to Fox about this UFO story, something I've wanted to do for ten years.

DICK
Science fiction?! There's no audience in it, kid!

STEVE
What about *2001*?

DICK
The exception that proves the rule!

STEVE
My buddy George and I think it's a genre ripe for reinvention.

DAVID
So we make Universal an offer. You do *Jaws* for them, they do your UFO project for you.

DICK
Universal loves you, kid. We don't need Fox.

Steve shifts uncomfortably. He looks like a kid trying to find an excuse to get out of gym class.

DAVID
Is there something else, Steven?

STEVE
I didn't like the book.

DAVID
Neither did we, we'll fix it in adaptation.

DICK
We'll get the best writer in town.

STEVE
I already did *Duel*. An Everyman being stalked by a mindless killing machine... it feels like the same story. They've both got four letters!

DAVID
We didn't make that connection. This has real characters, subtext.

DICK
It takes place on the ocean.

STEVE
I just don't want to get typecast as an action guy at the start of my career. I need to show range.

DAVID
We think this could be something special, Steven. No one's ever done this picture before.

Steve steels his resolve.

STEVE
Sorry, fellas. I'm not the guy.

Dick and David look crestfallen. Steve looks guilty, then suddenly worried.

STEVE
You're still coming to San José for the test screening, right?

DICK
Sure thing, kid. See you there.

Steve exits. Dick and David sit in silence for a long beat, wondering what the hell to do next.

DICK
We could change it to a whale?

David bursts into nervous laughter.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER, SAN JOSÉ - NIGHT

A line of MOVIEGOERS outside the theater. Next to posters for *Paper Moon*, another poster with text only:

TONIGHT'S SPECIAL PREVIEW:
"THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS"

Three black limousines pull up outside the theater. Steve emerges from the first, flanked by Dick and David; a delegation of UNIVERSAL EXECS emerge from the other two cars.

Dick wraps an arm around Steve's shoulders.

DICK
This is your coming out party, kid. Savor this moment, coz it'll never feel like this again.

Steve nods, clearly nervous. They head into the theater.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - LATER

The AUDIENCE sit in the dark, watching *Paper Moon*. Wedged between Dick and David, Steve looks increasingly nervous as the moment of truth draws near. He glances at the Universal execs seated nearby, staring implacably at the screen.

LATER

Paper Moon ends, lights come up. A slick MARKETING EXEC in an expensive suit stands, addresses the audience.

MARKETING EXEC
Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you're still with us?

The audience murmurs. Steve squirms.

MARKETING EXEC
You're getting two movies for the price of one tonight. What you're about to see isn't finished, there may be a little work to do here and there, music to be added in, that kind of thing, but we'd love to know your thoughts. You've all been given a card with a few simple questions to answer, and we'll be collecting them on your way out of the theater. Remember, there are no wrong answers; we just want your honest opinion. Thank you.

The exec sits. Steve sinks in his seat. The lights go down, and *The Sugarland Express* begins.

MOMENTS LATER

Goldie Hawn romps about on the big screen, and the audience are lapping it up. Dick beams at Steve.

DICK
You did it, kid. They love it!

Steve starts to relax. His dream is so close to becoming a reality, he can practically taste it...

LATER

The tone of the movie has shifted from a comical caper to something more serious, and the audience looks perplexed. The laughter has stopped, replaced with stony silence.

Steve glances around and knows in that instant that he's lost them. A few rows away, the Universal executives mutter to one another, looking gravely concerned.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

The audience storms out, depositing their completed cards in a collection box. One WOMAN is actually in tears; others have blue murder in their eyes.

Steve walks out of the theater, shell-shocked. He sees a card lying on the floor and picks it up. Scrawled across the card in huge angry letters is one word:

SUCKED!!!

Steve sees the Universal execs march quickly out, muttering to one another, shaking their heads.

INT. DICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Dick and Steve sit opposite one another. Tense beat.

DICK
Test screenings are bullshit kid, everyone knows that.

STEVE
Does the studio know?

Dick's silence speaks volumes. Steve looks devastated.

DICK
Maybe it's the title? So many movies fail coz of bad titles... or maybe it's Goldie? Audiences love her, but they've never seen her in a serious picture before.

Steve churns it over, desperately looking for angles. He speaks quickly, masking growing panic.

STEVE
I can fix this. There's seven minutes in there I can cut, maybe more. And I need to shift some scenes around, the rhythm's off.
(beat)
Tell them I can fix this, Dick.

Dick places a reassuring hand on his shoulder.

DICK
Relax, kid. David and I leave for Cannes tomorrow, but we'll figure this out when we're back. And don't worry -- the studio's still behind this, one hundred percent.

Steve nods, clearly not convinced. Exits.

DICK
We are so fucked.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Busy diner. Elton John's *Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me* playing on the jukebox. Steve sits at a table opposite George Lucas, looking like the sun has well and truly set.

STEVE
The studio's shifting the release to avoid *The Exorcist*.

GEORGE
Maybe they're just trying to give it every chance to succeed?

STEVE
And they're opening wide, two hundred and fifty screens out of the gate.

GEORGE
That's not <u>necessarily</u> bad.

STEVE
C'mon, George, you know what that means! They're trying to recoup their money before word of mouth gets out.

GEORGE
The reviews were great.

STEVE
Studios don't give a damn about reviews, all they care about is the gross! It was that goddamn ending, I should've known the audiences wouldn't go for it! Who wants to see a young couple being punished for trying to be a family? This could bury me, George!

A WAITRESS walks up, refills their coffees. George waits until she's out of earshot.

GEORGE
Maybe you should build the bridge in front of you before they burn the one behind.

Beat as Steve processes.

STEVE
What, that dumb shark thing?

GEORGE
If the book hits, you've got a built-in audience. And there's the parallels with *Duel*...
(realizes)
They've both got four letters!

STEVE
That's exactly my point! C'mon George, who wants to be known as the truck-and-shark director?

GEORGE
That actually sounds really cool.

STEVE
It's a B-movie! The fellas already think I'm this studio brat, this'll just confirm it. I thought we were supposed to change things?

George strokes his beard, considers his response carefully.

GEORGE
If Fellini was playing in Sioux City, Iowa, people would flock next door to see *The Gnome-Mobile*. We're filmmakers, not revolutionaries.

Steve stares into his coffee, a man looking into the abyss.

GEORGE
All I'm saying is, you could be underestimating this. Anyone who's ever gone swimming and wondered what's down there can relate.

George leans in, looks Steve dead in the eyes.

GEORGE
Get this thing right, and this picture could do for the ocean what *Psycho* did for the shower.

INT. OFFICE, 20TH CENTURY FOX STUDIOS - DAY

Steve pitches his UFO story to FOX EXECS. The office walls are decorated with posters of the studio's hits: *The King And I*, *The Sound Of Music*, *Planet Of The Apes*.

STEVE
There's a horizon line right across the middle of the screen. You're looking into infinity, it's night, the sky's black and full of stars, and you see these UFOs, these spaceships. And some of them are really big. And then from below the horizon line, there's one that fills a third of the screen... and you realize that it's just the turret, this thing goes right off the frame, must be five miles wide! And it's got these red and blue lights running along its sides...

Steve trails off. The Fox execs stare blankly. Beat.

FOX EXEC #1
We're not sure how receptive our audience will be to science fiction right now, Steven.

FOX EXEC #2
The moon landing was five years ago. And that Skylab thing NASA just launched... it feels like the whole space thing may be over.

FOX EXEC #3
We could be done with space.

Steve visibly deflates.

FOX EXEC #1
We'd still love to work with you, Steve. Be sure and let us know if you have anything else.

And at that moment, Steve realizes his career's in serious trouble. He gets up, walks out of the room.

INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steve tosses and turns in bed, unable to sleep. The fact that he sleeps on a waterbed doesn't help, every movement causing the bed to slosh and squelch beneath him.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Steve enters, heads to the fridge. He pulls out a carton of milk and takes a long drink...

Spits it out everywhere. It's gone bad.

He hurls the carton of milk across the room. It explodes against the wall, sending rivulets of white running down over a framed poster for *Duel* hanging there.

Steve stares at the *Duel* poster, featuring an image of Dennis Weaver frozen in a silent scream, with the truck looming over him like some mechanical monster.

For the briefest second, Steve sees what looks like a shark's teeth in the grille of the truck.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A cab pulls up outside the airport. Steve climbs out.

INT. PLANE - NIGHT

Steve reads the *Jaws* pages with utter voracity, using a pencil to scribble in the margins.

EXT. HOTEL DU CAP, FRENCH RIVIERA - DAY

A huge pearly-white château set in twenty-two acres of tropical gardens. Deferential palms cool its flushed facade, a dazzling beach stretches before it.

INT. CABANA, BEACH - CONTINUOUS

A cabana overlooking a stretch of beautiful sandy beach. Dick flicks through *Variety*, David's engrossed in a novel.

STEVE (O.S.)
How would we make the damn thing?

Dick and David are startled to see their prodigy, who looks like he hasn't slept in days.

DICK
What the hell are you doing here, kid? You look like shit.

STEVE
Jaws. How would we make it?

Dick gestures to an empty seat in the cabana.

DICK
Let's talk.

LATER

Dick, David and Steve sit in the cabana, engaged in intense discussion. The energy is palpable.

DICK
We could hire a shark trainer. Get a great white to perform stunts in long shots with a dummy, then use miniatures for the close-ups.

STEVE
Can you train a great white?

DICK
Those killer whales in Sea World can snatch a fish outta David's mouth without harming a whisker of that beautiful mustache.

DAVID
For the love of all things holy, don't mention whales.

DICK
How hard can it be? We'll ask around, get the world's greatest shark experts.

Steve considers this, lays down his terms.

STEVE
If I do this, we shoot it at sea. No studio tanks, we need this to be as authentic as possible.

DAVID
That'll blow the budget. No one's ever shot a major motion picture at sea before.

STEVE
And I want a life-size shark.

Dick and David shoot each other a concerned look.

DICK
Whoa, let's talk about this --

STEVE
Life-size, Dick. It's the only way we'll get the audience to buy into this. No miniatures.

Dick and David realize the kid's not gonna budge.

DAVID
We'll talk to the studio, see what can be done.

Steve lays down his final condition.

STEVE
We stick to the novel's basic concept, man versus beast. Lose all the subplots. I want this film to be a great adventure, something the folks I grew up around will flock to the theaters to see.

Dick breaks into a broad smile.

DICK
Whatever you say, kid.

Dick claps a hand on Steve's shoulder, gives it a squeeze. Dick and David exit the cabana, walking back up the beach towards the hotel.

The sun dips below the horizon, the sky bleeds red. Steve sits in the cabana staring out over the Mediterranean Ocean, a vast blue expanse stretching into infinity.

It seems to call out, daring him to take his best shot.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

CREW MEMBERS construct a set under the watchful eye of JOE ALVES (38), production designer. Joe's a wiry former race car driver, short and muscular, with intense energy.

JOE
C'mon guys, let's keep it moving! We gotta get this up quick, we're behind schedule here!

Joe spots someone watching from the shadows.

JOE
Let's take five, fellas.

Joe walks away, leaving the crew members puzzled.

MOMENTS LATER

Joe and Steve sit in a corner of the sound stage on upturned crates. Joe processes what he's just heard before speaking in a slow and deliberate manner, every word measured.

JOE
Let me get this straight. You want to build a fully functional, twenty-five foot great white shark that'll work underwater -- and you want to shoot on the ocean?

STEVE
That's correct.

JOE
The actual ocean. At sea.

STEVE
Sounds like fun, right?

JOE
It sounds like a fucking nightmare, Steve. Even if you find someone who can build the shark, you can't control the ocean! It'll take hours to set up a single shot, you'll be drifting out of position all day! Not to mention the weather, changes in light, all that equipment and crew exposed to the elements... have you got any idea what you're getting yourself into?

STEVE
Not entirely. That's why I need people I can trust, Joe.

Joe shakes his head, stunned at his friend's audacity.

STEVE
The studio thinks sets just pop up by themselves, costumes fall off a rack, props magically appear. They don't understand that the entire visual unity of a film springs from one special craftsman's mastery of his art -- but I do, Joe.
(beat)
I can't do this without you, pal. You're the only one.

Joe's body language remains negative, but Steve can sense the curiosity bubbling beneath the surface.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

A dingy club with a thick layer of smoke hanging in the air and DRUNKEN PATRONS at tables. On stage, CARL GOTTLIEB (36), a big teddy bear, goes through his stand-up routine.

CARL
I went to the doctor the other day, I said "Doc, I've got a problem. I can't get an erection for my wife anymore." Doc says "Bring her in to see me tomorrow." So I go back the next day with my wife, the Doc tells her to undress. "Uh-huh," he says, "I see." He tells her to put her clothes back on, then he takes me aside. I say "Doc, what's wrong with me?" He says "Nothing -- she didn't give me an erection either."

Scattered laughter. Carl's about to continue when he spots a familiar face seated at a corner table.

LATER

STAFF clear tables, sweep up. At the bar, Carl nurses a beer and considers Steve's request.

STEVE
Well, Carl, what do you say?

Carl shifts uncomfortably, unsure how to respond.

CARL
I dunno, Stevie. It's a hell of an offer, but I'm a TV writer. This is features you're talking about!

STEVE
You're perfect, I need someone who can inject some humor into this.

CARL
I thought this was a horror?

STEVE
We gotta make the audience care about these guys. The characters in Benchley's book are so unlikable, you're practically rooting for them to get eaten one by one!

Carl wrestles with his own sense of worth on one hand, and the opportunity of a lifetime on the other.

STEVE
I can't do this without you, pal. You're the only one.

INT. VERNA'S POOL HOUSE - DAY

A small pool house that's been converted into an editing suite. Steel film racks line every wall, and an editing table with a mounted projector takes center stage.

Steve stands opposite VERNA FIELDS (56), one of the finest editors in the business: short, stout, permanently on a diet, with thick glasses and a finely tuned bullshit radar.

STEVE
I can't do this without you, Verna. You're the only one.

Verna stares at Steve through her thick glasses, eyeballs comically magnified.

VERNA
Cut the crap, Stevie, this grapefruit diet's making me cranky. You want me to edit this thing, or not?

STEVE
Uh... would you?

VERNA
Bring me a cheeseburger, I'll carry your firstborn child.

Steve grabs Verna, hugging her tight.

INT. SFX DEPARTMENT, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Steve and Joe meet with a succession of SFX GUYS to discuss building the shark. In quick cuts:

SFX GUY #1
A realistic photo-double great white shark that can swim, attack a boat, and be shot from all angles?

SFX GUY #2
Impossible, it can't be done.

SFX GUY #3
Even if we could build it, it'll fry when it goes in the water.

Each SFX guy offers up a more realistic alternative.

SFX GUY #1
We could do it in miniatures.

SFX GUY #2
Real sharks in long shots, a model in a tank for close-ups.

SFX GUY #3
Full animation, matted into the picture so it'll match.

STEVE
Animation?! We're not making a Disney movie here, this has to look real! There's gotta be a way...

Back to the first SFX guy, who gives them a reality check.

SFX GUY #1
You're asking for something that's never been done before, in seventy-five years of filmmaking.

Steve and Joe meet with one last SFX GUY, who considers their request carefully before responding.

SFX GUY #4
There is one guy... Bob Mattey. Built the squid in *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*, closest anyone's got to what you're asking for. But he retired, a long time ago.

Steve leans forward, intense.

STEVE
Where can we find him?

EXT. SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS - DAY

High up in the mountains, a log cabin standing on a little knoll. Steve's Mercedes parked outside.

INT. BOB MATTEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Joe watch as BOB MATTEY (66), tiny, half-blind, shuffles about his home searching for his glasses. They shoot each other a hesitant look: this is the guy?!

BOB
Now where in the hell did I put 'em? I'm always losing the damn things...

Steve spots a pair of glasses perched on a 12-inch model of King Kong. He hands them to Bob, who puts them on to find himself staring at a baby-faced kid where there should be a big-time movie director. Bob goes wide-eyed.

BOB
You're a director? This business sure is changing!

Steve takes in the tiny, bespectacled old man before them with very little confidence.

STEVE
Well, Bob... can you do it?

Steve braces himself for the inevitable response.

BOB
It's the movies, we can do anything.

Steve and Joe exchange a surprised look.

STEVE
A free-swimming, full-scale model that'll work underwater?

JOE
The actual ocean. At sea.

Bob shrugs his meek shoulders, no big deal.

BOB
I don't see why not?

JOE
(whispers to Steve)
I think he's gone senile.

STEVE
Are you sure about this, Bob? Everyone else we've spoken to says it's impossible!

Bob smiles warmly, like a kind grandpa about to hand out boiled candy to a couple of eager kids.

BOB
Let me show you boys something.

INT. BOB'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bob's garage is filled with dusty movie props from a bygone era: Werewolves, man-eating plants, rubber scorpions, puppets and costumes. Steve looks around in amazement at the effects he fell in love with as a child, now collecting dust.

STEVE
This stuff is unreal! Did you make all this, Bob?

BOB
Every last one of 'em. Started working for my old man when I was sixteen years old. 'Course, things were a little different back then; we didn't have all these fancy new technologies you boys've got.

Bob searches through all the junk for an elusive object.

BOB
Now where did I put it...
(spots something)
Ah-ha!

Bob produces a large black control box, flips a switch. The junk piled up all around shudders, boxes and props shaking as something beneath stirs to life...

A 15-foot model alligator bursts out, jaws creaking open and clamping shut, dust pluming off its scaly body.

Joe leaps out of the way as the alligator lurches at him.

JOE
Holy shit, grandpa's for real.

INT. BUNGALOW, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Carl tacks scene cards on the wall, Joe works on storyboards, and Steve makes a very important phone call.

STEVE
Hello, is this Ron Taylor? My name's Steve Spielberg, I'm a film director working on a new picture about a great white. You worked on a documentary with Pete Gimble?

INT. RON TAYLOR'S HOME - NIGHT

RON TAYLOR (39), a tough-looking Australian, drinks a beer whilst talking on the phone.

RON
What can I do for you, Steve?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

STEVE
We'd like to use some real footage in the film for authenticity, and there's a scene where our shark attacks a cage with a diver inside.

RON
Whiteys don't usually attack cages, they prefer to attack bait.

STEVE
You'd really be helping us out, sir. It's the key to the whole picture, the climatic struggle between man and beast.

Ron considers the request, takes a slug from his beer.

RON
We'll give it a shot.

STEVE
That's great! Oh, our shark's a twenty-five footer -- so the bigger you can get them, the better.

Ron spits his beer out all over the place. Steve winces on the other end of the line.

RON
Our sharks are twelve-to-fifteen footers Mr. Spielberg, the scale's gonna be way off!

Steve pauses, stumped. Inspiration strikes.

STEVE
If we can't make the sharks bigger... how about making the actor smaller?

EXT. GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA - DAY

The world's largest coral reef, 1,200 miles of stunning coral and sparkling ocean. Breathtakingly beautiful.

BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Ron Taylor and his wife VALLERIE attempt to talk CARL RIZZO (36), a little person in full diving gear, into a specially-designed miniature cage. Carl's white with fear.

RON
It's reinforced steel, mate, perfectly safe. Nothing's gonna get through this sucker.

Ron bangs on the miniature cage's bars, causing the entire thing to rattle unconvincingly. Carl gulps.

VALLERIE
If you get scared, just pull on the chord and we'll haul you right out.

CARL RIZZO
I usually double for kids riding horses, that kind of thing!

RON
Horse riding's a lot more dangerous than this, mate. Those fish down there aren't interested in you, you wouldn't even be a snack.

CARL RIZZO
Okay, this isn't helping!

RON
I'll be right down there with ya, nothing's gonna happen.

Ron fixes on his mask, grabs the camera, and dives into the water. Carl steps tentatively towards the cage.

CARL RIZZO
I don't get paid enough for this.

The cage is lowered into the water off the side of the boat. Carl climbs tentatively into the cage...

The huge head of a great white shark rises above the spray, black maw gaping!

Carl screams as the shark attacks the cage, triangular teeth splintering against metal.

VALLERIE
Holy-moly!

The shark gets caught in the lines between the cage and the boat. Its tail whips above the surface as it crashes into the boat in a frenzy, sending Carl flying.

VALLERIE
It's trapped, stay clear!

Wood splits, taut nylon lines pop like thread, scraps of steel and wood flying through the air, and the cage and winch vanish in a boiling, foaming swirl.

Vallerie struggles to catch her breath.

VALLERIE
That was unreal! Poor thing really got caught up there.
(looks around)
Carl?

Carl's nowhere to be seen. Ron bursts out of the water and climbs aboard the boat, camera in hand.

RON
Jeez, you shoulda seen the sucker goin' at that cage!
(then)
Where's the little fella?

INT. CABIN, BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

Ron and Vallerie crouch outside the toilet in the boat's tiny interior. Ron tries the door: Locked.

RON
Carl, you in there mate?

CARL RIZZO (O.S.)
Stay the hell away from me!

Ron examines the lock on the door, turns to Vallerie.

RON
Get me a butter knife, babe.

INT. BUNGALOW, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Steve, Carl and Joe review the footage. On TV, the shark twists like crazy over the empty cage.

STEVE
We have to use it.

CARL
He wasn't in the cage, Steve.

Steve watches the shark on TV break free, the empty cage drifting into the ocean's murky depths.

STEVE
A great white shark just rewrote the end to our movie. Looks like Hooper survives.

INT. SID'S OFFICE, UNIVERSAL TOWERS - DAY

Steve, Dick and David meet with Sid Sheinberg and Ned Tanen.

DICK
Okay fellas, we're here. What's up? You increasing the budget?

Sid looks solemn, Ned strangely pleased. Tense beat.

SID
Our contract with the Screen Actors' Guild is set to expire, and certain elements of the existing contract are likely to be deemed unacceptable to the union's new leadership. The studio's decreed no new productions start unless they can wrap by July 1st to avoid the possibility of a strike.

DAVID
There goes our fall release.

NED
The hell it does. We want to start principal photography on April 10, wrap by end of June.

Steve almost chokes.

STEVE
It's mid-March! We don't have a script yet, a location -- I haven't even started casting!

DICK
Why don't we start once the new contract's finalized, aim for a summer release next year?

SID
The book's selling now, but who knows if it's got legs? We need to keep up the momentum.

STEVE
You've gotta be joking.
(to Dick/David)
Tell me they're joking, fellas.

Dick and David remain silent.

STEVE
You need to find someone else.

Ned breaks into a smile. Dick leaps out of his seat.

DICK
Can we have a moment, fellas?

Dick and David pull Steve aside. Ned attempts to eavesdrop as they talk in hushed voices.

DICK
This has to happen kid, and it has to happen now.

STEVE
No one can make this film in that time frame. I'm sorry, fellas.

Dick and David can feel their project slipping away. Dick knows he has to act fast.

DICK
This isn't a film, kid -- it's a movie. And with you at the helm, we can turn it into a primal scream.

The words sink in. Steve turns back to Sid and Ned.

STEVE
May 1st. That'll give us fifty-five days to get it in the can.

Ned's face falls. Sid thinks it over, shrugs.

SID
We can live with that.

INT. BUNGALOW, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Steve outlines the new plan to Joe and Carl.

STEVE
If we get all the land scenes shot by early June, that'll give us three weeks at sea.

CARL
What are we gonna shoot? We don't have a script yet!

STEVE
We'll write on the fly, with Verna editing on-site. Where are we on locations?

JOE
Down to the Eastern Seaboard, scouting next week.

STEVE
Then all we need is our cast.

JOE
Aren't you forgetting something?
(off Steve's look)
The shark?

Steve's face drops as he remembers the small problem of a working 25-foot white shark.

BOB (O.S.)
Did somebody say "shark?"

Bob Mattey stands in the doorway, holding a shoe box. He enters, lays the box on the table.

Steve watches intently as Bob opens the shoe box and takes out a small model, lovingly welded out of steel and copper: a platform base with a crane-like arm, attached to which is a wonderfully detailed 12-inch great white shark.

BOB
The platform sits on the seabed, with a trolley running on steel rails; the crane attaches to the trolley, giving us about seventy feet of movement in a straight line. The bucket-pivot lets us move the shark up, down, left, right. It'll weigh around twelve tons, take a crew of fifteen to operate, but it should do the trick.

Bob hands Steve the model. Steve plays with the shark, moving it up and down on the tiny mechanical arm.

STEVE
Can you build it by early June?

Bob smiles, delivers a line that'll become his trademark.

BOB
It's the movies, we can do anything.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

A palatial mansion high in the hills, luxury cars outside.

INT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

A party full of Hollywood's movers and shakers. Steve, Dick and David engaged in intense discussion.

DICK
The studio's pushing Charlton for Chief Brody.

STEVE
Charlton just saved a jetliner in *Airport '75*, and he's about to save Los Angeles in *Earthquake*. He's a goddamn superhero! I need Brody to be relatable, an Everyman.

DICK
They've got him under contract for two more pictures. They think we need a star to carry this thing.

STEVE
The shark's the star.

DAVID
We'll talk to them.

DICK
Who're you looking at for Hooper?

STEVE
My buddy George suggested Ricky Dreyfuss, we're meeting next week. Quint's proving a bigger problem.

DAVID
How about Robert Shaw? We used him on *The Sting*, he'd make a great Quint. And the timing's perfect, he's finishing a run on Broadway. The man's one hell of an actor.

STEVE
Great, let's set a meeting.

Dick shoots David a look. David realizes his mistake.

DICK
Just to forewarn you, kid. Robert's a little... intense.

STEVE
That's exactly what I need, someone the audience will buy as a worthy opponent for the shark!

DICK
No, you don't understand --

ROY (O.S.)
What's up, fellas?

Steve, Dick and David turn to see ROY SCHEIDER (42). Roy's laid back, not an ounce of fat; the lean physique and natural confidence of a former amateur boxer.

DICK
Roy, you know Steve Spielberg?

ROY
Not personally. Great to meet you, Steve. Loved *Duel*.

Steve and Roy shake hands. Something about Roy has Steve perplexed, lost in deep thought.

ROY
So, what's this about a shark?

Dick, David and Steve say nothing. It's an awkward silence that makes Roy feel very self-conscious.

ROY
I'll let you get back to it.

Steve watches Roy walk away... and it suddenly clicks.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Steve tears out of the house. He glances around frantically, sees Roy climbing into a car.

STEVE
Roy! Roy, wait up!

Steve runs to Roy's car. Roy winds down the window, confused. Steve catches his breath, then:

STEVE
Do you get seasick, Roy?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steve and Carl with RICKY DREYFUSS (26). Ricky's short, fun-loving, and full of kinetic energy. Without the beard or wire-rim glasses, he looks nothing like Hooper.

RICKY
I hated the book.

STEVE
We all do. Carl's gonna fix it.

RICKY
The character does nothing for me. He's boiler-plate exposition, boring as hell. Shark-this, shark-that, blah-blah-fucking-blah.

STEVE
That's all gonna change, Ricky. We see Hooper as the voice of scientific reason in a town that cares more about tourist dollars than protecting its own citizens. Your character elevates this whole picture from a formulaic monster movie to something with a clearly defined social perspective.

Ricky lowers his voice, almost conspiratorial.

RICKY
I just saw myself in *Duddy Kravitz*, and I was awful. I need to choose my next role very carefully, or my career is well and truly fucked.

Ricky goes to leave. Reaches the door when Steve speaks.

STEVE
Growing up in Scottsdale, Arizona, I felt like an alien. I was the only Jewish kid in school, a skinny runt with a big schnozz the other kids used to call "Spielbug". Spent most of my days trying to keep my face out of the drinking fountain. I longed for Saturday, when my dad would drop me at the Kiva Theater on Main Street for the double-header. I'd sit in the dark staring up at that big screen, and feel... connected. Then one day, I realized something: I never saw myself in those movies. There were no Jewish heroes embodying our rich tradition of intellectual enquiry, respect for learning, intense involvement with morality and law.

Ricky hangs by the door, listening intently. Steve turns to look directly at him, delivers the killer line.

STEVE
Those kids out there, the ones like me? They need heroes too.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Skyscrapers reaching skyward to test God. In the streets below, people fight over yellow cabs.

INT. VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Carl sit in the AUDIENCE, watching ACTORS on stage. Steve tracks one ACTOR in particular, analyzing every movement, every gesture.

INT. DRESSING ROOM, VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATER - LATER

Steve and Carl wait in the small dressing room, empty booze bottles covering every available surface.

CARL
The guy sure likes a drink.

The door blows open and in walks ROBERT SHAW (46), a steel-gazed mass of wiry muscle who seems to be fighting a constant urge to give you a severe beating, then buy you a frothy drink in a dented tankard, then give you another beating.

Unlike the character we'll remember him by, Shaw's clean-shaven and speaks with a cut-glass English accent. He marches past Steve and Carl, grabs a bottle of whiskey, pours a large measure into a chipped cup, drains it. Beat, then:

SHAW
I hate the book.

STEVE
We all do, sir. Carl's the writer, he's gonna fix it.

Shaw turns on Carl.

SHAW
Oh? And what have you written?

CARL
(flustered)
Well, I've mostly worked in TV --

SHAW
I've written for Lawrence Olivier.

Shaw turns his withering gaze on Steve, piercing blue eyes scanning for weaknesses.

SHAW
And you’re the director?

STEVE
Yes, sir.

SHAW
The boy king. Your last film was *The Sugarland Express*?

STEVE
That’s correct.

SHAW
And this fish film is your shot at redemption, is that it?

Steve’s stunned.

STEVE
Listen, Mr. Shaw --

SHAW
Good evening, gentlemen.

Shaw turns away, conversation over. He pours another drink, sinks into a chair. Steve and Carl go to leave. Steve stops at the door, turns back to Shaw.

STEVE
This might look like some dumb monster movie, Mr. Shaw. And I may look like a kid fresh out of film school. But mark my words, what we do here is gonna change the industry forever. You can be part of that, or live with regret for the rest of your life.

Steve and Carl exit. Shaw has a strange look about him. He drains his whiskey, pours another.

EXT. VIVIAN BEAUMONT THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Steve and Carl emerge from the theater.

CARL
Guy’s a real charmer.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Pitch-black. The shrill ring of a telephone. Steve fumbles in the dark for the receiver, answers.

STEVE
It's three in the morning.

DICK (V.O.)
Shaw's in.

Steve sits up in bed, turns on the light.

STEVE
Are you sure about this?

DICK (V.O.)
His agent just called. You've got your cast, kid.

The phone goes dead.

EXT. MARTHA'S VINEYARD - DAY

Picturesque, unspoiled. Victorian gingerbread houses, quiet streets, not a McDonald's in sight.

BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Joe and Steve tour around the island's beautiful coastline. Steve takes in the scene.

JOE
Twenty-five feet down to a sandy bottom, sheltered bays giving us an unbroken horizon with no land in sight, manageable tides, all within forty-five minutes of hotels that can house a hundred crew.

Steve gazes at the coastline, speckled with fishing villages and New England clapboard houses.

STEVE
This is it. This is Amity.

Relief washes over Joe. They've found their location!

JOE
There's one more thing to see.

EXT. SHIPYARD - EVENING

Steve stares at a 42-foot lobster boat sitting in the dock. The name “Warlock” is painted on its stern.

STEVE
What am I looking at?

JOE
You don’t see it? It’s the Orca.
(reverential)
This is Quint’s boat.

Steve stares quizzically at the mint-condition boat, trying to picture it as the shark hunter’s grimy vessel.

STEVE
Nothing a few coats of blood and fish guts won’t fix.

EXT. LOT, SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - DAY

Sun beats down on a dirt lot, home to a huge warehouse. Cars parked outside, including Steve’s Mercedes.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steve stands in the cavernous space with George Lucas, John Milius and Brian De Palma, staring up at a 25-foot shark with a creamy yellow plastic exterior mounted on scaffolding above them. Bob Mattey talks them through his creation.

BOB
Neoprene foam cells, non-absorbent, with a polyurethane skin and nylon stretch material. Tubular steel skeleton, flexible joints, thirty pneumatic rams driving the moving parts. We haven’t painted yet, on account of wanting to get the mix right -- shark skin has a texture like a cat’s tongue, so we’ll sand-blast between layers to create the right look and make sure water doesn’t bead unrealistically.

Bob hits a switch on a control panel and the shark’s jaws grind open and closed like an outsized bear trap.

BOB
Well, what do you think?

Steve stares at the monster, lost for words. Bob smiles.

BOB
I'll give you boys a moment.

Bob exits the warehouse, leaving the guys alone. De Palma gazes up at the shark.

DE PALMA
This is, without doubt, the most ridiculous thing I've ever seen.

Steve's stunned.

STEVE
What's wrong with it?

MILIUS
They've overdone it, Stevie. It's totally unrealistic, we're like human tacos to that thing.

STEVE
No they haven't, the ichthyologist said this is exactly what it would look like!

DE PALMA
Ichthy-whatever-the-fuck, it looks totally fake. Sorry, pal.

Steve's heart sinks. De Palma and Milius walk out of the warehouse, leaving Steve and George alone. George climbs the ladder to get a better look, peers into the shark's mouth.

GEORGE
Hey, you gotta check this out! You can see the pistons!

Steve gets an idea. He races to the control panel and hits a switch, causing the shark's jaws to close on George.

GEORGE
Aaaarrrgggh, it's got me!

George's exposed feet kick like crazy, hanging comically out of the shark's mouth. Steve laughs hysterically.

GEORGE
C'mon Steve, lemme outta here!

STEVE
Okay, okay, relax.

Steve flips the switch to open the mouth. Nothing.

GEORGE
Open it, these rubber teeth hurt!

Steve flips the switch again, but the shark's jaws remain clamped stubbornly shut.

STEVE
I think it's broken!

GEORGE
What?!

Steve races up the ladder and grabs George's legs, trying to pull him out of the mouth. The shark seems to be watching, black eyes staring stubbornly at Steve.

GEORGE
Help! HELP!

Steve tugs. George kicks. The shark stares, defiant. An almighty struggle and George finally breaks free. They tumble down the ladder, collapsing to the floor.

Steve and George look at each other in shock, then up at the shark. It looks like it's smiling at them.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bob sits in a deck chair, basking in the sun. He startles as Steve and George bolt out of the warehouse and leap into Steve's Mercedes.

STEVE
Gotta run, Bob. Great job!

Steve fires up the car's engine.

GEORGE
Let's hope it works better on set.

They peel out in a cloud of dust.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Crossing the narrow stretch of Nantucket Sound separating Massachusetts mainland from Martha's Vineyard.

Steve stands on the bow, watching the island come into view.

EXT. EDGARTOWN, MARTHA'S VINEYARD - DAY

Seaport village with stately white houses and quiet streets.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jaws HQ. CREW MEMBERS install desks, phones and Xerox machines; walls are covered in maps of the island, locations circled in red marker, pins stuck everywhere.

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Joe hang a small sign over the porch, a tastefully painted set of shark jaws and the text:

> *"JAWS" PRODUCTION OFFICE, A ZANUCK/BROWN COMPANY, FOR UNIVERSAL STUDIOS*

They stare up at it proudly.

VOICE (O.S.)
That's a zoning violation.

Steve and Joe turn to see a local SELECTMAN, full of self-importance, watching from the street.

JOE
Sorry?

SELECTMAN
That sign. Remove it immediately, or you'll be shut you down for non-conformity use.

Steve and Joe glance up at the tiny, unobtrusive sign.

STEVE
Are you being serious?

SELECTMAN
No, this is me joking. Take the damn thing down.

Joe shakes his head, takes the sign down. The selectman struts off, order restored in his tiny world.

JOE
That's some welcome party.

Steve watches the selectman walk away and realizes in that moment: they're in alien territory, here.

EXT. LOG CABIN - NIGHT

A large log cabin at the end of a private road, on a knoll overlooking the ocean.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl sets up his typewriter in a corner of the room, starts tacking scene cards up on the walls.

INT. VERNA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Verna watches like a hawk as two CREW MEMBERS sets up an editing table and mounted projector.

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Steve, Joe, Carl, Verna, Roy and Ricky at the dinner table, eating a feast of broiled lobster. Ricky's grown a beard and has transformed into Hooper; Roy's super-relaxed.

Steve takes in the team he'll rely on in the coming months. He's feeling good, full of confidence.

STEVE
Fifty-five days, guys. Fifty-five days that'll change everything.

RICKY
Let's hope for the better.

ROY
What's that supposed to mean?

RICKY
I thought *Duddy Kravitz* would be a hit. You never can tell.

Roy considers this, shrugs.

ROY
Duddy Kravitz didn't have a twenty-five-foot killer shark.

They eat in silence, warriors gorging on the eve of battle.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Carl at the typewriter, hammering away. Steve sits in a chair nearby, reading pages and making notes.

The telephone rings; Steve answers.

STEVE
This is Steve.

INT. DICK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dick sits at his desk on the phone.

DICK
You ready for this, kid?

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

STEVE
Ready as I'll ever be.

DICK
Good. Coz DoubleDay paid half a million for the paperback rights, meaning our little monster flick just shot up the studio's agenda. Don't screw this up, kid.

STEVE
Is that your idea of a pep talk?

Dick smiles, hangs up. Steve goes back to work.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

SUPER: DAY 1 OF PRINCIPLE PHOTOGRAPHY

Cameras roll. Roy (playing Chief Brody) discovers a severed arm on the beach. The arm belongs to a YOUNG WOMAN buried in the sand out of shot, looking very uncomfortable.

STEVE (O.S.)
Cut!

Steve marches over, examines the scene. Dozens of tiny crabs stand around the young woman's arm, motionless, tiny pincers wavering defiantly above their heads.

STEVE
The crabs aren't moving.

ROY
Must be with the union.

CREW MEMBERS snigger. Steve snatches a cup of coffee from a SOUNDMAN and tips it onto the crabs, sending them scuttling and burning the woman's hand.

YOUNG WOMAN (O.S.)
Ow!

Steve walks out of shot, all business.

STEVE (O.S.)
And... action!

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

The Hollywood circus moves from one location to another, shooting scene after scene. Crowds of LOCALS gather at every point, watching in endless fascination.

SUPER: DAY 4... DAY 7... DAY 11...

Every night, Steve and team sit around the dinner table, discussing story beats; after coffee and desert, Carl goes to the typewriter to thrash out the next day's scenes.

Steve crawls out of bed every morning at dawn, grabs a flask of hot tea, and heads outside to the veranda to read the latest script pages.

EXT. BOATYARD - DAY

SUPER: DAY 14

An angry mob of EXTRAS dressed as fishermen descend on the boatyard and take to the seas to hunt the shark.

Steve makes them go again and again, relentless in his quest for the perfect shot.

SPEEDBOAT - LATER

A frustrated FISHERMAN attempts to teach Ricky to bring a speedboat into the dock. Ricky keeps misjudging it, slamming the boat's nose into the dock.

WATCHING FROM THE BOATYARD

Two bemused LOCALS watch, shaking their heads.

LOCAL #1
Hollywood sure can't handle boats.

LOCAL #2
He seemed much smarter in *American Graffiti*.

SPEEDBOAT - MOMENTS LATER

The fisherman watches Ricky closely, issues instructions.

FISHERMAN
Easy, now... easy... easy...

The speedboat slams into the dock, splintering wood.

RICKY
FUCK!

FISHERMAN
Okay, let's try her again.

Ricky spots a MYSTERY MAN watching from the boatyard. It looks a little like Robert Shaw, if Robert Shaw lay in the sun for days on end, festering in his own filth.

The mystery man shakes his head, stalks off.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve and team eat another magnificent feast. Ricky has something on his mind, finally speaks.

RICKY
Is Robert Shaw on the island?

STEVE
Arrived a few days ago. Why?

RICKY
I saw him at the boatyard today. You guys ever catch him in Saville's *Hamlet*? Best Claudius ever, un-fucking-believable --
(off Verna's look)
Sorry, Vern.
(then)
What's he like?

Steve and Carl exchange a look. Ricky catches it.

STEVE
Shaw? He's... interesting.

RICKY
Interesting, how?

The household COOK enters, clears the plates.

COOK
Who's up for lemon cream pie? It's my speciality.

VERNA
There goes my cholesterol.

The cook exits. Ricky stares at Steve and Carl, waiting.

RICKY
Interesting -- how?

The cook returns with the pie. Steve and Carl fill their mouths with pie to avoid speaking. Ricky watches them eat, growing increasingly suspicious.

EXT. TOWN HALL - DAY

SUPER: DAY 17

Main Street jammed with trucks. CREW MEMBERS and LOCALS loiter around, drinking coffee.

INT. TOWN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The scene where the Amity Islanders announce the bounty on the shark that killed the Kintner boy. Roy's in the scene with other ACTORS; Ricky's watching in the background.

STEVE
And... action!

The actors erupt in argument, shouting over one another... the chilling sound of nails on chalkboard.

Everyone turns to see Robert Shaw: thick mustache, side burns, weatherbeaten skin, oozing menace. His piercing blue eyes scan the room.

Steve and Ricky watch behind the cameras, mesmerized.

MOMENTS LATER

Shaw slimes out. Stunned silence as everyone temporarily forgets what they're doing.

STEVE
Cut! That's a print, people!

Spontaneous applause breaks out, everyone showing their appreciation for the masterful performance. The only person not applauding is Ricky, who looks utterly terrified.

EXT. FISHING VILLAGE - DAY

Insufferably quaint, backed by a hill encrusted with summer cottages. You've seen this place on postcards.

EXT. DESERTED LOT - CONTINUOUS

CREW MEMBERS carrying planks of wood as Steve and Joe oversee the construction of Quint's home.

JOE
Right here, this is where we'll drive the piles in to support the main structure.

The same selectman we met earlier approaches.

SELECTMAN
What the hell's going on here?!

JOE
We're building a set, we've got all the necessary permits.

Joe hands the selectman reams of paperwork. He scans the documents, hands them back.

SELECTMAN
You wanna build, you gotta adhere to local construction codes.

JOE
What codes?

SELECTMAN
First, you gotta lay a concrete foundation. Then you gotta double-sheath the walls and flooring, put all electrical connections in a metal conduit, and connect all the sewage and waste lines.

STEVE
But it's just a set, it'll only be up for a couple of days!

SELECTMAN
I don’t give a rat-crap how long it’ll be up for, the law’s the law. And you gotta restore the lot to its original condition when you’re done, including all contents.

Steve looks around. The lot’s empty, but for paper cups and candy wrappers scattered around.

STEVE
It’s empty.

SELECTMAN
(points at the ground)
What the hell do you call that?

JOE
You want the trash back?!

SELECTMAN
Original. Condition.

Steve thinks fast, turns to the selectman.

STEVE
Out of interest, what happens if we don’t lay the foundation?

SELECTMAN
We’ll get a court order, tear the damn thing down.

STEVE
How long does that usually take?

SELECTMAN
Six weeks, maybe less. We can move pretty fast when we need to.

Steve turns to Joe, mischievous glint in his eyes.

STEVE
Screw the code. Build it.

JOE
(beat, smiles)
Okay boys, let’s do this!

The crew go to work. The selectman storms off, furious.

JOE
Make sure you keep the trash boys, the gentleman wants it back.

EXT. LOT - DAWN

Ricky crosses the lot to a small trailer, knocks on the door.

VOICE (O.S.)
Come.

INT. TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Ricky enters to find Shaw reading script pages, drinking what looks to be his fourth martini.

RICKY
Mr. Shaw? Ricky Dreyfuss, pleasure to finally meet you.

Ricky extends a hand. Shaw reluntantly shakes. Ricky's thrown by how huge Shaw's hand is, swallowing his own.

RICKY
I'm excited we're working together. I gotta say, your Claudius was the best I've ever seen.

SHAW
How many have you seen?

RICKY
(taken aback)
Uh... sorry?

SHAW
How many actors have you seen play Claudius?

RICKY
Well, I guess... four or five?

SHAW
I've seen sixteen.

Shaw drains his martini, goes back to reading. Ricky stands there, unsure what just happened. Exits.

INT. QUINT'S HOME - DAY

<u>SUPER: DAY 27</u>

A grimey slum, fit for a hunter. Shaw boils shark jaws in a pot, hands covered in blood as he bullies Ricky relentlessly in another virtuoso performance. Steve watches from behind the cameras and knows he's capturing pure gold.

STEVE
Cut! Robert, that was incredible!

Shaw looks at Steve, turns to nearby CREW MEMBERS.

SHAW
Somebody get this boy some milk and cookies, he looks famished.

Shaw ruffles Steve's hair, exits. The crew snigger.

EXT. LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Shaw works his way through a six-pack of beers between takes. Ricky spots him, walks over.

RICKY
You've really got this guy down. You use any special techniques to get into character?

Shaw holds up a huge hand, still slick with fake blood.

SHAW
"What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with
brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the
sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow?"

Shaw crushes his beer can, stalks off. Ricky realizes.

RICKY
(under his breath)
Claudius. Mother-<u>fucker</u>.

EXT. LOT - EVENING

CREW MEMBERS dismantle Quint's home, returning the lot to its original condition. Including the trash.

EXT. LOT - NIGHT

Joe watches as the selectman inspects the empty lot. The selectman picks a candy wrapper up off the ground and stares at it closely, like a detective examining evidence.

The selectman discards the wrapper and picks up a styrofoam cup next. Joe shakes his head in disbelief.

INT. VERNA'S ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Verna edits footage as Steve watches over her shoulder. The scenes between Shaw and Ricky sizzle.

STEVE
Well, Vern, what do you think? It's something, right?

VERNA
I think you need that shark, Stevie -- because I'm running out of stuff to work with here.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

A passenger ferry approaches Martha's Vineyard. TWO KIDS standing on the deck suddenly burst into tears. Their MOTHER rushes over to see what's wrong.

MOTHER
Hey there, what's the matter --

A 25-foot monster shark sitting on a barge is towed past the ferry at eye-level, tarpaulin flapping off its huge body.

The mother gasps, covers her children's eyes.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

A disused boat shed sports a crudely painted sign outside:

SHARK CITY - NO ADMITTANCE!

INT. SHARK CITY - CONTINUOUS

Bob Mattey watches proudly as Steve and Joe examine the now-painted shark. It looks totally freaking awesome.

STEVE
You've tested it in the water?

BOB
Of course, works perfectly!

Steve gazes lovingly at the star of his movie.

STEVE
You ready for the camera, big guy?

The shark stares back at Steve with cold, black eyes.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve, Joe, Carl, Verna, Roy, Ricky and Shaw eat another magnificent feast. Ricky steals glances at Shaw, who doesn't acknowledge his existence. Steve raises his glass.

STEVE
Three weeks to go, fellas. We're right on schedule. Here's to making a primal scream.

Glasses clink around the table. Ricky goes to cheers Shaw, but Shaw drains his drink. Steve notices.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 35

A heroic tug boat tows a huge steel construction on flotation tanks two miles off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, to a designated spot marked by buoys.

We recognize it from Bob Mattey's model earlier, a steel platform with a crane-like arm attached, but in reality it's frighteningly big and looks very unwieldy.

MOMENTS LATER

RIGGERS and DIVERS let the air out of the flotation tanks. The colossal steel structure sinks precariously, leaving only the crane-like arm above the water's surface.

MOMENTS LATER

The Hollywood armada arrives.

There's the Orca, the rusty centerpiece of the ensemble; camera boats; a barge carrying lights, reflectors and cables, and a fleet of smaller vessels ferrying CREW MEMBERS.

Finally, a barge arrives carrying a very special cargo concealed beneath a black plastic roof. The plastic is pulled back to reveal the shark sitting in a cradle, like a dangerous prisoner trapped in a barred cell.

SPEEDBOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve and Joe arrive at the location. Steve takes in the sheer scale of the operation for the first time.

STEVE
Jesus... this thing is huge.

The shark's cradle is lifted by crane, and the shark fastened to the mechanical arm jutting out of the sea.

The boats are anchored. Crew members board the Orca to set up the shot. The electric barge moves in, aiming lights and reflectors at the Orca. Steve boards the camera boat, which moves into position ready to get the shot.

The mechanical arm lowers the shark into the water, and the beast disappears beneath the murky surface.

ORCA - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky and Shaw take their positions.

Roy heads to the stern where a bucket of chum awaits, an oily mix of blood and fish guts stagnating in the sun.

ROY
I get all the fun jobs, huh?

CAMERA BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve gets the signal, the actors are in position.

STEVE
And... action!

ORCA

Roy lifts the bucket and starts hurling chum into the water, a lit cigarette dangling from his lips.

STEVE (O.S.)
Cue the shark!

CAMERA BOAT

Steve stares expectantly at the water, waiting for the star of his movie to break its surface. Nothing.

STEVE
Cut! Okay, let's try that again.
(then)
And... action!

ORCA

Roy shovels stinky chum into the sea.

STEVE (O.S.)
Cue the shark!

CAMERA BOAT

Steve watches the water's surface. No shark. A tinny voice crackles through a nearby radio:

RADIO
The shark is not working. Repeat, the shark is not working.

UNDERWATER - MOMENTS LATER

A team of DIVERS swim through the murky water, racing towards the ocean floor.

They nearly have a heart attack when they catch first sight of the monster lying limply on the seabed.

INT. SHARK CITY - NIGHT

The shark is mounted on tracks. A side panel is removed, revealing the multicolored hoses and pneumatic compressors inside. Bob runs various tests as Steve and Joe watch.

BOB
Seems to be working just fine now. We'll run some more tests through the night, just to be sure.

Steve and Joe look relieved, walk out.

EXT. SEA - DAY

<u>SUPER: DAY 36</u>

The steel platform is towed back out to its designated spot, and sunk. The shark is hoisted by crane and affixed to the mechanical arm. It goes into the water.

CAMERA BOAT - LATER

Steve hangs around, waiting. He uses a two-way radio.

STEVE
How are we looking, Bob?

A tinny voice crackles back through the radio:

BOB (V.O.)
Few technical problems, shouldn't be too much longer.

INT. ORCA - LATER

Ricky waits for the restroom. A flush, then Shaw emerges. Ricky's instantly hit by the foul stench.

SHAW
(doing Claudius again)
"O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven."

Shaw holds the door open for Ricky, smiling. Ricky holds his breath, enters. Shaw saunters off, singing to himself.

SHAW
Farewell and adieu to you fair Spanish ladies... farewell and adieu to you ladies of Spain...

ORCA - MOMENTS LATER

Ricky emerges from the cabin, ghostly pale. He glares at Shaw, drinking a beer on the stern. Shaw raises his beer to Ricky in a cheers gesture.

RICKY
(under his breath)
Motherfucker.

From the camera boat, anchored a few feet from the Orca:

STEVE
Okay, places everybody!

The actors take their positions. Ricky focuses, prepares to deliver his line.

STEVE (O.S.)
And...

SHAW
Mind your mannerisms, Mr. Hooper.

Ricky startles, his concentration broken.

STEVE (O.S.)
... action!

CAMERA BOAT

Steve watches the water expectantly. Nothing. A tiny voice crackles through a nearby radio:

RADIO
The shark is not working. Repeat, the shark is not working.

INT. SHARK CITY - NIGHT

The shark's jaws crank open, sending gallons of seawater gushing onto the floor including several flapping fish. Steve and Joe watch nervously, awaiting Bob's diagnosis.

BOB
The rig could've got damaged in transit, messing up the hydraulics. That's a relatively easy fix; the other scenario's a little trickier.

JOE
What "other scenario"?

BOB
The circuitry might have fried when we put him in the water.

Steve and Joe exchange shocked looks.

STEVE
I thought you tested it?!

BOB
We did, in a studio tank. Salt water's a little different.

JOE
(to himself)
Oh man, this is so bad...

BOB
Don't worry! We'll work through the night, fix him right up.

Steve stares into the shark's gaping mouth. A few remaining fish flap about inside, gills puffing open, slowly dying. He turns back to Bob with newfound suspicion.

STEVE
You can do this, right, Bob?

Bob smiles reassuringly.

BOB
It's the movies, we can do anything!

For the briefest second, Steve thinks he sees a malevolent twinkle in the old man's bespectacled eyes.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve and the team eat dinner. Shaw's noticeably absent.

RICKY
So, what's up with Shaw?

STEVE
He doesn't have to eat with us.

RICKY
I'm not talking about his dining habits. I'm talking about the fact that he's a fucking asshole.

Verna shoots Ricky a stern look. Ricky's indignant.

STEVE
Is there a problem between you?

RICKY
He's the one with the problem. Keeps quoting *Hamlet* at me, trying to get me all riled up.

ROY
You don't like *Hamlet*?

RICKY
The guy's got issues, beyond the four martinis he puts away before breakfast. He's unhinged.

Steve knows he has to act quickly.

STEVE
Maybe it's deliberate? The on-screen tension between you guys is phenomenal. It's elevating this to a genuine character piece.

Ricky's taken aback, clearly hadn't considered this. He's about to speak, then goes back to eating.

Steve doesn't notice Roy, who looks a little put out.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 42

The armada takes to the seas. The shark barge arrives, black plastic roof concealing the reluctant monster beneath.

INT. SHARK BARGE - MOMENTS LATER

The shark sits in its cradle. Bob fiddles with the control deck. Steve boards the barge, approaches.

STEVE
Big day today, Bob. You're sure it's gonna work?

BOB
Don't worry! There's always a few little kinks with this sorta thing, we've got it under control.

STEVE
(suspicious)
Right. A few kinks.

SPEEDBOAT - MOMENTS LATER

Dick and David approach the colossal fleet sitting in the middle of the Nantucket Sound.

DAVID
That's some operation.

DICK
Thirty grand a day, it'd better be.

CAMERA BOAT - MOMENTS LATER

Dick, David and Steve watch as the shark is hoisted through the air by crane and attached to the mechanical arm.

DAVID
Well, would you look at that?

DICK
Tell me about it. This Bob Mattey's really something, ain't he?

Steve smiles nervously.

STEVE
He sure is.

ORCA - MOMENTS LATER

The actors take their positions.

CAMERA BOAT

Steve gets the signal. The air is thick with anticipation. He grabs a bull horn, speaks into it:

STEVE
And... action!

ORCA

Shaw races to the bowsprit of the Orca, rifle in hand. He aims the rifle at the rippling ocean, waiting...

A huge conical head breaks the water's surface, red mouth gaping. The shark is working!

CAMERA BOAT

Steve's heart lifts... then he notices something strange about the monster in the water.

DICK
What the hell's that?

DAVID
(stands, looks)
It looks like a dimple.

True enough, the shark has an enormous dimple in its chin that makes it look more funny than frightening. Steve visibly deflates. David notices, tries to comfort him.

DAVID
It's... very frightening.

ORCA

Ricky, Roy and Shaw stare at the gormless, dimpled shark bobbing up and down in the water.

RICKY
If we had any sense, we'd all bail out now.

INT. SHARK CITY - NIGHT

The shark is mounted on tracks, dripping wet. Steve and Joe watch Bob examine the huge dimple in its chin.

BOB
We must've put him into the dive early, hit the platform.

STEVE
How long will it take to fix?

BOB
Couple of days ought to do. It's just like popping out a fender.

Steve stares at the monster, increasingly worried.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve, Dick and David at the dinner table.

DAVID
How much do we have?

STEVE
We've got all the land scenes.

DICK
We don't have <u>any</u> shark?!

STEVE
We'll get back on track. There's always a few little kinks with this sort of thing.

DICK
We're not doubting your abilities kid, it's the union we're worried about! A strike could kill us.

DAVID
And there's the budget to consider. Tourist season's started, the cost of filming here will sky-rocket.

Steve feels their confidence slipping away by the second. He knows he has to act quickly to smooth things over.

STEVE
I want to show you something.

INT. VERNA'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Steve, Dick and David watch as Verna runs scenes between Shaw and Ricky on the editing table's projector.

DAVID
That man is one hell of an actor.

DICK
I'll say. You really believe he hates the kid, right?

Steve smiles uncomfortably.

STEVE
Uh, yeah. Hell of an actor.

The footage on the projector ends. Dick and David stare at Steve proudly, seek to reassure him.

DAVID
We'll talk to the studio.

They go to leave. Dick's struck by an idea.

DICK
You know, Benchley's here next week. He's a little put out at some of your comments about the book. How about giving him a small cameo to patch things up? Could be some good PR in it for us.

STEVE
Sure thing, Dick. Great idea.

Dick clamps a hand on Steve's shoulder.

DICK
Keep up the good work, kid.

Dick and David exit. Steve breathes a sigh of relief, then notices Verna staring at him in judgement.

VERNA
So when do I get some shark footage to work with, huh?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve and Carl hatch a new plan.

STEVE
The shark's out of commission for a few days, and this place is crawling with tourists. Let's turn this situation to our advantage.

CARL
You mean... the beach scene?

Steve smiles. Joe enters, looks worried.

JOE
We just got the film tests back from the lab. The shark's teeth are too white.

Steve takes a deep breath, maintains his composure.

STEVE
Tell Bob to fix the teeth whilst he's doing the dimple.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

FOUR HUNDRED EXTRAS run out of the water on cue, screaming their lungs out, trampling each other. Steve coordinates the huge operation with calm focus, take after take.

A small biplane flies over the beach, trailing a banner with the DoubleDay logo and the text:

GOING SWIMMING? READ "JAWS" FIRST!

MOMENTS LATER

Steve chats to enthusiastic LOCALS between takes, many of whom are wearing *Jaws* T-shirts. Roy approaches.

ROY
Steve, you got a second?

They walk off together.

ROY
You think Brody's too boring?

STEVE
(beat, taken aback)
What makes you say that?

ROY
That stuff you said at dinner, about the chemistry between Ricky and Robert. I just don't wanna be the straight man, I'm supposed to be the star of this movie.

STEVE
Trust me, Roy. Carl's got a new ending that'll make Brody look like *Dirty Harry*. Don't worry.

Roy breaks into a big grin.

ROY
Sounds great! Thanks, Steve.

Roy walks off, back to his easygoing self. For the briefest second, Steve looks to be showing the strain.

LATER

Peter Benchley, playing the part of a reporter, holds a microphone and talks to a camera.

STEVE (O.S.)
Cut!

Steve walks up, claps a hand on Peter's shoulder.

STEVE
Pete, you're a natural!

PETER
It's Peter. And thank you.

Steve takes Peter aside.

STEVE
I want to run something by you. It's about the ending.

PETER
Oh? What about it?

STEVE
The book's ending is a real downer. The shark gets tangled up in the boat and drowns. It's not dramatic, and I need a big finish.

Peter's clearly offended, but Steve doesn't notice.

PETER
That's a little harsh, but you're entitled to your opinion. What do you propose instead?

STEVE
Brody shoves a tank of compressed air in the shark's mouth and shoots it with a rifle, blowing it up.

Beat as Peter considers this, then:

PETER
That is the most preposterous thing I've ever heard.

STEVE
Sure, but do you think it's a good ending for the movie?

PETER
It's absurd, Steven! Nobody will ever believe it.

STEVE
If I've got them for two hours, they'll believe anything for those two minutes. I want the audience on their feet screaming, "Yes! This is what this monster deserves!"

Peter shakes his head, realizes the futility of it.

PETER
It's your movie.

STEVE
Thanks, Pete. Your opinion really means a lot to me.

Steve walks off. Peter bristles.

LATER

Steve sits opposite a REPORTER, doing an interview.

REPORTER
How faithful is the movie to Benchley's novel?

STEVE
Our characters are much more likeable. The book's characters, you're practically rooting for them to get eaten one by one. Oh, and the ending! Our ending will be much bigger -- more dramatic.

CUT TO:

The same reporter, now interviewing Peter Benchley.

REPORTER
Spielberg says your book's a piece of shit, and the characters suck.

The words cut Peter like a knife.

PETER
Spielberg is a twenty-six year old kid who learned about life from watching movies. He knows, flatly, nothing about character. Mark my words, one day Steven Spielberg will be known as the most famous second-unit director in America.

INT. SID'S OFFICE, UNIVERSAL TOWERS - DAY

Dick and David sit opposite Sid Sheinberg and Ned Tanen. You could cut the tension in the air with a knife.

DICK
He really said that?

Ned tosses Dick a newspaper.

NED
You got any idea how embarrassing this is for the studio, having our director and author bad-mouthing each other in the newspapers?

DAVID
We'll fix it, Ned.

NED
Bet your ass you're gonna fix it! And what's this crap I hear about the shark not working? How the hell are we gonna make a monster movie without a goddamn monster?!

Dick and David shift uncomfortably.

NED
You pushed for the kid. You better pray he can handle this.

Ned storms out. Dick and David look shellshocked.

SID
So, how's it going out there?

DICK/DAVID
A few kinks.

SID
Kinks, or dimples?

Dick and David shoot each other a concerned look.

DICK
Listen, Sid --

SID
Relax, Dick. The Guild signed the new contract last night.

DICK
You mean... no strike?

SID
We just bought ourselves a stay of execution, gentlemen.

Relief washes through Dick and David.

DICK
That's fantastic news, Sid!

DAVID
Now we can finish this picture without the sword of Damacles hanging over our heads.

Dick and David go to leave.

SID
Remember the Universal way? On time, and in budget.
(then)
Get it under control.

Dick and David nod, exit.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 52

The steel platform is sunk. The shark goes into the water. The boats are moved into position and anchored.

CAMERA BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve gets the nod, everything is in place.

STEVE
And... action!

Steve spots a series of white dots on the horizon.

STEVE
Cut! What the hell's that?

A HIRED HAND looks up.

HIRED HAND
Sailboat season's started.

The white dots blossom into sailboats before Steve's eyes.

STEVE
We can't have other boats in shot, the Orca's gotta look completely isolated out here!

JOE
Are there gonna be many more?

HIRED HAND
You kidding? It's the Americas Cup, we're in the base leg of the Nantucket to Cape Cod run here.

Joe simmers.

JOE
Of course we are.

MOMENTS LATER

The sailboats encircle the Hollywood fleet, SAILORS onboard taking a good look at the curious spectacle.

STEVE
Mind staying out of shot, fellas?
We're trying to shoot a movie here!

SAILOR #1
You don't own the ocean, pal!

SAILOR #2
Fuck off back to Hollywood!

Steve smiles, waves.

STEVE
Thanks, fellas. Appreciate it.

CAMERA BOAT - LATER

Steve and team wait for the sailboats to pass. There are dozens of them, all around.

LATER

The last of the sailboats finally disappears... just as the sun sinks below the horizon.

STEVE
That's it for today, fellas.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 59

The Hollywood armada sits in the Nantucket Sound, bobbing up and down on the waves. Sailboats everywhere.

INT. CABIN, ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Ricky enters the cabin, where sandwiches have been laid out on the table. He picks one up, starts eating.

Shaw enters. He picks up a sandwich and stuffs it into his mouth, eyes fixed on Ricky as he chews and swallows.

Ricky takes another sandwich, eating quickly. Shaw responds, picking up another and devouring it.

Both men start jamming sandwiches into their mouths, chewing as fast as they can in a truly bizarre display of machismo. Ricky starts choking, coughing up doughy clumps.

Shaw smiles victoriously. He walks out, whistling.

CAMERA BOAT - LATER

The sailboats finally clear. Steve springs into action.

STEVE
Okay, let's do this!

The shark goes into the water. Steve gets the signal.

STEVE
And... action!

The shark surges out of the water like a monster from hell... and remains stuck there, hanging in midair.

STEVE
God damn it!

The familiar voice crackles through a nearby radio:

RADIO
The shark is not working. Repeat, the shark is not working.

Steve grabs the radio, furious.

STEVE
C'mon, Bob! We gotta get it working before the sailboats...
(notices)
... come...
(flat)
... back.

The sailboats are back in view.

ORCA - LATER

Steve sits alone on the bowsprit. The sailboats fade away, along with the last rays of daylight.

STEVE
That's it for today, fellas.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 65

Hollywood all at sea. Sailboats everywhere.

Crew members hang around on the boats, bored. A golf ball whizzes by, sailing into the ocean.

ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Steve and actors tee off on the stern. Ricky's up, sends a golf ball soaring into the sea.

STEVE
Nice shot, Ricky!

RICKY
Used to caddy for my old man.

Ricky hands the club to Shaw. Shaw drops a ball on the deck and casually wallops it twice as far as Ricky's.

STEVE
Whoa.

Shaw hands back the club back to Ricky, smiling.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 71

The crew continue to wait for the sailboats to pass. They're growing increasingly restless, frustrated.

The loud CRACK of a shotgun startles them.

ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Steve and the actors have graduated to skeet shooting off the Orca's stern. Steve misses one skeet, hits the other.

STEVE
Okay, Ricky. You're up.

Ricky takes the rifle and aims out to sea, acutely aware of Shaw's penetrating gaze. He breathes deep.

RICKY
Pull!

Two skeets fly out over the ocean. Ricky fires twice, misses both. Shaw chuckles with laughter. Ricky bristles.

STEVE
Better luck next time, Ricky.

Steve reloads the rifle, hands it to Shaw. Shaw stares at Ricky, who looks very nervous. For the briefest moment, Ricky isn't sure where Shaw will aim the gun...

SHAW
(eyes on Ricky)
Pull.

The skeets fly out to sea. Shaw blasts both to smithereens, then hands the gun back to Ricky.

RICKY
You really get off on putting other people down, don't you?

SHAW
I do not compete to put others down, Mr. Hooper. I compete because victory is utterly consoling to me.

ROY
C'mon fellas, play nice.

Steve reloads the rifle, unaware of the disapproving looks from crew members on the other boats.

STEVE
Roy, you're up.

Joe boards the Orca, approaches Steve.

JOE
You need to stop this, <u>now</u>.

STEVE
Stop what? I'm trying to keep up morale here!

JOE
Listen to me, Stevie. The crew respect you, you're the youngest director they've ever worked with -- but you're still a kid, on a small boat, holding a loaded gun.

Steve relents, hands Joe the rifle. He gazes at the horizon, which is still covered in sailboats.

STEVE
Let’s turn around, shoot from another angle.

JOE
It’ll take too long. We gotta raise all the anchors, move the boats, nail them all down again before the tide changes our orientation.

STEVE
We need to get something! We’ve got less than two minutes of usable footage in three weeks.

Steve goes to leave. Joe delivers the killer blow.

JOE
The shark’s not working.

Steve absorbs the news, barely maintains composure.

STEVE
Use the barrels instead.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve sits at the dinner table with Dick and David. The atmosphere is tense, to say the least.

DICK
Maybe we should shut down, come back in September when the tourists and sailboats have gone?

STEVE
Is that the studio talking?

DICK
This is me talking, kid! The budget’s out of control, no one’s seeing any dailies. People are starting to ask questions.

STEVE
No one sees anything until it’s ready.

DAVID
It’s not such a bad idea, Steven. Bob and his team can stay put, get the shark working correctly.

DICK
We'll push for a Christmas release. We can sell it to the studio, the book's a best seller.

STEVE
I can do this, fellas.
(beat, desperate)
Have you heard our new ending?

Dick and David share a concerned glance, clearly starting to question whether their prodigy's losing his mind.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

The shark refuses to cooperate. It rises too far out of the water and skids unconvincingly along the surface; it goes cross-eyed, jaws stuck open; it sinks completely and has to be rescued by divers. Bob has an excuse every time:

BOB
Electrolysis and salt air must've burned out the sensors.

BOB
Kelp and seaweed messed up the pneumatic pistons.

BOB
Barnacles on the platform.

Every night, the shark is hauled out of the water and studied. Paint peels, minor scratches become gaping wounds, the neoprene flesh absorbs water and swells, needing to be dried out with oil-fired burners and blowers.

Roy kills time topping up his tan or swimming in the ocean, Ricky grows increasingly frustrated, Shaw drinks.

Steve and crew hang around for hours on end to get just a few seconds of footage, and the days roll agonizingly by.

<u>SUPER: DAY 75... 81... 84... 89... 96...</u>

INT. VERNA'S ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve shows Brian De Palma, John Milius, Martin Scorsese and George Lucas the dailies on Verna's projector. The animatronic fish looks utterly ridiculous in every scene.

The footage ends. The atmosphere is like a wake.

STEVE
Well fellas, what d'you think? Don't pull any punches, give it to me straight.

No one wants to be first to speak. Finally:

MILIUS
It's... interesting. Kind of like an aquatic samurai movie.

SCORSESE
I like the scene with the girl. The mixture of sexuality and violence, that patriarchal myth... it's like a subliminal rape, with the shark as the offending phallus.

Steve turns to Brian De Palma, who's wearing a knowing look.

STEVE
Any thoughts here, Brian?

DE PALMA
What do you want me to say, Stevie?

STEVE
I wanna know what you think.

DE PALMA
Honestly? I think you just fucked your career.

STEVE
(offended)
Thanks for the support.

DE PALMA
What the hell did you expect? We're trying to change this business, make films that actually matter -- and you're out here shooting *King Kong* on the fucking ocean!

SCORSESE
King Kong, that's exactly what I was thinking! The scene with the girl, it reminds me of *King Kong*. Except this girl gets eaten.

De Palma, Milius and Scorsese exit. George pats Steve on the shoulder, then follows the others out.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 106

The fleet bobs on the vast expanse of blue nothingness. They look small, insignificant, completely lost.

ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Shaw sits in the sun, drinking steadily. Ricky sulks nearby. Roy climbs aboard after a swim.

INT. CABIN, ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Roy enters to find a CATERER laying out sandwiches.

ROY
(clearly disappointed)
Same again, huh?

The caterer exits. Roy reluctantly grabs a sandwich.

CAMERA BOAT - LATER

Steve, Dick and David wait for the monster to breach...

The enormous beast rises up out of the ocean in slow-motion, jaws gaping, black eyes rolling to white...

A huge CREAKING sound...

The shark collapses back into the ocean, sinks from view. Steve storms off, leaving Dick and David alone.

DICK
I think our careers just sank with that metal fish, Davie Boy.

Bubbles rise up from the murky depths, pop on the surface.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve, Joe, Carl and Verna eat together in silence. The only sound is the scrape of cutlery against plates.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve, Joe, Carl and Verna watch Richard Nixon delivering his resignation on TV. We see snippets of Nixon’s speech:

NIXON (TV)
I would have preferred to carry through to the finish, whatever the personal agony it would have involved...

NIXON (TV)
I have never been a quitter...

NIXON (TV)
To continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the President and Congress...

Steve watches the historic event as if every word is directed specifically at him. Verna sneers.

VERNA
Scumbag's turning it into an affirmation of character, you believe that?

JOE
Maybe so. But you gotta admit, there's something to be said for knowing when you're beaten.

Joe walks out. Steve's eyes remain fixed on the TV.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 115

The crew prepares one of the climatic moments in the picture, an angry shark attacking the Orca.

A complicated arrangement of underwater cables affixes the Orca to the tug boat, whilst several cameras aboard the Orca are set up to capture the action from multiple angles.

CAMERA BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve gets the signal.

STEVE
And... action!

The tug boat tows the Orca around violently, causing it to lurch around on the sea.

The actors are thrown around the grimy vessel as they battle the imaginary monster beneath the water.

Steve watches as the Orca takes a pounding.

STEVE
You sure it’s gonna hold?

JOE
It’s fine, we reinforced the --

CRACK! A table-sized hole rips out of the Orca’s hull beneath the water line, and the boat starts to sink.

JOE
Fuck.

ORCA

CREW MEMBERS rush around in panic, desperately trying to save expensive cameras loaded with precious film.

CAMERA BOAT

Steve watches as water gushes into the Orca’s hull. The boat is going down, and fast.

STEVE
Get the actors off the boat!
(grabs a bull horn)
GET THE ACTORS OFF THE BOAT!

ORCA

A SOUND MAN holds a boom mic above his head as the water races in, surging around his feet.

SOUND MAN
Fuck the actors, save the sound department!

Ricky and Roy jump into the ocean, swim to the other boats.

Shaw remains aboard, straightening his clothes as if preparing to meet his maker. He sinks slowly into the water, drinking from a bottle of whiskey as he goes under.

The Orca goes down, taking the cameras with it.

EXT. DOCK - LATER

The half-sunk Orca is towed into the dock.

The cameras are rushed off the boat, magazines removed and placed in buckets of cold water. The buckets are loaded into waiting cars; the cars peel quickly out.

Steve watches, a distant look about him. Joe approaches.

JOE
We're rushing the film to a lab in New York. As long as it's kept wet, the emulsion could survive.

Steve walks away.

INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Steve, dressed in a suit, checks himself over in the mirror. He still has that distant, slightly haunted look about him.

A knock on the door. Joe enters.

JOE
Lab just called. We're good.

Steve straightens his tie, stares at his reflection.

JOE
Stevie, did you hear what I said? The film survived, no re-shoot.

Steve doesn't respond. Joe exits, closing the door.

INT. BALLROOM, HARBOR VIEW HOTEL - NIGHT

Martha's Vineyard's most illustrious RESIDENTS are out in all their finery for a banquet in Hollywood's honor. Steve, Ricky, Roy and Robert Shaw put on a brave face as a local OFFICIAL makes a speech to the room.

OFFICIAL
Three months ago, our humble island became home to a group of very special visitors. And I'm happy to say, it seems they like the place so much, they've decided to stay!

Everyone laughs, except Steve and the actors. Shaw pours himself another drink, pounds it.

OFFICIAL
Seriously, it's been a real honor for us to host such an auspicious group. We're truly blessed you chose our home to shoot your movie, and we wish you all the best in finishing up real soon. God knows, you seem to need it!

More laughter, then the sound of applause brings silence. Everyone turns to see Robert Shaw on his feet, clapping very loudly. He raises his glass, drains it, and staggers off.

Steve watches Shaw leave. He turns back to Ricky and Roy, eating their dinners in silence.

STEVE
I know this hasn't been easy, fellas. But I just wanted to say, you're doing an incredible job.

ROY
Cut the crap, Steve. When are we gonna be done with this?

Steve's pause says everything.

STEVE
Honestly, I don't know. If we can just get the damn shark to work --

Steve's hit squarely in the face by a handful of mashed potato. Ricky wipes his hand on his trousers, goes back to eating as if it never happened.

Steve scoops up his own mash and hurls it at Ricky. Ricky ducks, and the mash hits the selectman Steve and Joe had two run-ins with earlier. He glares at them, furious.

Roy's more accurate: he nails Ricky and Steve simultaneously with fistfuls of food from his own plate.

Ricky races to the desert tray, starts pelting Steve and Roy with cake and diced fruit.

The diners watch in disbelief as a frenzied food fight erupts. It may look like harmless fun, but the expressions on the three men's faces tells a different story.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Steve walks down a deserted street, his face and suit covered in dried food. He comes across a book store.

In the book store's window, an elaborate display features dozens of copies of *Jaws* and a poster of the shark rising up from the depths. The poster reads:

THE EXPLOSIVE BEST SELLER!
SOON TO BE A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE!

Steve looks suddenly enraged. He picks up a nearby trash can and hurls it at the window. It bounces off the glass and back into him, knocking him into the street.

Lights turn on in nearby houses. Voices can be heard, people coming outside to see what's going on.

Steve runs off into the darkness.

EXT. FERRY - DAY

Sid Sheinberg and Ned Tanen stand on deck, watching Martha's Vineyard come into view.

INT. DINING ROOM, LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Dick and David sit opposite Sid and Ned. Sid remains his usual implacable self, but Ned's glowering.

SID
The studio's becoming concerned, gentlemen.

NED
That's the understatement of the goddamn century! We're hemorrhaging money on this fucking picture, what the hell's taking so long?!

DICK
No one's ever budgeted for a shark, Ned. We're doing something that's never been done before.

NED
We're not trying to make history here, we're trying to make <u>fucking money</u>! Have you got any idea what they're saying about us back at the studio? We're a running joke!

DAVID
Okay, let's talk about this --

NED
I'm through talking. We're pulling the plug, that's it!

SID
I didn't agree to that.

Ned spins around, stares at Sid in disbelief.

NED
You're going <u>against</u> me?

SID
This isn't about you and me. I believe in the kid, I think he'll give us one hell of a movie.

Ned glares furiously at Sid for a long, intense beat.

NED
You'd better be willing to stake your career on that, Sid.

Ned storms out of the room.

EXT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Steve sits on the porch staring at the ocean, a thousand slithers of moonlight rippling on its surface.

Ned tears out of the house, storms past Steve, climbs into a waiting car. The car peels out in a cloud of dust.

Dick exits the house, takes a seat beside Steve.

STEVE
Any words of advice?

Dick stares at the dark ocean in the distance.

DICK
As long as there's film, keep those cameras rolling. If we stop, they may not let us start back up again.

EXT. SEA - DAY

<u>SUPER: DAY 124</u>

The shark rises out of the water like a limp dick, skids comically along the surface, and collapses onto the Orca. It couldn't look more fake.

SHARK BARGE - MOMENTS LATER

Bob stands at the control center fiddling with levers, trying to get the shark to mount the Orca properly.

Joe boards the barge, approaches Bob.

JOE
The shark looks like shit, Bob.

BOB
We probably should've gone for the more expensive motor.

JOE
(taken aback)
Come again?

BOB
The motor driving it out of the water only cost $9,000. There was a more expensive option, but we were trying to keep costs down.

JOE
How much was the other motor?

BOB
$27,000.

Joe turns red with rage.

JOE
Are you telling me we can't make this shot because you were trying to save a lousy $18,000?! This shot is the fucking movie!

BOB
We may have underestimated things.
(off Joe's look)
No one's ever done this kind of thing before.

Joe simmers, but there are no words. He storms off.

INT. CABIN, ORCA - MOMENTS LATER

Roy enters to find the same spread of sandwiches as every other day. A strange look comes over him.

He picks up the entire tray, exits.

CAMERA BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Joe returns to the camera boat, approaches Steve.

JOE
We need to print what we've got.

STEVE
This shot's the movie.

JOE
Stevie, you gotta trust me on this. We can be out here until Christmas, it won't get any better. We need to print what we've got, and move on.

The shark rises pathetically out of the water again, collapsing on the half-sunk Orca. It looks exhausted, much like the young director watching.

STEVE
Screw it, print the damn --

A ruckus, lots of raised voices and shouting.

ORCA - CONTINUOUS

Roy has the caterer in a choke hold and is forcing sandwiches down his throat. The caterer is turning blue.

ROY
We're out here four fucking months, waiting for a fucking shark that won't fucking work, and we have to eat the same fucking shit day after day?! Eat! Eat it, you <u>fuck</u>!

Steve and Joe board the Orca and rush over, pulling Roy off the caterer. The caterer slumps to the ground, breathlessly coughing up clumps of sandwich.

STEVE
What the hell, Roy?! Walk it off! Just walk it off, okay?

Roy turns on Steve, his face a mask of pure rage.

ROY
Walk it off? Walk it off?! WE'RE ON A <u>FUCKING</u> <u>BOAT</u>!

Roy storms off. Steve turns to the rest of the crew members, who've formed a tight circle around him.

STEVE
It’s under control, fellas.
Everything’s under control, okay?

The crew members stare at Steve, still standing in a circle around him. The situation feels suddenly threatening.

STEVE
Everything’s under control.

The crew disperse, go their separate ways.

NED (PRE-LAP)
This is officially out of control.

INT. BOARDROOM, UNIVERSAL TOWERS - DAY

Lew Wasserman sits at the head of the table flanked by Sid, Ned, and a trio of STUDIO EXECS.

NED
We’re three times over budget with no end in sight. Spielberg’s just a kid, he can’t handle this. He’s lost all respect, there’s a goddamn mutiny taking place out there!

STUDIO EXEC #1
Should’ve shot in the tank.

STUDIO EXEC #2
With a more experienced director.

STUDIO EXEC #3
Someone who’s done this kind of picture before.

Ned turns to Lew.

NED
We’ll never make our money back, Lew. We need to pull the plug now, rethink this thing.

Lew’s huge sunglasses conceal any reaction. Beat.

LEW
Do we know how to do it better?

Ned and the execs shift uncomfortably, courage dissipating instantly. No one has the balls to answer, until:

SID
No.

Lew thinks it over. He shrugs.

LEW
Then let them keep going.

Lew exits. Beat, then Ned and the other execs file out. Sid remains, a half-smile playing on his lips.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SUPER: DAY 138

Bob and his team continue working on the shark, trying to get it to mount the Orca correctly. A tinny voice:

RADIO
The shark is not working. Repeat, the shark is not working.

CAMERA BOAT - LATER

The crew have taken to fishing for sand sharks, gutting them, and using their guts to catch more, their own twisted revenge on an entire species. Steve approaches.

STEVE
Little fishing, huh fellas?

The crew's eyes are vacant. They haul another sand shark aboard and cut it open. Dark blood and silver entrails spill out and creep towards Steve, who takes a step back. Steve turns to leave, and that's when he hears it:

"Spielbug."

STEVE
What did you say?

The crew continue with the ritualistic killing in silence.

Steve approaches Joe.

STEVE
(re: the crew)
What's got into them?

Joe looks over at the crew, then back at Steve.

JOE
They've got nothing left, Stevie. None of us have.

ORCA - LATER

Steve sits alone on the bowsprit, staring out over the ocean. It looks like a sheet of steel, utterly impenetrable. In that moment, he knows it has defeated him.

Robert Shaw approaches. Long beat as both men gaze out over the ocean, lost in their own thoughts.

STEVE
We'll never finish this movie. I made a mistake. No one's ever gone a hundred days over before, let alone some kid whose last picture failed at the box office.

Shaw adjusts his cap, stares out over the ocean.

SHAW
A long time ago, a young director, not much older than yourself, offered me the role of William the Conqueror. William the Bastard, they called him; first Norman King of England, descendant of Viking raiders. Defeated Harold Godwinson in the Battle of Hastings, 1066. I was just starting out, looking for my break, and here's the lead in a major TV drama. I turned it down, because I wanted to play Harold.

STEVE
Why didn't you want the lead?

SHAW
Harold died on the battlefield from an arrow through the eye. No one remembers William, because nothing happened to him.

Shaw turns, looks Steve dead in the eyes.

SHAW
No man wants to be remembered by his ashes, Mr. Spielberg.

Shaw walks off, leaving Steve alone with the sea. A strange look comes over Steve, a steely determination.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

TWELVE MEN in two groups of six run back and forth, hauling ropes. The ropes lead out to sea, where they're attached to a harness around the waist of a stunt woman, SUSAN BACKLINIE (26). Susan screams as she's dragged through the ocean in one direction after another by the men on the beach.

Steve stands waist-high in the cold ocean, just behind the cameraman capturing the action.

STEVE
Cut! Let's go again.

The crew on the beach stop running. Susan walks into shallow water. She's wearing a pair of cut-off Levi's with a harness attached, and looks to be in some pain.

STEVE
You okay, Susan?

SUSAN
This harness kinda hurts. You think the boys can go a little easier next time around?

STEVE
You got it.

Susan smiles flirtatiously; Steve smiles back. He walks out of the water, up to the men on the beach.

STEVE
There's supposed to be a monster shark out there, fellas. Put your backs into this one, okay?

Susan takes her position. Steve grabs one of the ropes.

STEVE
And... action!

Steve gives the rope an almighty tug, jerking a shocked Susan beneath the water's surface.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

Steve presses on. He uses the barrels to represent the shark, shooting entire sequences of scintillating action without so much as a dorsal fin in sight.

Carl hammers away at the typewriter all night long. Steve sits nearby, crossing out lines of dialogue, adding new ones.

They shoot the famous Indianapolis scene. Shaw is absolutely electric, nailing a perfect performance in one take.

Bob works away on the shark, replacing its motor with a bigger one. Armed with the new motor, the shark bursts out of the water at full force and mounts the Orca...

ORCA - DAY

... where it starts to devour Shaw. Shaw slides into the gaping jaws, stabbing repeatedly at the shark's huge conical head as it shakes him like a rag doll.

CAMERA BOAT

Steve watches the action, a mad gleam in his eyes.

STEVE
More thrashing! More power!

Joe approaches, a concerned look on his face.

JOE
We shouldn't push it Stevie, it isn't safe --

STEVE
MORE THRASHING! MORE POWER! GET THOSE JAWS WORKING HARDER, GODDAMNIT!

ORCA

Shaw cackles with glee, stabbing the beast repeatedly in the head as he eggs Steve on.

EXT. SEA - DAY

<u>SUPER: DAY 163</u>

The Hollywood fleet takes to the ocean for the last time. A dozen barrels filled with red paint and slimy squid, labelled "BLOOD & GUTS", are rigged with explosives.

Nothing remains of the Orca except its crow's nest jutting out of the water. Roy crawls out, rifle in hand.

CAMERA BOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve watches as the final shot is set up. Joe approaches.

JOE
Just thought you should know, they're planning on drowning you once we've got the last shot.

STEVE
Very funny.

JOE
Don't say I didn't warn you.

Joe walks off. Steve notices every member of the crew is glaring malevolently at him.

CROW'S NEST - MOMENTS LATER

Roy aims his rifle at the ocean.

STEVE (O.S.)
And... action!

EXT. SEA - CONTINUOUS

BOOM! The barrels explode, a huge mushroom of red pluming into the air. The blast is so intense, it knocks a CAMERAMAN off the camera boat and into the gunk-infested sea.

The crew watch vacantly, red paint and squid showering down all around, dripping down their faces like war paint.

They hear the roar of a speedboat's engine.

SPEEDBOAT - CONTINUOUS

Steve tears away from the scene. He turns to the crew and pumps a fist into the air.

STEVE
I shall <u>NOT</u> return!

The crew stare back, faces covered in fake blood. Their eyes never leave Steve as they fade into the background.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

In the back of the car, Steve gazes out of the window at the billboards, traffic, cars, people; an overpowering amount of visual stimuli after months spent at sea.

INT. HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

Steve sits alone at the bar, sipping a Coke. The BARTENDER dries glasses. No one else around.

Ricky enters, sits down next to Steve.

RICKY
Whiskey, straight up.

The bartender pours Ricky's drink, hands it to him.

STEVE
It's over. It's finally over.

Ricky takes a slug of whiskey.

RICKY
Motherfucker. It's over.

STEVE
It's over.

RICKY
Motherfucker. MOTHERFUCKER, it's OVER! MOTHERFUCKER!

STEVE
MOTHERFUCKER, IT'S OVER!

RICKY
MOTHERFUCKER! MOTHERFUCKER!

The bartender's about to interject, but something inside tells him these two guys need this. Ricky and Steve shout the same words over and over, lost in the moment.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Same guard as usual sits in the gate house. Steve pulls up in his Mercedes. The gate's arm remains down.

STEVE
Can you open the gate, Henry?

Slowly, the guard raises the gate's arm. He stares at Steve in a disapproving manner.

Steve guns onto the lot to find his usual parking space has been given to someone else.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS BACKLOT - DAY

Steve notices PEOPLE staring at him. They shake their heads, voices lowering to whispers as he passes.

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS COMMISSARY - DAY

Steve carries his tray of food to a busy table and takes a seat. EVERYONE at the table immediately finishes their lunch, gets up and walks away. Steve stares around, shocked.

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS TANK - DAY

Steve peers into the tank through a small window. Inside, cameras are set up underwater around a cage containing an ACTOR in full diving gear.

STEVE
And... action!

The shark lurches through the water, battering into a cage. It reverses back, lurching forward again.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Cavernous empty space. The shark stands in the middle of the sound stage, mounted on its tracks.

Footsteps echo throughout the huge space. Steve walks up to the shark, stares into its dead black eyes.

He turns away and walks out.

INT. VERNA'S POOL HOUSE - DAY

Verna stares at the footage playing on the mounted projector, Steve sitting beside her. She sighs.

VERNA
I don't know what to tell you, Stevie. I'm looking for scraps in outtakes, but it's not there. We just don't have enough shark.

Steve stares at the actors rushing around on the Orca, battling a monster that isn't there.

INT. SCREENING ROOM, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Lew Wasserman sits in a velvet seat, staring implacably at the movie playing on the giant projector. Sid and Ned sit on either side, Dick and David in the row behind.

The lights come up. Lew takes off his huge dark glasses for the first time, rubs his eyes.

DICK
Well, Lew, what do you think? There's still some major underwater scenes to add, and we don't have John Williams's score yet, but...

Dick trails off. Lew gazes blankly at the screen.

LEW
It's okay.

Lew walks out. Ned gloats.

NED
You just blew ten million dollars on turkey of the year.

Ned exits. Sid turns to Dick and David, all business.

SID
I suggest you go get the rest of this movie, gentlemen.

INT. JOHN WILLIAMS'S HOME - DAY

An elegantly decorated home with a grand piano. At the piano sits JOHN WILLIAMS (42), scholarly, bespectacled, balding. Steve sits in a chair nearby.

JOHN
I wanted a classic piece of suspense music, something that can become synonymous with approaching danger. Grinding away at you, just as a shark would... instinctual, relentless, unstoppable.

John uses just two fingers to play a simple, alternating ostinato: DUN-DUN-DUN-DUN-DUN-DUN...

Steve bursts into laughter.

STEVE
That's great, John. Seriously, what have you got?

John stares at Steve, surprised.

JOHN
But... that's it, Steven. That's the shark.

Steve's face drops.

ORCA - DAY

Steve stands on the bow staring out to sea, waiting for the shark to be ready. He grabs a two-way radio.

STEVE
How are we looking, Bob?

A tinny voice crackles back:

BOB (V.O.)
Few technical problems, shouldn't be too much longer.

Steve turns to Dick and David. Their faces are covered in red paint and bits of squid. Dick shrugs.

DICK
Test screenings are bullshit kid, everyone knows that.

STEVE
Does the studio know?

Dick shrugs, causing a piece of squid to slime off his face. Steve notices George Lucas sitting on the stern, gutting sand sharks with a vacant look in his eyes.

STEVE
George? What are you doing here?

George pulls out the shark's shiny entrails.

GEORGE
Get it right, Stevie, and this thing could do for the ocean what *Psycho* did for the shower.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. STEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Steve lurches awake, covered in sweat. The waterbed squelches and sloshes beneath him. He gets up, walks out.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Steve enters, goes to a drawer. Removes a shiny object.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Steve walks up to the waterbed. He raises a knife above his head, glinting in the moonlight...

Steve plunges the knife into the bed, stabbing repeatedly. Water sprays out, gushing onto the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Steve sits in the dark, his face bathed in the glow of the projector dominating the room.

On screen, the famous shower scene from *Psycho*. Janet Leigh screams as the silhouetted figure tears back the curtain; the music screeches as the knife flashes again and again.

Steve watches. A strange look comes over him.

INT. JOHN WILLIAMS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John Williams is asleep in bed when the phone rings. He fumbles for the receiver, answers.

JOHN
Hello?

STEVE (V.O.)
John? It's me.

John checks the clock on the bedside table.

JOHN
Steven? Why are you calling me at four in the morning?

Silence on the other end of the line.

JOHN
Steven, are you there?

Another beat, then:

STEVE (V.O.)
Play that music again.

INT. VERNA'S POOL HOUSE - DAY

Verna startles as Steve bursts into the pool house, alive with nervous energy.

STEVE
How many times do you see Janet Leigh getting stabbed in *Psycho*?

VERNA
How the hell should I know?

STEVE
Zero. You never actually <u>see</u> the knife going in, that's the whole point! We'll hold it back, use the music to suggest its presence, let their imaginations do the rest. Everybody knows what it's like to go swimming and wonder what's down there... man, this is huge!

Steve fixes Verna an intensely earnest stare, as if he's revealing the secrets of the universe.

STEVE
It's not what we see that frightens us. It's what we <u>don't</u> see.
(beat)
Don't show the shark, Vern!

Verna stares at Steve like he's lost his mind.

VERNA
Have you taken something?

MONTAGE - VERNA'S POOL HOUSE

A series of quick shots as Steve and Verna go to work.

Dozens of cans of film are analyzed, strips of celluloid pulled out, inspected and marked.

STEVE
No shots in the first half, we're taking it all out.

They snip and splice with insane focus, taking the entire first half of the movie apart.

LATER

Steve and Verna work away, tirelessly.

VERNA
Roy's tan gets darker, it's not matching up between cuts. And the sky keeps changing color.

Steve thinks fast, hopped up on caffeine and adrenaline.

STEVE
Take it apart, use the barrels.

VERNA
You sure about this? We've hardly got any shark in there!

STEVE
We'll use the music instead.
(off Verna's look)
It's scarier that way.

Verna nods, continues cutting. Slowly but surely, the movie we know and love takes shape...

EXT. MEDALLION THEATER, DALLAS - NIGHT

A long queue of MOVIEGOERS wait in line to buy tickets for *The Towering Inferno*.

Next to the poster for *Inferno*, another poster featuring an image cribbed from the *Jaws* paperback of a crude shark rising from the murky depths, with no title.

The moviegoers stare at the poster, curious.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

Steve, Dick and David pull up outside the theater. David stares out of the window at the crowds.

DAVID
Would you look at all these people. I wonder what's playing?

Dick shoots David a look.

DAVID
Oh, right! Of course.

Steve, Dick and David climb out of the limo. Dick wraps an arm around Steve's shoulder.

DICK
You ready for this, kid?

Steve nods. They head inside.

INT. MEDALLION THEATER - LATER

The AUDIENCE sit in the dark as *The Towering Inferno* plays.

Seated amongst them are several of the people we've come to know over the course of this journey: Peter Benchley; Joe, Carl and Verna; Ricky, Roy and Robert Shaw, now clean-shaven and clear-eyed; Bob Mattey; Sid Sheinberg; Brian De Palma, John Milius, Martin Scorsese, George Lucas.

And then there's Steve, wedged between Dick and David.

The Towering Inferno ends and the credits roll. The moment of truth has arrived.

The opening notes of John Williams's famous ostinato throb through the speakers, enveloping everything...

MOMENTS LATER

The audience watch in silence as the girl, Christie, is dragged underwater by an unseen force. She screams, gargles on water, prays for mercy... and is gone.

Steve glances at the blank expressions staring up at the big screen. He begins to fear the worst.

MOMENTS LATER

The audience watch as the Kintner boy is dragged beneath the water, the ocean turns red. Again, Steve awaits the reaction; the audience stare blankly at the screen.

In the row in front of Steve, a YOUNG MAN gets up and walks quickly out of the theater.

Steve slinks out of his seat, following him.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Steve watches as the young man throws up all over the lobby carpet.

Once he's finished, the man turns around and walks back into the theater, right past Steve.

Steve follows him back inside...

INT. MEDALLION THEATER - CONTINUOUS

... and that's when he hears the first scream.

Terrifying, guttural, a bloodcurdling sound. Seconds later, it's joined by another. And another. Another.

Soon the entire audience is shrieking hysterically, too terrified to keep watching, unable to look away. As the movie plays, we move through the dark theater finding:

1) Dick and David, pinching themselves in disbelief as the screams keep coming.

2) Joe, Carl and Verna, gazing proudly at the masterpiece of suspense they've helped create.

3) Ricky, Roy and Robert Shaw, watching themselves on-screen and realizing the audience are right there with them.

4) Bob Mattey, smiling as the audience jump out of their seats every time the shark appears.

5) Peter Benchley, witnessing the audience leap to their feet and punch the air as Brody shoots the gas tank in the shark's mouth, blowing it to smithereens.

6) Sid Sheinberg, realizing he has a monster on his hands in more ways than one.

7) Brian De Palma, John Milius, Martin Scorsese and George Lucas, staring up at the screen, knowing nothing will ever be the same again.

AT THE BACK OF THE THEATER

Steve watches the audience scream, laugh, cheer and applaud as they go through that ancient and primal ritual we'll never fully understand: being lost in a good story.

And he knows, right there and then.

EXT. MEDALLION THEATER, DALLAS - NIGHT

The audience emerge into the night sweating, exhilarated, chattering excitedly. Steve walks out, dazed. Brian De Palma, John Milius, Martin Scorsese and George Lucas approach.

DE PALMA
Congratulations, Stevie. You just made it twice as difficult for us to make real films.

De Palma smiles; Steve smiles back, understands. They go to leave, then George turns back to Steve.

GEORGE
You've inspired me, you know that? I'm gonna write that script I've been talking about. I even thought of a cool title: *Star Wars*.

STEVE
That's a great title, Georgie.

George walks away. Steve turns around and sees Robert Shaw, standing alone on the sidewalk.

Both men stare at each other, soldiers who survived on the battlefield together.

SHAW
It looks like you've found your arrow, Mr. Spielberg.

Shaw tips his cap and walks off into the night, anonymous, alone. Steve watches him go. He smiles.

UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Camera moves slowly along the seabed, gliding through the murky waters. Corals waver as we pass over them. Fish scuttle off in fear. That familiar ostinato plays.

VOICEOVER
There is a creature alive today that has survived millions of years of evolution. Without change. Without passion. And without logic. It lives to kill. A mindless eating machine. It will attack and devour... anything.

Pan up to reveal the silhouette of a NAKED GIRL swimming on the water's surface. We approach her and the music grows louder, more intense, tempo increasing.

VOICEOVER
It is as if God created the devil. And gave him... *Jaws*.

EXT. WATER'S SURFACE - CONTINUOUS

The actress Susan Backlinie screams as she's jerked below the surface of the water by a terrifying unseen force.

VOICEOVER
From the best-selling novel... *Jaws*. Rated PG. May be too intense for younger children.

PULL BACK:

INT. DICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Dick and Steve watch the trailer end on the TV. It resolves on that iconic image: the shark surging upward, mouth full of shard-like teeth, heading for a naked girl swimming on the water's surface. Title in huge red letters above.

DICK
The studio's putting everything into the marketing, it's a goddamn blitzkrieg. A million dollars on TV spots, can you believe that?

Steve stares at the screen, lost in thought.

DICK
Did you hear me, kid? I just said your movie's gonna change the business forever, and you look like you're not sure whether that's a good thing!

Steve finally looks up at his mentor.

STEVE
That's because I'm not.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS BACKLOT - MOMENTS LATER

Steve walks alone through the lot, drawing admiring stares.

As he's leaving the lot, Steve spots a group of CREW MEMBERS exiting a sound stage. He walks up, opens the door.

INT. SOUND STAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lights, cameras, ACTORS, CREW. Steve enters, walks through the darkness to get a better look...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK, sits in the director's chair: older, heavier, looking tired, yet still with a magnetic quality; a poignancy in every fiber of his being.

Steve watches every move, analyzing every detail. And then, almost as if he can feel the eyes on the back of his bulbous head, Hitchcock begins to slowly turn around...

A SECURITY GUARD spots Steve, approaches.

SECURITY GUARD
Closed set, sir. I'm gonna have to ask you to leave.

Just before their eyes meet, Hitchcock is interrupted by a question from his ASSISTANT DIRECTOR.

SECURITY GUARD
Sir?

Steve smiles.

STEVE
Sure. No problem.

Steve turns around and walks off the sound stage, into the blinding light outside.

The assistant director sees what just happened and rushes over to the security guard, ashen-faced.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
What the hell are you doing? Don't you who that was?!

The security guard shrugs as we...

FADE TO BLACK,

And the following text scrolls over the screen:

Jaws opened on 20 June, 1975.

Sixty-four days later, it surpassed The Godfather to become the most successful film in motion picture history.

Jaws is often credited with inventing the concept of the summer blockbuster, a tradition that continues to this day, changing the way movies were made forever.

In October 1975, Universal Studios offered Steven Spielberg the opportunity to direct the sequel.

He declined.