

THE LAST WARM PLACE

CHAPTER FOUR

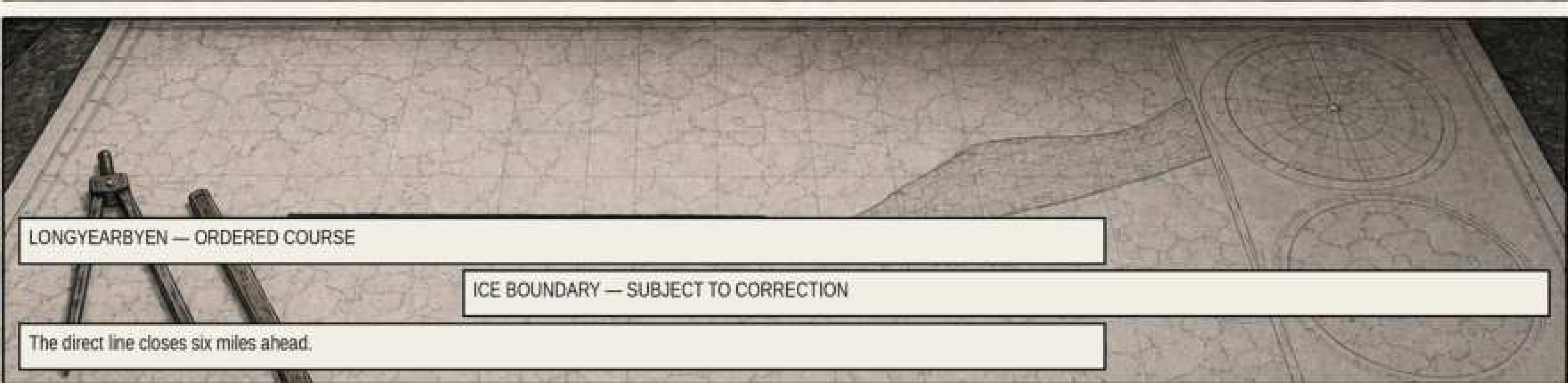
ORDERS





22 September. Day Eight.

Steady on ordered course.



LONGYEARBYEN — ORDERED COURSE

ICE BOUNDARY — SUBJECT TO CORRECTION

The direct line closes six miles ahead.



KRRRRM—KRAK



The road moved.

Roads have mayors. Ice has witnesses.

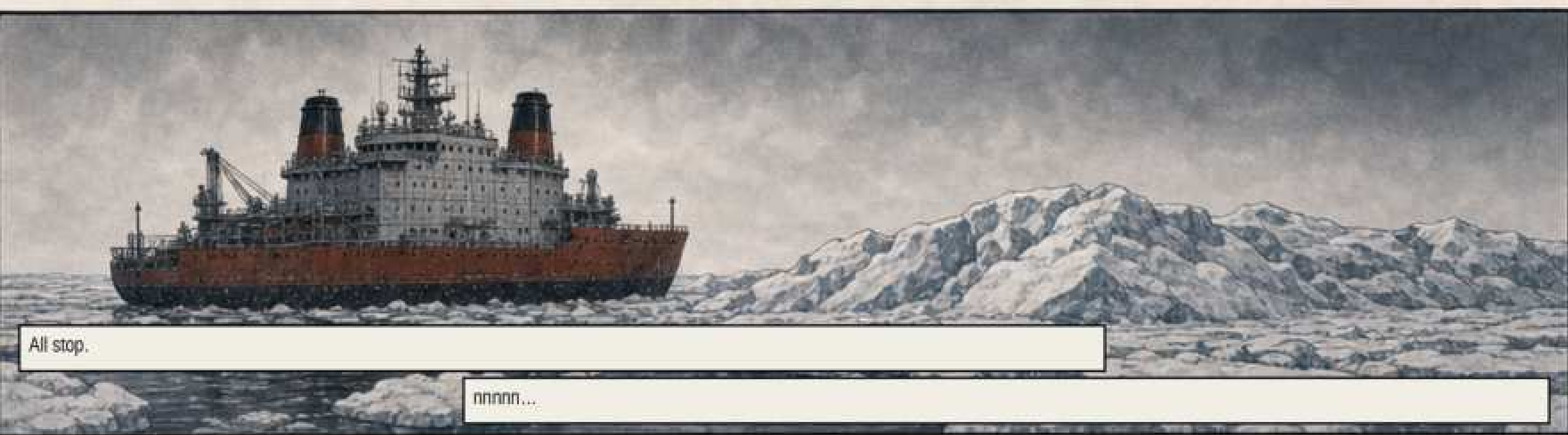
Then the witnesses recommend port.



Come ten degrees to port. Hold safe speed.

First deviation logged.

The destination is an order. The road is evidence.



All stop.

nnnnn...



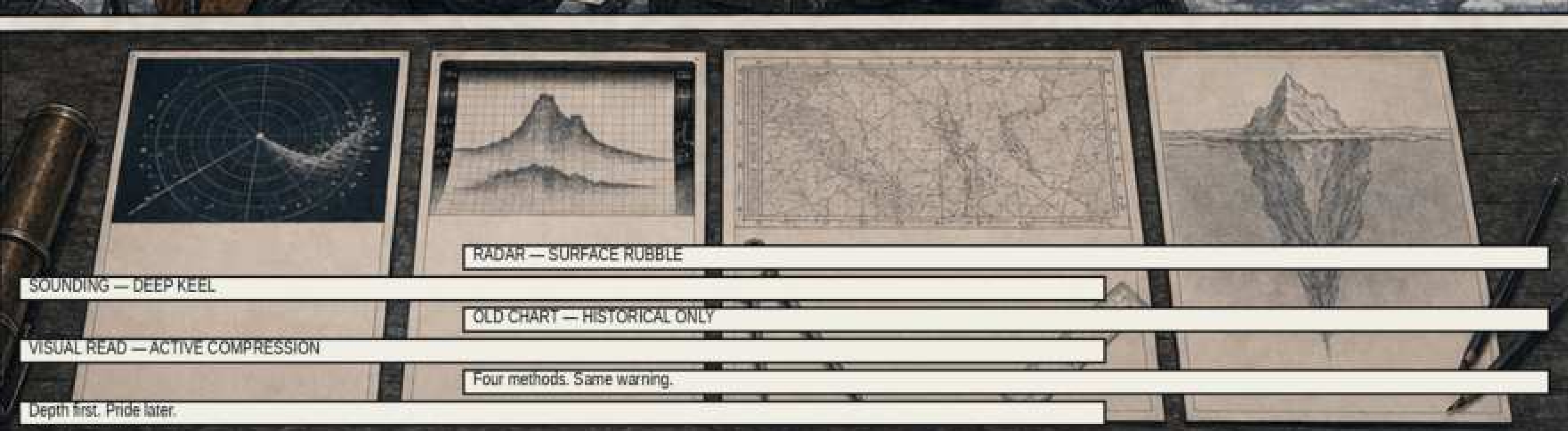
RIDGE BEARING — 184° RELATIVE

Surface crest is modest. Rubble field is not.



Second return repeats the first.

Keel extends far below the visible ridge.



RADAR — SURFACE RUBBLE

SOUNDING — DEEP KEEL

OLD CHART — HISTORICAL ONLY

VISUAL READ — ACTIVE COMPRESSION

Four methods. Same warning.

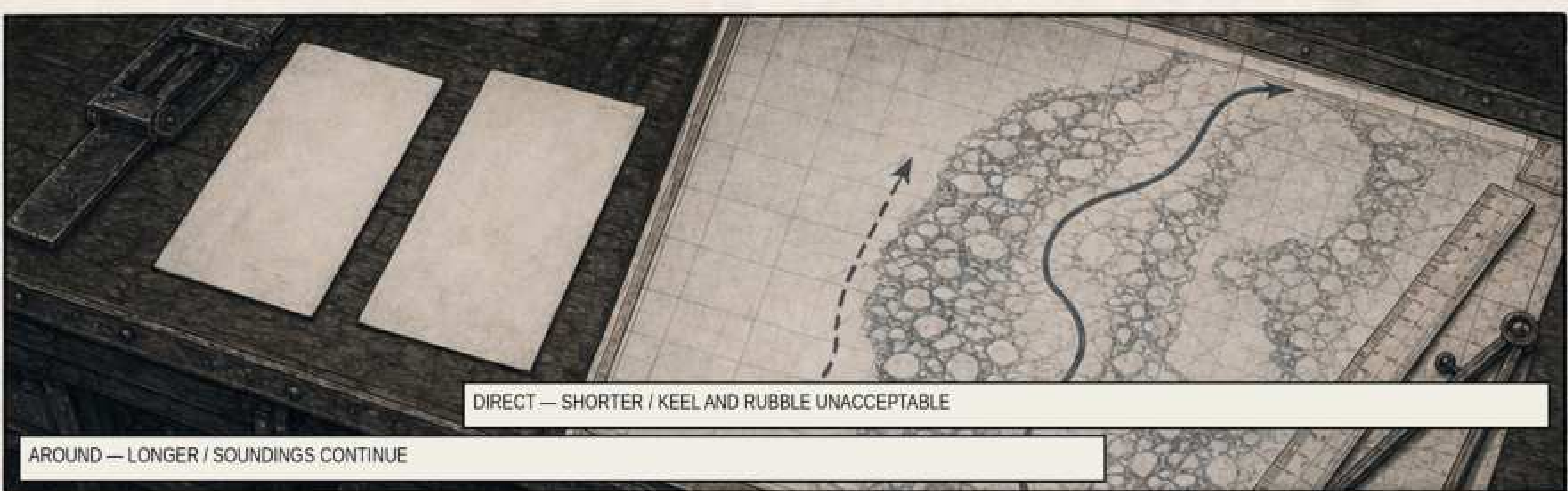
Depth first. Pride later.



The bow can break the crest.

The crest is not what can hold us.

Plot the keel, then show me the way around.



DIRECT — SHORTER / KEEL AND RUBBLE UNACCEPTABLE

AROUND — LONGER / SOUNDINGS CONTINUE



We can make one controlled test against the edge:

If it loads evenly, we may save hours.



The edge is closing while we discuss its manners.

A ship proves nothing by collecting damage.



Back one-third. Keep the stern in verified water.

THRUM—KRRSH



We go around.

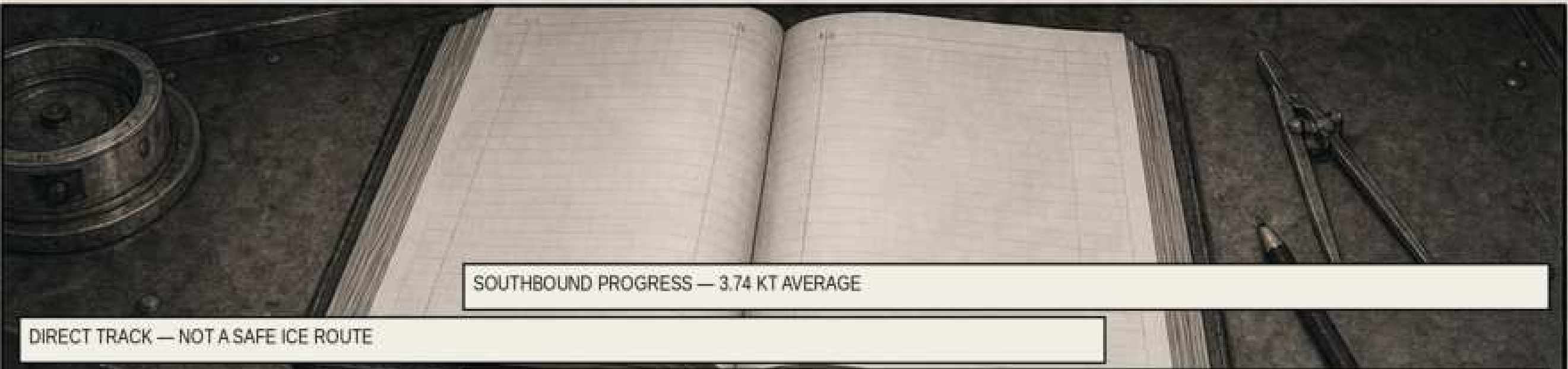
Detour entered. Estimate subject to the moving end.

Bravery is not a charted depth.



Two days later.

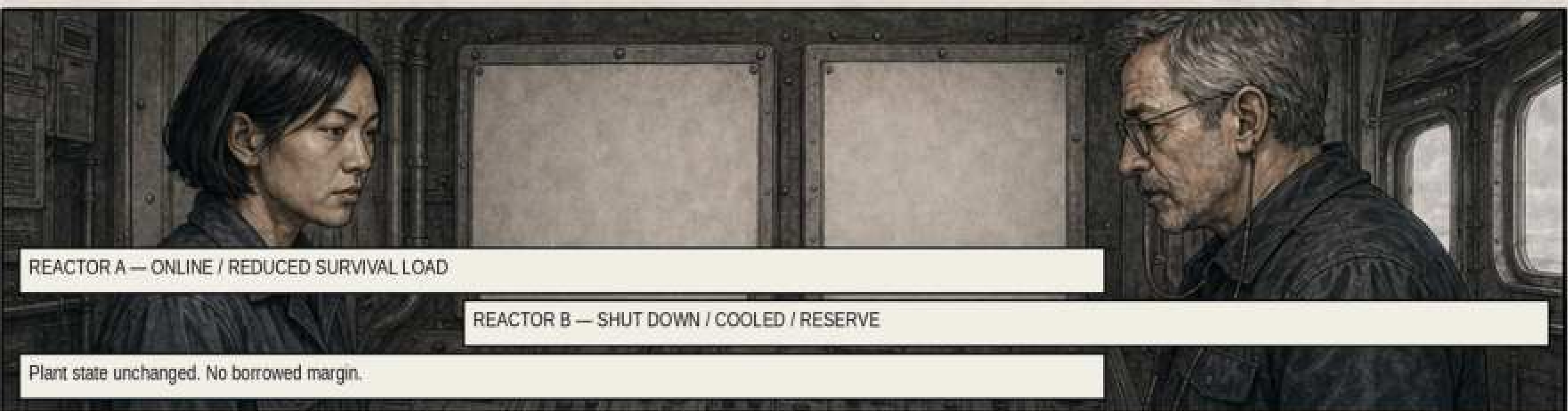
KRRRM... KRRRM...



SOUTHBOUND PROGRESS — 3.74 KT AVERAGE

DIRECT TRACK — NOT A SAFE ICE ROUTE

Below four knots since the ridge.



REACTOR A — ONLINE / REDUCED SURVIVAL LOAD

REACTOR B — SHUT DOWN / COOLED / RESERVE

Plant state unchanged. No borrowed margin.



TOTAL ABOARD — 173

DURATION — 112.02 DAYS

PLANNING DATE — 5 JANUARY 2035

Slow travel still eats at full speed.



Log the speed without apology.

A slow fact is still the fact we steer with.



26 September, Day Twelve.



I cannot eat breakfast under a death date.

rrmp



It is still the date when the paper is down.



tchk



Did they blame Kestrel?

No. They blamed the date.

Then we keep the person out of the accusation.



DAY-12 PHYSICAL RECOUNT — 09:00

People and arithmetic stay in the same record.

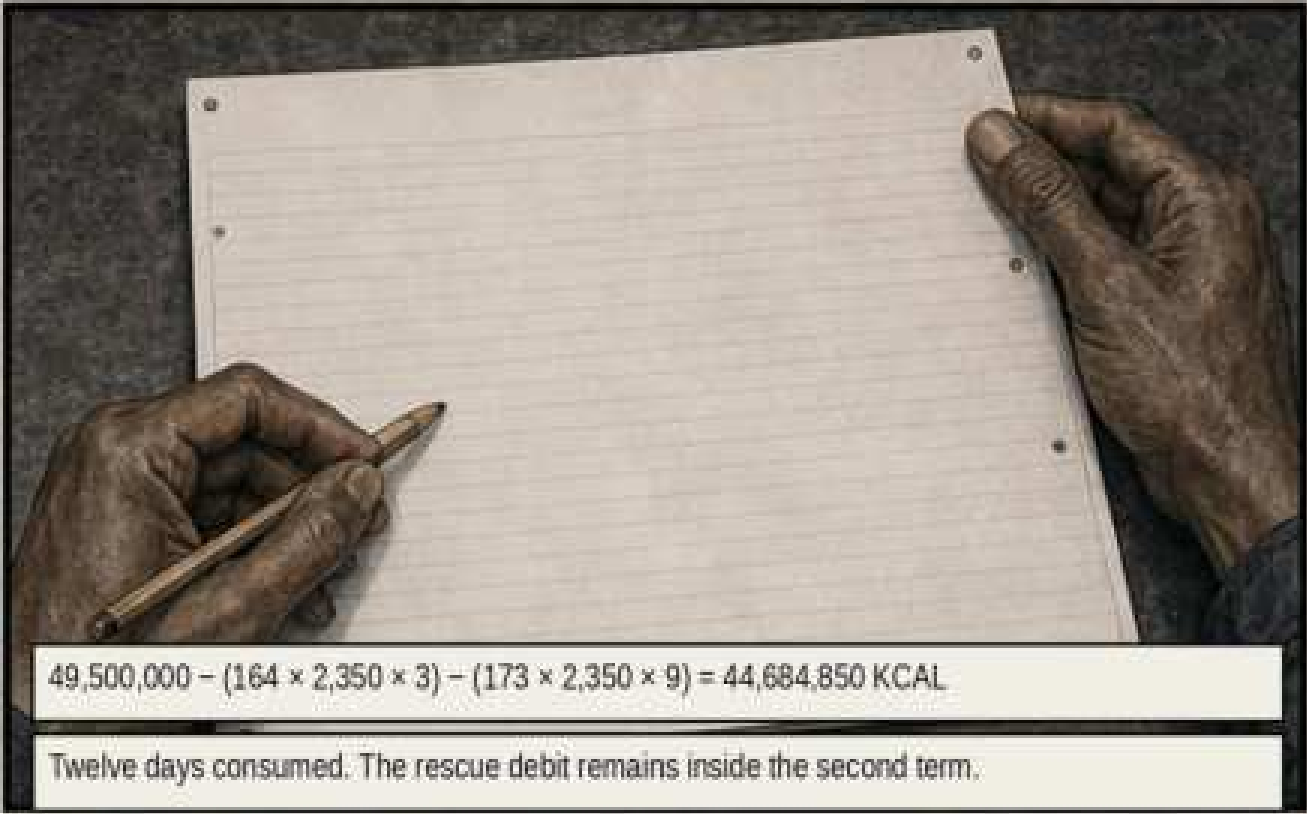
Even when neither helps?

Especially then.



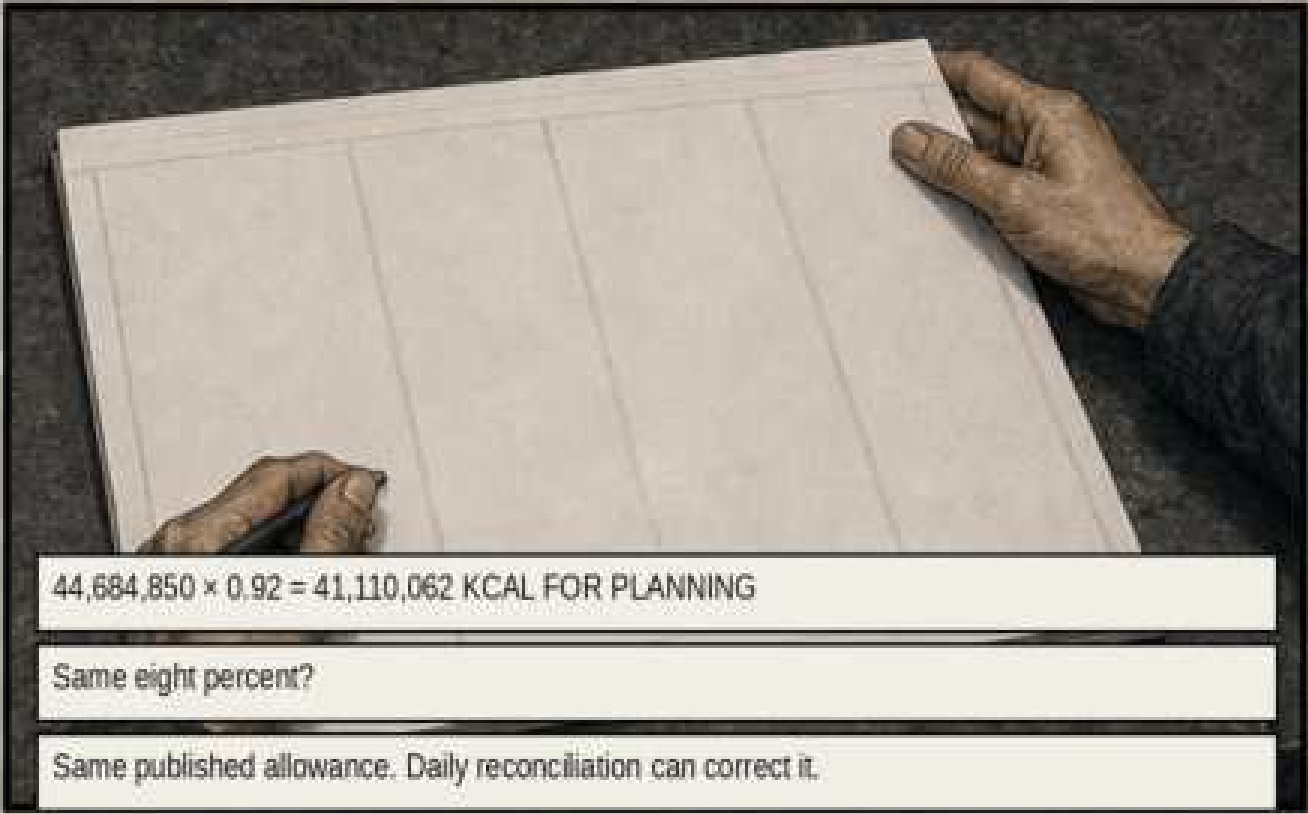
Start with food physically counted on Day Zero.

Debit people only for days they were aboard.



$49,500,000 - (164 \times 2,350 \times 3) - (173 \times 2,350 \times 9) = 44,684,850 \text{ KCAL}$

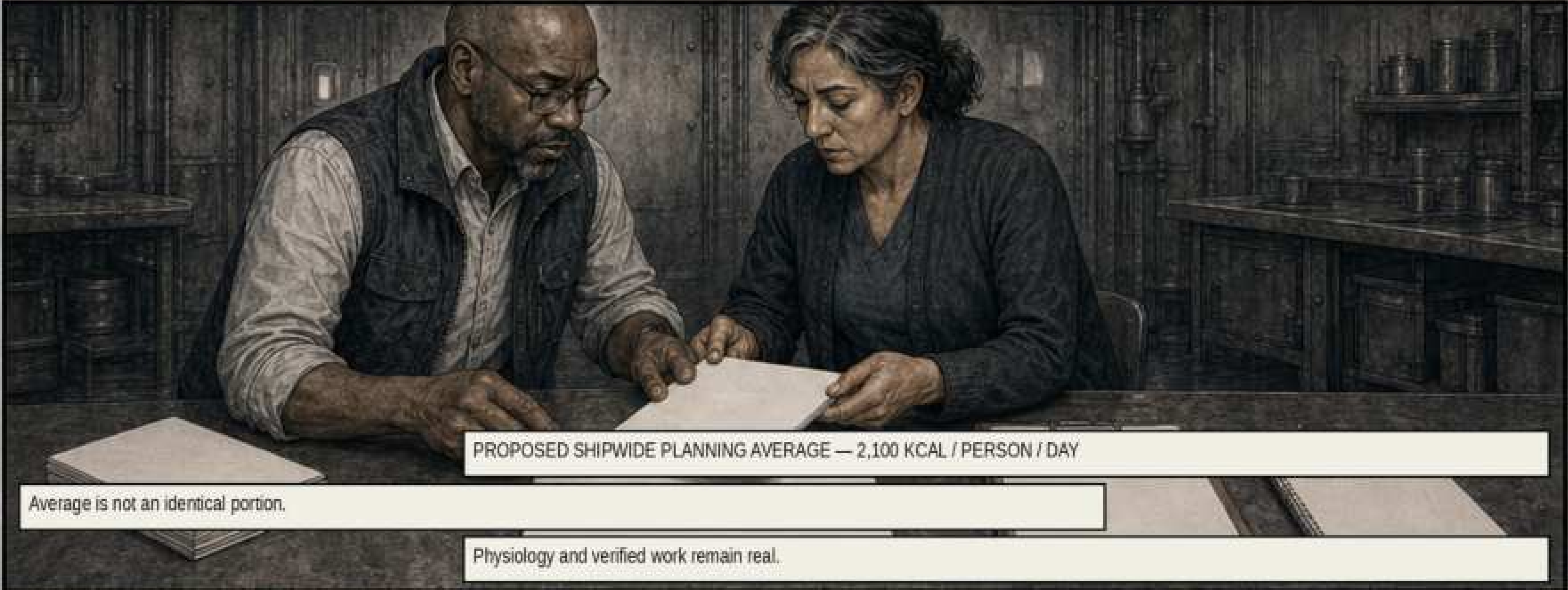
Twelve days consumed. The rescue debit remains inside the second term.



$44,684,850 \times 0.92 = 41,110,062 \text{ KCAL FOR PLANNING}$

Same eight percent?

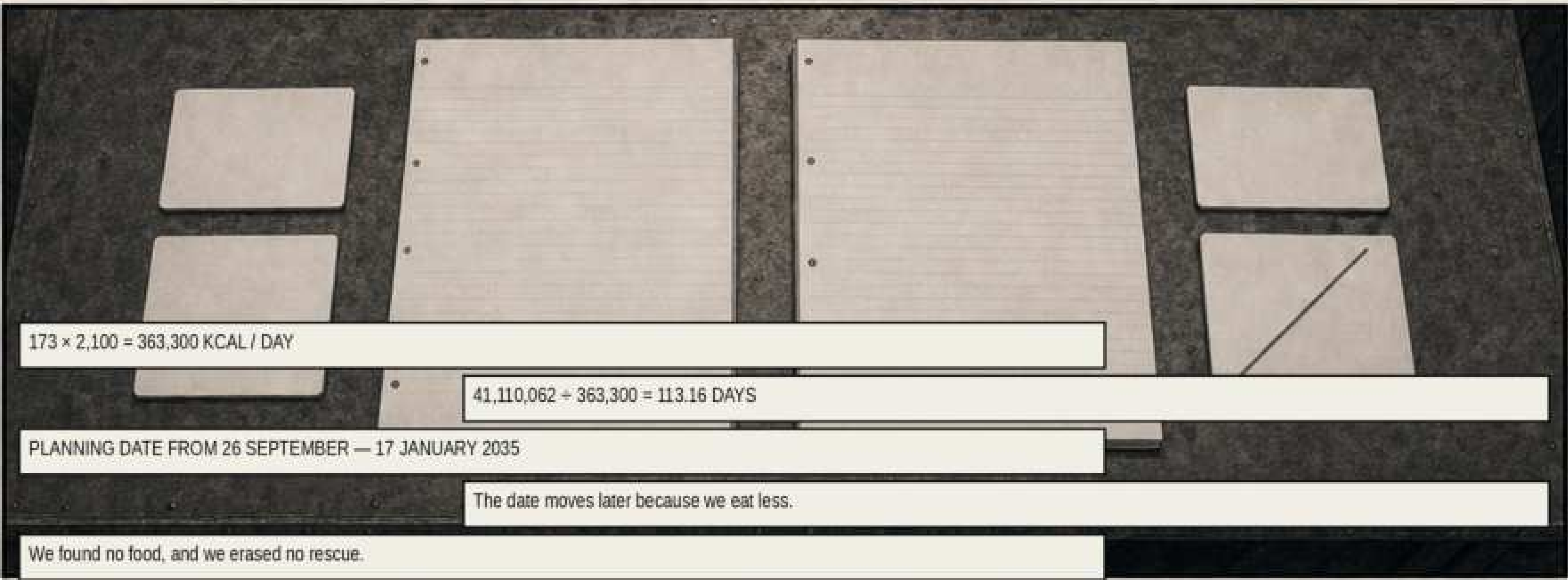
Same published allowance. Daily reconciliation can correct it.



PROPOSED SHIPWIDE PLANNING AVERAGE — 2,100 KCAL / PERSON / DAY

Average is not an identical portion.

Physiology and verified work remain real.



$173 \times 2,100 = 363,300 \text{ KCAL / DAY}$

$41,110,062 \div 363,300 = 113.16 \text{ DAYS}$

PLANNING DATE FROM 26 SEPTEMBER — 17 JANUARY 2035

The date moves later because we eat less.

We found no food, and we erased no rescue.



Average is not an identical portion.

The daily issue envelope is three hundred sixty-three thousand three hundred kilocalories.



AGE AND GROWTH NEED

MEDICAL NEED

VERIFIED WORKLOAD

A child, a healing patient, and a cold-deck watch do not have identical needs.

Job title alone proves nothing.



Who verifies workload before departments promote themselves?

Watch records, task duration, and the worker. Then we reconcile actual issues.

Publish the variance by category.

Agreed.



APPEAL — ELIAS / SAMIRA / WATCH REPRESENTATIVE

DECISION AND REASON ENTERED NEXT RECONCILIATION

An appeal is part of the method, not disobedience.

Totals and reasons public. Locks and weak points controlled.



REVISION 3 — EFFECTIVE NEXT ISSUE

PLANNING AVERAGE — 2,100 KCAL / PERSON / DAY

DAILY ISSUE ENVELOPE — 363,300 KCAL

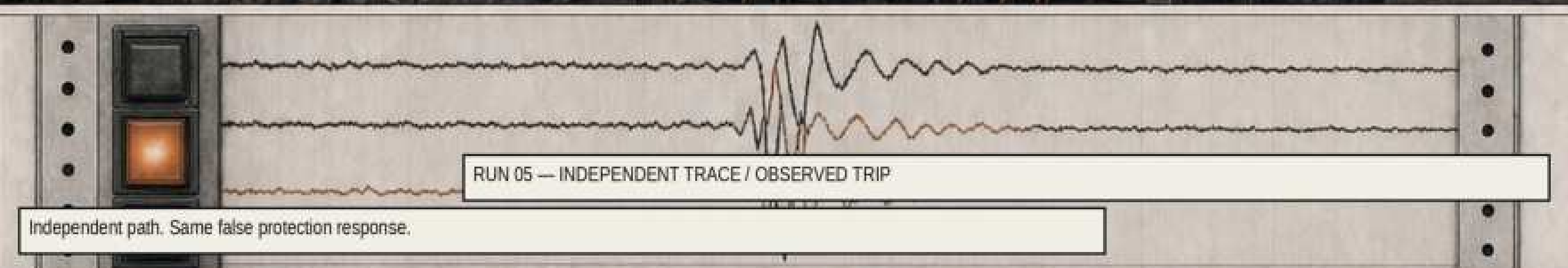
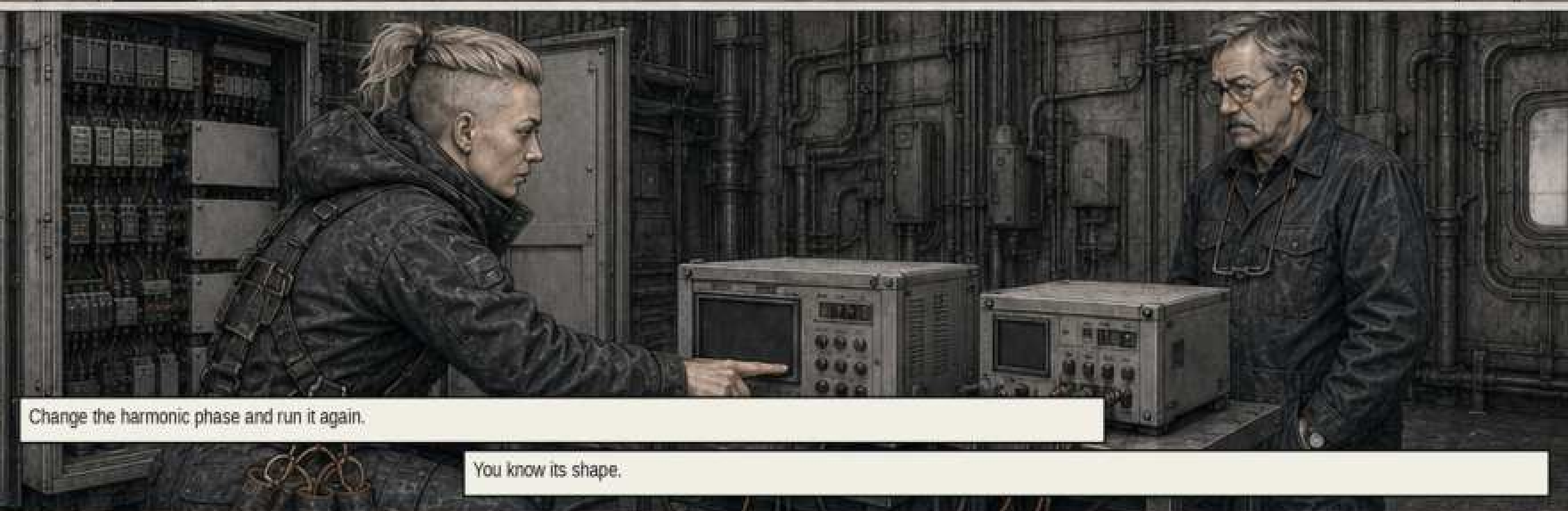
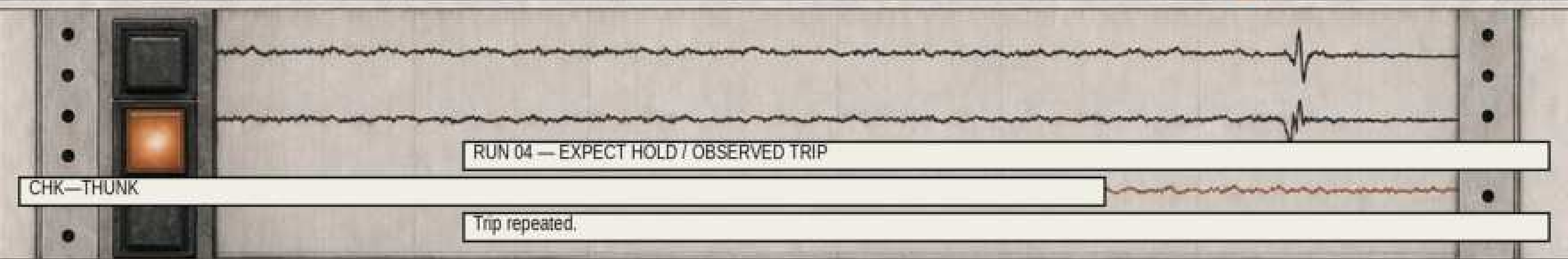
HORIZON — 113.16 DAYS

PLANNING DATE — 17 JANUARY 2035

Adopted. Reconcile tomorrow, and correct it in public.



Protection cabinet isolated and grounded.





The prototype tripped intermittently during commissioning.

I accepted it because factory support and replacement boards were one call away.



Engineers accept bounded risk.

You converted a shared risk into a private one.



I signed the acceptance.

I did not know shore support would disappear.

You knew the support assumption belonged in the record.



QUARANTINE — FULL BENCH TEST REQUIRED

No bypass plan. No substitute breaker claim. No connection authorization.



What happens next is work, not absolution.

Then put my decision on the public notice.

You will put it there yourself.



27 September. Day Thirteen.

Record this.



SHORE EXPORT PACKAGE — UNPROVEN

HARMONIC-PROTECTION FAULT UNDER TEST

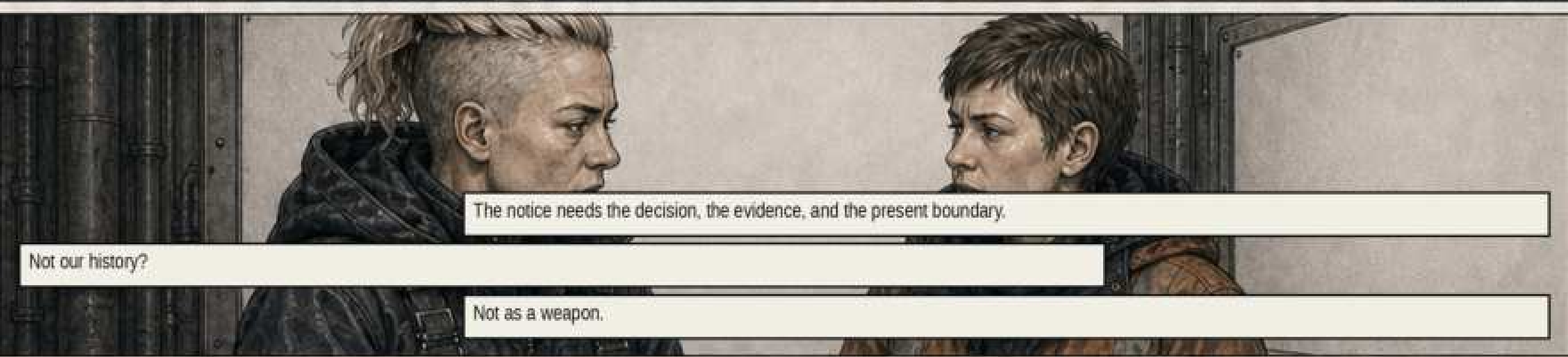
CONNECTION NOT AUTHORIZED



I accepted an intermittent prototype fault before departure.

I assumed factory support and replacement boards would remain available.

That assumption was mine, and I left it out of the shared record.



The notice needs the decision, the evidence, and the present boundary.

Not our history?

Not as a weapon.



FULL BENCH TEST — ACTIVE / RESULTS PUBLISHED BY STATE

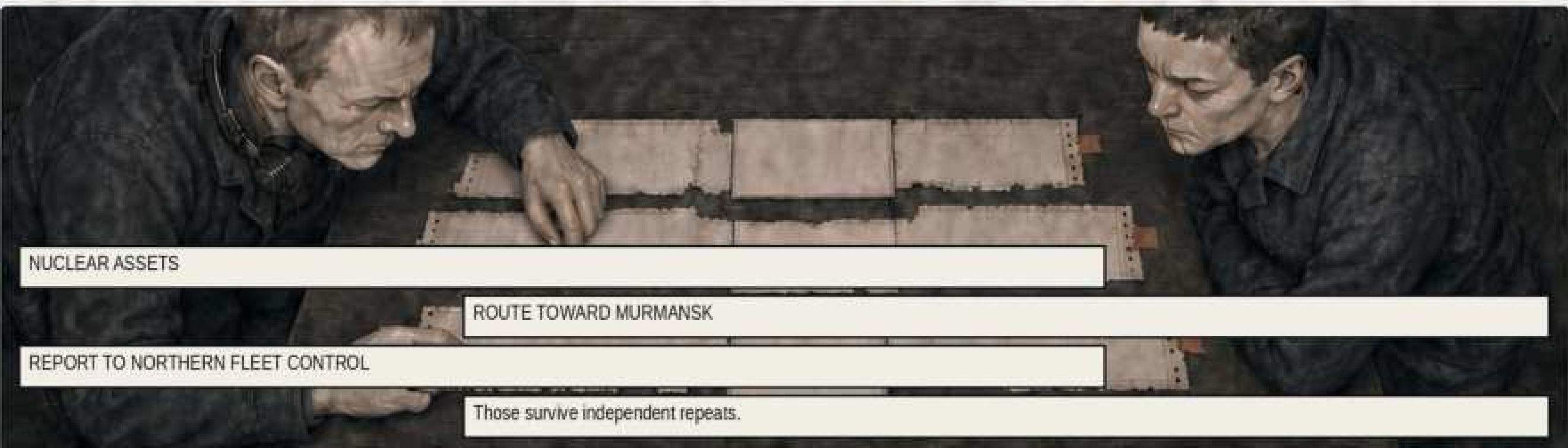
Unproven means no promise and no connection.

And no one else carries my assumption in secret.



Original sealed. Independent copy verified. Working copy only on this table.

Show me what a chief officer must carry on watch.

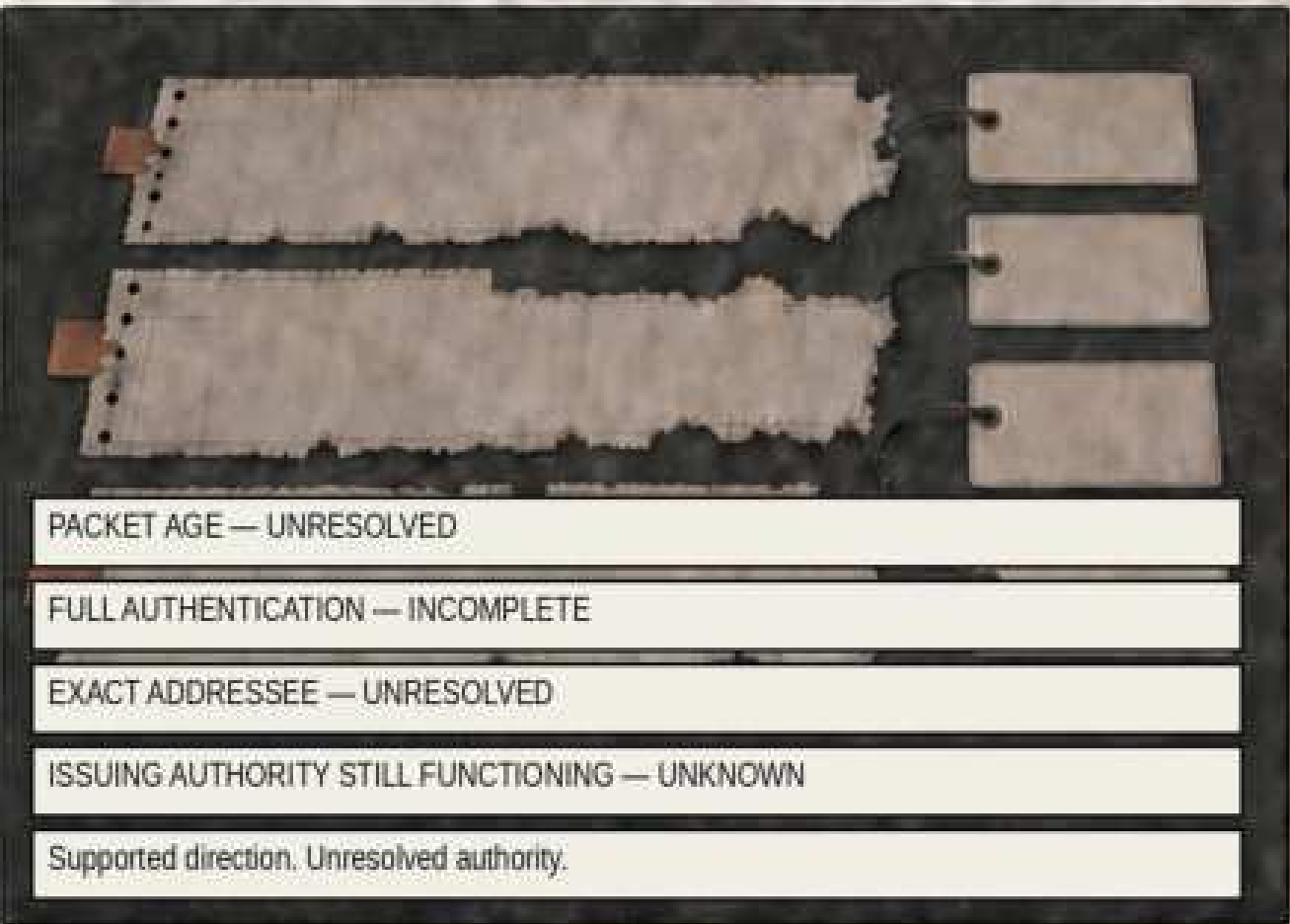


NUCLEAR ASSETS

ROUTE TOWARD MURMANSK

REPORT TO NORTHERN FLEET CONTROL

Those survive independent repeats.



PACKET AGE — UNRESOLVED

FULL AUTHENTICATION — INCOMPLETE

EXACT ADDRESSEE — UNRESOLVED

ISSUING AUTHORITY STILL FUNCTIONING — UNKNOWN

Supported direction. Unresolved authority.



Captain Wrona received the working reconstruction before the Longyearbyen order.

The supported fragments included Murmansk?

Yes.



I will ask what he decided and what he withheld.

Ask him. Do not ask the gaps to testify.



Revision Three. First full issue under the new average.

Film the board, not the patient list.

Understood.



WORKING RECONSTRUCTION 02 — TRANSFERRED TO CAPTAIN W. / 20 SEP 00:12 UTC

Before the course decision.



[Russian] I reconstructed the supported direction.

Then you reconstructed the uncertainty with it.



You had Murmansk before you ordered Longyearbyen.

Yes.



An isolated captain cannot privately decide the state is dead.

A direction affecting every watchstander was not yours alone.



The packet may be old, incomplete, misrouted, or issued by people already gone.

Taking the only refuge toward a likely nuclear target could be obedience as suicide.



Then refuse it in the record.

Do not hide the direction and call the silence seamanship.



Divided command kills ships.

Private command can kill trust before the hull.



I chose Longyearbyen.

I will answer for it when the ship can survive the answer.

chk



ORIGINAL — 27 SEP / 10:05–10:08 UTC / PUBLIC RATION CORRIDOR / BULKHEAD OPEN

Original sealed before review.



WORKING COPY — UNEDITED

DURATION MATCH — PASS

CHECKSUM MATCH — PASS



I recorded it while filming the ration corridor.

The bulkhead was open. I did not enter the chart room.

Have you published or played it for anyone?

No.



Keep the original sealed.

I will hear the working copy once.



I chose Longyearbyen.

Do not hide the direction and call the silence seamanship.

I can put this before the ship.

Not before he has the chance to disclose it himself.



Professor.

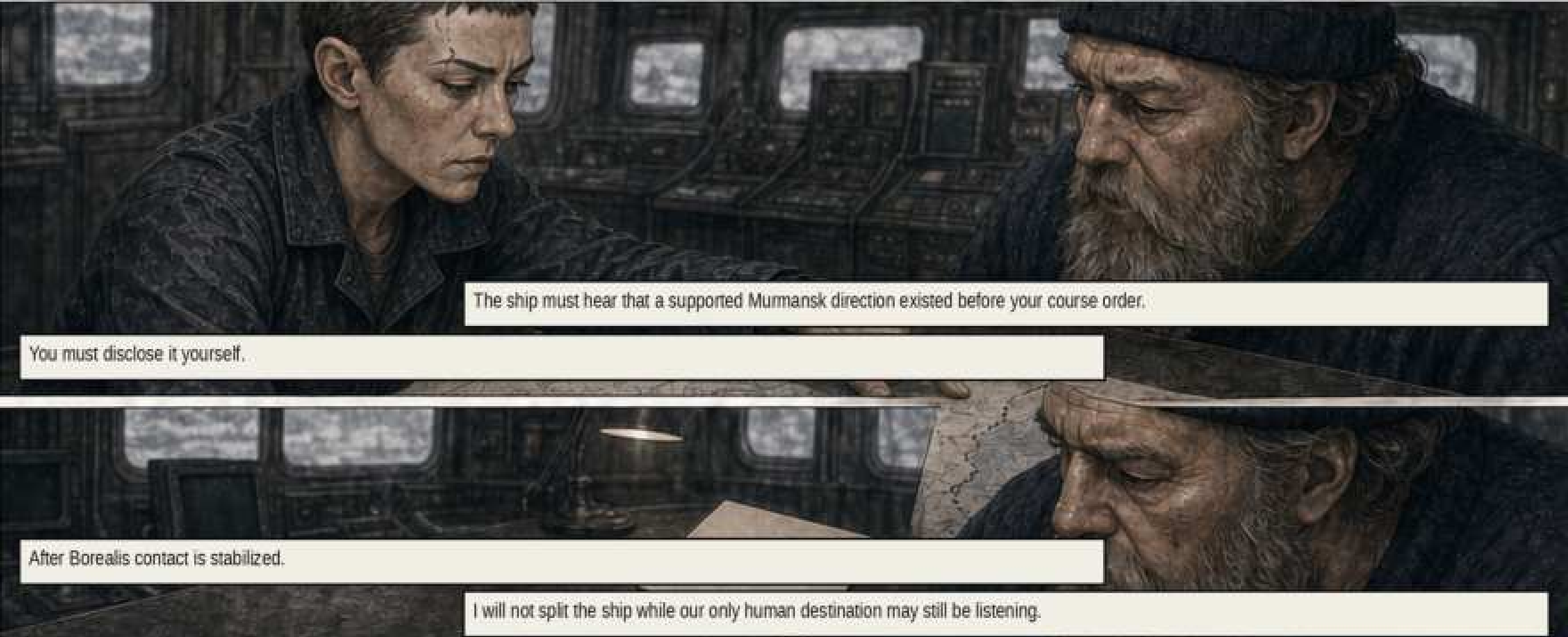
Captain.



Rachel recorded the open-bulkhead confrontation from the ration corridor.

Has she broadcast it?

No.



The ship must hear that a supported Murmansk direction existed before your course order.

You must disclose it yourself.

After Borealis contact is stabilized.

I will not split the ship while our only human destination may still be listening.



NEXT BOREALIS WINDOW — 28 SEP / 06:00–06:08 UTC

Stabilized means what, exactly?

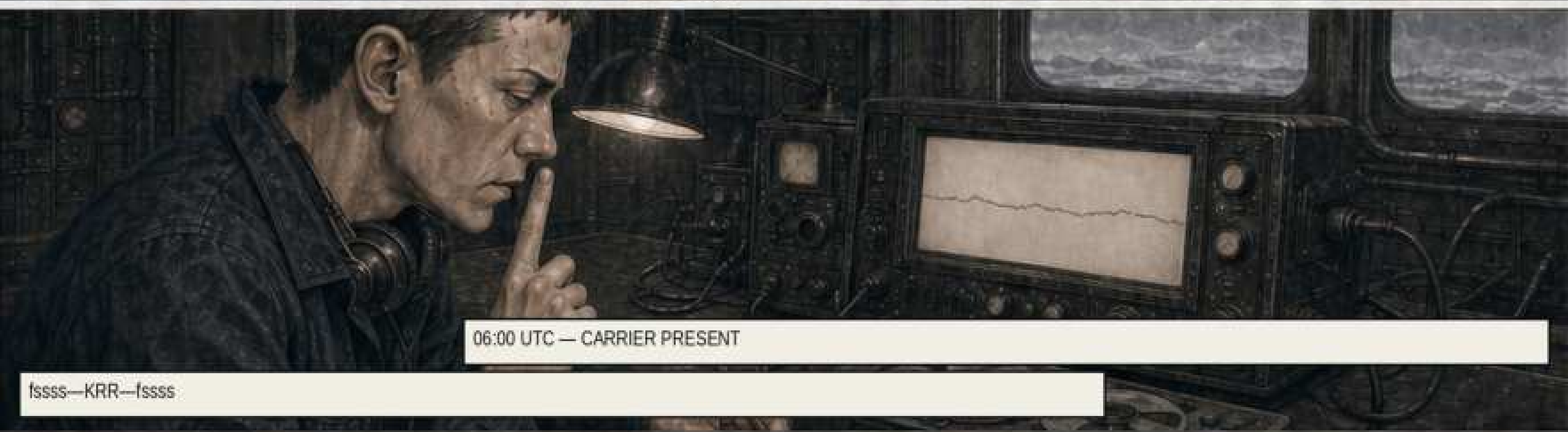
A payload we can authenticate and answer.

Then your promise has no clock.



28 September, Day Fourteen.

Recorders live. Window opening.



06:00 UTC — CARRIER PRESENT

fssss—KRR—fssss



Independent track matches the event.

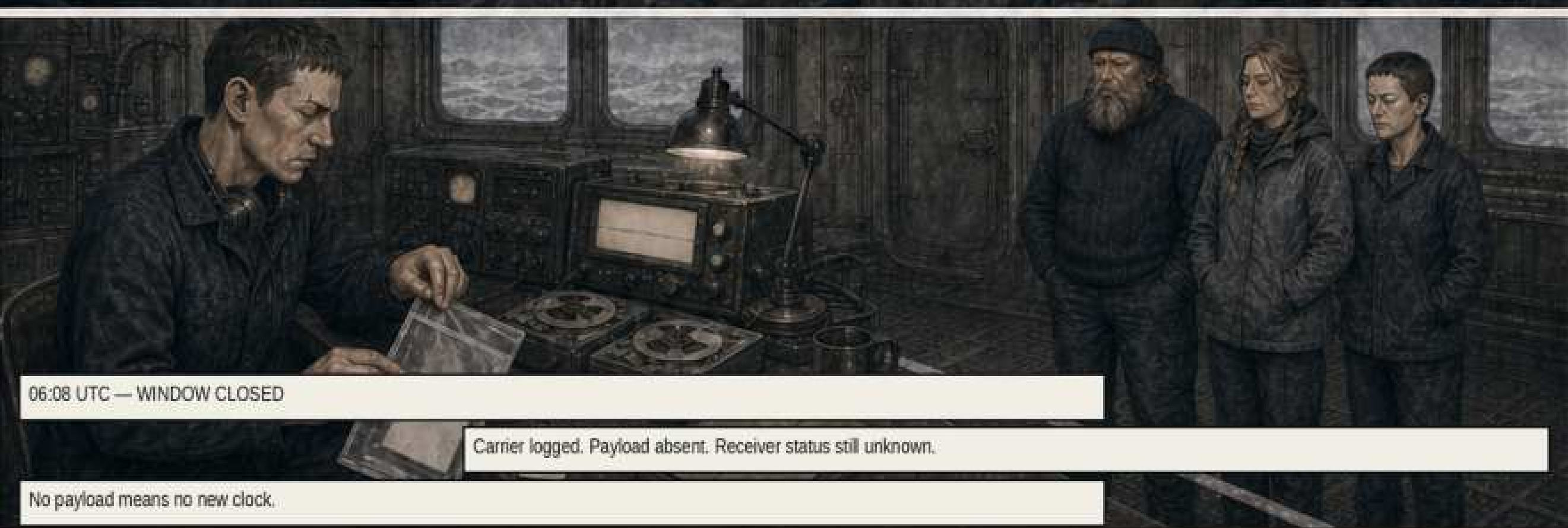
No recoverable authenticated payload.



Does carrier stabilize contact?

No.

Then the condition remains undefined.



06:08 UTC — WINDOW CLOSED

Carrier logged. Payload absent. Receiver status still unknown.

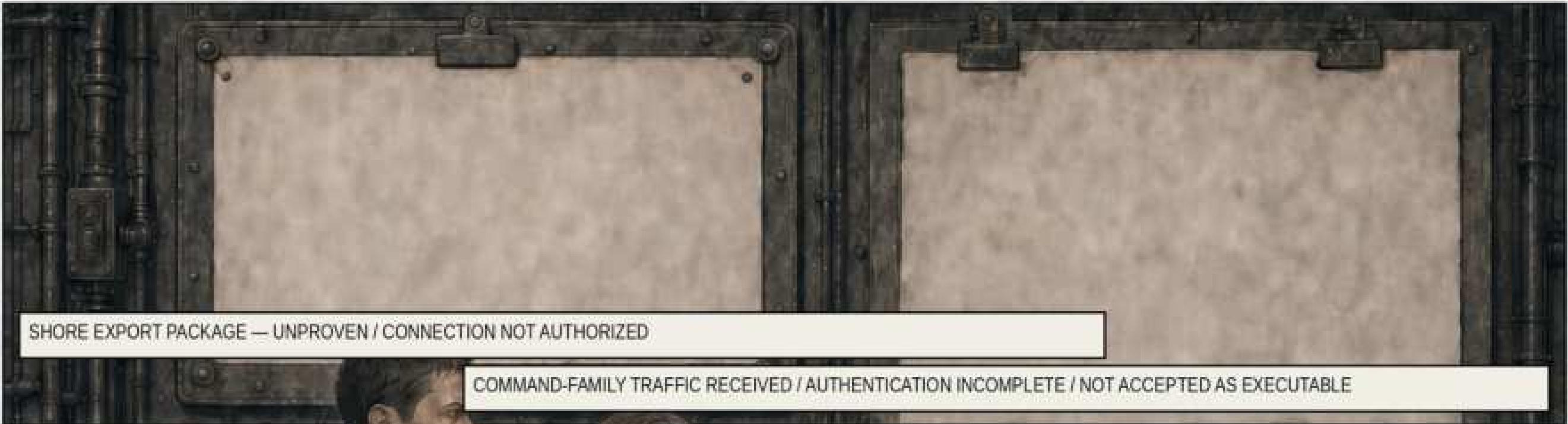
No payload means no new clock.



PLANNING AVERAGE — 2,100 KCAL / PERSON / DAY

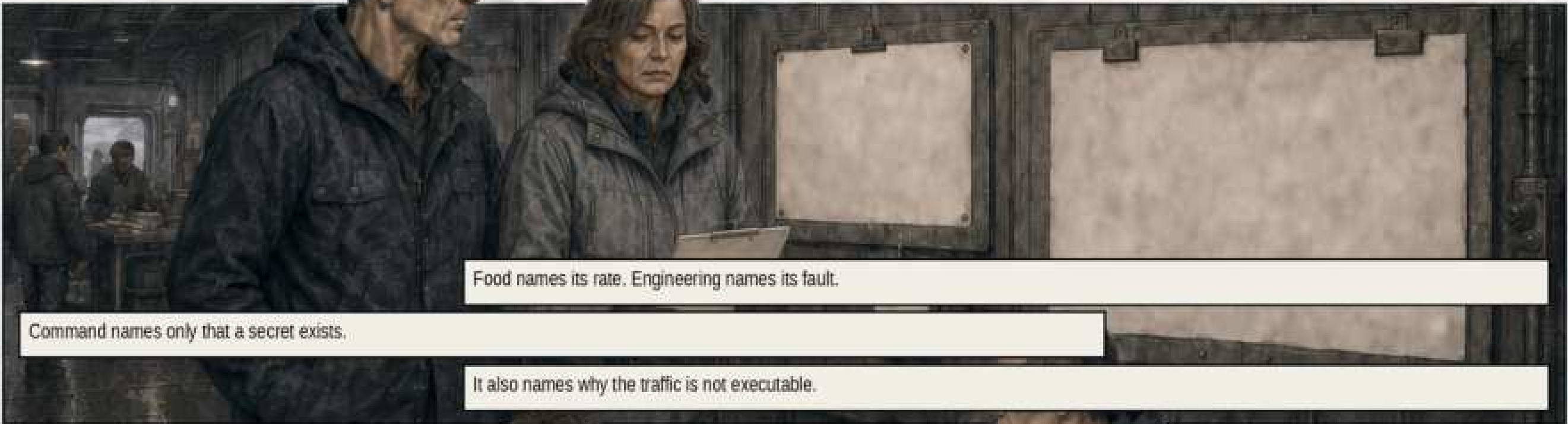
DAILY ISSUE ENVELOPE — 363,300 KCAL

PLANNING DATE — 17 JANUARY 2035



SHORE EXPORT PACKAGE — UNPROVEN / CONNECTION NOT AUTHORIZED

COMMAND-FAMILY TRAFFIC RECEIVED / AUTHENTICATION INCOMPLETE / NOT ACCEPTED AS EXECUTABLE



Food names its rate. Engineering names its fault.

Command names only that a secret exists.

It also names why the traffic is not executable.



Privately owned risk is still a systems failure.

Yes.

Then why is command exempt?

It is not. The remedy is not private access for you.



A notice can be honest and still incomplete.

Only if incomplete is not permanent.



If it is an order, why are we southbound?

It may not concern this ship.

A gap is not evidence for whichever fear arrives first.



Rumor is a fluid, Captain.

If you do not give it a pipe, it finds the cable runs.

And if I open the wrong valve?

Then at least we know which deck gets wet.



Variance is one point eight percent under envelope.

Publish it with the cause, not my name.



AVERAGE SOUTHBOUND PROGRESS — 3.81 KT / ROUTE STILL CORRECTING

The ice has submitted its daily objection.

That one I can answer now.



COMMAND WORKING COPY — CONTROLLED / CAPTAIN



ORIGINAL CAPTURE — SEALED / INDEPENDENT COPY — VERIFIED / RECONSTRUCTION ACCESS — OKSANA BELOVA

Signal evidence remains signal evidence.



OPEN-BULKHEAD RECORDING — ORIGINAL SEALED / NOT PUBLISHED

Preservation is not permission.



DISCLOSE SUPPORTED DIRECTION / STATE UNCERTAINTIES / RECORD COMMAND RATIONALE

A copy can prove words. It cannot make the decision legitimate.



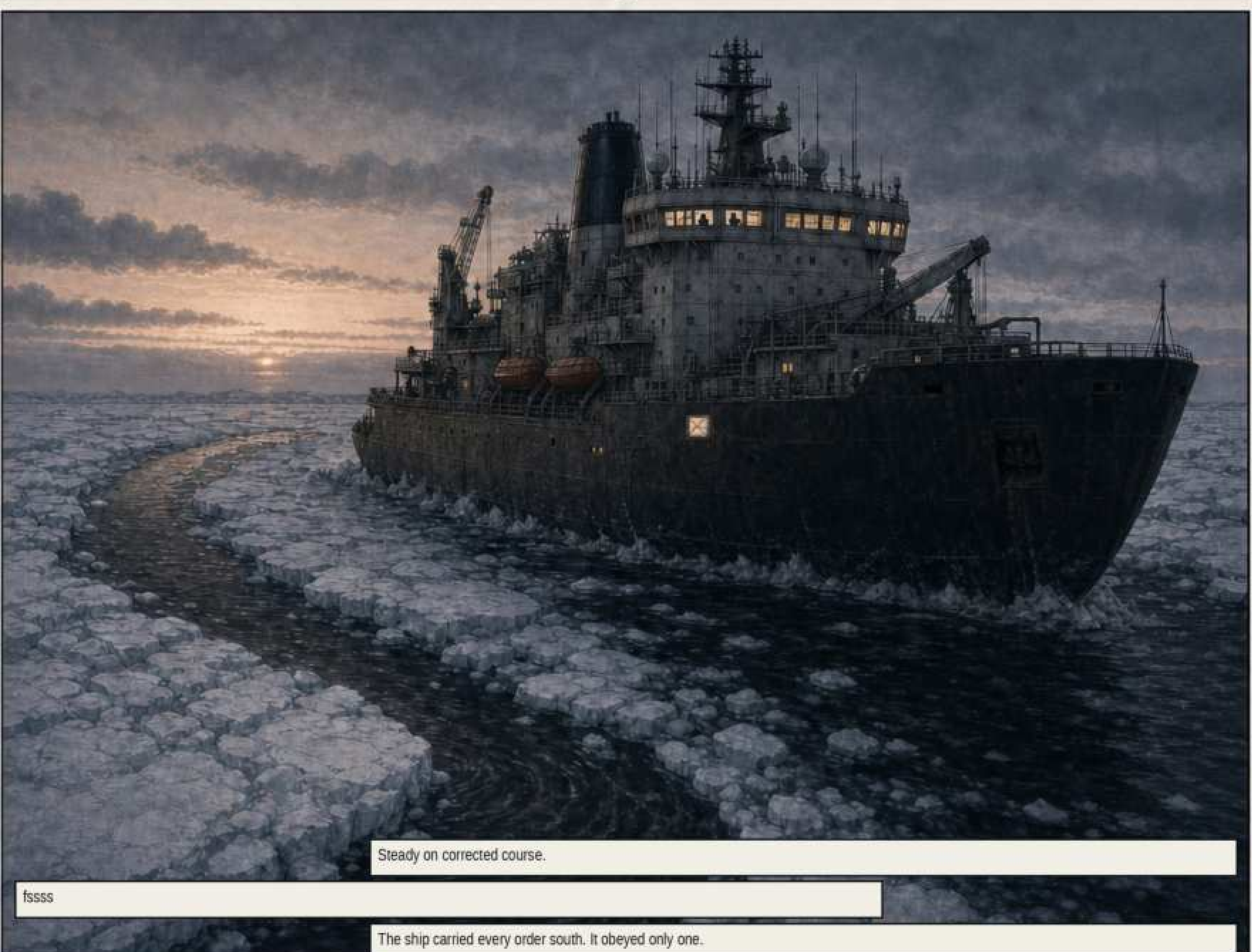
Four holders. No common notice.



TOTAL ABOARD — 173
SOUTHBOUND PROGRESS — BELOW 4 KT
REACTOR A — REDUCED SURVIVAL LOAD
REACTOR B — SHUT DOWN / COOLED / RESERVE
KA-32 SAFE-FLIGHT LEDGER — 29.40 HR



RATION HORIZON — 113.16 DAYS / 17 JANUARY 2035
SHORE EXPORT PACKAGE — UNPROVEN / CONNECTION NOT AUTHORIZED
COMMAND-FAMILY TRAFFIC — INCOMPLETE / NOT EXECUTABLE / SUBSTANTIVE DIRECTION NOT YET PUBLIC



Steady on corrected course.

fssss

The ship carried every order south. It obeyed only one.