



I 01 - THE INTERRUPTION

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Vanguard-6, this is MWSS111 Command. Captain Loretta, your return flight is being interrupted. A violent gravitational disturbance has appeared near the black-hole region. We need your ship to investigate immediately.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Understood, Captain. Hold the coordinates. I am bringing the bridge to mission status now.



| 02 - MISSION ACCEPTED

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

The field is unstable, and our long-range instruments cannot see through the distortion. Approach carefully, but get close enough for GMTO to map what is happening.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Mission confirmed and accepted. Althea, cancel our return vector and bring Vanguard-6 around. JIM, prepare the shield membrane. GMTO, plot us a survivable path.



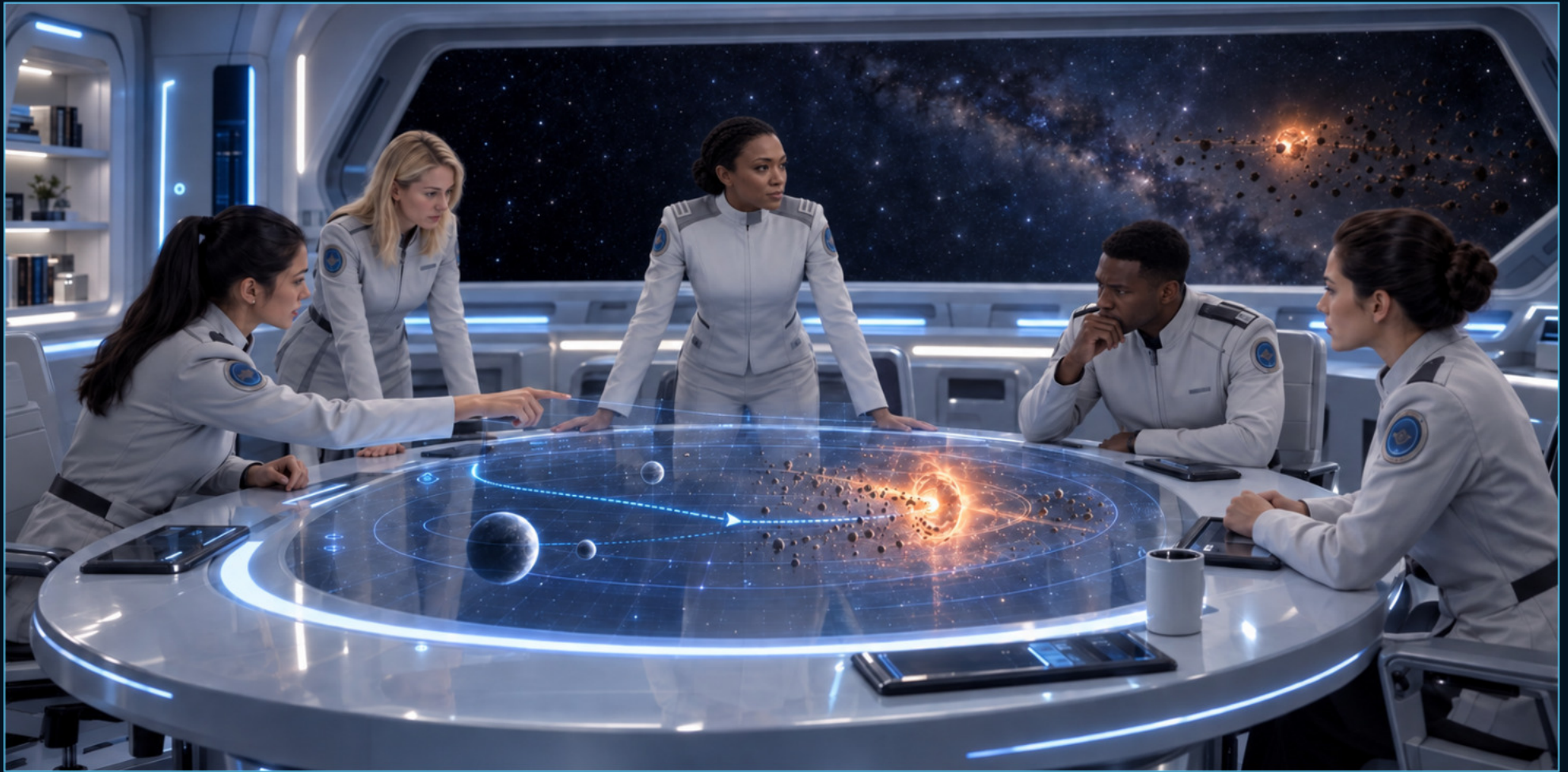
I 03 - COURSE SET FOR SCUTUM

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Understood. Althea, set course for Scutum. GMTO, find us a safe approach.

NARRATOR

Captain Loretta speaks calmly but decisively. Captain Larry remains silent on the secure channel. Althea immediately begins entering the new course without speaking.



I 04 - READY ROOM BRIEFING

INA

The disturbance is not confined to the black-hole region. This model shows an expanding debris wake bending the starlight ahead of us.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Then Captain Larry's report was only the center of it. Track the outer boundary and tell me how soon it crosses our flight path.

NARRATOR

Still en route, the crew studies the widening storm while GMT0 compares the projected route with the moving debris front.



I 05 - LONG-RANGE ALERT

SHIP COMPUTER

Long-range anomaly detected. Estimated intercept: eighteen minutes.

INA

That is not the black hole. It is the outer edge of the disturbance - a moving wall of charged plasma and debris.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Briefing is over. All personnel to stations. Althea, prepare for early intercept. INA, keep that signal locked. Rex, secure the ship.



I 06 - COMMAND STATIONS

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

All hands, command stations. Althea, bring us to approach velocity. INA, place every long-range sensor on the disturbance. Rex, secure the ship. GMT0, find us a path through the impossible. JIM, stand ready to make it survivable. From this moment forward, Vanguard-6 moves as one ship, one crew, and one purpose. Bring us to the threshold.

NARRATOR

The crew responds without hesitation. Across the bridge, stations come alive as Vanguard-6 closes on the outer edge of the disturbance.



I 07 - INTO THE DISTURBANCE

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

All stations, brace for heavy turbulence. Althea, follow the GMT0 corridor exactly. JIM, keep the shield bubble fully active. We are going in.

NARRATOR

The LRS Vanguard-6 drives toward the black hole through the roaring debris field, where gravity, light, and matter are being twisted around the accretion flow.



GMTO

A low-density path has formed along the outer boundary. Maintain this flight line to delay full contact with the debris stream.

JIM

First particle contact detected. The membrane is active and beginning to redistribute the forward pressure.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Althea, hold the GMTO line. Take us into the zone.

**INA**

Signal source ahead. The object is artificial - a sealed recorder buried inside the wreckage.

GMTO

The recorder is not producing the full gamma-ray burst. It is using the black hole's warped magnetic field and accretion energy as a natural amplifier.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Then we follow the signal to its source. Deploy ARGUS-1 and prepare the cargo bay.

**NARRATOR**

ARGUS-1 - the Autonomous Retrieval and Gamma-ray Utility Scout - threads through the debris and clamps onto the recorder.

ALTHEA

Crosswinds are pushing the debris field across our recovery line.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Hold position. JIM, extend the shield corridor. ARGUS-1, bring it home.

**NARRATOR**

The cargo bay opens inside JIM's protective membrane. ARGUS-1 guides the scarred recorder between the capture arms as the storm tears past the ship.

REX

Recorder secured. There is writing wrapped around the outer casing.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Put it on the main display.

INA

It says: Some things were meant to be lost.

**NARRATOR**

Vanguard-6 completes a hard 180-degree turn and bursts from the violent debris field. Behind the ship, plasma, shattered rock, and wreckage continue spiraling around the black hole.

JIM

Vanguard-6 is clear of the primary turbulence. Shield integrity is recovering.

ALTHEA

Holding relative position. The storm is still expanding toward us.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Keep our bow pointed toward open space. If that field shifts again, I want an immediate escape corridor.

**NARRATOR**

The scarred recorder remains suspended between the capture arms. ARGUS-1 waits nearby while Captain Larry appears on the cargo-bay conference screen.

INA

The original recording is ancient. It contains the final observations of a civilization that disappeared from this region.

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Disappeared naturally - or destroyed?

INA

The recorder documented an artificial energy discharge immediately before the system was erased.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Then the recorder witnessed what happened here.



INA

There is another layer embedded inside the ancient data. It carries Vanguard-6 identification codes and Captain Loretta's voice.

FUTURE LORETTA - RECORDING

Do not return this device to Milky Way Space Station 111.

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Can we determine when that message was transmitted?

GMTO

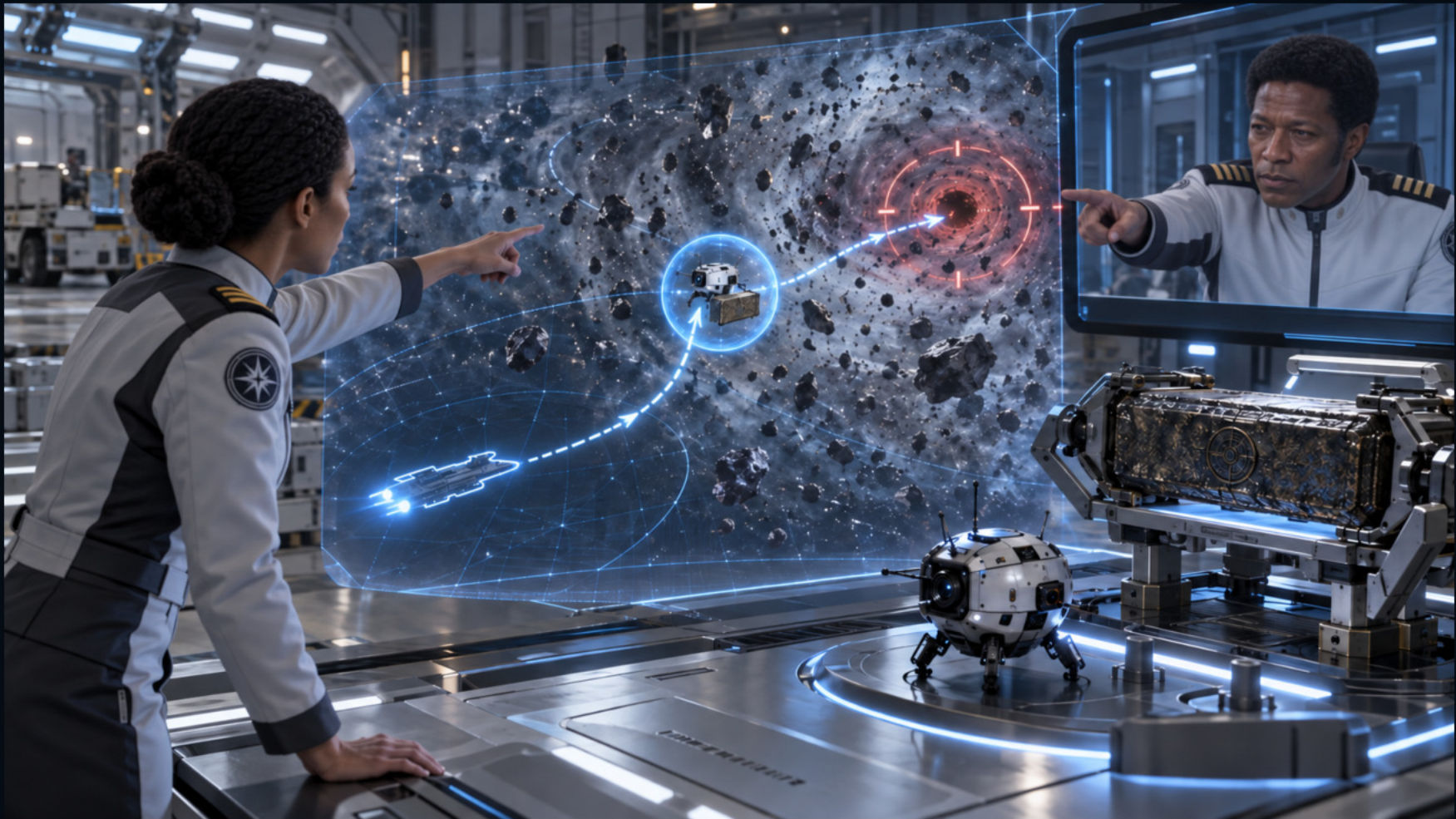
Negative. Its point of origin lies outside the present sequence of local time.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Then bringing it home may be exactly what someone - or something - expects us to do.

JIM

Destruction is not recommended. Released energy could reconnect the recorder with the amplified signal.

**GMTO**

The original recovery location remains temporarily stable. Surrounding gravitational currents conceal it from conventional sensors.

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Can ARGUS-1 carry it back without reopening the cargo bay inside that storm?

JIM

Affirmative. I can extend a narrow shield corridor around ARGUS-1.

GMTO

I can generate a miniature topology-containment field around the recorder and prevent further transmissions.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

For how long?

GMTO

Unknown.



CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Return it to the precise location where it was found. Record no conventional coordinates. Store the location only in GMTO's protected navigation archive.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

And place the entire region under permanent quarantine.

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

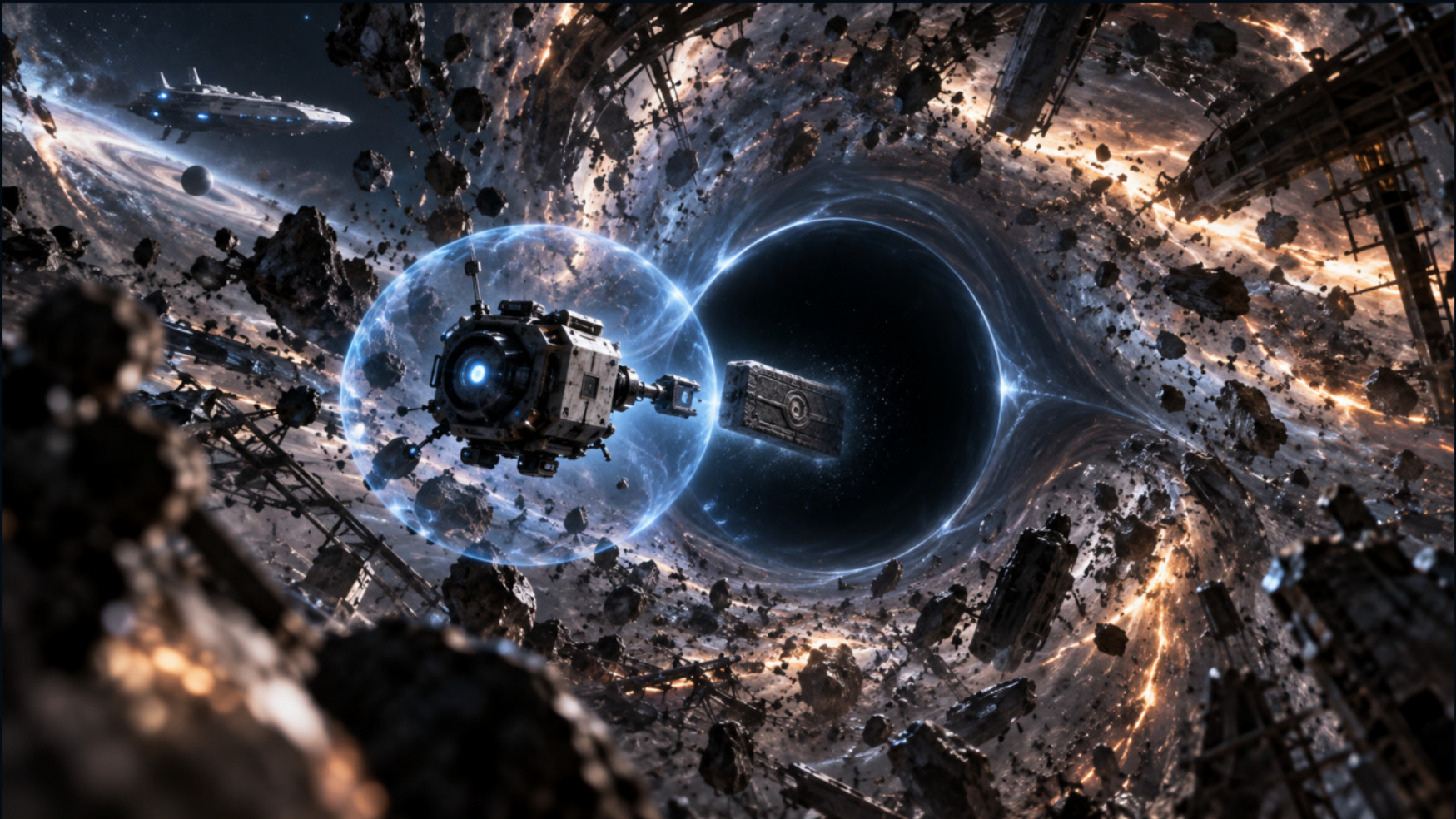
Agreed. No ships. No probes. No automated surveys.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Not even us.

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Especially not us.

**NARRATOR**

ARGUS-1 carries the recorder into the storm inside a miniature GMTO topology field. JIM's membrane bends burning fragments and debris around the probe.

ALTHEA

ARGUS-1 is approaching the turbulence boundary.

JIM

Portable membrane stable.

GMTO

Topology field synchronized.

INA

Captain - the signal is returning.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Can it reach beyond the containment field?

GMTO

Negative. The message is trapped inside its own repeating moment.

**NARRATOR**

ARGUS-1 reaches the hidden gravitational pocket and releases the recorder. For one final instant, the casing is visible: SOME THINGS WERE MEANT TO BE LOST.

GMTO

Recorder secured within the gravitational pocket. All transmissions have ceased.

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Establish a navigational exclusion zone extending beyond the entire debris field.

INA

Designation?

CAPTAIN LARRY THEBASSMAN

Quarantine Region One-Eleven.



CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

All MWSS111 vessels are prohibited from entering this region. No recovery operations are authorized. No signal originating here is to be answered.

JIM

Quarantine directive confirmed.

ALTHEA

Course back to Milky Way Space Station 111?

CAPTAIN LORETTA A. SMITH

Not yet. Move us another ten million kilometers away - and keep every sensor facing backward.

NARRATOR

Vanguard-6 begins to withdraw. Then GMTO detects one final pulse.

GMTO DISPLAY

YOU CAME BACK.