

REEL TENSION

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TITLECARD:

The following footage was discovered off the Florida Coast.

Due to a Civil Case against Benchley Canoes, the footage was previously withheld from the public.

Until now.

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

FOOTAGE rolls from a HELMET-mounted camera.

A white canoe CRUISES the calm ocean.

Masculine arms work the reel on a sturdy fishing pole. The steel fishing line extends out ahead of the small boat.

Rock music plays from large headphone wrapped around the fisherman's neck. Army Dog Tags dangle across his chest.

This is NILES, our point of view.

He holsters his rod on a mount in the floor.

Niles reaches for a beer. He twists it open. He sips. He TAPS his wedding ring against the bottle in rhythm with the music.

NILES (O.S.)

This is it.

Niles looks skyward: the swirling clouds, and the brilliant sun. He enjoys the view, as he talks OFF-SCREEN.

NILES (cont.)

The life.

Niles sings along with the music for a while, as he stares at the beautiful sky. He SIGHS in relief, then looks back down.

He PADDLES with his feet, working the PEDALS like a Bumper Boat.

He prepares a hook attached to a side mounted rod.

He throws the bait into the calm waters. And pedals on.

NILES

Here fishy fishy.

Niles takes another sip of beer.

He sings with the music as he checks his surroundings.

A few gulls fly about. Stragglers.

The ocean is calm. No other boats. Another rod on the left.

There's land in the horizon behind. Another rod in the rear.

NILES (yells)

Hellllloooo... Echo!

There is of course no echo, so Niles fakes his own.

He gulps the beer, watching it disappear from the bottle.

TRRRRL. The reel SPINS on the rod at his feet. FAST.

Niles swears and SNATCHES the rod, DROPPING the bottle.

He CLICKS the rod into a holster on his seat. He LOCKS the reel in place. TWANG. The steel line goes TAUGHT.

The pole BENDS. Niles TIGHTENS his thighs around the rod.

He YANKS on the pole. HARD. He REELS in a good length of line.

He looks ahead at the steel line. It ZIGS, quickly changing directions. Then ZAGS, curving back.

Niles curses as he STRUGGLES mightily. He yanks and reels in.

NILES

Whoah. Guys. I'm callin it now. I got a Marlin. Happy Honeymoon to me.

Niles reaches up to his helmet camera. CLICK.

He DUNKS the camera into the water off the side of his canoe.

INT. OCEAN - SAME

Bubbles RUSH by.

There's a net strung to the boat's side. It holds a half-dozen fish, ranging in size from 6 inches to 2 feet. BLOOD flows from their gills, leaving a dark and murky trail.

Niles POINTS the camera ahead. The steel line ZIGS.

The horizon is too murky and out-of-focus to display his catch.

Bubble rush by as Nile RAISES the camera.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

Niles points the camera at himself. He wears sunglasses, a Miami Heat shirt, 2 days stubble, and a LARGE smile.

NILES

You see it? This will be another for the Wall of Fame. Shit, this will take up the ENTIRE wall. Enjoy the show fellas. I'm gonna reel this Mother in.

Niles laughs and cheers as he re-attaches the helmet cam.

He pulls on the rod again, and reels in some slack.

The taught line RIPS through the water. The fish changes angles.

A DORSAL FIN RUPTURES the surface. Then the tail fin, about 4 feet behind.

It RACES right for the small boat.

NILES (O.S.)

Hammerhead!

The SHARK CARVES away. The rod BENDS to an EXTREME arc.

The boat TURNS - with the shark on the line.

NILES (shaky)

Holy shit.

The side rod's line is in his WAY. Niles manoeuvres it clear - while holding the main rod. He DUCKS under the line.

He YANKS on the shark rod again. And reels in some line.

Niles pedals HARD. Anxious and swearing. The small canoe propels towards the fins. The shark DIVES down. The fins vanish.

The pedals RIP from under Niles' feet. TEARING his sandals off his feet. One flies into the ocean.

The pedals TWIRL on their own.

He PLANTS his bare feet against the boat, barely hanging on.

NILES

It's so strong, guys. It's like
tryin to rein in a freight train.

Niles' breathing gets more intense.

The shark PULLS his canoe, slowly leading him out to the ocean.

His grip TIGHTENS on the rod. His knuckles turn white.

NILES

It's PULLING me?!

The rod is firmly CLAMPED in its holster between his legs.

Niles reaches with one hand, and SPINS the side reel quickly - withdrawing the line, thereby removing the obstacle.

He looks to the front SHARK rod: the line is TAUGHT as ever.

Niles finishes REELING IN the side-line. The rod rests in its cradle. The HOOK, with bait still attached, SWINGS in the air.

Niles turns to the other side and REPEATS the process. Turning back occasionally to keep an eye on the Hammerhead.

The large Dorsal Fin RETURNS - 30 feet away.

The shark CURVES again, taking the boat along with.

NILES

FUCK!

Niles looks to the side - SCREAMING - because the HOOK from a side rod has LODGED in his face.

The fishing line leads from his face to the pole.

Niles reaches out with a SHAKY hand. GRIMACING - as he TUGS at the hook in his face.

He WIGGLES it, trying to ease it out.

The TOP of the long hook appears. He struggles. With small TUGS, more and more of the hook appears.

In the corner of his vision, Niles notices the FIN curve again.

His beer bottles CLANG against one another.

Finally, Niles PRIES the hook loose from his flesh.

He looks to his bloody fingers. And CURSES the shark. He LATCHES the hook on the pole.

NILES (laughs)
I hope I caught that on tape.

He looks down to the rod and WAILS on the reel. Pulling hard.

He STOPS. The FIN lowers into the ocean again.

Niles looks behind. The land is further out, but at least there's no other fins out there.

NILES
It's rogue. Holy shit.

He returns his GAZE to the front of the boat. The tension loosens on the rod. The arc becomes less extreme.

NILES (worried)
All he knows is how to kill.

The dorsal fin BREACHES the Ocean. It RACES for the boat.

NILES
No. NO. NO.

Niles reels in the line as quickly as he can.

NILES
Nature is one tough Mother.

The tail fin WHIPS from side to side, PROPELLING the shark forward at high-speeds.

NILES

Whoah. He's tryin to break free.

Suddenly, the line JERKS as the shark CARVES away. The boat SWERVES with the beast.

TSSSHHK! The beer bottles SMASH into another. SHATTERING.

Niles YANKS. Reels in some line. And repeats the process.

NILES (straining)

This. Is. Impossible.

The Hammerhead SWERVES back, leading the boat with it.

Niles SLIDES on his seat - nearly falling out of the boat.

He PLANTS a foot. He SCREAMS.

He looks to his BLEEDING foot - SLICED from the broken glass.

The shark RACES for Niles. Then quickly CURVES away again.

The boat ROCKS again, as the shark PULLS.

His MP3 player FALLS between his feet. The track switches to John Williams' familiar heart-pounding score for JAWS.

Blood DRAINS through a port in the floor.

NILES

Uh. Not helping.

Niles RIPS out the headphone cord.

The shark changes direction. The Dorsal Fin RACES for the boat.

Niles reels in. FAST.

The fin DIVES, 20 feet from Niles and the boat.

NILES

No. No. No. No. No.

Niles SEARCHES the boat's perimeter for the shark.

PANICKED. His breathing gets SHAKY. Adrenaline kicks in.

NILES (scared)
Chill. Buddy. CHILL.

Niles reaches up and DISMOUNTS the camera.

It SHAKES as he brings it down to his face.

NILES (smirks)
And here I was... thinkin the WAR
was hard shit.

Niles keeps the camera aimed at his face, as he searches the perimeter. He looks to the lens, to the horizon, and back.

NILES
I love you, doll... I know you're
gonna be watchin this with me later.
I know you're gonna be pissed. And
I know, right about now, my arm's
hurtin cuz you prob'ly punched me.
Sayin shit like, Why'd you do that,
Niles? It's so dangerous!
(beat, smirks)
Well, first... you're right, honey.
Secondly, you're always right. But,
thirdly, this one. THIS video. Is
for the boys. Braggin rights and
what-not. I hope this fucker's ready
for his close-up.

He SMILES large. And JAMS the camera DOWN into the ocean.

INT. OCEAN - SAME

BUBBLES. Then 5 feet away, a sleek predator with a wide elongated head - a HAMMERHEAD shark.

It ROCKETS towards the boat.

The closer it gets, the more visible it is.

SCARS from multiple battles are LASHED across its torso.

The steel line ahead of the boat TIGHTENS.

More BUBBLES.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

The camera BREACHES the surface. Niles MOUNTS it to his helmet.

The front rod BENDS at an EXTREME angle. The boat DIPS.

Niles WHIPS his attention to the rear. The fishing line RIPS across his vision.

The boat QUICKLY turns around - facing the opposite direction - land in the distant horizon.

The tight steel line TAKES OUT the rear rod.

NILES (O.S.)
How hairy is too hairy?

The shark CARVES back. Niles DUCKS a flying hook this time.

He YANKS on the rod and REELS in more line.

The FIN gets closer and CLOSER, coming alongside the boat.

The boat SPINS around again. TIPPING.

Niles nearly FALLS out of the boat. He PLANTS his feet again.

He YELLS in pain as glass shards PIERCE his feet.

NILES
Fuck this.

Niles OPENS a side panel and retrieves a pair of wire-cutters.

NILES
Some wars can't be won.

Niles CUTS the steel line. TWANG. It ROCKETS into the ocean.

NILES
Sorry, guys. I'm whooped.

Niles reaches to the front and MOUNTS the heavy rod.

He lifts his leg and looks to his injured foot. There are several cuts. Blood drops to the floor.

There is a lone shard still embedded. He carefully grabs it.

He looks away. And yells. As he pulls out the glass.

The bloody shard is an inch long. He tosses it to the ocean.

Niles SCANS his surroundings. No fins.

He relaxes, resting his leg on the side of the boat.

He looks to the sky.

NILES

Sides, it's not like it was a gold-fish. Fucker had the fight in em.

Niles looks to his leg. Dangling over the edge. His foot drips blood into the ocean.

He stares out for a moment. Catching his breath.

He TAPS his wedding ring on the side panel.

NILES

In a few years, son, you'll have a chance to beat your old man. But for now, I have the best fishing story.

The FIN BREACHES the surface, 10 feet ahead of the boat.

Niles CURSES loud. He brings his leg back into the boat.

He MOUNTS the pedals. And PUMPS away.

He winces from pain. Blood FLOWS.

The shark keeps coming. Closer and CLOSER.

Niles reaches to the side. He FUMBLES with an oar. He unclasps it - and SLAMS it into the water.

He slowly turns the boat around. He looks back. The FIN dives.

Niles pedals HARD - yelling from the pain.

He uses the paddle too. The distant land is miles away.
Hard breath after HARD breath - the paddle RIPS the water.
THRAM. The boat HOPS - RAMMED from below by the Hammerhead.
Niles loses the paddle as he CLAMPS his hands onto the boat.

NILES
FUCK YOooooooooou!

The FIN breaks the surface - RUSHING full-steam ahead.
The shark RAMS the boat with its wide head.
A hook SWINGS by and PIERCES Niles' thigh.
He yells. He RIPS it out right away.
He BASHES the pole into the water. He THROWS the other rod too.
Niles swears and yells but doesn't give up. He keeps pedaling.

NILES
Come on. Come on.

He looks back. Two floating fishing poles in his wake.
The shark BASHES into the boat again.
Niles WHIPS his attention to the massive shark head - such a STRANGE face. Then a small mouth with JAGGED DAGGERS.
The Hammerhead DISAPPEARS.
Niles looks to his feet - all the BLOOD pumping from the lacerations SWIRLS around the drainage port. And OUT.
THRAM. Again. The fiberglass shell CRACKS.
Water FLOODS in, SLOSHING about the broken glass from the floor.
Niles RAISES his legs, CROUCHING on the seat.
He searches the water. Panicked. Shaky.

NILES (realizing)
Knife?

Niles notices his tackle-box, on the floor. He REACHES for it.

WHA-THRAM! The rear floor ERUPTS. Niles FALLS.

FZZZK. KKRSH. The camera FALLS of the helmet. It lands in the boat. Water SPLASHES against it.

Niles SMACKS the camera with his arm, inadvertently. It SPINS around, framing Niles from below.

Niles searches for options. The boat FLOODS. The Fin CIRCLES him. The boat is SINKING.

The shark DARTS at Niles. He SLAMS a fist into its body.

The Hammerhead THRASHES Niles with its muscular tail.

He FALLS into the boat. He HITS his head on the pedals.

The camera SLOSHES about. The shark PUSHES it away.

The camera BUMPS into the tackle-box. Niles picks it up. He pulls out a sheathed KNIFE.

NILES (O.S.)

I know. I know. It's not your fault.

The camera bobs in the water, pointing at Niles now.

NILES (cont.)

It's your nature. I started it. Didn't I. Now Im sorry. I hafta end it too.

The shark RAMS the boat again. It RIPS through the hull - PUSHING the camera away, revealing Niles: KNIFE raised.

He VIOLENTLY brings the blade down. Into the great beast.

The shark WHIPS its head to the blade.

He KNOCKS into Niles leg in the process. It opens its JAWS and SLAMS them down around his leg.

Niles WAILS. He SLAMS the knife down into the BEAST again.

The Hammerhead CLAMPS onto Niles' arm. The knife falls.

The water rises. The camera floats OUT of the boat.

INT. OCEAN - SAME

The camera DIPS below the surface.

The shark attack mounts with intensity as Niles FIGHTS back.

They THRASH about. SWIRLING bubbles obscure visibility.

The Hammerhead DIVES down.

Niles treads water. Dark blood flows from his wounds.

The shark reappears LAUNCHING from below.

RED frothy liquid envelops the camera.

EXT. OCEAN - SAME

The camera re-surfaces - FLOATING away from the sinking boat as Niles BATTLES the vicious Hammerhead.

FADE:

EXT. BEACH - LATE AFTERNOON

The camera ROLLS in with the tide, onto a white sandy beach.

Niles hand comes with the next wave. His wedding ring GLINTS.

The next wave comes. Niles hand moves past the camera, revealing its severed stump.

FADE OUT: