

A grounded science-drama
by Galen R. Collins

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Writers Guild of America West #2325714

When the orbit breaks,
courage begins.



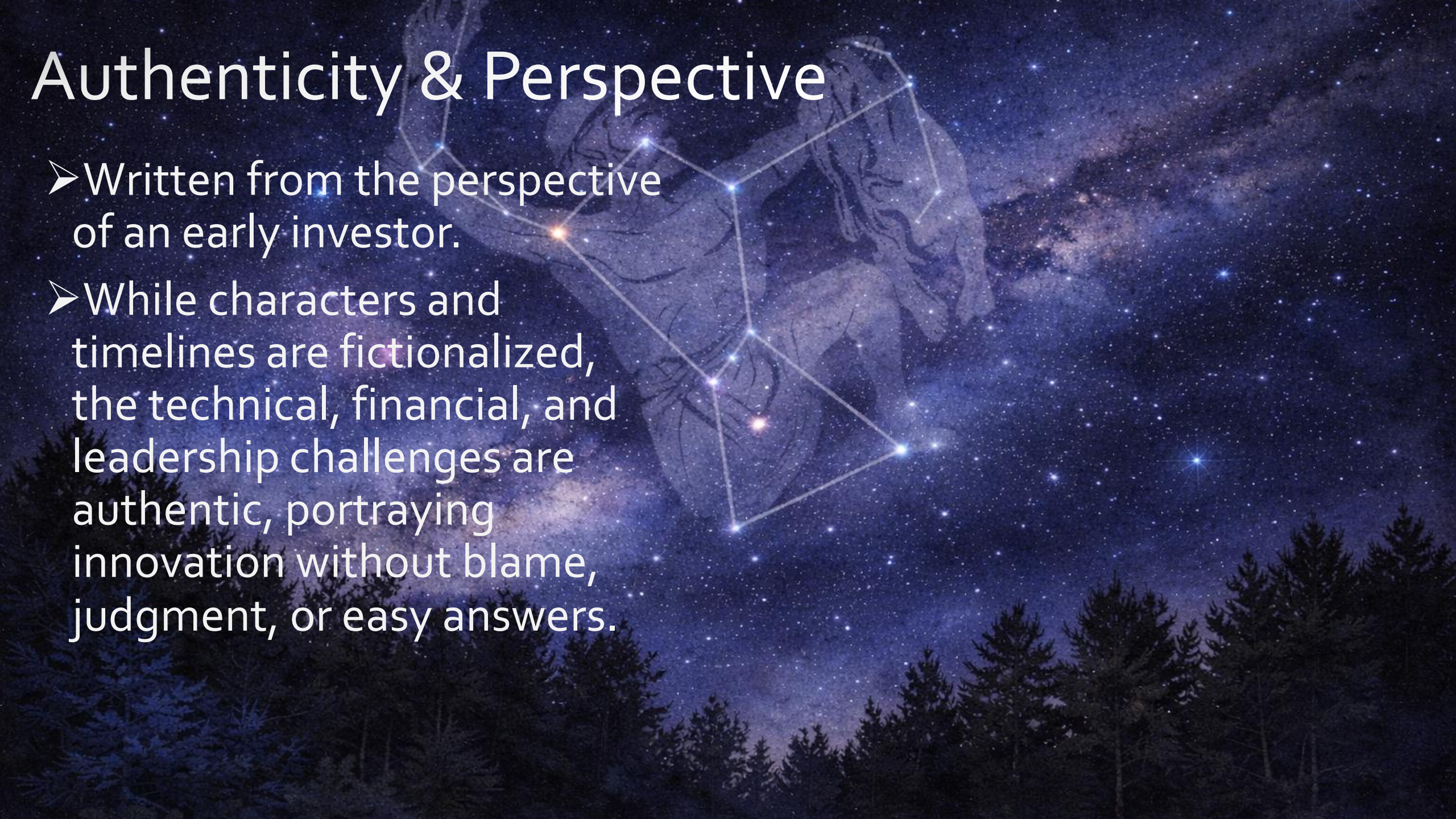
ORBIT
DOWNFALL

Logline

When a \$500-million space observatory begins falling toward Earth, a young startup CEO leads an unproven team on a high-risk rescue mission—where success is uncertain, failure is public, and leadership means acting without knowing the outcome.



Authenticity & Perspective

The background of the slide is a composite image. It features a dark, starry night sky with the Milky Way galaxy visible as a bright, hazy band of light. In the upper left, a constellation of stars is connected by thin white lines, forming a shape that resembles a reclining figure. The bottom of the image shows the dark, silhouetted tops of evergreen trees against the starry sky.

- Written from the perspective of an early investor.
- While characters and timelines are fictionalized, the technical, financial, and leadership challenges are authentic, portraying innovation without blame, judgment, or easy answers.

Synopsis

When a \$500-million space observatory begins an accelerated descent toward Earth, Jae-Min Han, the young CEO of a scrappy aerospace startup, is handed a mission no one has ever attempted: rescue an unprepared satellite before it burns up in the atmosphere.

With time running out, Jae-Min must lead a largely untested team through a high-risk operation involving autonomous robotics, unproven software, and an unforgiving orbital window. As financial pressure mounts and public scrutiny intensifies, the technical challenge becomes secondary to a deeper one—how to lead when certainty is impossible and failure will be visible to the world.

Told from the inside of innovation rather than the spectacle of spaceflight, *Orbit Downfall* explores the human cost of progress: fragmented focus, burnout, trust, and the quiet courage required to move forward without guarantees. Inspired by real events, the film is not about whether the mission succeeds, but about what is learned when ambition, responsibility, and the unknown collide.

Orbit Downfall is a grounded, character-driven space drama about leadership, learning, and the moments that define who we become when outcomes are still unwritten.



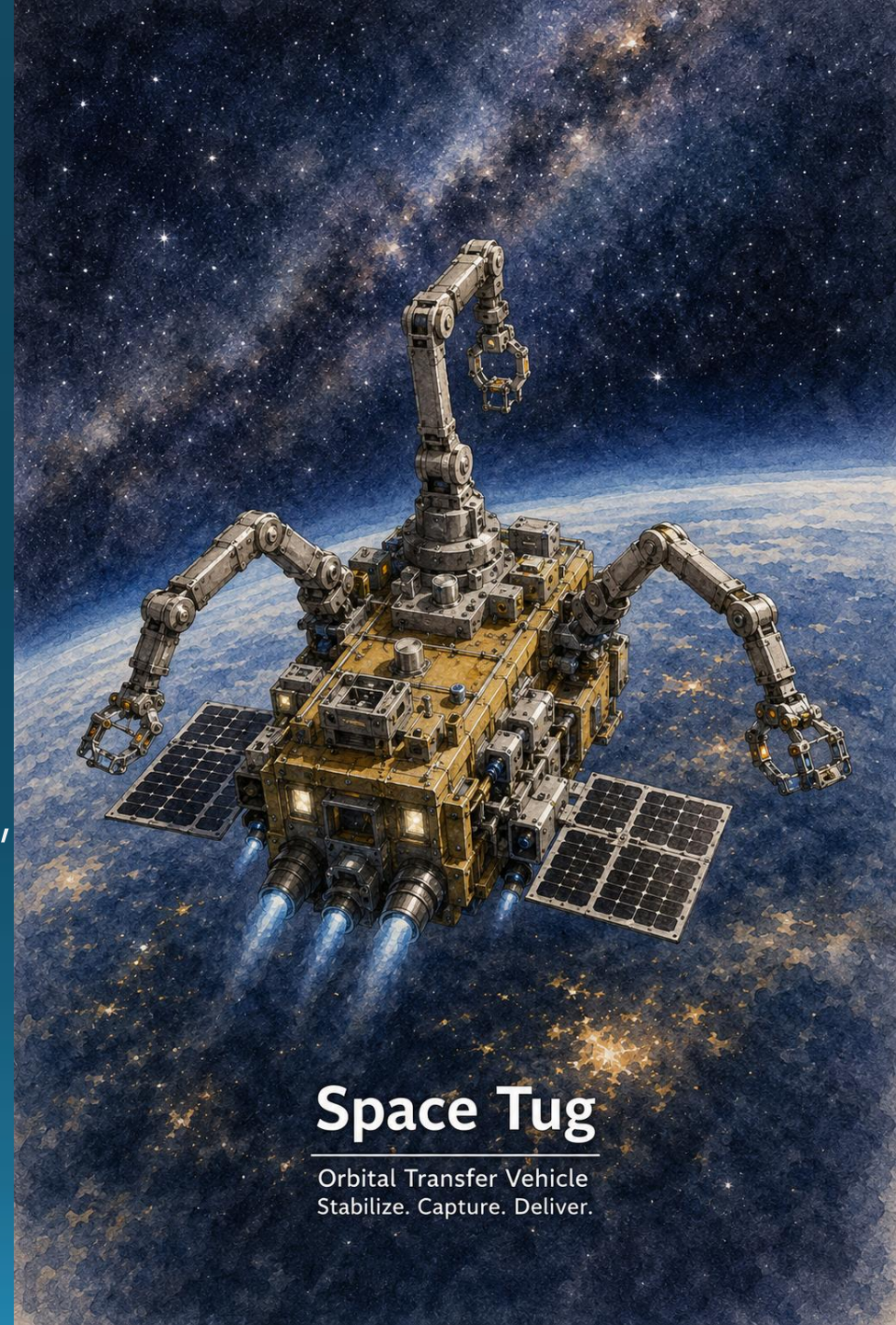
ACT I – ORIGINS & ORBITAL DECAY

- When Nightwatch, an aging five hundred million dollar space observatory, begins an accelerated descent toward Earth, the Federal Space Agency quietly searches for a way to save it. Time is limited. Public failure would be costly.
- The story shifts to Jae Min Han, a young aerospace engineer whose fascination with space began as a teenager stargazing with his mother in the Arizona desert. Disillusioned by slow, bureaucratic government programs, Jae Min leaves a major defense contractor to found Orion Orbital, a startup focused on extending the life of satellites already in orbit.
- Orion develops promising tools: advanced vision systems, AI coordination software, and autonomous sensing technologies. But the company is small, underfunded, and unproven. In orbit, credibility is earned only through performance. Space is unforgiving. Physics does not wait.
- The stakes are set. Nightwatch is falling. Orion has ideas, but no track record. Survival will depend on whether vision can become capability.



ACT II – BUILDING CREDIBILITY & CAPABILITY

- As orbital congestion increases and national security concerns grow, Orion secures early Department of Defense work. Its software and sensing technologies perform in real conditions, slowly building credibility.
- The company attracts young, driven engineers, but pressure mounts. Funding remains fragile. Timelines tighten. Leadership demands intensify. CEO Jae Min struggles to balance inspiration, execution, and the human cost of a startup racing against physics.
- A hard truth emerges. Software alone cannot save satellites. To intervene in orbit, Orion needs a physical vehicle capable of maneuvering, attaching, and moving objects never designed to be serviced.
- Orion acquires Aeromove, a small firm that builds robotic orbital transfer vehicles. The spacecraft is soon nicknamed Space Tug.
- The acquisition gives Orion full end to end satellite servicing capability. It also removes every excuse. There is no vendor to blame if something goes wrong. Control now comes with total responsibility.



Space Tug

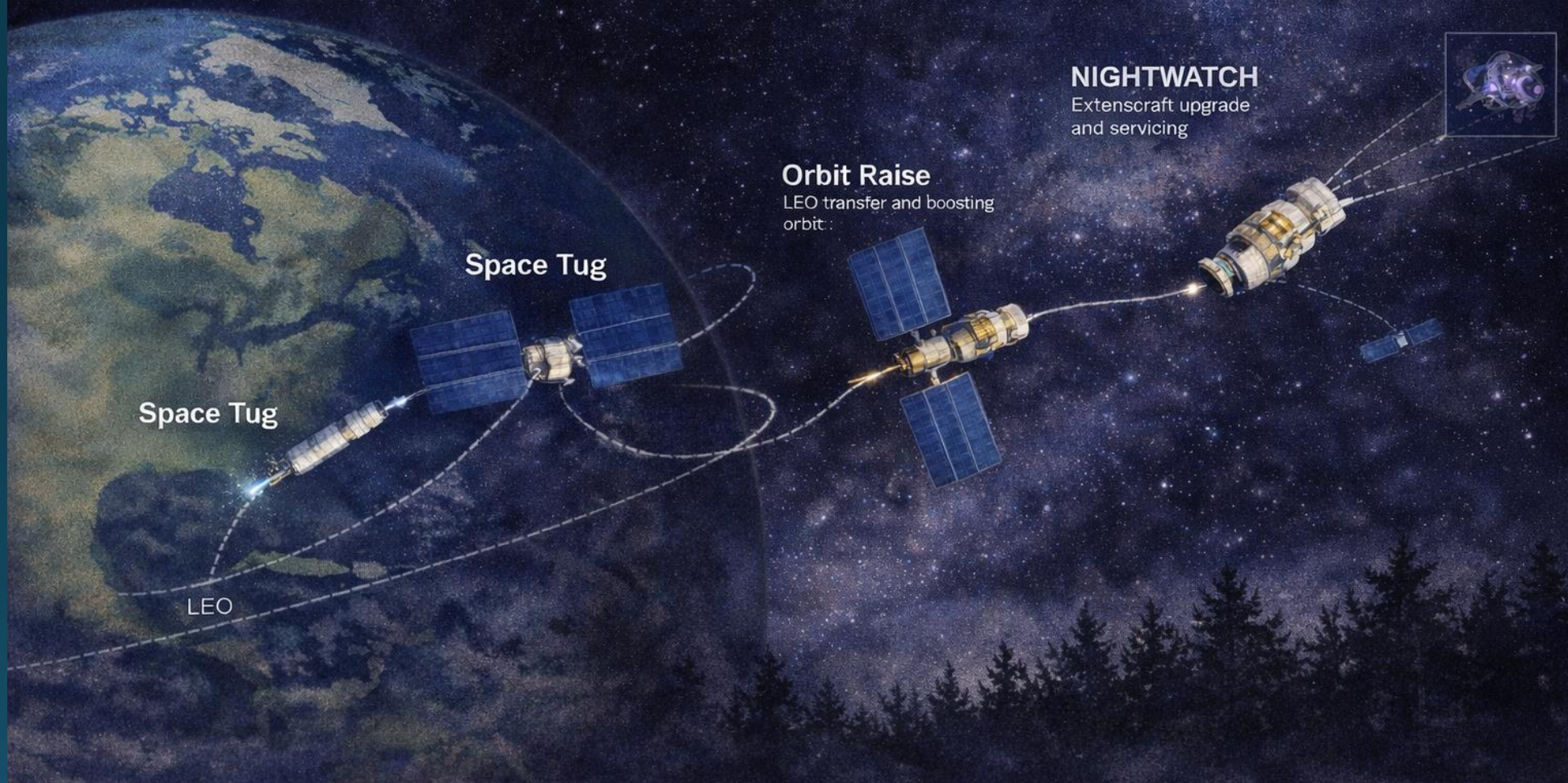
Orbital Transfer Vehicle
Stabilize. Capture. Deliver.

Act III – THE NIGHTWATCH MISSION

- Shortly after acquiring Aeromove, Orion is awarded the Nightwatch rescue contract—a \$30-million, first-of-its-kind mission to capture and reboost an unprepared government satellite. Orion wins not because it is the largest, but because it is the fastest.
- Leadership shifts from inspiration to alignment. With no margin for error, the company races to integrate Space Tug, finalize guidance software, and prepare for launch. Technical uncertainty, regulatory pressure, financial risk, and team burnout collide. As focus fragments, Jae-Min faces a leadership crisis.
- He intervenes. Accountability is restructured. Orion is recentered around a single mission: rendezvous, capture, and reboost Nightwatch. The work becomes less visionary—and more exacting.
- As launch nears, testing compresses, simulations pile up, and margins vanish. Once deployed, Space Tug begins its multi-week orbital transfer, guided cautiously from Earth. But at final rendezvous, human control ends. Communication latency makes intervention impossible.
- Space Tug must act alone.
- From Earth, Jae-Min watches. The outcome is unknown. Success uncertain. Failure public.



LEO SPACE TUG Servicing Mission for NIGHTWATCH (September 2026)



Themes That Drive the Story

- Learning over winning
- Trusting systems you've built
- Letting go of control
- Progress without guarantees

Jae-Min (V.O.)

*Whether we succeed or fail,
we learn from the mission.*

*Sometimes the work is learning to wait.
To trust what you've built.*

*Progress is small.
Steady.
Still becoming.*

Target Audience

- Adult, thoughtful audiences
- Fans of:
 - Science
 - Leadership stories
 - Real-world problem solving
- Appeals to both STEM and humanities viewers
- A contained, character-driven space drama designed for thoughtful adult audiences and prestige festivals.



Why This Story Matters

- Based on true conditions of modern space innovation
- Explores:
 - Decision-making under incomplete information
 - Leadership without certainty
 - Public failure vs private responsibility
- A rare film about how progress actually happens



Tone & Style

- **Tone:** Tense, intelligent, restrained, deeply human
- **Style:** Grounded science drama with techno-thriller elements
- **Feature Film (110–120 min)**

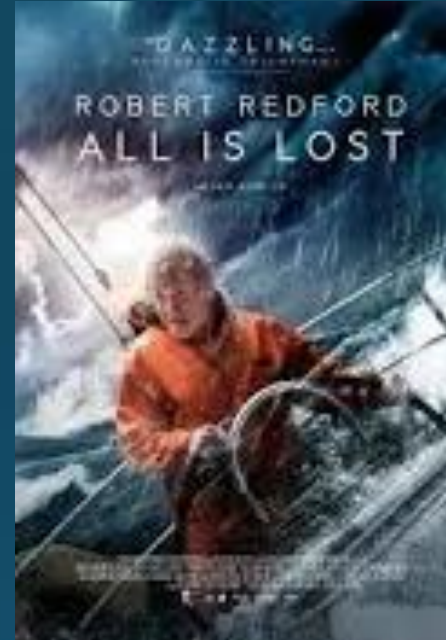
Comparable Films



Apollo 13 (1995) – Crisis leadership and problem-solving under real-world constraints → \$355M worldwide, 9 Oscar nominations, 2 wins.



First Man (2018) – An intimate, restrained portrait of risk, loss, and perseverance behind the space race, told through process rather than spectacle → \$105M worldwide, 4 Oscar nominations, 1 win.



All Is Lost (2013) – A nearly wordless study of competence, endurance, and acceptance when systems fail and control disappears → \$13M worldwide, Golden Globe nominee, widely praised for minimalist storytelling.



Margin Call (2011) – A compressed, real-time drama about institutional decision-making under moral and financial pressure as a system begins to fail → \$19M worldwide, Academy Award nominee for Best Original Screenplay.

Why I'm Telling This Story

I'm telling this story because most narratives about innovation focus on winning—on breakthroughs, heroes, and clean endings. This one focuses on what actually happens in between.

Orbit Downfall is about people who take responsibility in uncertain systems, who build something knowing it may fail, and who learn when control must give way to trust. It reflects a lived perspective on leadership, risk, and progress—where learning matters more than outcome, and accountability matters more than credit.

This story isn't about triumph. It's about what it means to stand behind a decision when the result is unknown.



A story about when control ends.

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