

HALF-LIFE

'Black Mesa'

Episode #1.01

Written by

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Based on

'Half-Life' by Marc Laidlaw

Developed by Valve

Published by Sierra Studios

'Half-Life: Decay' by Matthew Armstrong, Brian Hess, and Randy
Pitchford

Developed by Gearbox Software

Published by Sierra On-Line

Character List

DR. GORDON FREEMAN
DR. ELI VANCE
DR. GINA CROSS
DR. COLETTE GREEN
BARNEY CALHOUN
AZIAN VANCE

DR. ISAAC KLEINER
DR. ROSENBERG
DR. RICHARD KELLER
ALYX VANCE
DR. WALTER BENNET
THE G-MAN

Non-speaking
SECURITY GUARD

Voice only
TRAIN TANNY
HEV SUIT

Set List

Interiors:

BLACK MESA TRANSIT TRAIN
 TRAIN DOCKING STATION
BULKHEAD ENTRANCE DOORS
LAB CONTROL ROOM
LOCKER ROOM
 HEV SUIT STORAGE AREA
KELLER'S OFFICE
LIFT
CORRIDOR (where BARNEY talks to KLEINER)
SECURITY CAMERA ROOM
SAMPLE STORAGE ROOM
 CARGO LIFT
AZIAN'S DORMITORY
BULKHEAD ENTRANCE TO ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER
ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER ROOM
 AREA UNDERNEATH ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER
SURFACE OF XEN
VORTIGAUNT ROOM

Exteriors:

BLACK MESA WAREHOUSE
BLACK MESA EXTERIOR: RED NEW MEXICO ROCKS
BLACK MESA TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL ROOM

OPENING

1 - INT. BLACK MESA TRANSIT TRAIN - DARK OUTSIDE BUT LIGHTS ON IN TRAIN

There is a hexagonal rail-train in operation. It carries us along with it, we do not linger yet on the surroundings. It grinds heavily on its rail. Metallic. Inside the lights are white and harsh. Outside, the train is in an underground tunnel, where the walls are rock.

Inside the train, there is a seated man in a scientist's uniform. We approach him from the front, slowly. This is GORDON FREEMAN. His hair is brown and short. He has a goatee. He is wearing glasses which he takes off and cleans on his shirt nervously. He looks generally distressed - he is late for work.

GORDON does not speak. GORDON never speaks.

Suddenly, the train stops.

The lights go out.

Strange. Must be a power outage. That never happens. The whole facility feels... fragile.

The lights flicker and spark back on, and the train starts moving again. A TANNYOY starts speaking on the train. It is a friendly but soulless female voice.

TANNYOY

Good morning, and welcome to the Black Mesa transit system. This automated train is provided for the security and convenience of the Black Mesa research facility personnel. The time is 08:47AM.

Current topside temperature is 93 degrees.

The Black Mesa compound is maintained at a pleasant 68 degrees at all times. This train is inbound from Level 3 dormitories to Sector C Test Labs and Control Facilities.

At the instant the TANNYOY says 'Black Mesa', this text appears on the screen:

BLACK MESA RESEARCH FACILITY
BLACK MESA, NEW MEXICO

The text fades away. The first portion of the text saying 'BLACK MESA' stays for a fraction longer - this is the title of the episode.

The TANNYOY continues while the text is displayed. While it talks, the train moves through different rooms and environments. These include:

- Rock tunnels and stone corridors.

- The BLACK MESA WAREHOUSE where yellow robots are working with large crates.
- The BLACK MESA EXTERIOR: RED NEW MEXICO ROCKS where a helicopter has just landed.
- The BLACK MESA TOXIC WASTE DISPOSAL ROOM where luminous green liquid pours out of a crack in a rusty brown silo.

There is only one rail. No turns, no switching. One option.

It is industrial. Hazardous. The environment and equipment feel worn and old. Ready to break.

Throughout, the TANNOY speaks.

TANNOY

Due to the high toxicity of material routinely handled in the Black Mesa compound, no smoking, eating, or drinking are permitted within the Black Mesa transit system. In the event of an emergency, passengers are to remain seated and await further instruction. If it is necessary to exit the train, disabled personnel should be evacuated first.

GORDON looks around as the train passes through the different environments. There is a look on his face. He has seen these views a hundred times.

Yet this time... it feels like the last time.

And he knows there is nothing he can do about it.

This text appears on screen during the time where GORDON is in frame, while it slowly zooms into his face:

SUBJECT:

GORDON FREEMAN

MALE, AGE 27

EDUCATION:

Ph. D., MIT, THEORETICAL PHYSICS

POSITION:

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

ASSIGNMENT:

ANOMALOUS MATERIALS LABORATORY

CLEARANCE:

LEVEL 3

ADMINISTRATIVE SPONSOR:

CLASSIFIED

DISASTER RESPONSE PRIORITY:

DISCRETIONARY

Despite the helplessness and doom on GORDON's face, there is something else about him that holds the gaze. A perseverance. A clarity. A dependability.

And GORDON does not speak. GORDON never speaks.

TANNOY

A reminder that the Black Mesa hazard course decathlon will commence this evening at 19:00 in the Level 3 facility. Remember, more lives than your own may depend on your fitness. Do you have a friend or relative who would make a valuable addition to the Black Mesa team? Immediate openings are available in the areas of materials handling and low clearance security. The Black Mesa research facility is an equal-opportunity employer.

At the same time as this last sentence is stated by the TANNOY, to the left of the train, another stationary train comes into view. Inside it, looking at GORDON, is an older thin man with black slicked-back hair wearing a dull blue suit. He is unknown to GORDON. He is holding a briefcase. His gaze is emotionless but absolutely piercing. You can't look away. Seeing him is like seeing the ghost of someone you think you know. He sticks out from Black Mesa like a sore thumb. Though he will never be named officially, this is the G-MAN.

GORDON stares back, with neither breaking eye contact nor blinking until they are out of each other's sight.

GORDON looks back ahead. His expression is unchanged.

The train begins to slow, and the TRAIN DOCKING STATION appears in view, with a security guard standing on the platform. He is dressed in the blue overalls and black body armour of all Black Mesa security personnel. He has a friendly but tired look on his face. He is known to GORDON. This is BARNEY CALHOUN.

TANNOY

Now arriving at Sector C Test Labs and Control Facilities. Please stand back from the automated door and wait for the security officer to verify your identity. Before exiting the train, be sure to check the area for personal belongings. Work safe. Work smart. Your future depends on it.

BARNEY

Morning Gordon! Looks like you're running late.

BARNEY lets GORDON out of the train, and they walk down the platform together on the TRAIN DOCKING STATION.

2 - INT. TRAIN DOCKING STATION - UNDERGROUND - CONTINUOUS

BARNEY

Were you up all night training for
the decathlon?

He studies GORDON's reaction and quickly laughs. He already knows the answer.

If you put as much effort into
the job as you do for your fitness
this place would do everything for
us. Which is a pipedream compared
to how it's been this morning so far.

He stretches as they reach the keycard machine next to a large
BULKHEAD ENTRANCE DOOR.

You probably had the brownout on the
train. It happened everywhere across
the whole facility. I actually had a
bunch of messages for you, but they
all disappeared. An entire system
crash. I can't even find my own
files. Makes today's shift at least
a couple hours longer. It's probably
gonna happen again too.

He sighs.

Just one of those days, I guess.

GORDON looks back with a slightly more sympathetic look on his face.
It comes across as a little mocking to BARNEY, though. BARNEY perks
himself up.

I wish I knew what's goin' on, but..

He lightly punches GORDON's arm.

...Clearance.

GORDON smiles now as BARNEY opens the huge door. They both walk
through together and the BULKHEAD shuts heavily. Like a prison cell
door.

3 - INT. BULKHEAD ENTRANCE DOOR - DIFFERENT DOOR IN FACILITY -
DIFFERENT CHARACTERS

In a similar bulkhead chamber at a different entrance to the
facility, two women wearing HEV suits stand side by side in silence,
waiting. The woman in the red HEV suit with brown chin-length hair
is COLETTE GREEN. The woman in the yellow HEV suit and tied-up

ginger hair is GINA CROSS. They are both research scientists with Level 4 clearance. Higher up than GORDON or BARNEY.

Their faces are sharp, intelligent, thinking. There is an air of surety about the women. They know and have seen too much to fret about little things. The silence they stand in is not uncomfortable. Perhaps tense... but not uncomfortable.

COLETTE

You saw the memo I received from
Richard?

GINA nods. Business, business, business. She knew she was going to say that.

COLETTE

I don't like it. It has me feeling
uneasy about today's experiment.
And when you're doing one like this...

She trails off. Deep in thought.

GINA

What's different about it, then?
I didn't get a chance to see it
yesterday.

What are they talking about? Why is this experiment so unusual?

COLETTE

Nearly everything. It's like no other
sample we've seen. It's massive, it
contains almost no other elements,
giving it exceptional purity, and in
my own research I recorded
some drastic spectral fluctuations
the like of which no other samples
have come close to. There's no
other way of looking at it, Gina.
What we're doing today is very
dangerous.

GINA thought as much. Though COLETTE took everything seriously, this was perhaps the most highly strung she had seen her. Should GINA ask how she's feeling? No. No, she wouldn't appreciate that. Best to stay on topic.

GINA

...And it was Dr. Keller who told
us to switch the samples?

COLETTE

It would appear so, but I've never
known Richard to be so short notice.
He's Mr. Plan. I want a word with
him before we do anything today.

Another silence comes. This one is a little more uncomfortable than the last - COLETTE is yet to meet GINA's eye. This must really be serious.

COLETTE
(without looking)
You alright?

Slight shock. This really is bad. The only reason COLETTE would ask GINA if she's alright is if she herself definitely isn't. What's going on?

GINA
...When did you first receive the
new sample? I swear we've only had
it a day or two.

COLETTE
Wednesday afternoon, so two days ago,
yes.

Maybe that's it. Everything is too short notice. She doesn't know enough.

GINA
Then this is a ridiculous turnaround
time. This wouldn't be appropriate
for a sample of half this size. Dr.
Keller must know that. Colette...
we're not being told everything.

COLETTE
(sharply)
We're not being told anything, Gina.

Holy shit. Cold.

The BULKHEAD DOORS finally open as they begin to walk into the facility. The air of stoic calmness that we found them with has turned to fraught tension. Black Mesa is already falling apart.

4 - INT. LAB CONTROL ROOM

We suddenly find ourselves in a LAB CONTROL ROOM. There are many high-tech and complex workstations and machines lining the room's walls and surfaces. Incomprehensible from afar. Two men, scientists, both balding and wearing glasses, are arguing with each other as another man, a third scientist, enters. The two arguing are ISAAC KLEINER and Dr. ROSENBERG. The third man is ELI VANCE. The other two are bickering, irritating to ELI. ELI is relatable, trying to be in control, and slightly clueless. An instant good-guy.

ELI
(shouting)
Kleiner! Rosenberg!

(KELINER and ROSENBERG turn to him)
What the hell's going on? Why are there so
many power outages?

ROSENBERG
(relieved but urgently)
Eli! We've been ordered to run the
scanner at 105%. It's messing up the
whole facility.

What in the world? The experiment is imminent, and we've got a late-
notice order to boost the spectrometer beyond 100? Bewildering.

ELI
105...? That's- that's- what is that,
15% above the safety buffer zone?

ROSENBERG
Exactly. I've been trying to make
Isaac see reason, but he won't
listen. We should abort this
experiment now before-

KLEINER
(interrupting)
The Anti-Mass Spectrometer is
perfectly capable of running
at a power resolution that
high. You should know,
Rosenberg, you oversaw the
building of the machine.

Having the staff at each other's throats like this will help
nothing. ELI's got to do something to sort this out. But what to
make of it? Can we stop it even if we want to?

ROSENBERG
Yes, Kleiner, and that's exactly
why this is a huge risk! Not to
mention the sample we're using
for the test is far larger than
ones previously used. If things
go wrong, they could go wrong
badly. Even irreversibly.

Ah, the sample. Let's use that.

ELI
Yes, I was aware of the sample
switch.

Time to take a side..

...To be honest, I'm on your side,
Rosenberg.

Rosenberg sighs in relief and turns to Kleiner, who looks irritated.

KLEINER

Why?

Let's be sensible and sensitive here. Choose the words carefully. Don't want Kleiner making this harder than it needs to be.

ELI

There are a few reasons I
can think of.

THE SAMPLE.

Firstly, because I don't trust the circumstances around that sample. How did we get it? How came we across GG-3883? That's the new sample's official name, by the way. It just appears and then we're suddenly using it in our largest ever test? How would someone even have retrieved it? From what I know, it's nothing like the samples that the other excursions have produced... Nothing.

SHOULD HE SAY IT? SHOULD HE?

...I think the sample came to us.

KLEINER:

What?

ELI made a mistake. He should have kept his conspiracies to himself.

Now what could that possibly mean?

ELI:

I mean someone delivered the specimen
to us.

KLEINER:

Oh really? Who?

ELI looks at ROSENBERG, who is watching him with intrigue, but there's something else in his face - fright. He trusts ELI. Should ELI really be bringing this up at a time like this?

ELI remembers what he saw.

What did he see?

He saw the G-MAN hand something over to the sampling team two days ago. He saw it. It must be that. Do I tell them?

No.

Best not to keep conspiring.

Things are about to blow up.

ELI:

I don't know. But you don't know how we got it either, Isaac. So, for now, I suggest, in the name of safety, that you restrain yourself.

KLEINER stars back, not moving.

It's okay to press on? Okay.

Secondly, I don't trust this situation because I can't understand how this has been ordered this morning... Rosenberg, did you say these orders came from Keller?

ROSENBERG:

Yes, they did. I was actually about to go and see him myself on this.

Ahhh, perfect. ROSENBERG on duty and away from KLEINER.

ELI:

Right. Go, now.

ROSENBERG leaves. KLEINER watches him go. KLEINER clearly has a real bone to pick with them both. Is something else bothering him? He's always a contrarian, but to take such a strong side on something so serious is bold. Maybe his work was corrupted by the power outages - ELI's work was too. Let's use that.

And finally, Isaac, as you can see right...

(ELI gestures to a data bar on the work monitor that is fully red) ...there... if we keep running the spectrometer at 105%, the power supply of the entire facility may go out for a long, long time. Then we'll both be in trouble.

KLEINER blinks and walks out. He hasn't changed his mind, but now ELI has him worried about recovering his work. He DID lose work due to the power outages.

ELI breathes heavily as the camera zooms into his face. He seems worried - he is not an old man, but his hair is greying. He feels more stress than the other scientists - he feels he has more to lose. The camera follows his gaze out through the window of the LAB CONTROL ROOM - and there we can see the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER - a large, mechanical beast of a sight. It is poised like a drill - a drill about to mine the earth with laser and power to uncover the foul core of a rotten company. The consequences of failure would be gigantic - and it seems to ELI that only he knows it.

5 - EXT. BLACK MESA GENERAL FEATURES - REPEATS OF PLACES SEEN EARLIER DURING TRAIN RIDE

There is a sequence where several places already seen on the train ride are seen again. Nothing is really happening, but there is a feeling that everything may fall apart at any moment. RED ROCKS. GREEN WASTE ROOMS. A SECURITY CAMERA ROOM where computers are malfunctioning and broken. THE TRAIN. We see GINA and COLETTE walking down a dimly lit corridor. They look grim but wary. We see BARNEY patrolling a more well-lit corridor. He yawns. Black Mesa is tiring and dying.

6 - INT. LOCKER ROOM

The door to the locker room slides open clunkily. It looks 15 years old at least and has not seen much maintenance. GORDON walks in, quickly scanning the room to see if anyone else is here. There is someone here - a scientist getting dressed. Though unknown to GORDON, his name is WALTER BENNET. He is a nice fellow.

GORDON walks in and makes quick eye contact with BENNET.

BENNET
Greetings!

GORDON nods as he walks past BENNET. He pauses and looks to the right at the vending machine - still out of order. Dammit.

BENNET
Are you looking for an HEV suit?
There are three just down there..
(He gestures to an entrance on the left, opposite the vending machine)
Take whichever you like. I believe they're all up for grabs.

GORDON already knew all this, but courteously nods again at BENNET and smiles faintly as he walks on.

7 - INT. HEV STORAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

As he reaches the HEV SUIT STORAGE AREA, he takes a second to look at the room.

There are three pods down a short flight of stairs, with a control panel at the top of the stairs. The pods are all closed. GORDON eyes the pods. He hopes that all three are still available like BENNET said. He wants the red one.

He presses the button on the machine to open all the pods. To his disappointment, only the middle HEV remains - the orange suit. Today just isn't the one.

It always seems like there are choices. Really, there's only one path to walk.

GORDON walks down to the HEV and hesitates before touching it. He isn't sure why. He's worn this suit countless times.

He does not know it yet, but this is the final time he is ever without it. Perhaps he did know it.

Before we see GORDON put on the suit, we are back in the LOCKER ROOM. BENNET is struggling to get fully dressed and is looking at himself in the mirror. In the background of the mirror and out of focus, GORDON walks out of the room wearing the HEV - an iconic look teased without its big reveal.

BENNET

Why do we have to wear these
ridiculous ties?

8 - INT. JUST OUTSIDE KELLER'S OFFICE - A LITTLE DARK

COLETTE and GINA stand side-by-side, mentally preparing themselves for their conversation they're about to have with KELLER. He is not a difficult man to talk to, but the unusualness of the day and their shared feeling of being a prisoner in the preceding and forthcoming events has them fretting and on the edge of falling apart.

They do not speak a word to each other about their plan of what to say to KELLER. But there is a shared knowledge between them - one unit as two people.

GINA

You ready?

COLETTE nods. She breathes out and opens the door. RICHARD KELLER is sitting in his wheelchair in his office. He is an old man now, but his mind is a fortified place: strong, powerful, and has lasted a long time - it could last longer still.

KELLER

Ah, hello doctors. It's nice to see
someone is on time today. Dr. Freeman
is running late... again. Honestly, I
cannot understand what Kleiner sees
in that boy.

GINA looks at COLETTE and readies herself to say something. Better to get it out straight away rather than letting him go over the details and voicing our issues at the end. But before she can say anything-

KELLER

Anyway! Let's get started. When Dr.
Freeman is ready upstairs, they'll
want to begin the experiment, so

you'll need to retrieve the sample,
Dr. Cross. Then when-

GINA

(blurting out)

Dr. Keller, we were hoping
to discuss the sample before
the experiment starts.

(she glances at COLETTE, who is looking at her with a wild
intensity. This matters. KELLER looks at her expectantly.)

We believe there is a potential
danger with using-

Suddenly, with a bang, the office door opens again and in walks
ROSENBERG.

ROSENBERG

Dr. Keller!

For god's sake. How hard can this be?

KELLER

Ah! Hello, Dr. Rosenberg. We're...
sort of in the middle of something
right now, so...

ROSENBERG

I've been talking to Kleiner, and
he seems to be under the impression
that you're planning on running the
anti-mass spectrometer at greater
than ninety percent. You realise
there is a reason for the safety
buffer?

GINA is a little stopped in her tracks. It seems ROSENBERG has come
to join their crusade.

KELLER

I understand your concern, Doctor,
but the administrator was quite
clear on his requirements.

What?

The administrator?

Hang on. So, this DIDN'T come from KELLER. He's following orders
coming directly from the big cheese of Black MESA...

COLETTE

...The administrator?

Good. COLETTE's thought the same... there's something extremely off
about this.

KELLER

...Yes, Dr. Green, the administrator.

COLETTE

We thought- well, we assumed that you were the one who had organised the specifics of today's experiment, as is standard.

COLETTE meets GINA's eyes. Worry. The administrator has never gotten involved like this before. The outlandish details of today's experiment have clearly not been safety organised - they were ordered by a businessman that they hardly ever saw.

ROSENBERG

As was I. Keller, the administrator - Wallace Breen is a bureaucrat, not a scientist. He should not have a say in all this. I did not design this equipment to be run at such a high intensity.

KELLER

Rosenberg, this is not your decision.

Trust KELLER to be a stickler for the rules. He won't disobey orders. Can't he see how problematic this could become?

Now, if you wish to stay and monitor the experiment, so be it. Otherwise... you can go back to your little labs over by the train yard.

Ouch. Disrespectful. GINA can't blame ROSENBERG for leaving... as he does. After ROSENBERG storms out, KELLER turns back around to face his own control panel.

If ROSENBERG's concerns regarding the safety parameters for the anti-mass spectrometer have been shut down - what hope does discussing the new sample have? KELLER will shut that down too, and both GINA and COLETTE know it - what can they do? Before they can think of an option, KELLER continues talking.

KELLER

Dr. Cross, the sample storage area is through the door here, as always. And Dr. Green, we need you in the test chamber. I'll monitor the experiment from here.

Both women walk out of separate doors. They can't voice their concerns effectively. They are separated and trapped on a path they can't turn off. All they can do now is hope the experiment doesn't go awry...

9 - INT. THE LIFT

THE LIFT doors open, and we are greeted with a full view of GORDON in the orange HEV suit - a classic iconic look. He gets in, the doors close, and it begins to descend. His eyes are blank as his mind is in another place, wondering why the power outages are happening, and about more mundane things - he is yet to find out all the calamities the other characters already know about.

As he stands there, thinking, the camera moves, swivelling.

When it feels like the camera should be passing behind GORDON's head, it is suddenly apparent that we are watching from GORDON's perspective - it is a FIRST-PERSON shot. GORDON is the first POV character. GORDON looks around the room as we do. He looks at his hands. He presses a couple of buttons on his suit, and we hear the classic HEV voice in his ear:

HEV SUIT:
Power: 100 percent.

The camera moves back around slowly to now be facing GORDON again. Suddenly, the lift jars to a stop and the lights go out.

What's happening? Another power outage? This has never happened before.

Looking around and waiting, GORDON presses the emergency button in the lift, but finds it to be broken. There is nothing he can do.

He looks around and breathes heavier. He jams the button with his fingers urgently a few times to no avail.

He is about to start climbing out the top of the lift.

Suddenly, the lights return, and the lift continues to descend. GORDON relaxes again.

An apt choice for the most important man in the world.

10 - INT. CORRIDOR

BARNEY is patrolling in a general area where there are several scientists and security personnel present. He walks past KLEINER who is complaining to a SECURITY MEMBER behind a desk.

KLEINER
...I can't access my files, I can't even get into my office, and I've just been informed that the administrator is the one overseeing today's test. Do you have the faintest idea what that means?

Asshole. Don't take it out on this guy. Nothing to do with him. Hell, BARNEY will tell him himself.

BARNEY

(stepping in)

I know, Sir, I know. We're doing everything we can to try and get the situation under control. Just give us some time.

There is an irritable burning fire in KLEINER's eyes. Something started it and BARNEY is fanning it.

KLEINER

Time? I don't have any more time! If I'm not able to get the results to the administrator in the next hour, then my job will be in serious jeopardy!

KLEINER steps toward BARNEY and raises an accusatory pointing finger.

And I'll make sure that mine is not the only one.

Jeez, who spat in this guy's coffee? Can't he see that we're all suffering today? And they do experiments all the time - who cares if the administrator is overseeing this one. The power outages are the main concern.

KLEINER storms off back down to the test lab.

The SECURITY MEMBER gives BARNEY an appreciative nod. BARNEY gives a mock salute and begins to wander away, feeling defeated. He looks around the room and sees that everyone looks stressed.

Why not take a trip to the main server room? The security camera monitors are in there too. Hell, he could give sorting it out a go himself.

Similarly to GORDON in the lift, the camera begins to rotate around. Now we are looking at the world from BARNEY's perspective. BARNEY is the second POV character.

He walks down a corridor. Things are slower and more controlled than with GORDON's perspective, reflecting BARNEY's cooler and more trained response to stress.

BARNEY nods at another security guard walking past him. He looks down and brings out his security pass to scan on a nearby door.

11 - INT. SECURITY CAMERA ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The door beeps open. In BARNEY goes, to be greeted with a vast collection of monitor displays, which show many different areas of Black Mesa. His eyes sweep over them too quickly to focus on anything. As he begins clearing some cables off the desk in front of him, the camera swivels back round to now be on BARNEY's face again.

He glances up at the camera displays again and does a double take.

Wait.

Hang on a moment.

Who is that?

He looks at a display and sees a woman he's never seen before - it's GINA. She is in the SAMPLE STORAGE ROOM.

This is most odd.

BARNEY

Why can I see...?

Then it hits him.

The power outages have reset the camera displays so that all of them are automatically able to be viewed regardless of security clearance level. BARNEY is only level 3.. GINA is level 4. He is not normally permitted to see the SAMPLE STORAGE ROOM.

BARNEY

If I can see you..

His curiosity gets the better of him. He's always wondered what he wasn't cleared to see. He starts studying the other display monitors with joy. He's got the mind of a good-natured crime-fighting detective. He'd make an excellent superhero.. but a better friend.

12 - INT. SAMPLE STORAGE ROOM

As BARNEY is studying the other displays, the camera goes into the display for the SAMPLE STORAGE ROOM, where GINA is working to get to the new sample, GG-3883.

We feel her resignation. She is working, but her mind is elsewhere, pondering.

She is moving through the other, older samples - many of which are small, yellowy, and immersed in dull black and grey rock.

She inputs the code for the new sample - GG-3883 - and it appears in front of her.

Time stops.

Oh my god.

GINA's gaze has become placid, hypnotised. She stops moving entirely. What the hell does it look like?

Slowly, the sample comes into view.

It is a gigantic, pure amber crystal with no rock encasing it.

The entire room seems to darken around the sample and GINA's face, illuminated by the amber glow.

This is the only thing that matters in the world.

Her gaze stays fixed... but becomes unnerved as the amber glow appears to grow more intense... dazzling.

It's like it's alive.

The crystal fluctuates. The slightest movement. Blink and you'll miss it. Did it just...?

Suddenly, COLETTE'S voice buzzes over the com, shattering the paralysis.

COLETTE

(Over speaker)

Do you have the sample, Gina?

GINA

(Shaky, breathy)

Yes. Just moving it now.

COLETTE

Good. Be on your way to me
under the spectrometer when
you're done.

As GINA loosens herself up, the camera quickly swivels, as it did with GORDON and BARNEY, around to show GINA's point of view - she is the third POV character.

She sends the other sample bays away with a few button presses.

Many sample storage doors slam shut.

She goes to pick up the sample.

She hesitates for a moment.

What is this thing?

It's unearthly. Unnatural.

She gingerly picks it up and handles it carefully. It's even heavier than it looks. The moments with it in her gloved hands are intense. Like dropping it would set a bomb off.

She puts the sample in the loader machine and pushes it into the nearby open cargo lift.

The gate on the lift closes, and as it begins to ascend without her, the camera rotates back around to rest on GINA's face.

She is soaked with sweat.

There are tears in her eyes.

Like she has seen a thousand terrible futures.

13 - INT. CARGO LIFT - CONTINUOUS

We see the sample in the loader being moved up in the lift shaft. The camera follows it exactly, picking up every movement and judder of the mechanics.

The lift suddenly halts. We linger on the sample for a moment...

Then another moment...

Too long...

What's about to happen?

The sample starts to luminate a yellow glow on its own very subtly. It almost pulsates.

Like energy.

Like life.

14 - INT. LAB CONTROL ROOM

The doors to the LAB CONTROL ROOM slide open and GORDON walks in. He is stoic as usual. A brick in the rapids.

A stark contrast to the state of ELI, who is already in the room.

ELI sits at the desk with his leg bouncing. He starts at the sight of GORDON and stands up. They are firm friends.

ELI

Gordon! There you are. I take it
you've heard the news about today's
experiment?

GORDON stares back. What news?

Just then, GORDON notices the state of ELI. He's more wired than usual. There is a panic in his eyes.

What the hell's happening?

GORDON goes to open his mouth, but ELI continues talking. ELI starts to pace.

GORDON gets the feeling that ELI wasn't really asking him.

ELI

They've just sent the new sample down
to the test chamber. The anti-mass
spectrometer is running at 105 at the
moment.

What????

New sample?

105?

How has all of this happened just this morning?

It's a hell of a gamble just so upstairs
can get their extra resolution. And it's
the administrator, too. It's Dr. Breen who's
ordered this.

BREEN? GORDON has never even met him.

You mean we're being treated like subjects of a tyrant?

What kind of state is this company in?

Why? Why this mad rush with no time
to prepare? And all we know is he's
'very concerned with getting a conclusive
analysis of today's sample'. One can
only imagine the lengths they went to
to get it if they're this eager to
test it.

ELI shakes his head.

I don't understand. This lack of
precautions is gonna get us all in
deep trouble soon, mark my words...

Amen to that.

...And maybe Breen or Keller don't
have much to lose in doing this, but
...I do.

GORDON stares for a moment. ELI has never outright said this before.

My wife and daughter are in the dorms
here.

Of course. His family...

If anything happened to them because
of all this, I'd... I don't know.

ELI couldn't go on living. GORDON knows it. GORDON also realises
just how seriously he HASN'T been taking the entire job up to this
point. ELI has his entire life and the lives of those dearest to him
on the line here...

Shit. GORDON better start turning up for work on time.

Anyway... Kleiner and Rosenberg are
waiting for you, Gordon. In the test
chamber.

GORDON looks right through ELI for the first time since meeting him.
He understands him.

GORDON nods at ELI and walks out through the other door of the
CONTROL ROOM.

As he leaves, GORDON becomes aware of a sinking feeling inside. No experiment he'd done before felt this punchy. And if things went wrong...

...it would be HIS fault.

Doesn't matter whose fault it would actually be.

It's GORDON's fault.

The lives of ELI and his family are in HIS HANDS.

Oh Christ.

15 - INT. AZIAN'S DORMITORY - LIGHT, BREEZY, RELAXED

In contrast to the stress of the metallic shell of the CONTROL ROOM, we find ourselves in a very different environment.

White billowing translucent curtains float across an open doorway next to a balcony. We see a bright blue sky and the beautiful red rocks of New Mexico in the distance.

We are in the dormitories.

As the camera slowly moves from the doorway inside to the living space, we see a framed family photo on a wooden surface - it is ELI, his wife, AZIAN, and their daughter, ALYX.

AZIAN is in her mid-thirties somewhere but looks younger.

ALYX is no more than 7 years old.

What a picture of heaven this is. A million years away from the turmoil of Black Mesa... though that doesn't matter. This place will burn anyway.

ALYX

It's sunny again, mom.

AZIAN

Yes, just like yesterday. Just like
always, here!

ALYX

I'm bored of the sunshine. When will
it rain?

AZIAN laughs. Children say things adults could never formulate.

She is sitting at a desk, writing something. She is an intelligent woman.

ALYX is sitting on a sofa nearby, reading a book. The book looks like one no normal seven-year-old would be reading - it's dense. No pictures. She's clever too.

AZIAN

Now, why would you want it to rain,
Alyx?

ALYX. She matters.

ALYX

Because it's sunny every day. It's
boring.

AZIAN

But, isn't that nice?

ALYX

No... the rain is exciting. And sometimes
there's storms.

AZIAN gets up from her desk and walks slowly over to ALYX on the
sofa.

She loves her more than anything.

Why would ALYX wish for something like that?

No use wishing for change when the NOW is peaceful.

AZIAN

Yes... and sometimes, there's... thunder and
lightning!

(She tickles ALYX playfully. They laugh
together for a little while.)

I think you're just a little bored, Alyx.
The sunshine is good. You might not think
it now, but trust mommy, sometimes you
don't know what you have until it's gone.

ALYX is staring at her now, listening, thinking, computing.

You're wishing for change even though you're
happy. The rain is exciting, sure, but
once it doesn't stop, after two days you'll
wonder how you could've ever hated the sun.

ALYX is beat. She knows it. She'll remember that. But she won't show
it.

ALYX

Hmph.

(She folds her arms.)
But... I love Black Mesa.

AZIAN

Ohhh, here we go... as you always say!

ALYX

I want to be a scientist here like daddy
when I grow up!

AZIAN

Yes, yes, Alyx Vance the scientist! Taking
the world by storm...!

AZIAN doesn't want to make her feel like this is her only option.
There's so much she could do.

But don't lose sight of all the other things
in the world, sweet. Are you sure about being
a Black Mesa scientist?

ALYX nods enthusiastically. It would be tough making her see any
other pathway.

AZIAN

There are so many things you could be,
Alyx. You've got the world at your
feet. The possibilities of your future
are endless.

Are they?

You could be Alyx Vance the doctor...
Alyx Vance the explorer... Alyx Vance
the astronaut... Alyx Vance the-

ALYX

-scientist.

AZIAN chuckles. Ahhhhh. It's okay. She'd make an excellent
scientist, after all.

AZIAN

Okay baby, well, if you're sure. We're
certainly in the right place.

They cuddle together on the sofa. Mother protecting daughter.

We're in the right place.

Are they?

16 - INT. BULKHEAD ENTRANCE TO ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

GORDON is standing silently in a room with a huge BULKHEAD DOOR on
the side he's facing. This is the room just outside the ANTI-MASS
SPECTROMETER. In front of the door, facing him, are KLEINER and
ROSENBERG.

KLEINER looks smug. The experiment is going ahead as ordered.

ROSENBERG looks tired, defeated, almost nauseous. At this point, he
just wants to get it over with.

GORDON feels like he is about to be executed.

Like these two faces would be the last he'd ever see.

What a grim fate.

The silence is broken by ROSENBERG.

ROSENBERG

I'm afraid we'll be deviating a bit
from standard analysis procedures today,
Gordon.

You don't say.

KLEINER

(Through gritted teeth)
Yes, but with good reason. This is a
rare opportunity for us. This is the
purest sample we've seen yet.

ROSENBERG

And, potentially, the most unstable.

GORDON feels like he is intruding on the two men's argument.

Why is it him that's having to do this?

Why him?

It's almost cruel.

What has he done to deserve this?

KLEINER

Now, now, if you follow standard insertion
procedures, everything will be fine.

ROSENBERG

I don't know how you can say that
although I will admit that the possibility
of a resonance cascade scenario is
extremely unlikely-

What?

What did he just say?

What on earth is a 'resonance cascade'?

GORDON has never heard of it. Sounds like something from a video
game.

He almost can't take it seriously, but the shushing tones of KLEINER
stimulating his suspicious mind betrays his quiet amusement of the
ridiculous term.

KLEINER

Gordon doesn't need to hear all
this, he's a highly trained professional.

Despite the hostile atmosphere, GORDON feels a sense of reassurance
at this last comment. He is generally quite well-respected by the

staff here - other than KELLER. But KELLER is old school - he respects cleanliness and lack of tardiness leagues more than he respects scientific talent. Who cares what he thinks?

We've assured the administrator that
nothing will go wrong.

A shame that KLEINER cares about the administrator, though. The guy will take anything we give him if we use enough buzzwords.

ROSENBERG

Ahh...

(defeated, tired, frustrated)

Yes, you're right about that, I'll
admit. Gordon, we do have complete
confidence in you.

Thanks.

I guess.

KLEINER

(Proudly)

Well, go ahead. Let's let him in
now.

They walk to opposite sides of the room to scan the panels. The huge bulkhead doors open and GORDON steels himself.

He's seen the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER numerous times. It was overwhelmingly intimidating at first - he got used to it.

Now? Today?

It's like the first time all over again.

17 - INT. SECURITY CAMERA ROOM

BARNEY has almost finished setting up the mended server after the power outage. He is admiring the fully functional security camera display...

Wait a minute, who's that?

BARNEY peers at a screen. Something catches his eye.

It's not an irregular corridor.

But someone's there.

Someone's looking right at ME.

On the display, in a corridor, the G-MAN is standing stock still, staring at BARNEY.

BARNEY stares back, unable to look away. BARNEY's eyes are working.

The G-MAN looks back.

There is something in the G-MAN's eyes.

Is it... decision-making?

BARNEY looks back.

Suddenly, the display showing the G-MAN turns to static.

BARNEY is shocked out of his hypnotisation and scrambles to get it back online. When he does, the G-MAN is gone.

He will leave BARNEY alone.

He does not have what the G-MAN wants.

18 - INT. THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

The ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER is revealed in all its orange glory. GORDON walks in and begins circling the main unit. He eyes the ladder on the wall which he needs to climb.

ROSENBERG's voice comes on over the speaker.

ROSENBERG

Testing.. Testing..

(he clears his throat)

Everything seems to be in order.

Wrong. So, so wrong.

KLEINER

Alright, Gordon, your suit should
keep you comfortable through all this.

What an understatement.

The specimen will be delivered to you
in a few moments. If you would be so good
as to climb up and start the rotors, we can
bring the anti-mass spectrometer to 80% and
hold it there until the carrier arrives.

While KLEINER says this, GORDON is already climbing up the ladder to reach the rotor control platform which starts the rotors. Once the light turns green, GORDON climbs back down again. The machine hums and spins into life. Slow at first. Gaining speed. GORDON is on the ground again now.

Very good. We'll take it from here.

History will say otherwise.

ROSENBERG

Power to stage one emitters in 3...

2... 1...

A bright yellow-orange light is emitted from the central part of the machine, shooting straight down into the central scanner on the ground. It looks explosive. Space-age. Like it would vaporise you.

I'm seeing predictable phaser rays.

GORDON is wired as hell. Eyes darting all over the machine. Looking for the slightest issue.

Though if something happens, he knows there's nothing he can do to help. He's stuck in the room with the most powerful machine in the company.

That he knows of.

19 - INT. AREA UNDERNEATH ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

GINA enters into a test chamber which is located underneath the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER which GORDON is currently standing in. COLETTE is already in there struggling with some equipment on a balcony, a few metres above GINA. There is no easy way for them to reach each other.

The machine is already whirring quickly.

The noise is loud. If it weren't for the com, they would struggle to hear one another.

GINA

Colette! What's wrong?!?

COLETTE

It's about to go critical!

Sparks suddenly explode out of the next panel from the one COLETTE is working on. GINA runs near to try and help, but there's no way she can reach.

Things are in motion that cannot be stopped. There is a red warning plate that is flashing which says 'CONTROLS INACTIVE' on it. It is out of reach for them both.

It's like a nightmare.

GINA

What the hell is going on with our equipment?

COLETTE

It wasn't meant to run at this level in the first place!

She's dead right.

GINA

Tell them to stop! Stop it!

COLETTE

(frustrated and panicked)

I can't, Gina! I've tried, and the equipment's interference is too high to communicate with Richard! There's nothing we can do!

COLETTE slams her fists on the display. It is ineffectual.

The room looks like a warping UFO at this point.

There are many spinning yellow and white lights on the ceiling and laser beams within the central column next to COLETTE.

GINA stands and stares.

20 - INT. THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

ROSENBERG

Stage 2 emitters activating... Now.

The trifecta of machinery pieces whirring around the central node now emit their own laser-like light. It is whiter in hue. It looks powerful and is rather bright and hot. GORDON keeps his distance.

This feels... wrong.

This feels like pushing an old washing machine to its limit in your parents' house as a child.

You know it's going to break. You don't care if it breaks. It's old. It doesn't matter.

This washing machine is different.

This one will kill you.

KLEINER

Gordon, we cannot predict how long the system can operate at this level, nor how long the reading will take. Please work as quickly as you can.

Glad to see KLEINER still has some level of sense in his head.

ROSENBERG

Overhead capacitors to 105%.

The SPECTROMETER makes a scarily deep and loud noise.

Uh, it's probably not a problem... Probably, but I'm showing a small discrepancy in -

Yes?

Well... no, it's well within acceptable bounds again. Sustaining sequence.

Complacency. Not what you want at a time like this.

GORDON doesn't even realise it, but he's staring at the SPECTROMETER with a balance of wonder and fear at this point. It is an awesome sight, forgetting the world-splitting dangers involved.

KLEINER

I've just been informed that the sample is ready, Gordon. It should be coming up to you any moment. Look to the delivery system for your specimen.

At that moment, the sample arrives attached to the carrier put on the lift by GINA earlier on.

GORDON is similarly mesmerised by its bright yellow light, which at this point is luminescent and sparkles and dazzles around the room, even next to the SPECTROMETER. The lasers and the crystal seem to interact with each other, reflecting and refracting lights as the SPECTROMETER overworks. The sample almost appears solid gold as GORDON grips hold of the trolley to move it to the SPECTROMETER.

This is what it wants.

21 - INT. LAB CONTROL ROOM

ELI is fearfully watching the power level of the machine and of Black Mesa go wildly overboard. As sweat runs down in front of his ear, he suddenly hears a voice.

An inhuman voice.

A whisper.

Right next to his ear.

He doesn't look, but he knows the face of the thing that said it.

The G-MAN.

G-MAN

Prepare for unforeseen consequences.

ELI is shocked.

He can't move.

He can't breathe.

Everything is silent.

22 - INT. THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

GORDON slowly pushes the sample towards the main laser.

Like a zombie.

At the instant the crystal hits the laser, his eyes widen.

The silence continues.

He only watches as a massive surge of energy runs through the machine.

The light blinds.

Several explosions happen around the room.

The entire lab shakes.

23 - INT. AREA UNDERNEATH THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

GINA and COLETTE are plunged into darkness in the AREA UNDERNEATH THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER. There are showers of sparks and fires. They are both flung from side to side as an earthquake rips the room apart.

The silence continues.

24 - INT. ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

Bolts of electricity shoot off in random directions around the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER.

It is so loud, yet we hear nothing.

One of the bolts hits an area right next to the window of the LAB CONTROL ROOM. There is blood.

25 - INT. LAB CONTROL ROOM

ELI is knocked backwards by a laser that shoots through the room, narrowly missing his head, exploding debris everywhere.

ELI's face is sprayed with blood. We don't know where the blood came from.

His eyes are glazed.

26 - INT. ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

GORDON looks at the crystal in the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER. It is no longer there.

27 - INT. SECURITY CAMERA ROOM

In the SECURITY CAMERA ROOM, BARNEY is thrown sideways into a cabinet. As the quake shocks the room. He hits his head and is knocked out instantly. It is violent.

28 - INT. THE ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER

Another bolt strikes the ground only a metre or two away from GORDON in the ANTI-MASS SPECTROMETER ROOM and he is flung sideways into the corner of the room at a great speed.

Only the HEV braces his impact.

Green.

Yellow and green.

Green?

Bright green.

Green concentrated points of energy begin to appear all over the chamber. Blinding GORDON again as he writhes on the ground.

He is bleeding too. He can... taste it.

He looks around in shock and bewilderment as the green lights multiply.

A green bath. Warm. A warm green lightning bath.

Lightning is exciting.

Never seen green lightning before.

What a discovery.

Then the world was dark. A black nothingness. As it would be.

A voice. A tinny voice.

A faraway voice.

HEV SUIT

(Distant)

Minor lacerations detected.

A green and black sequence of flashing stun.

29 - INT. SURFACE OF XEN - THE BORDERWORLD - CONTINUOUS

Stars above.

Ground below.

Soft ground.

Springy ground.

Feeling tight.

What a feeling.

Unquestionably the surface of an alien planet. Hahaha.

Undoubtedly a hostile biosphere. Of course.
Unfortunately, can't stay. See you later.
A black and green sequence of blinding speed.

30 - INT. VORTIGAUNT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Innerchamber. Dark around. Sacred. Surrounded. Trapped. Freedom.
Destiny. Creatures. Voices. Enemies. Friends. Important. Endgame.

The pathway set before him now. Vortigaunt connections of parallel
lines. Touched and changed by a host of misunderstood friends. They
understand GORDON. GORDON understands his path. His macabre, his
determination, his silence. Perfect.

A green and black sequence of sudden thrill.

31 - DARKNESS - CONTINUOUS

THE G-MAN

(voice, disembodied)

Rise and shine, Dr. Freeman, rise and shine.
Time to wake up and feel the debris.

END EPISODE