

THE MARTIAN

Written by

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Based on the novel by Andy Weir

**Draft
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INT. NASA - PRESS ROOM - DAY

THEODORE "TEDDY" SANDERS, Director of NASA, steels himself before he steps to the podium. Normally, he leaves these briefings to his press secretary.

Today is different.

TEDDY

At around 4:30 a.m., central standard time, our satellites detected a storm approaching the Ares 3 mission site on Mars. By 6:45, the storm had escalated to "severe," and the Ares 3 team reported winds of over 175 kilometers per hour hitting the site. As a result... we had no choice but to abort the Ares 3 mission and order immediate evacuation. Thanks to the quick action of Commander Lewis, astronauts Beck, Johanssen, Martinez, and Vogel were all able to reach the Mars Ascent Vehicle and perform an emergency launch at 7:28 central time.

(then)

Unfortunately, during the evacuation, Astronaut Mark Watney was struck by debris and killed. Commander Lewis and the rest of her team were able to intercept safely with the *Hermes* and are now heading home...

(wavers, then)

But Mark Watney is dead.

As the CACOPHONY of questions erupts from the press --

EXT. SPACE - MARS - TO ESTABLISH

-- we CUT TO the cold silence of space. THE RED PLANET shines brilliantly amidst the darkness, as though someone cut a perfect circle from the insides of a blast furnace.

PRELAP the sound of an ALARM: ARRR... ARRR... ARRR...

EXT. MARS - DAY

A BODY lies facedown, half-covered in red sand at the base of a hill. We catch a glimpse of the nametag on the spacesuit:

"Watney."

The OXYGEN ALARM inside the helmet continues to BLARE. And just as it builds to crescendo...

Mark Watney gasps for air.

He jerks back into consciousness. He's disoriented, alarms BLARING inside his helmet. As he struggles to move...

He screams in pain. Glances down. Sees:

A JAGGED LENGTH OF ANTENNA has pierced his spacesuit and stabbed straight into his abdomen. CAKED BLOOD all around the wound.

Mark's training kicks in -- *the suit is breached* -- he struggles to his knees -- gasping in pain -- he reaches to the side of his helmet for the BREACH KIT -- pulls the valve free -- grabs hold of the antenna... grits his teeth...

AND YANKS the antenna out of his side. The antenna SNAPS FREE -- the suit is exposed to atmosphere -- the pressure inside DROPS -- Mark CRIES OUT, goes woozy --

But stays conscious.

He slams the breach kit over the hole. Seals it. Checks his arm readout. The oxygen stabilizes. He's still alive.

For now.

He struggles to his feet. Picks up the length of antenna. Begins the LONG CLIMB up the hill.

EXT. MARS - HAB - DAY

We're WITH MARK as he makes the climb, and as he crests the hill we swing around to reveal:

THE ARES 3 HABITATION (a.k.a. "The Hab"): The large, white tent-like structure where the six crew members lived during their time on Mars.

It's been battered by the storm, but it's still intact. Mark registers momentary relief. But then his eyes dart over to the MAV LAUNCH SITE.

It's empty.

And although we may not know what that means, the look on Mark's face tells us *it's bad.*

He keeps walking.

INT. HAB - AIRLOCK - DAY

Mark fumbles his way into one of the hab's airlocks. As soon as the airlock equalizes, he tears off his helmet...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark stumbles into the main living space. Peels off his jumpsuit. WINCES as he tears the blood-caked fabric away from HIS WOUND.

His fingers probe the puncture. It's deep. *That's bad.* He checks his back for an exit wound. There's none. *That's good.* He grabs the broken antenna he brought with him. His fingers trace the bloodied end. It's jagged -- as though a piece of the antenna broke off inside him.

That's really bad.

Mark stumbles over to the first-aid station. Grabs supplies. Anesthetic. Syringe. Forceps. Needle. Suture thread.

(This is not exactly going to be easy to watch.)

Sweat pouring off his brow, Mark loads up the syringe with anesthetic. Grits his teeth. Injects it into his wound. Gasps. Breathes. Grabs the forceps. Hesitates. *I don't want to do this.* He takes a deep breath...

And digs the forceps into his wound.

He CRIES OUT in pain. Nearly goes unconscious. Fights it. *Don't pass out, Mark.* He probes with the forceps, grimacing in agony. He can't find it. Pushes the forceps in deeper. And DEEPER. Jesus. Mark's face goes WHITE.

He finds it. Yanks the forceps free. Sees the small piece of shrapnel. *It's out. Hallelujah.*

Mark grabs the needle. Tries to thread it. His hands won't stop shaking. He makes fists. *C'mon Mark.* Steadies himself just enough.

He begins to stitch himself up. Bit by agonizing bit. His hands keep shaking, but he refuses to stop until the wound is closed. Finally...

He's done. He clips the sutures. Collapses back into his chair. *Oh Jesus.* Tries to catch his breath.

We slowly ANGLE IN ON MARK as he struggles to breathe... and breathe...

And as we settle into a CLOSEUP, we see the full reality of Mark's situation hit him. He's in agony. Left for dead. All by himself.

The only man on the planet.

His eyes drift to the middle distance. Then...

MARK

Fuck.

CUT TO TITLE:

THE MARTIAN

EXT. MARS - HAB - DAY

To establish. Mark's footprints still undisturbed in the red sand.

TITLE: Sol 7

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark speaks directly to camera. We see the NASA timestamp journal graphics in the corner of frame.

MARK

Okay. Well. Let's start with the obvious. I'm still alive. Though, by the time anyone's seeing this, there's an excellent chance I won't be. But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Point is, I didn't die on Sol 6. Best I can tell --

Mark holds up the jagged piece of antenna.

MARK (CONT'D)

-- this length of our primary communications antenna tore through my bio-monitor. And ripped a hole in me as well. It was horrible thank you for asking. But the antenna... along with the copious amount of blood that came out of my body... managed to seal the breach in my suit. Which kept me alive. Even though the team thought I was dead.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

And since the MAV is gone, I have to assume everyone proceeded with the evac when my biosigns came back snake eyes.

(then)

Commander Lewis... If you ever hear this... Listen. It wasn't your fault. Just bad luck. You did what you had to do, and if I had been in your position I would have done the same. I'm glad you guys made it.

(then)

All right, though. That's where we're at. Mark Watney, stranded on Mars. I have no way to contact the Hermes -- see above re: main communications antenna broke and stuck into my stomach. And even if I could, it's not like they could just turn around and get me anyway. I have no way to contact Earth. And even if I could, it would take... four years before the Ares 4 team could reach me. I'm in a Hab designed to last thirty-one days. If the Oxygenator breaks down, I'll suffocate. If the Water Reclaimer breaks down, I'll die of thirst. If the Hab breaches, I'll just kind of... explode. If none of those things happen, I'll eventually run out of food and starve to death. So... yeah.

Mark trails off. It's one thing to know it. It's another to say it out loud.

MARK (CONT'D)

Yeah.

EXT. MARS - DAWN

Sunrise on Mars. Bright white sun scatters blue-grey light across the horizon. It's beautiful.

TITLE: Sol 8

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark looks a little less-terrible than he did before.

MARK

All right. Let's attack the problem. Surface mission was supposed to take thirty-one days. For redundancy, they sent enough food to last for fifty-six days. For six people. So for just me, it'll last three-hundred days. And I figure I can stretch that to four hundred if I ration. Ares 4 team arrives in four years. So... I've gotta figure out how to grow three years worth of food. Here. On a planet where nothing grows. Luckily, I'm the botanist.

Mark holds up one of his mission briefs. Points to the word "Botanist" under "Watney." Looks at us like, *impressed?*

MARK (CONT'D)

Mars will come to fear my botany powers.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark cleans the dust off the array of SOLAR PANELS outside the Hab (this is an almost-daily part of Mark's routine, and crucial to his survival.)

As he works, something catches his attention. Off to the side of the HAB, there's a pile of SILVER BAGS. Mark glances at them. *Hummm.*

Then he goes back to work.

INT. HAB - DAY

Inventory. Mark removes all of the ration packs, stacking them in orderly piles as he catalogues their contents. One case in particular catches his attention.

Label: "DO NOT OPEN UNTIL THANKSGIVING."

It's one of the few specialty cases NASA packs for their astronauts. Mark opens it. Inside: freeze-dried turkey. Stuffing. Cranberry powder. And actual VEGETABLES. Carrots, onions... and POTATOES.

Mark removes the potatoes. Stares at them for a long time.

TITLE:

Sol 9

Mark pours himself a glass of water from the WATER RECLAIMER. Finishes eating a meal. He takes the leftover scraps and dumps them into a bucket marked "COMPOST."

TITLE: Sol 11

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark flushes the toilet, which begins the procedure of vacuum-drying the waste. Mark glances back at the system. Hmmm...

The system finishes its process, sealing the waste into --
A SILVER BAG.

Mark studies the bag. Idea forming.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark collects the pile of silver bags. Carries them inside.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark stands in the kitchen, surrounded by silver bags. He fills a large container with water from the Reclaimer. He dumps in the contents of the compost bin.

Then he stares at the bags. He does not look happy.

He tears open a bag. Dumps the contents into the bin. Tears open another bag. As he does so, he starts to GAG --

TITLE: Sol 12

EXT. MARS - HAB - DAY

Mark scoops Martian dirt into a container with a small shovel. He carries the container to the airlock --

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark enters the Hab, dumps his container of dirt into a corner where's he cleared an empty area.

TITLE: Sol 13

INT. HAB - DAY

Same shot. Mark enters with another container. We follow to reveal... there's now a HUGE PILE of dirt in the corner.

TITLE: Sol 16

Mark has spread the dirt over a third of the Hab floor. He stares at the compost bin. Eyes it like it's his nemesis.

Then he takes a deep breath. Opens the bin. Begins dumping it over the Martian dirt.

He can't hold his breath forever. He breathes eventually. Oh god, that's horrible.

TITLE: Sol 19

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark packs soil on top of one of the crew member's bunks. As he moves the personal items aside, he finds a DATA-STICK. He holds it up and looks at it: *hummmmm*.

CUT TO:

Mark has plugged the data-stick into the computer and is now viewing its contents: old episodes of seventies television.

Mark just sits there. Watching THREE'S COMPANY.

TITLE: Sol 24

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark cuts each potato into four quarters, making sure each quarter has at least two eyes.

He begins planting each potato quarter in nice, orderly rows. As he works, we slowly WIDEN OUT to reveal --

The ENTIRE HAB is now covered in SOIL. Not just the floor -- Mark has cleared every available surface -- bunks, countertops, table -- and covered it with his dirt.

MARK (PRELAP)
The problem is water...

TITLE: Sol 30

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark talks directly to camera.

MARK
I've created one-hundred and six meters of farmable soil. If I use the emergency tents I can get that to one-twenty-six.

(MORE)

per cubic meter. We packed three hundred liters of emergency water -- I'll save fifty -- but even donating two-fifty to the cause means I still need to figure out how to make roughly two-hundred and eighty more liters of water. Fortunately, I know the recipe. Take hydrogen. Add oxygen. Burn. Unfortunately... *burn*.

At this point, we may notice Mark is standing in the middle of what looks like a mad-scientist's chemistry experiment.

We may also notice Mark is wearing the protective inner lining of his EVA suit. Along with goggles. An oxygen mask hangs around his neck.

MARK (CONT'D)

I have hundreds of liters of unused Hydrazine from the MDV. Each molecule of Hydrazine has four hydrogen atoms in it. So each liter of Hydrazine has enough hydrogen for two liters of water. I've been boosting the O2 in the Hab with the Oxygenator. If I run the Hydrazine over the iridium catalyst from the MDV engine, it'll separate into N2 and H2. Then I just need to direct the hydrogen into a small area and burn it. Luckily, in the history of humanity, nothing bad has ever happened from lighting hydrogen on fire.

Mark just stares at the camera. Then continues.

MARK (CONT'D)

Believe it or not, the challenge has been finding something that will hold a flame. Turns out, NASA hates fire. Because of the whole "fire makes everyone die in space" thing. So every single thing here is flame retardant. With the notable exception of... Martinez' personal items.

Mark holds up Martinez' personal items pack. Removes a small wooden cross.

want me to go through your stuff,
you shouldn't have left me for dead
on a desolate planet.

Mark starts shaving the cross down with a screwdriver.

MARK (CONT'D)

I figure God won't mind,
considering the situation.

INT. HAB - DAY

Science time. Quick cuts now as Mark shows us how to make
water by burning rocket fuel:

-- Mark duct tapes torn trash-bags to create a tent, which he
uses to cover his work table.

-- He tears an air hose out of one of the space suits, tapes
it to the tent, hangs it from the ceiling. Now he has a
chimney.

-- Mark vents pure oxygen from a tank, lights it with a spark
from battery wires. Whoosh. Points the flame at the wood
shavings. Now he has a small torch.

-- Moment of truth. Mark holds the torch, starts the
Hydrazine flow. The Hydrazine sizzles on the iridium and
DISAPPEARS.

FOLLOW Mark's gaze up to the chimney. FLAME BURSTS start
sputtering out from the hose. Mark grins. *It's working.*

Mark checks his instruments. Watches the temperature
carefully. Repeats the process.

TITLE: Sol 34

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark's still at it. He looks exhausted. He goes through the
procedure once again. Glances at the atmospheric analyzer.
Um. Is that right? Doesn't give it a second thought.

He strikes the torch again...

BOOM!

The explosion is LOUD, FAST, and CONTAINED. It blasts Mark
clear across the room. He hits the ground like a wet rag.

TITLE: Sol 35

Mark talks to camera. His clothes are somewhat scorched. His hair is singed in patches.

MARK

So. Yes. I blew myself up.

(then)

Best guess? I forgot to account for the excess oxygen I've been exhaling when I did my calculations. Because I'm stupid.

He's still dazed. A little out of it.

MARK (CONT'D)

Interesting side note: this is how JPL was founded. Five guys at Cal Tech were trying to make rocket fuel and nearly burned down their dorm. Rather than expel them, Professor... Von Karman? I want to say... banished them to a nearby farm in Pasadena and told them to keep working. And now we have a space program.

(then)

See? I pay attention.

(then)

I'm gonna get back to work. As soon as my ears stop ringing.

He just sits there for a while.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark's back at it. He checks his math, adjusts the O2 levels. Winces as he fires up the torch.

He doesn't blow up. Phew. Starts venting the hydrazine.

CUT TO:

Later. Mark steps back from the table. Wipes the sweat from his brow. Looks at his hands. Sweat.

Mark walks over to the walls. Sees the condensation. Beads of water everywhere. He traces them with his finger. Breathes in deep.

It's as though he's created a rainforest in his Hab.

He walks over to the WATER RECLAIMER. Takes the lid off the MAIN TANK.

TITLE:

Sol 36

INT. HAB - DAY

WIDE SHOT: we can see the entire Hab. The surfaces covered with soil, the cramped living space, the mad-scientist experiment in the center.

Mark works at the table. And as he does so...

We begin to SPEED UP. Time lapse photography:

Mark vents the Hydrazine -- Mark checks his readouts -- Mark collects water from the reclaimer -- Mark spreads the water over his soil -- Mark eats lunch -- Mark goes back to work --

Moving faster and FASTER:

Mark sleeps -- Mark puts on his spacesuit -- Mark exits the Hab -- Mark brings in more dirt -- Mark vents Hydrazine -- Mark eats -- Mark sleeps --

While the days FLY BY, we're slowly ANGLING towards the back of the room...

-- Mark works Mark eats Mark sleeps Mark works --

Towards a small patch of SOIL in the corner. We land in CLOSEUP: soil filling the frame. We HOLD.

And after a beat...

A single, green SPROUT breaks through the soil.

TITLE:

Sol 42

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. SPACE

And FROM BLACK, we FIND EARTH. The calming blue-greens a welcome reprieve from the fiery reds of Mars.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

The President of the United States speaks before a bronze memorial. A somber crowd listens in respectful silence. We watch from far away.

A MAN walks past the large NASA logo greeting visitors at the front gate.

TITLE: JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, HOUSTON, TX

INT. NASA - DAY

The man enters the main lobby.

TITLE: VENKAT KAPOOR, DIRECTOR OF MARS MISSIONS

Guards glance up from the television, nod hello. As Venkat walks through security, we catch a glimpse of their screens:

A CNN TITLE reads: "President Speaks At Watney Memorial."

INT. NASA - VARIOUS

As Venkat makes his way through NASA, we notice everyone in the building is watching news reports of the Watney service.

ON THE SCREENS: We catch a brief glimpse of a female astronaut floating in zero-g, eulogizing Mark.

INT. NASA - TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY

A man sits at his desk, staring out the window. We recognize him from the beginning of the movie.

TITLE: TEDDY SANDERS, DIRECTOR OF NASA

ON THE TELEVISION, we see Teddy shake hands with the President at the service.

Venkat gives it a passing glance as he enters.

VENKAT

I need you to authorize my satellite time.

TEDDY

Jesus, Venkat. I just got back from the memorial.

VENKAT

I apologize. But I have to go before the Appropriations Committee, and I want to be ahead of this.

(then)

I thought you gave a lovely speech, by the way.

TEDDY

What are we asking for?

VENKAT

We're funded for five Ares missions. I think I can get Congress to authorize a sixth.

TEDDY

It's not gonna happen.

VENKAT

We evac'd our team after six sols. There's almost an entire mission worth of supplies up there. It would only cost a fraction of a normal mission. But I need to know what the damage is.

TEDDY

You're not the only one who needs satellite time. We've got the Ares 4 supply missions coming up. We need to concentrate on the Schiaparelli Crater.

VENKAT

I'm talking about securing us another mission. We have twelve satellites in orbit, I'm sure you can spare a few hours --

TEDDY

It's not about the satellite time, Venk.

Venk shrugs -- then what is it?

TEDDY (CONT'D)

We're a public domain organization.

VENKAT

And?

TEDDY

The second we point the satellites at the Hab... I broadcast pictures of Mark Watney's dead body to the world.

(disbelief)
You're afraid of a PR problem?

TEDDY

Of course I'm afraid of a PR problem. Another mission? Congress won't reimburse us for a paper clip if we put a dead astronaut on the cover of the New York Times. We're finally putting this behind us. The last thing we want to do is dredge everything back up.

VENKAT

So... what do we do? He's not going to decompose. He'll be there forever.

TEDDY

Meteorology estimates he'll be covered in sand from normal weather activity within a year.

VENKAT

We can't wait a year for this. We have work to do.

TEDDY

Ares 5 won't even launch for another five years. We have plenty of time.

Venkat thinks about it. Frustrated. Tries another tack.

VENKAT

Okay, consider this. Right now, the world is on our side. Sympathy for Watney's family is high...

He knows this sounds cold, but he's out of options.

VENKAT (CONT'D)

Ares 6 could bring the body back. We don't say that's the purpose of the mission, but we make it clear that would be part of it. We frame it that way, we get more support in Congress. I can sell it. But not if we wait a year.

Teddy stares back out the window. Venkat has a point.

In a year, people won't care any more.

INT. NASA - SATCON - NIGHT

A WOMAN in her twenties fights with the coffee machine.

TITLE: MINDY PARK, SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

She sits down at her station. It's 3 a.m. -- everything's a little quieter on the floor.

Mindy checks the work order on her screen. Straightens up a bit when she sees the request comes from "KAPOOR, VENKAT." She enters the latitude and longitude...

MINDY
Acidalia Planitia...

Her heart starts to beat a little faster as she realizes what she's about to see. Click. The images pop up: overhead shots of the Hab site.

Morbid curiosity getting the better of her, she scans for Mark's dead body. Doesn't find it. *Humm...*

She zooms in on the Hab. *That's strange.*

And then it hits her.

Oh god.

She doesn't know what to do. It takes her a moment to find the phone. Heart POUNDING.

MINDY (CONT'D)
Security? This is Mindy Park in SatCon. I need the emergency contact number for Dr. Kapoor.
Yes, him. *Yes it's an emergency --*

INT. NASA - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A hard-charging WOMAN stares at us in SHOCK --

WOMAN
Oh you have GOT to be SHITTING ME --

TITLE: ANNIE MONTROSE, Director of Media Relations

Annie, Venkat, and Teddy all huddle in the conference room. IMAGES of the HAB site on the screens around them.

TEDDY
How sure?

VENKAT
Nearly 100%.

ANNIE
Do you understand the shitstorm
that's about to hit us?

TEDDY
Annie, one thing at a time.
(to Venkat)
Prove it to me.

VENKAT
(points to images)
For starters, no body. Also, pop
tents are set up. And the solar
cells are clean.

TEDDY
Body could have been buried in the
storm. Pop tents could have
autodeployed. Cells could have
been cleaned by wind.

VENKAT
(nods)
Look at Rover 2. According to the
logs, Commander Lewis took it out
on Sol 5. Plugged it into the Hab
to recharge. It's been moved.

TEDDY
She could have forgotten to log the
move.

VENKAT
Here's the clincher. Check the
MDV. It's been taken apart. Looks
like the fuel plant has been
completely removed. There's no way
they do that without telling us.

ANNIE
Why don't we talk to Lewis? Let's
go to CAPCOM and ask her directly
right now.

Venkat shoots Teddy a glance. After a moment, Teddy
understands what it means.

No. If Watney is really alive...
we don't want the Ares 3 crew to
know.

ANNIE

What? How can you not tell them?

TEDDY

They have another ten months on
their trip home. Space travel is
dangerous. We need them alert and
undistracted.

ANNIE

They already think he's dead.

VENKAT

And they'd be devastated to find
out they abandoned him alive.

ANNIE

You're on board with this?

VENKAT

We have to protect the crew.
There's nothing they can do anyway.
Let them deal with the emotional
trauma when they're not trapped in
a spaceship.

TEDDY

How do we handle the public?

ANNIE

(opens her laptop)

We have twenty-four hours before
we're required to release the pics.

TEDDY

We'll need to release a statement
with them. We don't want people
working it out on their own.

ANNIE

"Dear America. Remember that
astronaut we thought we killed and
had a nice funeral for? Turns out
he's alive and we left him on Mars.
Our bad. Sincerely, NASA."

TEDDY
(stands up)
I need to get on a plane to
Chicago.

VENKAT
(Why? Oh...)
Mark's parents.

TEDDY
(nods)
They should hear it from me before
it breaks on the news.

ANNIE
They'll be happy to hear their
son's alive, at least.

TEDDY
He's alive. But if my math is
right, he's gonna starve to death
long before we can help him.
(then)
I'm not exactly looking forward to
the conversation.

Venkat's eyes drift to the images of Mars.

VENKAT
Can you even imagine what he's
going through? He's fifty million
miles from home. He thinks he's
totally alone and that we all gave
up on him. What kind of effect
does that have on a man's
psychology?
(then)
What's he thinking about right now?

EXT. SPACE

Over a shot of the big red planet:

MARK (V.O.)
I'm gonna die out here...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark stares directly into camera.

MARK
...if I have to listen to any more
goddamn disco music.

round" is playing on the computer.

MARK (CONT'D)

Jesus, Commander Lewis, you
couldn't have packed anything from
this century?

(then)

I'm not turning the beat around. I
refuse to.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE:

Sol 62

INT. HAB - DAY

It's been a while since we've seen Mark, so it's time to
check in. The Hab has been TRANSFORMED into a makeshift
GREENHOUSE. Potato plants sprout everywhere.

Mark uproots some of the potatoes, cuts them in pieces.
Replants them.

MARK (V.O.)

It's time to start thinking long
term. Even if I find a way to tell
NASA I'm alive, there's no
guarantee they'll be able to save
me. I need to be proactive. I
need to figure out how to get to
Ares 4...

CUT TO:

Mark sits at his work station, checking A MAP of Mars while
he makes calculations.

MARK (V.O.)

Ares 4 will be landing at the
Schiaparelli Crater, 3,200 km away.

We see Mark trace a route from his position to the crater.

MARK (V.O.)

Because of the eighteen-month lead
time required to synthesize fuel
for the return launch, the MAV is
already there. So, four years from
now, when Hermes returns, I'll need
to launch from there to reach them.
Which means I gotta get to the
crater.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark speaks directly to camera.

MARK

But here's the rub. I've got two rovers designed to go a max distance of 35 kilometers before they need to be recharged at the Hab. That's problem A. Problem B is it'll take me... roughly fifty days to make the journey. So I have to be able to live for fifty days. Inside a rover with marginal life support the size of a small van. And yeah, problem C is if I don't figure out how to make contact with NASA in the first place, none of this matters anyway. So... yes, in the face of overwhelming odds, I am left with only one option:
(then)
I'm gonna have to science the shit out of it.

MUSIC UP: The bouncing bass line of "Rubberband Man" by The Spinners carries us through --

EXT./INT. HAB - SEQUENCE

Quick cuts. Mark rips the (VERY large) battery out of Rover 1 and drags it over to Rover 2. Stares at it. *Where am I gonna put this?*

-- Mark tears up some spare Hab canvas. Cuts a large pouch and several strips. Makes what looks like saddle bags.

-- Mark loops the harness to the battery. Straps the pouch to the side of Rover 2. Fills the opposite pouch with ROCKS. Slowly the battery begins to RISE. Balance attained.

-- Mark uproots panels from the SOLAR FARM. Straps them to the roof of Rover 2.

-- Mark sits behind the wheel of his makeshift wagon train. Takes it for a test drive. It's not pretty, but the spare battery HOLDS. As do the solar cells.

-- The Rover comes to a stop a fair distance from the Hab. "Rubberband Man" fades out...

Mark speaks to the camera. His teeth are chattering.

MARK

Okay, so... success? I've doubled my battery life by scavenging Rover 1, and the solar cells will allow me to recharge without the Hab.

BUT. If I use the heater, it'll eat up half my battery power every day. If I don't use the heater, I will be slowly killed by the laws of thermodynamics.

(tries to stop shaking)

I'd like to solve this problem, but unfortunately my brain is frozen.

Mark drives back towards the Hab.

INT. HAB - NIGHT

Mark sits in his bunk. Drumming his fingers on the wall. Thinking.

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark drives the Rover across Acidalia Planitia. IN THE DISTANCE: a GREEN FLAG is planted at the top of a hill.

MARK (V.O.)

Good news: I may have a solution to my heating problem.

Mark climbs the hill.

MARK (V.O.)

Bad news: it involves me digging up the Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generator. Now, if I remember my training correctly, one of the lessons was titled, "Don't Dig Up The Big Box of Plutonium, Mark..."

Mark begins to dig up the big box of plutonium.

MARK (V.O.)

I get it. RTGs are good for spacecrafts, but if they rupture around humans... no more humans. Which is why we buried it when we arrived. And planted that flag so we would never be stupid enough to accidentally go near it again.

Mark unearths the RTG. It looks like a small missile.

MARK

But. As long as I don't break it...

(hesitates)

I almost said "everything will be fine" out loud. My point is...

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark talks to camera while he drives the rover. He's covered in sweat. He even has his shirt off.

MARK

I'm not cold anymore. And yes, I could choose to think about the fact that I'm warm because I have a decaying radioactive isotope riding shotgun next to me, but right now I have bigger problems on my hands. I've scoured every single data file on Commander Lewis' personal drive, and this is officially the LEAST disco song she owns.

Mark hits play on the computer. "Hot Stuff" by Donna Summer starts playing. It's super disco-y. Mark drives, stone-faced, while it plays.

EXT. MARS - DAY

The rover heads towards the Hab in the distance, growing smaller and smaller in frame. *Gotta have some HOT LOVE baby this evening... Hot hot hot hot... stuff...*

INT. NASA - MEDIA ROOM - DAY

SATELLITE IMAGERY: from above, Rover 2 cuts across Mars.

VENKAT

We believe Mark's been preparing for a journey. He's been taking Rover 2 out for longer and longer trips over the past few days. Incremental tests.

A CNN REPORTER conducts an interview with Venkat in the NASA MEDIA ROOM. Annie watches like a nervous stage mom.

REPORTER

To what end? Why would he leave the relative safety of the Hab?

Communication. If he could find a way to reach the Ares 4 launch site, he could talk to us. But it would be a dangerous gamble. Assuming he could make the journey... there's nothing other than the MAV at the site. No presupplies, no life support. His best bet is to stay in the Hab.

REPORTER

So he'd be risking his life to talk to you?

VENKAT

(nods)

This is the problem Mark faces. He's alone. And he needs to make contact to survive. But if we could talk to him, we'd tell him to stay put. Mark needs to trust we're doing everything in our power to bring him home alive.

INT. NASA - DAY

Venkat walks quickly down the halls with Annie...

ANNIE

Don't say "Bring him home alive."
It reminds the world he might die.

VENKAT

You think people might forget that?

ANNIE

You asked how you did and I'm giving you my answer. My answer is "Eh." And yes, I'm going to make everyone forget there's a strong likelihood Mark Watney is going to die because that's what you pay me for and unfortunately I need this job because I'm currently paying alimony to two deadbeat ex-husbands because somehow gender equality has bitten me square in the ass.

VENKAT

Hard to believe tha--

ANNIE

I left them.

Venkat and Annie enter the conference room just as the rest of the Department Heads are settling for the meeting. Teddy glances up as they enter --

TEDDY

Don't say "Bring him home alive,"
Venkat.

VENKAT

You know, these interviews aren't
easy. And god forbid I try to say
something proactive and positive.

TEDDY

Annie...

ANNIE

No more Venkat on television. Copy
that.

Venkat starts to muster an "are you kidding me?" as Mindy passes out a brief to the department heads. But Teddy's already onto business --

TEDDY

Seventy-six kilometers. Am I
reading that right?

Nobody's quite sure who Teddy is asking.

MINDY

Are you asking me?

TEDDY

I am.

MINDY

Yes, sir. Mark drove straight away
from the Hab for almost two hours,
did a short EVA, then drove for
another two. We think the EVA was
to change batteries.

A man who seems to embody the word "gruff" stares at Mindy over his brief. *Who is this kid?*

GRUFF MAN

Are we doing a daddy/daughter thing
today? Where's the Director of
SatCon?

TITLE: MITCH HENDERSON, Hermes Flight Director.

Ms. Park is the person who figured out Mark was alive in the first place. She's in charge of tracking him now.

TEDDY

Quit being a dick, Mitch. Is Watney doing another test?

MINDY

He's seventy-six kilometers away from the Hab. If it's a test and it doesn't work... he's dead.

TEDDY

He didn't load up the Oxygenator or the Water Reclaimer?

MINDY

I didn't see that happen, no sir.

TEDDY

You didn't see it?

MINDY

Every forty-one hours, we have a seventeen minute gap. It's just the way the orbits work. So... it's possible we missed something.

TEDDY

I want that gap down to four minutes. I'm giving you total authority over satellite trajectories and orbital adjustments. Make it happen.

MINDY

(um...)

Okay.

TEDDY

Let's assume Ms. Park didn't miss something. If he didn't load the Oxygenator, he can't be going to Ares 4. But that's not to say he won't try it eventually. Bruce, what's the earliest we can get a presupply there?

Teddy looks to the man who is the smartest rocket scientist at the table. (And, to be clear, there are at least six rocket scientists at this table.)

BRUCE

With the positions of Earth and Mars, it'll take nine months. And it'll take us six months to build it in the first place.

TEDDY

Three months.

(off Bruce)

You're gonna say that's impossible, then I'm gonna give a speech about the blinding capabilities of the JPL team. And then you'll do the math in your head and say something like "The overtime alone will be a nightmare."

BRUCE

(oh god I didn't even think of that)

The overtime will be a nightmare.

TEDDY

Get started. I'll find you the money.

MITCH

It's time to tell the crew.

VENKAT

Mitch, we discussed this.

MITCH

You discussed this. But I'm the one who decides what's best for the crew. And I say we bring them up to speed. They deserve to know.

TEDDY

Sorry, Mitch. I'm with Venkat. They need to concentrate on getting home.

MITCH

Bullshit.

TEDDY

Once we have a real rescue plan, we'll tell them. Otherwise it's moot. Bruce has three months to get the payload done. That's all that matters right now.

We'll do our best.

TEDDY

Mark dies if you don't.

EXT. MARS - VARIOUS - DAY/NIGHT

-- Mark collects the solar panels. Starts stacking them on the roof of Rover 2.

MARK (V.O.)

Everywhere I go, I'm the first.
It's a strange feeling.

-- Mark leaves FOOTPRINTS in the red dirt as he walks.

MARK (V.O.)

Step outside the rover? First guy
to be there. Climb that hill?
First guy to do that.

-- Mark takes careful note of one of the Martian moon (PHOBOS) in the sky. Finds his course.

MARK (V.O.)

One million years... nobody here.
And now... me.

INT. ROVER 2 - NIGHT

Mark lies down in the cramped Rover. Addresses camera.

MARK

I'm the first person to be alone on
an entire planet.

Mark tries to sleep but can't. Somber.

TITLE: SOL 82

INT. NASA - SATCON - DAY

SATELLITE VIEW: Mark's Rover 2 cuts through Mars.

MINDY

He's on the move again --

Penkat huddles over Mindy's screen.

VENKAT

Where the hell is he going? He hasn't changed course in thirteen days. And he's nowhere near course for Ares 4...

MINDY

Unless he's not taking a direct route. Maybe he's trying to avoid some obstacle...

VENKAT

What obstacle? It's Acidalia Planitia. There's nothing out there but --

Venkat stops short. Mindy looks at him: what?

VENKAT (CONT'D)

I need a map.

Venkat bolts away. Mindy follows.

INT. NASA - BREAKROOM - DAY

Venkat hurries into the employee break room. A lone TECHNICIAN sits, sipping coffee. ON THE BACK WALL: a large poster of Mars (the type they sell in gift shops.)

Venkat rips the poster off the wall.

TECHNICIAN

Hey -- c'mon --

VENKAT

I'll buy you a new one.

(to Mindy)

What's the Hab's location?

MINDY

31.2 degrees north, 28.5 degrees west.

Venkat marks it off on the map with a sharpie. Draws Mark's location. He needs a ruler. Looks around, grabs the Technician's notebook out of his hands.

TECHNICIAN

Okay, seriously?

Venkat ignores him. Uses the spine to connect the dots. Studies it. Grins.

I know where he's going.

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark's Rover 2 crests a hill. As it does, we BOOM DOWN TO REVEAL:

PATHFINDER

The American spacecraft launched in 1996. It's in two notable sections -- the large LANDER and the smaller SOJOURNER ROVER. As Mark approaches --

VENKAT (PRELAP)

Pathfinder --

INT. NASA - DAY

Venkata talks on his phone as he races across the bullpen --

VENKAT

Mark's going for Pathfinder, Bruce--

EXT. JPL - DAY - INTERCUT

TITLE: Jet Propulsion Laboratories, Pasadena, California

Bruce hurries across the JPL campus. In the background, DEER frolic. (NOTE: This is real. Deer frolic out in the open on the JPL grounds. NOTE: It's awesome.)

VENKAT (OVER PHONE)

What are the odds he can get it working again?

BRUCE

Hard to say. We lost contact in '97. We think it was battery failure.

(then)

Though I'd like to point out it lasted three times longer than expected in any scenario.

VENKAT

Nobody's criticizing JPL's work, Bruce. I'm on a plane to you. I want you to track down everyone who worked on Pathfinder and bring them in.

BRUCE

We keep them locked in a hangar.
They're still complaining about
Windows '95.

Even Venkat can't let that go --

VENKAT

In fairness, it was a horrible
operating system.

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark picks up a rock from the fields of Ares Vallis. We follow him as he carries it to reveal --

Mark has built A RAMP out of rocks and sand leading from the Pathfinder Lander to his rover. He puts the last rock in place. Grabs the ropes (made from braided Hab material.)

He PULLS with all his might. The LANDER inches up the ramp. Mark pulls it on top of the Rover --

EXT./INT. MARS - DAY

Mark drives Rover 2 (with the Lander strapped to the top) across the Martian landscape.

INSIDE -- Mark drives while Sojourner sits beside him. The little rover looks like a robotic dog. Mark gives it a pat.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Sojourner now sits beside the workbench outside the Hab, watching as Mark methodically takes apart the Lander.

It looks like he's been at this for a while. He removes the Lander's battery, replaces it with an environment heater. Like a surgeon performing a heart transplant.

He locks the heater into place, and as it CLICKS we --

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE(S):

PATHFINDER LOG: SOL 0 BOOT SEQUENCE INITIATED TIME 00:00:00
LOADING OS... PERFORMING HARDWARE CHECK...

WET TEMPERATURE: -3°C, DRY TEMPERATURE: NONFUNCTIONAL,
BATTERY: FULL, HIGAIN: Okay, LOGAIN: Okay, METEOROLOGY:
NONFUNCTIONAL, ASI: NONFUNCTIONAL, SOLAR A: NONFUNCTIONAL,
SOLAR B: NONFUNCTIONAL, SOLAR C: NONFUNCTIONAL, HARDWARE
CHECK COMPLETE

THEN:

BROADCASTING STATUS

LISTENING FOR TELEMETRY SIGNAL...

LISTENING FOR TELEMETRY SIGNAL...

LISTENING FOR TELEMETRY SIGNAL...

THEN:

SIGNAL ACQUIRED.

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Venkat, Bruce, and the JPL team see the words come up on the main screen. The room begins to BUZZ...

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark stares at the high gain antenna on the Lander. It starts to MOVE... angling towards Earth.

Mark begins to dance.

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Venkat and Bruce cluster around the communication station of TIM GRIMES.

TIM

As soon as I received the high-gain response, I directed Pathfinder to take a panoramic image.

VENKAT

Have you received it yet?

TIM

Yes, but I thought we would all rather look at this black screen instead of a vibrant red planet.

BRUCE

(off Venkat's look)

Tim is our finest comm tech, and we all appreciate his acerbic wit.

Bruce mouths "I will fire you" to Tim.

TIM

Incoming.

ON THE SCREENS: the panoramic starts to appear, one vertical stripe at a time.

VENKAT

Martian surface... more surface...

BRUCE

There's the Hab!

VENKAT

What's that?

The image reveals a handwritten note, posted on a metal rod.

VENKAT (CONT'D)

"I'll write messages here. Are you receiving?"

The image reveals two more notes, spaced a few feet apart.

VENKAT (CONT'D)

"Point here for yes." "Point here for no."

TIM

Thirty-two minute round trip communications time. We can only ask yes/no questions. This won't exactly be an Algonquin round table of snappy repartee.

BRUCE

Tim.

TIM

Roger that. Pointing the camera...

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark watches as the camera moves towards one of his notes. We ANGLE IN on the paper, focusing on one word in particular:

"YES."

MARK (PRELAP)

So here's the rub...

Mark addresses camera.

MARK

Somehow, we need to have complex astrophysical engineering conversations using only a camera. From 1996. Luckily, the camera spins 360, so I can make an alphabet. I just can't use our alphabet. Twenty-six letters plus question card into 360 gives us 13 degrees of arc. Too narrow. I wouldn't know what the camera was pointing at. So. Hexidecimals to the rescue...

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark methodically sets up cards marked "A-F" and "0-9" in a circle around the camera.

MARK (V.O.)

I figured one of you guys kept an ASCII table somewhere...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark sits in Johanssen's bunk. Scrolling through her laptop.

MARK (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you supernerd Beth Johanssen, who also had copies of Zork 2 and Leather Goddesses of Phobos on her laptop. Seriously, Johanssen... it's like the Smithsonian of loneliness on there...

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Tim consults an ASCII chart as he points the camera...

EXT. HAB - DAY

The camera swings from card to card...

MARK (V.O.)

Not that I'm complaining.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark translates the numbers with his ASCII table:

"HOW ALIVE"

Mark ponders the question. Begins writing his response.

INT. NASA - DAY

CLOSE ON THE FRONT PAGE of the NEW YORK TIMES: Mark's handwritten note posted on a pole:

"Impaled by antenna. Bio-monitor destroyed. Crew had reason to think me dead. Not their fault."

Annie circles her desk. Talks into her speakerphone.

ANNIE

I need a picture of Watney...

INT. JPL - INTERCUT

Venkat talks on his speakerphone. Two software engineers (JACK and RYOKO) wait in his doorway.

VENKAT (INTO PHONE)

It's not that simple, Annie.

ANNIE

You're talking to him with a camera, Venkat. It is, in fact, that simple.

VENKAT

We can only send one message per hour, and only when Acidalia Planitia is facing Earth. We're not going to waste a message asking him to pose for a photo.

ANNIE

This is the biggest story in the world. I gotta give them something. If it's not a picture of Mark, I'm gonna have to put you back on television. And that could very well sink the whole goddamn space program.

Jack and Ryoko start backing away. *She sounds scary.* Venkat snaps for them to stay where they are.

VENKAT

I'll see what I can do, Annie.

Venkat hangs up. Looks to Jack and Ryoko. Go.

JACK
Pathfinder has an OS update system.

RYOKO
We can change the communication system to broadcast on the Ares-3 rover frequency. Also, I didn't think you were that bad on television.

Venkat nods a thank you. Sees where they're going --

VENKAT
You can make our text show up on the rover screen?

RYOKO
(nods)
And whatever Watney types gets sent back to us.

VENKAT
How?

JACK
The rover currently parses the signal into bytes, then identifies the specific sequence the Hab sends...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark translates a long message of code from JPL. It looks a bit like sanskrit to us.

JACK (V.O.)
So there's a spot in the rover's codebase where the bytes are parsed...

Mark realizes what they're asking him to do. Got it...

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark inputs the code into the rover's computer.

JACK (V.O.)
We have Watney hack a tiny bit of code, just twenty instructions, to write the parsed bytes to a log file before checking their validity...

EXT. SPACE

One of the satellites orbiting Mars swings through frame...

RYOKO (V.O.)

Then we broadcast the rover's patch
to Pathfinder, which re-broadcasts
it to the rover...

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark waits patiently at the computer.

RYOKO (V.O.)

And we're in business.

Text pops up on Mark's screen. As he reads:

VENKAT (V.O.)

"Mark, this is Venkat Kapoor.
We've been watching you since Sol
49. The whole world is rooting for
you. Amazing job, getting
Pathfinder. We're working on
rescue plans. Meantime, we're
putting together a supply mission
to keep you fed until Ares 4
arrives."

Mark types his response...

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Venkat and Bruce huddle around Tim's console.

TIM

(reading)

"Glad to hear it. Really looking
forward to not dying. How's the
crew? What did they say when they
found out I was alive?"

Venkat and Bruce share a glance. Venkat thinks about it.

VENKAT

Tell him. Hm. Tell him...

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark watches the text pop up onscreen:

"We haven't told the crew you're alive yet. We need them to concentrate on the mission."

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER

The whole room waits patiently. Tim reads the response.

TIM

He says... "They don't know I'm alive? What the--"

(hesitates)

"What the... f-word... f-word in gerund form... f-word again... is wrong with you... f-words."

VENKAT

Mark, please watch your language...

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark reads the response.

VENKAT (V.O.)

Everything you type is being broadcast live all over the world.

Mark's eyes narrow as he types his response. Hits ENTER.

INT. JPL - CONTROL CENTER

The group reads Mark's response. They go PALE. *Oh, Jesus.* Venkat hangs his head. Tim tries really hard not to smile and fails.

INT. NASA - TEDDY'S OFFICE

Teddy is on the phone as Mitch approaches.

TEDDY (INTO PHONE)

Yes sir... he's under a tremendous amount of stress... I understand. We're working on it. Thank you, sir.

Teddy hangs up. Glances at Mitch.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

I just had to explain to the President of the United States what a "bureaucratic felcher" is.

MITCH

I made the mistake of typing it into Google.

(off Teddy's look)

Don't.

(then)

Problem is, Mark's right. This is only gonna get worse the longer we wait. We need to tell the crew.

TEDDY

You're bringing this up while Venkat's in Pasadena so he can't argue the other side.

MITCH

I shouldn't have to clear this with you or Venkat or anyone else.

(then)

It's time, Teddy.

Teddy thinks about it.

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark watches the next message come up onscreen:

"We're telling the crew now."

We SLOWLY PUSH IN on Mark's face as he absorbs the news...

CUT TO:

INT. HAB - FLASHBACK - DAY

Mark Watney sleeps soundly in his bunk. He's clean-shaven. Bright-faced and optimistic. Even though this is only a few months earlier, he seems years younger.

VOICE

Good morning, Crew!

COMMANDER MELISSA LEWIS walks down row of bunks with a lively authority that suggests her Navy background.

LEWIS

Up and at 'em.

(to their groans)

No bitching. You got forty minutes more sleep than you would've on Earth.

RICK MARTINEZ is first out of bed. An Air-Force man, he's used to this schedule.

MARTINEZ
Morning, Commander.

ALEX VOGEL is next up. Checks watch. Pulls on jumpsuit. A man of few words.

BETH JOHANSSEN manages to sit-up straight before she half falls back to sleep. Mornings are not her thing.

Mark stays where he is. Covers his head with his pillow.

MARK
Noisy people go away.

MARTINEZ
Beck! Rise and shine, bud.

DR. CHRIS BECK rubs the sleep out of his eyes.

BECK
Yeah, okay.

Johanssen falls out of bed, hits the ground with a dull thud.

LEWIS
Beck, make sure Johanssen didn't break anything.
(yanks pillow from Watney)
Watney! Let's move. Uncle Sam paid one hundred thousand dollars for every second we're gonna be here.

MARK
Bad woman take pillow.

LEWIS
Back on Earth, I've tipped 200-pound men out of their bunks. Want to see what I can do in point-four G?

MARK
(thinks about it)
Sort of?

We follow Mark as he stumbles out of bed and makes his way to the kitchen where the others are gathering for breakfast. He opens the ration cupboard and grabs a meal at random.

MARTINEZ
Hand me an "eggs," will you?

MARK
You can tell the difference?

MARTINEZ
Not really.

MARK
Vogel. Let me guess. Sausages.

VOGEL
Ja, please.

MARK
You know you're a stereotype,
right?

VOGEL
I am comfortable with that.

MARK
Beck?

BECK
Crispy confit of suckling pig with
a jade emulsion and white
asparagus.

MARK
I think I speak for the crew when I
say: we love to hear you say
"suckling." Sunshine? Breakfast?

Johanssen's barely off the floor. She groans.

MARK (CONT'D)
I'm guessing that's a no.

While the crew eats, Lewis checks the Comm station.

LEWIS
Mission updates from Houston.
Satellites show a storm coming, but
we can do surface ops before it
gets here. Vogel, Martinez, you'll
be with me outside. Johanssen,
you're stuck tracking weather
reports. Watney, your soil
experiments are bumped up to today.
Beck, run the samples from
yesterday's EVA through the
spectrometer.

Should you really go out with a storm on the way?

LEWIS

Houston authorized it.

BECK

Seems needlessly dangerous.

LEWIS

Coming to Mars in the first place could be defined as "needlessly dangerous." But we believe our work outweighs the risk, don't we astronauts?

MARK

Does she want us to say "hoo-ah?" I feel like she wants us to say "hoo-ah."

BECK

Just be careful.

EXT. HAB - DAWN - FLASHBACK

Outside the Hab, we catch our first glimpse of THE MARS ASCENT VEHICLE (aka the "MAV"): the massive rocket looms on the nearby launch pad.

Lewis, Martinez, and Vogel fan out with precision around the Hab as they begin work.

LEWIS

Vogel, you're the chemist. Call it.

VOGEL

Please dig 30 centimeters for the samples. At least 100 grams each. Very important is 30 centimeters down.

LEWIS

Will do. Stay within 100 meters of the Hab.

As Martinez begins taking samples, he takes note of writhing darkness on the horizon.

MARTINEZ

The storm is closer than Houston reported...

The group spreads out. Drills for samples. As they work --

LEWIS

How many samples you need?

VOGEL

Seven, perhaps?

LEWIS

That's fine. Already got four.

MARTINEZ

Only four? Well, I guess we can't expect the Navy to keep up with the Air Force.

LEWIS

That's how you want to play it?

MARTINEZ

Just call 'em as I see 'em, Commander.

Johanssen's VOICE rings out over their radios.

JOHANSSSEN (OVER RADIO)

Johanssen here. Houston's upgraded storm to "severe." It's going to be here in fifteen minutes.

Lewis scans the horizon. Studies the storm.

LEWIS

Back to base.

INT. HAB - DAY - FLASHBACK

The Hab SHAKES as the ROARING WINDS SLAM INTO IT. Everyone is TENSE. Most of them are wearing their EVA suits; the others are scrambling into theirs.

LEWIS

Helmets on. Now. We could breach.

Johanssen is watching the reports on her laptop.

JOHANSSSEN

Sustained winds over 100 kph.
Gusting to 125.

WATNEY

Jesus. What's the abort windspeed?

Technically 150. Any more than that and the MAV's in danger of tipping.

LEWIS

Any predictions on the storm track?

JOHANSSSEN

This is the edge of it. It's gonna get worse before it gets better.

The Hab canvas ripples under the brutal assault from the storm. The cacophony outside growing LOUDER and LOUDER.

LEWIS

All right. Prep for abort. We'll go to the MAV and hope for the best. If the wind gets too high, we'll launch.

Nobody argues.

EXT. HAB - STORM - FLASHBACK

The HIGH WINDS slam into our six astronauts as they exit the airlock. They struggle to stay on their feet as they fight their way through the punishing storm.

LEWIS

Visibility is almost zero. If you get lost, home in on my suit's telemetry. The wind's gonna be rougher away from the Hab, so be ready.

Sand continues to slam them as they take step after agonizing step towards the MAV. It's brutal; they fight for every inch.

MARK

Hey. Maybe we could shore up the MAV. Make tipping less likely.

LEWIS

How?

MARK

We could use cables from the solar farm as guy lines.

Mark pauses to catch his breath. Starts forward again...

MARK (CONT'D)

The rovers could be anchors. The
trick would be getting around the--

WHAM! A massive section of antenna SLAMS INTO MARK out of
nowhere. He's lifted off his feet and YANKED away into the
storm. It happens FAST. One second he's there...

And then he's gone.

JOHANSSSEN

WATNEY!!!

LEWIS

What happened?

JOHANSSSEN

Something hit him --

LEWIS

Watney, report --

No reply.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

WATNEY, REPORT!

JOHANSSSEN

He's offline. I don't know
where he is --

BECK

-- Commander, before we lost
telemetry, his decompression
alarm went off --

LEWIS

Shit! Johanssen where did
you last see him?

JOHANSSSEN

-- He was right in front of
me and then he was gone. He
flew off due west --

Lewis surveys the scene. Visibility is NEAR ZERO. She can
barely see the people next to her. Tries to keep her heart
from POUNDING out of her chest.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Okay... okay... Martinez, get to
the MAV and prep for launch --
Everyone else, home in on
Johanssen.

JOHANSSSEN

(stumbling)

I can't see anything --

VOGEL

Doctor Beck! How long can a person
survive decompression?

BECK

Less than minute.

Line up and walk west. Small steps. He's probably prone. We don't want to step over him.

The group fights through the chaos --

INT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

WHOOSH! Martinez dives into the MAV's airlock, forces the door closed against the wind. Waits for agonizing seconds as it pressurizes...

Pressurized. Martinez yanks his suit off, scrambles up the ladder as fast as he can. Slides into the pilot's couch and begins to boot the system.

MARTINEZ

Commander -- The MAV's got a 7 seven degree tilt. It'll tip at 12.3 --

EXT. HAB - STORM - CONTINUOUS

LEWIS

Copy that --

Beck checks the readout on his arm computer.

BECK

Johanssen, Watney's bio-monitor sent something before going offline. My computer just says "Bad Packet" --

JOHANSSSEN

I have it, too. It didn't finish transmitting. Some data's missing and there's no checksum. Gimme a sec --

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

Commander, message from Houston. We're officially scrubbed. The storm's gonna be too rough.

LEWIS

Copy. Continue prepping for launch.

JOHANSSSEN

Beck -- I have the raw packet. It's plaintext: BP 0, PR 0, TP 36.2. That's as far as it got --

BECK

Copy.

(then)

Blood pressure zero. Pulse rate zero. Temperature normal.

LEWIS

Temperature normal?

BECK

It takes a while for the... it takes a while for the body to cool.

Everyone stops short as that news lands.

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

Commander. Tilting at 10.5 degrees now, with gusts pushing it to 11.

LEWIS

Copy. If it tips, can you launch before it completely falls over?

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

(hesitates)

Uh. Yes. Ma'am. I could take manual control.

LEWIS

Copy that. Everyone home in on Martinez' suit. That'll get you to the airlock. Get in and prep for launch.

VOGEL

What about you, Commander?

LEWIS

I'm searching a little more. Get moving. And Martinez, if you start to top, launch.

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

You really think I'm leaving you behind?

LEWIS

I just ordered you to. You three, get to the ship.

(as they hesitate)

GO.

Vogel, Beck, and Johanssen stumble into the airlock. Wait for it to pressurize...

EXT. STORM - CONTINUOUS

Lewis can't see a thing in any direction. *C'mon, think, Melissa, think...*

She reaches into the pack on her back and removes two of the one meter drill bits she was using earlier to take samples. She holds one in each hand, dragging them on the ground as she trudges through the sand.

LEWIS

Johanssen, would the rover IR camera do any good?

INT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

JOHANSSEN (INTO RADIO)

Negative. IR can't get through sand any better than visible light.

They rip off their helmets. Scramble up the ladder.

BECK

What's she thinking? She's a geologist. She knows IR can't get through a sandstorm.

VOGEL

She is grasping. For anything.

MARTINEZ

Commander. We're tilting 11.6 degrees. One good gust and we're tipping.

LEWIS (OVER RADIO)

What about the proximity radar? Could it detect Watney's suit?

MARTINEZ

No way. It's made to see Hermes in orbit, not the metal in a single suit.

LEWIS (OVER RADIO)

Copy. Give it a try.

Beck slides into his acceleration couch.

BECK

Commander, I know you don't want to hear this, but Watn... Mark's dead.

LEWIS (OVER RADIO)

Copy.

(then)

Martinez, try the radar.

MARTINEZ

Roger.

As Martinez waits for the radar, he glares at Beck.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

What is wrong with you?

BECK

My friend just died. I don't want my Commander to die too.

EXT. STORM - CONTINUOUS

Lewis fights her way through the storm.

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

Negative contact on proximity radar.

LEWIS

Nothing?

INT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

MARTINEZ

It can barely see the Hab. There's not enough met--

SCREEEACH -- the MAV lurches, begins to tip --

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

Strap in! We're tipping!

JOHANSEN

13 degrees --

VOGEL

-- We're past balance. We'll never rock back --

BECK

Let it tip. We can't leave her.

MARTINEZ

We'll never be able to fix it. I got one trick left, then I'm following orders.

EXT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

WHOOSH -- Martinez fires a sustained burn from the nosecone array. The thrusters fight against the slow tilt of the spacecraft...

INT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

VOGEL

You are firing the OMS?

MARTINEZ

C'mon... c'mon...

JOHANSSSEN

12.9 degrees...

BECK

Commander. You need to get back to the ship. Now.

MARTINEZ

Agreed. He's gone, Ma'am...

EXT. STORM - CONTINUOUS

Lewis stands alone in the storm.

MARTINEZ (OVER RADIO)

Watney's gone.

She stares out at the darkness all around her.

INT. MAV - CONTINUOUS

Martinez fights the controls. Beck and Johanssen share nervous glances. Finally:

LEWIS (OVER RADIO)

Copy. On my way.

JOHANSSSEN

11.6... 11.5... holding at 11.5...

INT. MAV - AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

WHOOSH. Down below, Lewis slams the airlock door shut. She tears off her suit. Makes her way to the flight cabin.

She doesn't say a word as she straps herself in to her couch.

For a moment, nobody speaks. Then:

MARTINEZ

Still at pilot release. Ready for launch.

Lewis closes her eyes. Nods.

MARTINEZ (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Commander. You need to verbally --

LEWIS

Launch.

Martinez nods. Activates the sequence. The pyros FIRE. The main engines IGNITE...

CLOSE ON LEWIS. Just as the MAV LURCHES UPWARD, we --

CUT TO:

EXT. HERMES - PRESENT - SPACE

THE HERMES: the massive spacecraft makes its way through space on its long journey back to Earth.

TITLE: Four Months Later

We ANGLE towards one of the windows to FIND COMMANDER LEWIS staring out at the starfield...

JOHANSEN (O.S.)

Commander Lewis...

INT. HERMES - PRESENT

Lewis keys the console.

LEWIS

Go ahead.

JOHANSEN (OVER RADIO)

Data dump is almost complete.

LEWIS

Copy. Coming to you.

Lewis floats her way past the reactor, heading towards the Semicone-A ladder.

MARTINEZ beats her there. As he floats up the ladder...

LEWIS (CONT'D)

You're in a hurry.

MARTINEZ

My son turned three yesterday.
Should be some pics of the party.

As they make their way up the ladder, the centripetal force from the rotating craft creates artificial gravity. Halfway up, they have to use their hands on the ladder.

We FOLLOW them to THE BRIDGE. Beck and Vogel are already there -- the data dump is the highlight of the day.

JOHANSSSEN

All right, we've got a batch of personals. Dispatching them to your laptops... I don't need to read Vogel's weird German fetish emails...

VOGEL

They are telemetry updates..

JOHANSSSEN

Whatever does it for you. We've got a system update, I'll take care of that, and... huh. There's a voice message. Addressed to the whole crew.

LEWIS

(shrugs)

Play it.

Johanssen opens the message. Hits play.

MITCH (MESSAGE)

Hermes, this is Mitch Henderson.

MARTINEZ

Henderson? Talking directly to us without CAPCOM?

LEWIS

Shh.

MITCH (MESSAGE)

I have some news. There's no subtle way to put this: Mark Watney is still alive.

The news hits the crew like a freight train. Johanssen GASPS. Beck stammers a "what?" Vogel and Martinez share shocked looks.

MITCH (MESSAGE) (CONT'D)

I know that's a surprise. And I know you'll have a lot of questions. Here are the basics: he's alive and healthy.

(MORE)

MITCH (MESSAGE) (CONT'D)

We found out two months ago and decided not to tell you. I was strongly against that decision. We're telling you now because we finally have communication with him and a viable rescue plan. We'll get you a full write up of what happened, but it's not your fault. Mark stresses that every time it comes up. Take some time to absorb this. Your science schedules are cleared for tomorrow. Send all the questions you want and we'll answer them. Henderson out.

For a moment the group sits in stunned silence.

MARTINEZ

He... He's alive?

Vogel cracks a smile.

VOGEL

Watney lives.

Beck starts to laugh. Relief pouring out of him.

BECK

Holy shit. Commander! He's alive!

But Lewis is still in shock. Her words barely a whisper:

LEWIS

I left him behind.

The group sees their commander's inconsolable reaction. Tries to console her anyway:

JOHANSEN

Commander... it wasn't...

BECK

We all left together.

LEWIS

You were following orders.

(then)

I left him behind.

The group trades glances, but nobody knows what to say. Without another word, Lewis turns and exits the bridge.

EXT. MARS - SPACE

The big red planet momentarily eclipses the Sun. As sunlight breaks across the edge, warming the planet...

TITLE: Sol 116

MARK (PRELAP)

Now that NASA can talk to me, they won't shut up...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark talks to camera.

MARK

They want constant updates on every Hab system, and they've got a room full of people trying to micromanage my crops. Which is awesome. Look, I don't mean to sound arrogant here, but I'm the best botanist on the planet. So.

Mark adjusts the camera to show more of the lab. We see the lush greenery of the potato plants EVERYWHERE.

MARK (CONT'D)

It's almost time for second harvest. There's been a lot of debate on where to store the potatoes. After three days of bureaucratic back and forth, I'm guessing we go with "outside." Because "it's really, really cold out there."

(then)

In other news, there's been a request for me to pose for a picture on the next transmission. I'm debating between "High School Senior..."

Mark leans one elbow against an imaginary pillar and hooks his other thumb on his imaginary belt loops.

MARK (CONT'D)

And "Coquettish Ingenue..."

Mark turns his back to camera, looks at us over his shoulder, and bites on his thumb suggestively.

MARK (CONT'D)

But I'm not sure how that will translate with the spacesuit on.

(then)

One big bonus of this NASA communication: Email! Just like the days on the Hermes, I get data dumps. Not just friends and family, but NASA also sends choice messages from the public. Rock stars, athletes, even The President. The coolest one is from my alma mater, the University of Chicago. They say once you grow crops somewhere, you have officially "colonized" it. So, technically, I colonized Mars.

(then)

In your face, Neil Armstrong.

MUSIC UP: "Right Back Where We Started From" by Maxine Nightingale takes us into...

INT./EXT. HAB - VARIOUS

Mark's daily routine:

- Mark checks the crops, meticulously keeping track of each and every plant in his journal.
- Mark removes water from the water reclaimer. Goes down the rows of plants, watering one by one.
- Mark cleans the solar panels.
- Mark watches an episode of "Happy Days" while eating a ration pack. On the screen: The Fonz puts his arms around two women and exits Al's diner. Man, Fonzie's cool.
- Mark writes on a note card with a sharpie.
- Mark stands outside in his suit. Positions himself in front of the camera. Holds up a notecard. We're behind him, we don't see what the notecard says. As he poses --

CUT TO:

INT. NASA - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Annie tosses a photo on the conference room table:

Mark, in his spacesuit, gives the camera a big thumbs-up. He holds up a note that says, "Ayyyyyyyy!"

ANNIE

I ask for a picture and I get the
goddamn Fonz?

Venkat and Bruce are both on monitors from JPL.

VENKAT (ONSCREEN)

Just be grateful you got something,
Annie.

ANNIE

It's not gonna work. I need
something with less-Happy-Days and
more... Mark's face.

VENKAT (ONSCREEN)

I could tell him to take his helmet
off, but then he'd, you know, die.

TEDDY

Let's release the photo when we
detail the rescue operation.
Bruce, I want to announce we're
launching next year during the
Hohmann Transfer window. Is your
team still on schedule?

BRUCE (ONSCREEN)

It'll be tight. But we'll make it.

TEDDY

Nine-month travel time, that puts
the probe to Mars on Sol 856. Did
we get the Botany Team's analysis?

VENKAT (ONSCREEN)

They estimate Mark's crops will
last him until just over Sol 900.
They grudgingly admit Mark is doing
great work.

TEDDY

Grudgingly?

VENKAT

Mark has a tendency to tell them to
have sex with themselves whenever
they question one of his decisions.

TEDDY

Get him in line, Venkat. We can't
afford any miscommunication. I
hate this margin. 900 sols worth
of food. We get there on 856.

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

And that's assuming nothing goes wrong...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark finishes putting on his spacesuit. Snaps his helmet into place. Grabs his toolkit.

TEDDY (V.O.)

And something always goes wrong.

Mark steps into the airlock. Closes the door behind him. As he does, we begin ANGLING towards the carbon-thread canvas lining the side of the airlock.

As the depressurization process begins, the canvas starts to STRETCH...

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE: "FOUR YEARS EARLIER"

INT. DEYO PLASTICS - FACTORY - DAY

Woven carbon thread runs through the massive factory press, which sandwiches it between polymer sheets.

The completed material is folded four times and glued together. The resulting sheet is coated with soft resin.

CUT TO:

Workers sterilize the sheet, then move it to a cleanroom.

CUT TO:

A worker in a white bodysuit cuts a strip off the sheet. He divides it into squares. Tests the strength of each square.

CUT TO:

The worker briefs his superior as he runs tests on the sheet.

WORKER

Parameters call for a thirty-one Sol mission length.

SUPERIOR

Test for triple that estimate. At least.

CUT TO:

The sheet is cut to shape, folded, sewn, and sealed with resin. A man with a clipboard makes final inspections.

CUT TO:

The sheet is sealed into an argon-filled airtight shipping container. The clipboard man places a label on the package: "Project Ares-3; Hab Canvas; Sheet AL102."

EXT./INT. CHARTER PLANE - DAY

The sheet package is loaded onto a charter plane.

CUT TO:

We HOLD on the package as the ROAR of the engines suggest we're reaching altitude.

EXT. EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

A team carefully unloads the package from the plane.

EXT./INT. JPL - DAY

A team transfers the package to the JPL White Room. (We catch a glimpse of Bruce overseeing the proceedings.)

CUT TO:

Engineers assemble Presupply 309. The package for Sheet AL102 is placed next to twelve similar Hab Canvas packages.

EXT. LAUNCHPAD - DAY

Presupply Probe 309 is readied on the launch pad.

CUT TO:

The probe LAUNCHES.

INT. PROBE - SPACE

We HOLD on the package as the probe makes its way to Mars.

EXT. MARS

The probe begins its descent toward Acidalia Planitia. The heat shield glows as it endures reentry. The probe releases a parachute. The heat shield detaches.

CUT TO:

The parachute detaches. Whump -- Balloons inflate all around the probe's hull. The probe hits the ground HARD. It bounces and rolls across the surface of Mars.

Then it comes to a stop.

CUT TO:

Same shot. *Twenty-three months later.* Which means twenty-three months of dirt, sediment, and windburn now alter the landscape and coat the probe.

CUT TO:

Two astronauts (Lewis and Beck) approach the probe.

CUT TO:

The astronauts unpack the probe, methodically lay out the portions of the Hab canvas. We ANGLE towards Sheet AL102.

CUT TO:

Lewis and Beck assemble the Hab. Sheet AL102 is perfectly sized to fit Airlock 1. Beck stretches the sheet tight to the seal-strips on the airlock's exterior.

CUT TO:

Lewis floods the Hab with air. Sheet AL102 feels pressure for the first time. Sheet AL102 holds.

INT. AIRLOCK - VARIOUS

Astronauts repeatedly come in and out of the airlock during the first six sols of the mission. We stay focused on Sheet AL102 as they pass.

CUT TO:

Our astronauts nervously wait in the airlock as the storm SLAMS into the Hab. The airlock opens, wind SCREAMS, dirt swirls, the astronauts stumble outside.

We stay with Sheet AL102. As the airlock shuts, the storm continues to SLAM into the Hab over and OVER again.

WHAM! The airlock is rocked from a powerful gust.

Sheet AL102 stretches and twists.

CUT TO:

Mark Watney stumbles into Airlock 1. Holding his bleeding side with one hand. He GASPS in pain.

CUT TO:

We HOLD on Sheet AL102. We hear Mark's muffled voice inside the Hab:

MARK (O.S.)
...luckily, I'm a botanist. Mars
will come to fear my botany
powers...

INT. AIRLOCK - MOTION CONTROL

Motion control shot. Mark enters and exits the airlock. Again and again. The whole time we're slowly ANGLING in on the edge of the airlock, where Sheet AL102 meets the seam.

Mark exits. Again and again. One hundred and sixteen Sols of wear and tear on a sheet designed to last thirty-one. Again and again and AGAIN...

And as Mark passes with his toolkit (finally catching us up to where we began this sequence,) we settle into a CLOSEUP of the fabric of Sheet AL102.

The airlock depressurizes...

The fabric stretches...

And Sheet AL102 RIPS.

The Hab breaches. In one-tenth of a second, the tear travels the length of the airlock --

The full force of the Hab's atmosphere rushes through the breach...

KAAAA-BOOOOM!

The airlock (with Mark in it) is LAUNCHED LIKE A CANNONBALL. It flies forty meters through the air --

INSIDE THE HAB

QUICK SLO-MO SHOT as the crops inside the HAB are DESTROYED in the depressurization.

OUTSIDE THE HAB

RAMP to regular speed --

WHAM! The airlock hits the hillside -- Mark's body SLAMS into the wall -- his faceplate SHATTERS -- the airlock FLIPS and TUMBLES down the hill. Mark is tossed around inside like a ragdoll in a washing machine.

The airlock rolls another fifteen meters...

And comes to a stop.

INT. NASA - SATCON

Mindy watches the satellite imagery refresh.

ONSCREEN: One moment the Hab is fully intact. Refresh. The airlock jumps fifty meters away. The Hab is blown.

Mindy bolts up in her chair. Oh god. She grabs the phone.

INT. AIRLOCK - DAY

Panicked breaths. Ringing ears.

Mark struggles to stay conscious. His head bleeding.

Jesus Christ. What the fuck just happened?

He looks through the window. Sees the collapsed Hab. The debris of ruined equipment scattering the field between them.

Pssssshhhhhhhh...

Mark wipes the blood from his brow, rolls to his knees. Struggles out of his suit. Checks his wounds. He's alive.

Pssssshhhhhhhh...

What the hell is that sound?

Air.

The airlock is leaking.

Mark's heart starts to pound. He searches frantically for the leak, checking every seam, every inch of fabric...

Pssssshhhhhhhh...

Mark checks the readout on the suit's arm computer. Oxygen flow steady. This will keep him alive. For now. But he has to find that leak...

Think, Watney. How do you find an invisible leak?

He does an inventory. He has his toolkit. He has the patch kit from his suit. *Think, Watney...*

It hits him.

He pulls the knife out of the toolkit...

And cuts his own hair.

He hacks a chunk clean out of it. Holds the loose hair tight. Then he goes back to the arm computer. BOOSTS the oxygen flow. *Now, all I need is a spark...*

Yanks the WIRES from the power generator free. Strips the casing. *Here goes nothing...*

He holds the wires in the oxygen flow, rubs them together to create a SPARK. WHOOSH. He lights the hair on fire, creating the key to his plan:

SMOKE.

Mark holds his breath. Watches the smoke wisp and curl towards the floor...

Heading right through the microscopic TEAR in the fabric.

Mark grins. *I've got you.* Goes back to the toolkit. Finds that old stalwart of every NASA space mission: *Duct tape.*

He tears a piece free. Seals the hole. The hissing stops. Mark breathes. *Okay...*

Now what?

CUT TO:

Mark cuts off one of the arms from his EVA suit. Cuts it into one square piece. Opens the patch kit. Works fast to glue the square over the area where the faceplate used to be. Then glues the arm-hole shut.

CUT TO:

WHAM! Mark slams his back into the airlock wall, hitting it with enough force so that...

The airlock ROLLS.

It's clumsy -- like rolling a phone booth from inside -- but it works. The airlock rolls a little less than a meter.

Mark takes a breath. Girds himself to do it again...

EXT. HAB - NIGHT

WHAM! The airlock rolls. WHAM! It rolls again.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Morning now. The airlock has traveled the fifty meters so that it's now close to the Hab.

Mark exits the airlock. He's wearing the patched up EVA suit. Which means his faceplate is completely covered with fabric, and he only has one arm free.

He points the free arm in front of him and begins to walk.

INSIDE THE SUIT:

We see that Mark is using the camera mounted into his arm computer to navigate. The camera projects an image onto the inside of the faceplate. Which is now fabric. It's crude, but it'll work.

MARK'S POV: Mark hurries through the rip in the airlock. Stumbles through the deflated Hab, past the mess of debris, heading for the bunk. Finds what he's looking for...

Martinez' SUIT.

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark stumbles into the Rover. Drops Martinez' suit beside him. Works his way out of his ruined suit.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark (now wearing Martinez' suit) carefully arranges rocks in the red dirt. Glances up to the sky...

INT. NASA - SATCON - DAY

Venkat, Mindy, and a crowd of others stare at the screens.

VENKAT

He's writing something. What does it say?

Mindy leans in close. Squints.

MINDY

"I'm OK."

EXT. HAB - NIGHT

The rip in the airlock is now SEALED with a swath of fabric. The Hab swells with pressure as it inflates...

INT. HAB - NIGHT

Mark stands in the center of the Hab. We finally get a good look at it. And it's A MESS. Equipment overturned, debris everywhere. But the worst part?

Mark's crops are RUINED.

Mark stares at the disaster of frozen soil and uprooted plants. All his work. His lifeline. Destroyed.

He stares at the mess for a long time.

Then he begins to clean it up.

VENKAT (PRELAP)

The crops are dead...

INT. NASA - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Venkat, Teddy, Annie and a team of others study the analysis reports. Mood is somber.

VENKAT

Complete loss of pressure boiled off most of the water. Any bacteria that survived, died in the sub-zero temperatures when exposed to Mars' atmosphere.

ANNIE

How long does he have?

VENKAT

He can still eat the potatoes he has, he just can't grow any more. We estimate they'll give him about 200 sols.

TEDDY

And rations get him to what? Sol 400?

VENKAT

(nods)

So with potatoes he can stretch to 600.

ANNIE
By Sol 856 he'll be long dead.

TEDDY
It's Sol 122 now. The trip itself will take... 414 days. We need 13 to mount the boosters and perform inspections. Which gives Bruce and his team... 48 days to make this probe.

ANNIE
How long does it normally take?

VENKAT
Six months. Minimum.

TEDDY
I'm gonna let you call Bruce and give him the news.

INT. JPL - DAY

Bruce and his team sit around a speakerphone. They've just hung up with Venkat. Everyone looks suitably SHELLSHOCKED.

BRUCE
Okay.
(long pause)
Okay.

Everyone is at a loss for words. You might as well have told this team they have to build a unicorn.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I'm, uh... I'm gonna need a change of clothes. We're all gonna need a change of clothes.

EXT. HERMES

The Hermes continues on its course back to Earth.

MARTINEZ (PRELAP)
"Dear Mark..."

INT. HERMES

Martinez types at his terminal.

MARTINEZ (V.O.)

"Apparently, NASA's letting us talk to you now, and I drew the short straw. Sorry we left you behind on Mars, but we don't like you."

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark reads his email.

MARTINEZ (V.O.)

"Also, it's a lot roomier on the *Hermes* without you. We have to take turns doing your tasks, but it's only botany (not real science.) How's Mars?"

Mark types his response.

MARK (V.O.)

"Dear Martinez, Mars is fine. I accidentally blew up the Hab, but unfortunately all of Commander Lewis' disco music still survived."

INT. HERMES

Martinez reads Mark's response.

MARK (V.O.)

How's the *Hermes*? Cramped and claustrophobic? Every day I go outside and look at the vast horizons."

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark stands outside the Hab. The horizon reflects off his faceplate.

MARK (V.O.)

"Just because I can."

INT. HERMES

MARK (V.O.)

"Tell the others I said hello."

Martinez types. We see his response on his screen:

"Will do."

INT. JPL - OFFICE - NIGHT

A man sleeps in his office, half-on and half-off his small love seat. He snores ever-so-slightly.

TITLE: RICH FURNELL, ASTRODYNAMICS

On his computer screen, we see orbital computations running. Vectors between Earth and Mars cycle over and over.

VOICE (O.S.)

Rich?

MIKE WATKINS pokes his head in Rich's office. Rich stirs.

MIKE

Rich? Wake up. Sorry, they're asking for the probe courses.

RICH

What time is it?

MIKE

3:42.

Rich nods. Grabs the old cup of coffee from his end table. Takes a big drink. His face registers shock. He opens his mouth and lets the coffee fall directly on the floor.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I know we're coming at this backwards, but we can't commit to a firm launch date with this many unknowns.

RICH

It's all right. All twenty-five models for launch will take 414 days to reach Mars. They vary only slightly in thrust duration, and the fuel requirement is nearly identical.

MIKE

(looking at Rich's calculations)

414, huh?

RICH

Earth and Mars are really badly positioned. Heck, it's almost easier to...

Rich trails off.

MIKE
Almost easier to what?

RICH
(lost in his head)
I need more coffee...

MIKE
Almost easier to what?

Rich walks out of the room.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You understand I'm your boss,
right?

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark scrubs the solar panels.

VENKAT (V.O.)
We've officially named the probe
"Iris," after the Greek goddess who
traveled the heavens with the speed
of wind. Among other things, she's
also the goddess of rainbows.

INT. JPL - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Tim reads Mark's response on his screen as Venkat waits. Tim
suppresses a smile, throws Mark's response on the main
screens:

"Gay probe coming to save me. Got it."

INT. NASA - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Teddy addresses the group from the head of the table.

TEDDY
Okay, let's ask the...
(consults his files)
Two hundred million dollar...
sorry, five hundred... That's a
"five?"

Venkat nods. Teddy sighs.

TEDDY (CONT'D)
Let's ask the very, very expensive
question: is this probe gonna be
ready on time?

Bruce looks noticeably more exhausted than everyone else.
Which is saying something.

BRUCE

We're behind. We're going as fast
as we can, but it's not fast
enough.

TEDDY

How far behind are we talking
about?

BRUCE

We've been at it twenty nine days,
so we only have nineteen left.
After that, the Pad needs thirteen
days to mount it on the booster.
So... almost two weeks behind.

TEDDY

Is that as bad as it's gonna get?

BRUCE

If we don't have any more problems,
it'll be two weeks. But... there
are always problems.

TEDDY

Give me a number.

BRUCE

Fifteen days. If I had another
fifteen days, I could get it done.

TEDDY

All right, let's create fifteen
days. Thirteen days to mount the
probe. How can we reduce?

VENKAT

It... actually only takes three
days to mount it. The following
ten are for testing and
inspections. We could probably get
the mounting down to two. But
inspections can't be shortened.
They're time-based. If you shorten
the intervals, you invalidate the
inspections.

TEDDY

How often do those inspections
reveal a problem?

The room goes silent. Everyone trades nervous glances.

VENKAT

Are you suggesting we don't do the inspections?

TEDDY

Right now I'm asking how often they reveal a problem.

VENKAT

About one in twenty launches.

TEDDY

And how often is the problem they reveal a would-be mission failure?

VENKAT

I'm not sure. Maybe half the time?

TEDDY

So if we skip inspections and testing, we have a 1 in 40 chance of mission failure?

VENKAT

That's two-point-five percent. That's grounds for a countdown halt. We can't take a chance like that.

TEDDY

I'm not sure we have a choice. Ninety-seven-point-five percent is better than zero. Anyone else know a safer way to buy more time?

Nobody does.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Let's tell Dr. Keller and her team to reduce Watney's food intake, stretch the rations four more days. She won't like it, but that'll get us to fifteen. And we'll cancel the inspections.

VENKAT

(grave)

Teddy...

TEDDY

It's on me, Venkat.

(to Bruce)

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)

You've got your two weeks. Get it done.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark sits at the kitchen table. A ration pack and two potatoes in front of him. He talks to camera. He looks depressed.

MARK

This is what "minimal calorie count" looks like.

(holds up the pack)

Standard issue ration. But instead of three every one day, I'm now eating one every three days.

(opens pack)

Oh good. Meatloaf.

He divides the meatloaf into thirds. Sets the majority aside. Focuses on what's left. Which is pathetic.

MARK (CONT'D)

This is today's allotment. Which I will supplement with potatoes. Which I am beginning to hate with the fiery passion of a thousand suns. And now I've been told to do this.

Mark hacks off even more of the meager ration and half of a potato and sets that aside. There's barely anything left.

MARK (CONT'D)

The point is, "Stretch the rations four more days" is a real dick-punch.

There are also two pills on the table. Mark begins to crush them.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm dipping this potato in Vicodin and there's nothing anyone can do about it.

INT. JPL - OFFICE - DAY

Mike briefs a few members of his team.

MIKE

...and since we've pushed launch, we'll need to account for the new satellite adjustments.

ENGINEER

We still haven't received the old satellite adjustments.

MIKE

(frowns)

I asked for those two weeks ago.
What is Rich doing?

The scientists trade glances. Then:

ENGINEER

We're scared to even go in there.

MIKE

(hangs head)

Why is every goddamn
astrodynamicist I've ever worked
with certifiably insane?

(glances at co-worker)

No offense, Diane.

INT. JPL - RICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Rich's office is a warzone of computer printouts, charts, and reference books. Every spare surface is covered with empty coffee cups and take-out boxes.

MIKE

Rich. What the hell are you doing?

Rich doesn't take his eyes off his screen.

RICH

Hi, Mike. Just, um... working on a side project.

MIKE

(are you kidding me?)

What about your current project?
We've been waiting for satellite
adjustments for two weeks.

RICH

Those are pretty easy. I bet Diane can do them.

MIKE

Then why am I paying you?

RICH

I need some supercomputer time.

MIKE
To calculate the adjustments?

RICH
No, Diane's gonna do those. I need
the supercomputer for my side
project.

MIKE
Rich, seriously. You have to do
your job.

Rich finally looks up from his screen. Thinks for a moment.

RICH
Would now be a good time for a
vacation?

MIKE
(sighs)
You know what, Rich? I think now
would be an ideal time for you to
take a vacation.

RICH
Great. I'll start right now.

MIKE
Go on home. Get some rest.

Rich doesn't respond. Goes back to work.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Can I at least get those satellite
orbits?

RICH
I'm on vacation.

EXT. MARS - NIGHT

It's dark, only pinpricks of light coming from the stars. As
the dead silence of Mars' surface becomes oppressive...

INT. HAB - NIGHT

Mark lies awake in his bunk. Staring at the ceiling. He
looks apprehensive. He drums his fingers on his chest.

TITLE: Sol 171

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY

The IRIS PROBE, now mounted on the booster, is readied for launch. WATER VAPOR clouds the launchpad.

ANNIE (PRELAP)

Launch is scheduled for 9:14 a.m...

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Annie stands at the podium.

ANNIE

Once in orbit, the mission will be handed off to the Ares-3 presupply team, who will monitor its progress over the following months. It will take 414 days to reach Mars.

REPORTER

Annie, about the payload -- I hear there's more than just food?

ANNIE

That's true. We allocated 100 grams for luxury items. There are some handwritten letters from Mark's family, a note from the president, a USB drive filled with music.

REPORTER

Any disco?

ANNIE

No disco.

Everyone laughs. As it quiets down...

REPORTER

If the launch fails, is there any recourse for Watney?

Annie hesitates.

INT. NASA - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Full house. Mitch presides over the room, in his element.

MITCH

Do you believe in God, Venkat?

VENKAT

Lots of them. I'm Hindu.

MITCH
We'll take all the help we can get.

Mitch puts on his headset.

MITCH (CONT'D)
This is the Flight Director. Begin
Launch Status Check.

LAUNCH CONTROL (OVER COMMS)
Roger that, Houston...

And as Mitch runs through the status check...

INT. NASA - VIP ROOM - DAY

Teddy watches the countdown clock from the observation room. He looks over what appears to be a SPEECH. We catch a few words, including, "...successful launch..."

Teddy closes the speech in a BLUE FOLDER. As the clock approaches 00:00:15....

MITCH (ON THE FLOOR)
This is Flight. We are go for
launch on schedule.

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)
15... 14... 13...

ON THE FLOOR: VENKAT leans against the wall. Deep breath.

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)
12... 11...

INT. NASA - ANNIE'S OFFICE

ANNIE paces in front of the NINE TELEVISIONS in her office.

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)
10... 9... 8...

INT. JPL - CAFETERIA

BRUCE sits with his engineers, all in rapt attention.

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)
7... 6...

INT. JPL - RICH'S OFFICE

RICH PURNELL works on orbital calculations at his computer. Isn't paying attention to the launch at all.

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)

5... 4...

INT. HULL - DAY

The IRIS PROBE is held in place inside the payload bulb by FIVE LARGE BOLTS. As we're ANGLING IN on Iris...

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)

3... 2... 1...

...we DRIFT DOWN to one of the bolts.

EXT. LAUNCHPAD - DAY

LIFTOFF. Clamps RELEASE, the booster FIRES. PLUMES of SMOKE fill the frame --

INT. NASA - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

TIMER CONTROLLER (V.O.)

...and liftoff of the Iris Supply Probe.

CHEERS course through the room --

INT. HULL - DAY

A VIOLENT SHIMMY rattles the payload as the craft ACCELERATES. The bolt at the forefront CRACKS --

INT. NASA - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The ASCENT FLIGHT DIRECTOR frowns at his station.

ASCENT FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Getting a little shimmy, Flight.

MITCH

Say again?

EXT. IRIS CRAFT - DAY

As the first stage depletes its fuel, it JETTISONS the stage-clamps. The stage falls away from the craft.

The second stage engines IGNITE --

INT. HULL - DAY

WHOOSH -- the acceleration SHAKES the craft. The BOLT SHEARS CLEAN OFF -- the payload ROCKS -- THE OTHER FOUR BOLTS SNAP --

Iris slips from its supports, and SLAMS INTO THE HULL --

INT. NASA - CONTROL ROOM - DAY

ALARMS and LIGHTS flash across the consoles. A cacophony of urgent voices from the floor:

ASCENT FLIGHT DIRECTOR

Whoa! Flight, we're getting a large procession!

VOICE

Force on Iris at 7 G's.

SECOND VOICE

Intermittent signal loss.

MITCH

Ascent, what's happening?

ASCENT FLIGHT DIRECTOR

It's spinning on the long axis with a 17 degree progression.

MITCH

Can you get it to orbit?

ASCENT FLIGHT DIRECTOR

I can't talk to it at all. Signal failures left and right.

THIRD VOICE

Ground telemetry shows it 200 meters low of target path.

FOURTH VOICE

We've lost readings on the probe, Flight.

MITCH

(goes cold)

Entirely lost the probe?

FOURTH VOICE

Affirm, Flight. Intermittent signal from the ship, but no probe.

MITCH

Shit. It shook loose in the bay.

(then)

Can it limp to orbit? Even super-low EO? We might be able to --

FLIGHT ASCENT DIRECTOR

Loss of signal, Flight.

VOICE

L.O.S. here, too.

SECOND VOICE

Same here.

The voices go SILENT. The alarms BLARE. Then:

MITCH
Reestablish.

COMM
No luck.

MITCH
Ground?

GROUND
GC. Vehicle had already left
visual range.

MITCH
SatCon?

SATCON
No satellite acquisition of signal.

Mitch looks to the main screen. It GOES BLACK, with LARGE
WHITE LETTERS reading: "L.O.S."

RADIO
Flight, US Destroyer Stockton
reports debris falling from sky.

Mitch puts his head in his hands.

MITCH
Roger.

Then Mitch Henderson says the words every Flight Director
hopes he never has to say:

MITCH (CONT'D)
GC, Flight. Lock the doors.

INT. NASA - VIP ROOM

Teddy sits in stunned silence, watching the despondent
Mission Control Center below begin post-failure procedures.

He closes his eyes for a moment.

Then he takes THE BLUE FOLDER and puts it back in his
briefcase...

...and removes THE RED FOLDER.

INT. NASA - VENKAT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Venkat sits in his office. NASA is eerily silent now. It's night. Venkat stares into space.

Click. He's been motionless so long, the sensors think the office is empty and shut off the lights.

Venkat shifts. The lights click back on.

A chime RINGS OUT on his computer. Venkat glances at the screen, sees a relayed message from Pathfinder:

"WATNEY: How'd the launch go?"

EXT. SPACE - TO ESTABLISH

The SOMBER REDS of MARS blaze against the spacescape.

INT. HAB - NIGHT

Mark talks directly to camera. It takes him a moment to find his words.

MARK

So, um. Martinez. I need you to do something for me. If I die. I need you to check on my parents. They'll want to hear about our time on Mars first-hand. I'll need you to do that. It won't be easy talking to a couple about their dead son. It's a lot to ask; that's why I'm asking you. I'm not giving up. Just planning for every outcome. It's what I do. Tell them...

(searches)

Tell them I knew the risks. Tell them we signed on because we believe. Tell them I was doing what I love. They know all that, but it'll be good to hear it again. Tell them... Tell them...

Mark trails off.

EXT. CNSA - TO ESTABLISH

An impressive headquarters in the heart of Beijing.

TITLE: CHINA NATIONAL SPACE ADMINISTRATION

INT. CNSA - DAY

ONSCREEN: Teddy and Venkat answer questions from reporters.

We hear a MAN'S VOICE. He speaks in SUBTITLED CHINESE.

VOICE

In order to maximize food volume,
they used protein cubes rather than
standard rations...

Reveal TWO MEN watching the monitor. The voice belongs to:

TITLE: ZHU TAO, Under-Director, CNSA

ZHU

The initial launch compressed the
food, while unexpected lateral
vibration caused a shimmy which
sludged the contents, creating an
unbalanced load. When the second
stage fired, the load shook loose.

TITLE: GUO MING, Director, CNSA

GUO

We would have caught that in the
inspection phase.

ZHU

They would have, too. Had they
time.

Guo shuts off the television.

GUO

That poor astronaut is going to
starve to death.

ZHU

Perhaps. Perhaps not.

(hands Guo the brief)

The *Taiyang Shen's* booster. Our
engineers have run the numbers, and
it has enough fuel for a Mars
injection orbit.

GUO

Are you kidding?

ZHU

Have you ever known me to "kid,"
sir?

GUO
Why hasn't NASA approached us?

ZHU
Because they don't know. Our booster technology is classified. We have to assume The Ministry of State Security is doing a good job protecting our secrets.

GUO
(thinks)
If they don't know... and we decide not to help... no one will know we could have.

ZHU
Correct, sir.

GUO
So. For the sake of argument, let's say we decided to help. What then.

ZHU
Time would be the enemy. Based on travel duration and the astronaut's remaining supplies, any probe would have to launch within the month.

GUO
(shrugs)
That's when we planned to launch Taiyang Shen.

ZHU
But they would need to build another probe. In a month. It took them two months to build Iris, and it failed.

GUO
That's their problem. We are simply providing the booster.
(thinks)
The State Council would likely want political favors from the US Government in exchange for our assistance.

ZHU
The American people may be sentimental, but their government is not.

(MORE)

ZHU (CONT'D)

The US State Department won't trade anything major for one man's life. This, perhaps, is futile.

GUO

Not futile. Just difficult. If this becomes a negotiation between diplomats, it will never resolve. We need to keep this among scientists. Space agency to space agency.

ZHU

But what can they do for us? We'd be giving up a booster and effectively cancelling Taiyang Shen.

GUO

(smiles)

They'll give us something we can't get without them.

(then)

They'll put a Chinese astronaut on Mars.

ZHU

(of course)

The Ares 5 crew hasn't been selected yet. We'll insist on a crewman. They'll accept. Do you think our State Department will go for it?

GUO

Publicly rescue the Americans? Put a Chinese astronaut on Mars? Have the World see China as equal to the US in Space?

(wry)

Yes, I believe our government will accept these terms.

INT. NASA - TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAY

We're SLOWLY PUSHING IN on Teddy as he listens to the voice on the other end of the phone detail the terms.

Teddy closes his eyes. Relief washes over him. It takes him a moment to realize they're waiting for his answer.

TEDDY

Yes.

INT. JPL - CONFERENCE ROOM

Bruce stands at the white boards, addressing his department heads. He's energized, writing like a madman while he talks:

BRUCE

All right, thanks to our friends in China, we get one more chance at this. We finished the Iris probe in sixty-three days. Now we get to do it again in twenty-eight...

INT. NASA - SUPERCOMPUTER

Rich Purnell stares at the calculations on the screen. *Can these be right?*

INT. NASA - HALLWAYS

Rich hurries through the halls.

INT. NASA - VENKAT'S OFFICE

Venkat's on the phone.

VENKAT

We're jettisoning any sort of landing system -- the idea is we're only sending rations, so they can crash land on Mars...

(listens)

Bruce thinks it could work--

SECRETARY

Wait --

Rich barges into to Venkat's office.

RICH

You should hang up the phone.

Venkat puts the phone on hold.

VENKAT

I'm sorry -- who are you?

RICH

My name is Rich Purnell and I work in astrodynamics and you should hang up the phone right now.

VENKAT

(into phone)

I'll call you back.

RICH
I know how to save Mark Watney.

VENKAT
That's already in progress.

RICH
The Taiyang Shen? That won't work.
You can't make a Mars probe in a
month.

VENKAT
We're sure as hell gonna try.

RICH
Don't get me wrong, we need the
Shen for this to work, but a Mars
probe? You might as well bury
Watney yourself. It's a cover-your-
ass decision and you know it.

VENKAT
Mr. Purnell --

Rich hands Venkat his summary.

RICH
After you read this I may need you
to reimburse me for my vacation
time.

Venkat skims the page. His eyes get wider as he goes.

VENKAT
Who else knows about this?

INT. NASA - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

We're FOLLOWING ANNIE as she hurries into the briefing room.
Venkat, Bruce, and Mitch are already there. Annie's reading
the email on her phone.

ANNIE
What the hell is "Project Elrond?"

VENKAT
I had to make something up.

ANNIE
"Elrond?"

MITCH
(realizing)
Because it's a secret meeting.
(MORE)

MITCH (CONT'D)

Your email said I couldn't even tell my assistant.

VENKAT

Exactly.

BRUCE

(growing excited)

Are we going to make a momentous decision? We're gonna make a momentous decision, aren't we?

ANNIE

How do you know that? Why does "Elrond" mean "secret meeting?"

BRUCE

The Council of Elrond. From Lord of the Rings. It's the meeting where they decide to destroy the One Ring.

ANNIE

I so quit right now.

TEDDY

(entering)

If we're calling something Project Elrond, I would like my codename to be "Glorfindel."

ANNIE

Oh my god I hate every one of you.

MITCH

Teddy doesn't even know what this is about?

VENKAT

One of our astrodynamicists, Rich Purnell, has come up with an alternate rescue option. And for reasons that will become immediately obvious, this option cannot leave this room until the five of us decide what's best.

(has their full attention)

Purnell believes he's found a way to reroute the *Hermes*. The course he's come up with would give the *Hermes* a flyby on Sol 549.

ANNIE
(after silence)
Jesus...

MITCH
You want to send the *Hermes* back to
Mars...

BRUCE
How is that possible? Iris
wouldn't even have landed until Sol
588.

VENKAT
Iris was a point thrust craft.
Hermes has a constant-thrust ion
engine. If they did this "Rich
Purnell Maneuver," they'd start
accelerating now, to preserve
velocity and gain even more. They
wouldn't intercept Earth at all,
but would come close enough to use
a gravity assist to adjust course.
Around that time, they'd pick up a
re-supply probe with provisions for
the extended trip. After that,
they'd be accelerating towards
Mars, arriving on Sol 549. But
it's a flyby. They'll be going too
fast to fall into orbit.

BRUCE
What good is a flyby if we can't
get Watney off the surface?

VENKAT
Watney would have to get to the
Ares-4 MAV.

BRUCE
The MAV is designed to get to low
Mars orbit. But with Hermes on
flyby, the MAV would have to escape
Mars gravity entirely to intercept.

VENKAT
We'd have to figure out a way to
modify the MAV.
(off their looks)
I can get rooms full of people
working on it if we decide to go
this route.

TEDDY

You mentioned a supply probe. How do we have that capability?

VENKAT

We'd have to use the *Taiyang Shen*.

And Teddy is the first to understand the need for secrecy:

TEDDY

So. We have two options on the table. Send *Watney* enough food to last until *Ares 4*, or send *Hermes* back to get him right now. Both plans require the *Taiyang Shen*, so we can only do one.

VENKAT

We'd have to choose.

ANNIE

What about the *Hermes* crew? We'd be asking them to add...

(does the math)

533 days to their mission.

MITCH

They wouldn't hesitate. Not for a second. That's why Venkat called this meeting. He wants us to decide instead.

Venkat nods. That's correct.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Bullshit. It should be Commander Lewis' call.

VENKAT

We need to make this decision. It's a matter of life and death.

MITCH

She's the Mission Commander. Life and death decisions are her damn job.

TEDDY

Can the *Hermes* function for 533 days beyond the scheduled mission end?

VENKAT

It should. The *Hermes* was made to do all five Ares missions, so it's only halfway through lifespan. The crew may have to fix things here and there, but they're well trained.

ANNIE

But if something went wrong...

VENKAT

We would lose the crew. And the Ares Program with them.

BRUCE

So... what? We either have a high chance of killing one person, or a low chance of killing six people. How do we make that decision?

VENKAT

We don't. Teddy does.

All eyes on Teddy now. The room sits in silence. Teddy thinks for a long time.

TEDDY

We still have the chance to bring five astronauts home safe and sound. I'm not risking their lives.

MITCH

They risked their lives when they signed on to the mission.

TEDDY

And now the mission needs to come to an end.

MITCH

Let them make that decision. Space is dangerous. You want to play it safe, go join an insurance company.

TEDDY

Mitch. We're going with option one.

Mitch stares at Teddy. Quietly seething.

MITCH

You goddamn coward.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark trudges out of the airlock, goes about his routine. He walks over to the solar panels, starts to scrub them for (what seems like) the thousandth time...

And stops.

He can't do it anymore. He stares at them for a long time. Then drops the brush.

He walks to the top of the hill. Sits down.

He closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

Later. Mark hasn't moved. The sun is beginning to set. The temperature ALARM on his suit is beginning to BLARE. It gets cold FAST on Mars.

Mark overrides the alarm. Sits the in silence. As he glances back towards the setting sun, something METALLIC glints in the dust beneath him.

Hmm. Mark gets up. Walks towards it. Bends down. It's Vogel's specimen drill. Dropped when the storm hit. Mark looks around, sees the HOLES drilled in the rock formation.

His fingers trace the unfinished work.

EXT. HAB - NIGHT

We're ANGLING TOWARDS the Hab. We may notice that the solar panels are, once again, scrubbed clean.

MARK

We evac'd six sols into a thirty-one sol mission...

INT. HAB - NIGHT

Mark addresses camera while he works at the experiment table. Still somber. But he's working.

MARK

Which means we've got twenty-five sols of experiment and research schedules. For each of us. So. Commander Lewis... your geocompositing experiments are in good hands. Beck -- I'll be honest with you, I don't understand photoautotrophic engineering.

(MORE)

At all. But I'm working my way through it as best I can. Johanssen, I know you don't like it when I touch the ChemCam, but guess what? I'm touching the ChemCam. Vogel, I think I've got a new cataloguing system for the core samples that I've titled "Das Core Samples" out of respect for the motherland. And Martinez... I still don't know what it is you do. Why did we bring you? No idea.

(then)

I'm trying to keep everything documented and organized. I know that's not exactly my strong suit, but I want it all to make sense, in case... you know. Maybe you can teach it in class someday. The Watney Syllabus. "How to Make a Bathtub Using NASA Tubing and an Old RTG." "How to Cook a Potato Six-Thousand Different Ways." "How to Make Water Out of Rocket Fuel. To Keep You Alive. For Just A Little Longer."

INT. HERMES - VOGEL'S QUARTERS

From his computer, Vogel runs a diagnostic check on the ship's engines. As he finishes his work for the day, he turns his attention to his Email. Frowns when he sees:

"Subject: *Unsere Kinder*"

Our children? That's strange. He tries to open the attachment, but it's unreadable.

INT. HERMES - JOHANSEN'S QUARTERS

Vogel enters Johanssen's quarters.

VOGEL

I have computer problem. I wonder if you will help?

JOHANSEN

Of course.

VOGEL

I received an image from my wife, but the computer cannot view.

JOHANSSEN

Let's take a look.

(as she works)

Euh. This isn't a jpg. It's a plain ASCII text file. Looks like... I don't know what this looks like. Math equations. Does this make any sense to you?

VOGEL

(reads)

"Rich Purnell Maneuver." Ja. It is a course maneuver for the Hermes... why would they send it in secret...

And as Vogel tries to make sense of what he's looking at, one phrase in particular stands out on the screen:

"SOL 549."

VOGEL (CONT'D)

Main Gott.

INT. HERMES - THE REC

All five crew members are seated around the main table in The Rec -- the cramped area of the ship used for personal time.

VOGEL

...and the mission would conclude with Earth intercept 211 days later.

Lewis gives the others a chance to absorb the news.

MARTINEZ

Would this really work?

VOGEL

Ja. I ran the numbers. They all check out. It is brilliant course.

MARTINEZ

How would he get off Mars?

LEWIS

There was more in the message. The maneuver is part of an overall idea NASA had to rescue Watney. We'd have to pick up a supply near Earth, and he'd have to get to the Ares-4 MAV.

BECK

Why all the cloak and dagger?

LEWIS

NASA rejected the idea. They'd rather take a big risk on Watney than a small risk on all of us. Whoever snuck it in Vogel's email obviously disagreed.

MARTINEZ

So. We're talking about going directly against NASA's decision?

LEWIS

Yes. That's what we're talking about. If we do the maneuver, they'll have to send the supply ship or we'll die. We have the opportunity to force their hand.

JOHANSEN

Are we gonna do it?

LEWIS

I won't lie. I'd like to do it. But this isn't a normal decision. This is something NASA expressly rejected. We're talking about mutiny. Which is not a word I use lightly.

Lewis stands from her seat, paces around the table.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

We'll only do it if we all agree. And before you answer, consider the consequences. If we mess up the supply rendezvous, we die. If we mess up the Earth gravity assist, we die. If we do everything perfectly, we add 533 days to our mission. 533 more days before we see our families again. 533 days of unplanned space travel where anything could go wrong. Something might break that we can't fix. If it's mission critical, we die.

MARTINEZ

Sign me up.

LEWIS

Easy, cowboy. You and I are military. There's a good chance we'd be court-martialed when we got home. As for the rest of you, I guarantee they'll never send you up again.

Silence as the group digests that news.

BECK

If we go for it, how would it work?

VOGEL

(shrugs)

I plot the course and execute it.

JOHANSSSEN

Remote Override. They can take over the *Hermes* from Mission Control.

LEWIS

Can you disable it?

JOHANSSSEN

Hermes has four redundant flight computers, each connected to three redundant comm systems. We can't shut down the comms; we'd lose telemetry and guidance. We can't shut down the computers; we need to control the ship. I'd have to disable the Remote Override on each system... It's part of the OS, I'd have to jump over the code...

(thinks)

Yes. I can do it.

LEWIS

You sure?

JOHANSSSEN

It's an emergency feature, not a security program. It isn't protected against malicious code.

LEWIS

Malicious code? So, what -- you'll hack it?

BECK

Johanssen used to go by the handle "Bladewind" in high school.

JOHANSSSEN

Ha ha. That's not... true.
(that's totally true)
I can do it.

She shoots Beck a look that says, "Keep our private conversations private."

LEWIS

It has to be unanimous. If anyone says no, that's it. We go home as planned. But I vote yes.

MARTINEZ

I vote yes.

VOGEL

If we do this, it would be over one thousand days of space. That is enough space for one life.

(then)

Yes.

Beck thinks about it long and hard. He has a deductive mind; this is the most difficult decision he's ever faced. Then:

BECK

Let's go get him.

And then there was one. All eyes turn to Johanssen.

LEWIS

Johanssen?

As Johanssen glances up at us, feeling the full weight of the world on her small shoulders --

INT. NASA - MISSION CONTROL - NIGHT

BRENDAN HATCH oversees Mission Control from 1 a.m. to 9 a.m. every morning. The shift is much quieter than the day shift. Usually.

CAPCOM

Flight, CAPCOM.

BRENDAN

Go CAPCOM.

CAPCOM

Unscheduled status update from *Hermes*.

BRENDAN

Roger. Read it out.

CAPCOM

I...I don't get it, Flight. No real status. Just a single sentence.

BRENDAN

What's it say?

CAPCOM

Message reads: "Houston, be advised: Rich Purnell is a steely-eyed missile man."

BRENDAN

What? Who the hell is Rich Purnell?

ALARMS start ringing out on the various stations.

TELEMETRY

Flight, Telemetry.

BRENDAN

Go Telemetry.

TELEMETRY

Hermes is off-course.

BRENDAN

CAPCOM, advise Hermes they're drifting. Telemetry, get a correction vector ready --

TELEMETRY

Negative, Flight. It's not drift, they've adjusted course. Deliberate 27.812 rotation.

BRENDAN

What the hell? CAPCOM, ask them what the hell.

CAPCOM

Roger Flight. Message sent. Minimum reply time 3 minutes, 4 seconds.

BRENDAN

Telemetry, any chance this is instrumentation failure?

TELEMETRY

Negative, Flight. We're tracking them with SatCon. Observed position is consistent with course change.

BRENDAN

Oh god. Guidance, Flight.

GUIDANCE

Go Flight.

BRENDAN

Work out how long they can stay on this course before it's irreversible. At what point will they no longer be able to intercept Earth?

GUIDANCE

Working on that now, Flight.

BRENDAN

And somebody find out who the hell Rich Purnell is!

INT. ROVER - NIGHT

Mark sits in the cramped Rover, reading through his messages. Clicks on one from Martinez. We see the first sentence:

"We're coming for you, Watney."

Mark reads the message... starts to understand the full weight of what's happening, what his crew is doing for him... and for the first time all movie, Mark's strong facade begins to crumble...

Tears well up in his eyes.

INT. NASA - TEDDY'S OFFICE - DAWN

Teddy's staring out the window when Mitch enters. Teddy makes him wait.

TEDDY

Annie will go before the media this morning and inform them of NASA's decision to reroute the Hermes to Mars.

MITCH

That seems like the smart move. Considering the circumstances.

TEDDY

Not that we had a choice. You may have killed the whole crew, Mitch.

MITCH

Whoever gave them the maneuver only passed along information. Lewis made the decision to act on it. If she let emotion cloud her decision, she'd be a bad commander. She's not a bad commander.

TEDDY

When this is over... I'll expect your resignation.

MITCH

(a beat; then)
I understand.

TEDDY

(we're finished here)
Bring our astronauts home.

EXT. MARS

Beneath us, sunlight creeps across the ridges of the Schiaparelli Crater. We PRELAP the sound of DRILLING.

TITLE: Sol 207

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark, in his MAV SUIT, stands on top of Rover Two. He holds the large ROCK SAMPLE DRILL like a jackhammer, drilling holes through the roof. It's grueling work.

And he's been at this a while: we catch a glimpse of the SEVEN-HUNDRED HOLES he's already drilled around the edge of the roof.

He finishes the last hole. Then he grabs a SCREWDRIVER. And a ROCK. Jams the screwdriver between the holes like a chisel. WHACK! He hits it with the rock.

WHACK! He hits it again. And again.

MARK (PRELAP)

Every Ares mission requires three years of presupplies...

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark talks directly to the camera.

MARK

NASA figured out it's a lot easier to ship some of this stuff ahead of time rather than bring it with us. So, as a result, the MAV for Ares-4 is already waiting at the Schiaparelli Crater. And the plan is to use it to launch me into orbit just as the Hermes is passing. And then, I guess... they catch me? In space.

Mark thinks about that. Grins. *Okay, I guess that sounds awesome.*

MARK (CONT'D)

Anyway, that's not really my problem right now. I have to get to the Schiaparelli Crater by Sol 449. And it's 3,200 kilometers away. And I have to figure out how to bring everything here that's keeping me alive -- the Atmospheric Regulator, the Oxygenator, and the Water Reclaimer -- along for the ride. Luckily, I have the brainpower of the entire planet Earth helping me with this endeavor. So far we've come up with, "Drill holes in the roof of your rover and then hit it with a rock."

(then)

We'll get there.

MUSIC UP: The opening CHORDS of "Starman" by David Bowie take us to...

EXT. MARS - DAY - BEGIN MONTAGE

"Didn't know what time it was the lights were low, oh, oh..."

Mark positions the partially-disassembled rover in front of the camera. Frames his handiwork. Waits.

INT. NASA - MONTAGE

"I leaned back on my radio, oh, oh..."

Venkat and his engineers study Mark's photograph. Okay, good. The engineers start sketching out what to do next...

EXT. CHINA - AIRPORT - MONTAGE

A bleary Teddy and Mitch blink in the harsh daylight as they step out of the terminal. They find Zhu and Guo waiting for them with an entourage. As they shake hands...

EXT. HERMES - MONTAGE

The Hermes approaches Earth, slowing rotation...

INT. HERMES - MONTAGE

Lewis, floating now due to the lack of centripetal gravity, talks on the computer to her husband, ROBERT. It's clear they love each other.

Robert holds up something he found at the flea market: an original pressing of the 1973 Abba's Greatest Hits album.

Lewis squeals when she sees it. Claps with delight.

INT. JPL - WHITE ROOM - MONTAGE

Bruce and his team oversee the Iris 2 Probe as it's loaded into shipping containers.

INT. HAB - KITCHEN - MONTAGE

"There's a starman waiting in the sky..."

Mark, now with the beginnings of a beard, inventories his remaining ration packs while he eats a potato.

He labels a few ration packs as he sets them aside: "Departure," "Birthday," "Last Meal..."

INT. HERMES - MONTAGE

Martinez talks to his wife, MARISSA. She's upset with him. But she stays strong. *We'll get through this.*

She holds her hand up to the screen. He does the same.

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - CHINA - MONTAGE

The Iris 2 Probe is attached to the booster.

INT. CNSA - MONTAGE

Mitch engages in a heated argument with the Chinese Flight Director. Zhu raises his eyebrows, glances at Teddy -- *is this guy for real?*

Teddy shakes his head, *Don't look at me, man.*

INT. HERMES - MONTAGE

Vogel entertains his WIFE and their young CHILDREN. He faces them while he flips in low-G; the kids laugh and laugh.

INT. CESA - MONTAGE

The Taiyang Shen LAUNCHES. Venkat, Mitch, Teddy, and the Chinese scientists all clap, shake hands.

INT. HERMES - MONTAGE

Martinez takes control of the probe. He pilots it towards the Hermes...

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK 3 - MONTAGE

Beck, geared up in his EVA suit, tethered to the wall, guides the probe to the docking port.

INT. HAB - MONTAGE

Mark cuts the bottom out of one of the pop-tents.

INT. HERMES - MONTAGE

Johannsen talks to HER PARENTS. They have tears in their eyes. She waves goodbye to them. *I gotta go.*

EXT. HAB - MONTAGE

Mark seals the tent to the roof of Rover 1, then pressurizes it. Checking for leaks. It's like a hot-air balloon.

INT. NASA - WORK ROOM - MONTAGE

Venkat and his engineers are doing the exact same thing -- they have a mirrored set of Mark's equipment. They try to figure out how to fit the Oxygenator into the pop tent.

EXT. MARS - MONTAGE

"He told us not to blow it 'Cause he knows it's all worthwhile..."

Mark, his beard growing fuller by the day, bops his head to the music as he drives Rover 2 across the dunes.

CUT TO:

Mark digs up the RTG. Again. Doesn't seem to mind holding a BIG BOX OF RADIATION.

INT. HAB - MONTAGE

The Hab once again looks like a Mad Scientist's workshop. Tubes, coils, drill bits, and sample containers litter the room as Mark tries to make a HEAT RESERVOIR out of the RTG.

Three's Company plays on the computer in the background.

EXT. HAB - MONTAGE

Mark attaches his heat reservoir to Rover 1. Surveys his handiwork. Okay, next step...

EXT. HERMES - END MONTAGE

"Let the children lose it, let the children use it, let all the children boogie..."

The Hermes, rotating once again, soars through space on its return journey to Mars. Earth recedes in the background...

And the music slowly FADES OUT.

EXT. MARS

As we hold in silence on the Red Planet, the title takes a little longer than usual to appear onscreen....

TITLE: Sol 449

MARK (PRELAP)

I've been thinking about laws on Mars...

EXT. HAB - DAY

And it's OVER SIX MONTHS LATER, so a lot has changed.

MARK (PRELAP)

There's an international treaty saying no country can lay claim to anything that's not on Earth.

Both Rovers are now hitched together. Pathfinder rides on top of Rover 1 like Granny Clampett. Rover 2 houses all the equipment. The whole thing looks like a Gypsy caravan made of billion dollar NASA equipment.

MARK (PRELAP) (CONT'D)

And by another treaty, if you're not in any country's territory, maritime law applies. So Mars is "international waters."

INT. HAB - DAY

The Hab is similarly transformed. All the major equipment has been stripped for parts. Sections of the canvas have been cut down, re-glued, making the tent lopsided in places.

MARK (PRELAP)

NASA is an American non-military organization, and it owns the Hab. So while I'm in the Hab, American law applies. As soon as I step outside, I'm in international waters. Then when I get in the Rover, I'm back to American Law.

INT. HAB - DAY

Mark talks directly to camera. The six months have transformed him as well. He's GAUNT. His hair is longer. His impressive beard shapes his face.

MARK

So here's the cool part. I leave this morning for the Schiaparelli crater, where I will commandeer the Ares 4 lander. Nobody explicitly gave me permission to do this, and they can't until I'm aboard the Ares 4 and operating the comm system. After I board the Ares 4, before talking to NASA, I will take control of a craft in international waters without permission. Which, by definition, makes me a pirate.

(then)

Mark Watney, Space Pirate.

It's better than winning the Nobel Prize.

INT. HAB - DAY

Last day in the Hab. Mark begins by shaving his beard.

CUT TO:

Mark organizes the boxes and boxes of experiments he was keeping alive during his time in the Hab. Among the labels we see "Das Soil Samples."

CUT TO:

Mark pulls on his EVA suit. Performs final shutdown. All the computers, lights, heaters go DARK. Silence.

EXT. HAB - DAY

Mark depressurizes the Hab. Stares at it for a moment. Thank you for keeping me alive.

EXT. ROVER - DAY

Mark opens Rover 2. We catch a glimpse inside: it's filled with frozen potatoes and scavenged equipment. Mark tosses the box of remaining rations inside. We catch a glimpse of one of the labels: "Goodbye, Mars."

INT. ROVER - DAY

Mark climbs into Rover 1. Powers up the system. *Here we go.*

EXT. ROVER - DAY

Mark rolls out of the Hab site. Heading towards the horizon.

INT. NASA - SATCON - DAY

SATELLITE VIEW: Mark's caravan makes its way around the impressive Marth Crater.

Mindy watches at her station. Venkat approaches.

VENKAT

How's our boy doing?

MINDY

So far, so good. He's sticking to schedule. Drives for four hours before noon. Then sets the solar panels. And waits thirteen hours while they recharge. Sleeps somewhere in there. Then starts again.

VENKAT

How's his morale?

MINDY

He's asked us to call him "Captain Blondebeard."

VENKAT

(thinks about that... huh)
Mars would be governed by maritime law, so technically --

MINDY

Yeah, he explained it to us.

EXT. MARS - DAY

The ROVER cuts across Mars. No music. Just quiet. Wheels turning in the rust-colored dirt.

The Rover has a max speed of 25 kph, so it's slow going. But hypnotic. Right now, it's the only thing moving on the entire planet.

ANGLE MARK. Watching the horizon.

EXT. HERMES - TO ESTABLISH

The Hermes continues on its way towards Mars...

INT. HERMES - VARIOUS

Vogel yanks a bad cable out of VASIMR 4. Looks at it, shakes his head. Tries to come up with a solution. Starts braiding together some low-gage cables...

CUT TO:

Johanssen double checks her math on the reactor power. Hmm. This isn't right. She powers it back...

CUT TO:

Martinez tries to pull free a wall panel. It won't budge. Checks to see if anyone is looking. Throws his shoulder into it. Whump. Nothing.

CUT TO:

Beck pulls the air filters free. They're filthy. He starts scrubbing them in a makeshift bath.

LEWIS (PRELAP)

We knew this would happen...

INT. HERMES - REC

The full crew is gathered in the Rec.

LEWIS

This ship is designed for a 396 day mission, and we need to make it last 898.

JOHANSEN

We're working the problem.

VOGEL

Problems. In Germany, we have a story about a little boy who carries a pot of honey. And it has leak. And every time he patches the leak, another leak. And he patches and patches but more leaks. And then a thousand wasps come for the honey and sting the boy on his face and his hands and then the boy dies.

Everyone just stares at Vogel for a beat. Okay.

LEWIS

(to Martinez)

What's wrong with your bunkroom?

MARTINEZ

It's still trying to cook me. The climate control isn't keeping up. I think it's the tubing in the walls that bring the coolant. I can't get at them because they're built into the hull.

LEWIS

Where have you been sleeping?

MARTINEZ

Airlock 2. It's the only place where people won't trip over me.

LEWIS

No good. If one seal breaks, you die.

MARTINEZ

Where else is there? The ship is cramped, and if I sleep in the hallway, I'll be in everyone's way.

LEWIS

Okay. From now on, you sleep in Beck's room.

BECK

Um. Where do I sleep then?

LEWIS

With Johanssen.

And Johanssen goes immediately BEET RED.

BECK
You know about that?

LEWIS
It's a small ship, Beck. I know
about everything.

JOHANSSSEN
You're not mad?

LEWIS
If this were a normal mission,
you'd have broken about thirty
rules --

MARTINEZ
And a few world records!

He holds his hand up for a high-five. Nobody obliges.

LEWIS
But this isn't exactly a normal
mission.

Lewis gets up. Meeting adjourned.

MARTINEZ
You just gonna leave me hanging up
here?

A beat. Then Johanssen gives Martinez a discreet high-five.

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark sits outside the rover in his MAV suit while he waits
for the solar panels to charge.

He takes in the view. Phobos arcs through the sky.

It's beautiful.

EXT. MARS - DAY

Mark's Rover Caravan makes its way down into the Schiaparelli
Crater.

IN THE DISTANCE: We catch a glimpse of THE MAV. Standing an
impressive twenty-seven meters tall, its conical body gleams
in the midday sun. As we ANGLE towards it...

INT. JPL - BRIEFING ROOM

A stack of paperwork drops in front of Venkat. We notice
diagrams for the MAV.

BRUCE

Okay, I'm gonna start by stating, for the record, that you're not gonna like this.

Venkat starts to look through the plans in front of him.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

But keep in mind this is the end result of thousands of hours of work, testing, and lateral thinking by JPL.

VENKAT

I'm sure it's hard to trim down a ship that's already designed to be as light as possible.

BRUCE

The problem is the intercept velocity. The MAV is designed to get to Low Mars Orbit, which is 4.1 kps. But the Hermes flyby will be 5.8 kps. I can walk you through the math, but once we've synthesized the added fuel, we'll need to strip five-thousand kilograms from that ship.

VENKAT

But you can do it?

Bruce gives him a look that says, *well, that depends on your definition of "do it," Venkat.*

BRUCE

There were some gimmes right off the bat. The design presumes 500 kilograms of Martian soil and samples. Obviously, we won't do that. And there's just one passenger instead of six. With suits and gear, that saves another 500. And we can strip their acceleration chairs. And, of course, all nonessential gear. The med kit, tool kit, internal harnessing, and anything else that isn't nailed down. Then we ditch all life support. The tanks, pumps, heaters... even the insulation on the inner side of the hull. We don't need it.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

We'll have Watney use his EVA suit for the whole trip.

VENKAT

Won't that make it awkward for him to use the controls?

BRUCE

He won't be using the controls. Major Martinez will pilot the MAV remotely from the Hermes.

VENKAT

We've never had a manned ship controlled remotely before.

(off Bruce's look)

But... I'm excited for the opportunities that affords.

BRUCE

If we go remote, we can lose the control panels. And power and data lines. Then we dump the secondary and tertiary comm systems.

VENKAT

You're going to have a remote controlled ascent with no backup comms?

BRUCE

I'm not even to the bad stuff yet, Venkat.

Really?

VENKAT

You better skip to the bad stuff.

BRUCE

We have to remove the nose airlock, the windows, and Hull Panel 19.

VENKAT

(what?)

You're taking the front of the ship off?

BRUCE

Sure. The nose airlock alone is 400 kilograms. And the windows are pretty damn heavy, too. And they're connected to Hull Panel 19, so we might as well take it all.

VENKAT

You're going to launch a man into space with a giant hole in the front of the ship?

BRUCE

Well... no. We're gonna have him cover it with Hab canvas.

Venkat puts his head in his hands.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

The hull's mostly there to keep the air in. Mars' atmosphere is so thin you don't need a lot of streamlining. By the time the ship's going fast enough for air resistance to matter, it'll be high enough that there's practically no air. We've run the simulations. Should be good.

VENKAT

You're sending him to space under a tarp.

BRUCE

Yes. Can I go on?

VENKAT

(thinks genuinely)

I'm not really sure I want you to, but okay.

INT. JPL - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Tim reads Mark's response while the group awaits.

TIM

Mark says... "Are you f-word-ing kidding me?"

VENKAT

Do you think he meant it like...

(excited)

"Are you kidding me?" Or more...

(angry)

"Are you kidding me?"

TIM

(doesn't want to hurt

Venkat's feelings)

It's... possible he meant it the first way?

INT. MAV - DAY

Mark stares at the camera with a look that says, "Oh *jesus* these JPL guys are gonna get me killed." But then...

MARK

Well... on the plus side... how many people can say they've vandalized a three billion dollar spacecraft?

EXT. MAV - DAY

Mark stands in his EVA suit at the base of the MAV. He holds a large wrench in his hand, almost like a weapon.

As we ANGLE IN on Mark, staring up at the MAV with a gleam in his eyes...

"Waterloo" by ABBA begins to play...

INT. MAV - DAY

"My my at Waterloo Napoleon did surrender..."

Mark tears the acceleration chairs out of the cockpit.

EXT. MAV - DAY

WHUMP. One after another, the acceleration chairs hit the dirt in a pile. WHUMP.

INT. MAV - DAY

Mark tears the control panels out of the ship. He's having fun.

EXT. MAV - DAY

WHUMP. The control panels hit the dirt. The pile is growing.

INT. HERMES - DAY

Martinez runs through a flight simulation at his station. It's not going well. "Collision with Terrain" blinks in angry red letters on his screen.

Lewis gives him an encouraging pat on the back. Try again. Martinez reboots the simulator...

INT. MAV - AIRLOCK

Mark waits in the airlock with a whole mess of stripped equipment.

INT. JPL - WHITE ROOM - DAY

Bruce and his team argue about the best way to remove an engine in the white room.

EXT. MAV - DAY

The outside of the MAV is beginning to look like the set of Sanford and Son. In the background, Mark wrenches one of the MAV's engines free.

INT. HERMES - DAY

Johanssen throws new scenarios at Martinez in the simulator. Martinez is cool as a cucumber. Johanssen smiles.

INT. MAV - DAY

Mark, in his EVA suit now, kicks the windows loose.

EXT. MAV - DAY

UP ABOVE: The nose airlock breaks free, and tumbles down towards camera, BLACKING OUT FRAME.

EXT. MAV - DUSK

FROM BLACK, we FIND MARK. He's sitting in his EVA suit on a hill slope, surveying his handiwork.

The MAV has been TRANSFORMED. The whole front has been torn off. Hab canvas now covers it. Engines have been removed. Equipment litters the area all around us. Junkyard on Mars.

"Finally facing my Waterloo..."

Mark just sits. Exhausted.

The music FADES.

EXT. HERMES

The Hermes halts rotation as it approaches Mars.

LEWIS (PRELAP)
How many times did you kill Watney?

The whole crew is present for the state of the union.

MARTINEZ

I prefer to see the glass as half full... of not murdering my crewmate. The important thing is I got all scenarios to orbit. Eventually.

JOHANSSSEN

(nods)

He's ready.

LEWIS

All right. Here's the plan. Martinez will fly the MAV. Johanssen will sysop the ascent. Beck and Vogel, I want you in Airlock 2 with the outer door open before the MAV even launches. Once we reach intercept, it'll be Beck's job to get Watney.

BECK

He might be in bad shape when I get him. The stripped down MAV will get up to 12 g's during the launch. He could be knocked unconscious and may even have internal bleeding.

LEWIS

Well, then it's a good thing you're our doctor. What's the intercept plan?

BECK

We finished attaching the tethers into one long line. It's 214 meters long. I'll have the MMU, so moving around should be easy.

LEWIS

How fast a relative velocity can you handle?

BECK

Once I get to Mark? I can grab the MAV at 5 meters per second. 10 is like jumping onto a moving train. Any more than that and I might miss.

LEWIS

We've got some leeway. The launch will be 52 minutes before the intercept and it takes 12 minutes. As soon as Mark's engine cuts out we'll know our intercept point and velocity.

BECK

Good. And 214 meters isn't a hard limit, per se.

LEWIS

Yes. It is.

BECK

Yeah, I get it. I'm not supposed to go untethered. But without my leash, I could get way out --

LEWIS

Not an option. Vogel, you're Beck's backup. All goes well, you're pulling them back aboard with the tether. If things go wrong, you're going out after them.

VOGEL

Ja.

LEWIS

All right. Let's go get our boy.

INT. ROVER - AIRLOCK - DAY

Mark sits inside the makeshift pressurized tent. He tears open his last remaining ration pack:

"Goodbye, Mars"

He eats in silence.

TITLE: Sol 549

EXT. NASA - DAY

The press room is overflowing, so reporters are camping out on the lawn. They set up cameras for their remote segments.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Teddy, Venkat, and Annie watch from the VIP room above.

ANNIE

If something goes wrong, what can Mission Control do?

VENKAT

Not a damned thing.

(off her look)

It's all happening twelve light-minutes away. That means it takes twenty-four minutes for them to get the answer to any question they ask. The whole launch is twelve minutes long. They're on their own.

Down below, Mitch takes his position as Johanssen's VOICE rings out over the COMMS:

JOHANSSEN (OVER COMMS)

Fuel Pressure green.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

New-Years-Eve-Level crowds gather in Times Square. On the Jumbotron, news reports have banners announcing the "Watney Rescue."

INT. PUB - INDIA - DAY?

People crowd into a pub in Mumbai, eyes glued to the screens. Johanssen's voice RINGS OUT:

JOHANSSEN (OVER COMMS)

Engine alignment perfect...

EXT. ST. PETERSBERG - NIGHT?

The cold is not keeping the crowds from watching the screens in the Palace Square.

JOHANSSEN (OVER COMMS)

Communications five by five...

INT. HOME - DAY

In a quaint, Chicago home, AN ELDERLY COUPLE sit on the couch, holding tight to each other as they stare at the screen.

JOHANSSEN (OVER COMMS)

We are ready for preflight checklist, Commander...

INT. HERMES

Lewis sits in her lead position in the cockpit.

LEWIS
Copy. CAPCOM...

CLOSE ON JOHANSEN, at her station.

JOHANSEN
Go.

LEWIS
Remote Command...

CLOSE ON MARTINEZ, grinning in anticipation.

MARTINEZ
Go.

LEWIS
Recovery...

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

CLOSE ON BECK as he floats in the open airlock. Beneath him, the Red Planet blazes in all its brilliance.

BECK
Go.

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)
Secondary recovery...

CLOSE ON VOGEL, clamped to the floor behind Beck.

VOGEL
Go.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

CLOSE ON LEWIS:

LEWIS
Pilot...

And finally...

INT. MAV - COCKPIT

CLOSE ON MARK WATNEY, in his EVA suit, strapped into his acceleration seat.

MARK

Go.

EXT. VARIOUS

ALL AROUND THE WORLD -- the CROWDS ERUPT IN CHEERS as they hear Mark's voice.

INT. HOME - DAY

In the Chicago home, tears spring to the woman's eyes. Her husband squeezes her tight.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)
Mission control, this is Hermes actual. We are go for launch, and will proceed on schedule. We are T minus four minutes, 10 seconds to launch... mark.

MITCH
Timekeeper?

TIMEKEEPER
Affirmative, flight. Our clocks are synched to theirs.

MITCH
(to himself)
Not that we can do anything...

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

Lewis softens a bit as she speaks to Mark for the first time since the accident --

LEWIS
About two minutes, Watney. How you doing down there?

INT. MAV - COCKPIT

MARK
It's good to hear your voice, Commander. I'm eager to get up to you.

LEWIS
We're on the case. Remember, you'll be pulling some pretty heavy G's. It's okay to pass out. You're in Martinez' hands.

MARK
Tell that asshole no barrel-rolls.

LEWIS
Copy that, MAV.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

Beck and Vogel stare down at Mars.

BECK
Vogel...

VOGEL
Ja?

BECK
If I can't reach Mark, I want you
to release my tether.

VOGEL
Doctor Beck, The Commander has said
no to this.

BECK
I know what she said. I have an
MMU. I can get back without a
tether.

Johanssen's VOICE rings out over COMMS:

JOHANSSSEN
T-minus 10... 9...

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

MARTINEZ
Main engines start.

JOHANSSSEN
8... 7... mooring clamps
released...

LEWIS
About five seconds, Watney. Hang
on.

INT. MAV - DAY

Mark tenses in anticipation.

MARK
See you in a few, Commander.

JOHANSSSEN (OVER COMMS)

3... 2... 1...

LIFTOFF.

The MAV is launched upward with INCREDIBLE FORCE. In the history of space travel, no manned ship has ever accelerated faster. Mark is SLAMMED back into his acceleration couch --

He can't even GASP -- the wind knocked out of him -- He struggles to remain conscious as the ship shakes VIOLENTLY --

MARK'S POV: staring forward, at the HAB CANVAS (which now patches where the nosecone used to be.)

As the ship accelerates, the canvas begins to RIP --

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

JOHANSSSEN

Velocity 741 meters per second.
Altitude 1350 meters...

LEWIS

That's too low --

MARTINEZ

I know. It's fighting me --

JOHANSSSEN

Velocity 850, altitude 1843 --

LEWIS

Watney? Watney, do you read? Can you report?

INT. MAV - DAY

But Mark's barely conscious -- his eyes drifting from terrified to serene as he fades --

HIS POV -- the canvas RIPS FREE....

Revealing the RED ATMOSPHERE of Mars. And as it thins -- as we rocket towards the heavens -- the red gives way to the black... And the last thing Mark sees before he drops unconscious --

Are the STARS.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

JOHANSSSEN

MAV's out of the atmosphere.

MARTINEZ

I'm getting more response now.

JOHANSSSEN

He's well below target altitude.
Velocity is good.

LEWIS

How far below?

JOHANSSSEN

Working on it -- Main shutdown in
3... 2... 1... Shutdown.

MARTINEZ

Back to automatic guidance.
Confirm shutdown.

LEWIS

Watney? Do you read?

BECK (OVER COMMS)

He's probably passed out. He
pulled 12 G's on the ascent. Give
him a few minutes.

LEWIS

Copy.

JOHANSSSEN

I have interval pings. Intercept
velocity will be 11 meters per
second...

BECK (OVER COMMS)

I can make that work.

JOHANSSSEN

Distance at intercept will be --
(goes pale)
We'll be 68 kilometers apart.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

BECK

Did she say 68 kilometers?
Kilometers?

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

MARTINEZ

Oh my god...

LEWIS

Keep it together. Work the problem. Martinez, do we have any juice in the MAV?

MARTINEZ

Negative, Commander. They ditched the OMS system to make launch weight.

LEWIS

Then we have to go him. Johanssen, time to intercept?

JOHANSSEN

39 minutes, 12 seconds --

LEWIS

What if we point our attitude thrusters all the same direction?

MARTINEZ

Depends on how much fuel we want to save for attitude adjustments on the trip home.

LEWIS

How much do you need?

MARTINEZ

I could get by with maybe 20 percent of what's left.

LEWIS

Johanssen --

JOHANSSEN

(already working it)

Use 75.5 percent of remaining attitude adjust fuel. That'll bring the intercept range to zero.

LEWIS

Do it.

JOHANSSEN

Hang on -- that gets the range to zero, but the intercept velocity will be 42 meters per second --

LEWIS

Then we have 39 minutes to figure out how to slow down. Martinez, burn the jets.

EXT. HERMES

WHOOSH. The thrusters FIRE. The Hermes changes course --

INT. MAV

CLOSE ON MARK as his eyelids flutter. He winces in pain as he slowly regains consciousness.

BENEATH HIM -- the orbiting MAV offers an unobstructed view of Mars. The great red planet's horizon stretches out forever as the wispy atmosphere gives it a fuzzy edge.

It's breathtaking. Awe-inspiring.

Mark holds up his middle finger. *Fuck you, Mars.*

MARK

MAV to Hermes --

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

Watney?!

MARK

Affirmative, Commander.

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

What's your status?

MARK

My chest hurts. I think I broke some ribs.

(then)

How are you?

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

We're working on getting you. There was a complication during launch.

MARK

Yeah. The canvas didn't hold...

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

MARK (OVER COMMS)

I think it ripped early in the ascent.

LEWIS

That's consistent with what we saw.

MARK (OVER COMMS)

How bad is it, Commander?

LEWIS
We've corrected the intercept
range, but we've got a problem with
the intercept velocity.

MARK (OVER COMMS)
How big a problem?

LEWIS
42 meters per second.

INT. MAV

We're CLOSE ON MARK as that news lands.

MARK
Well. Shit.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)
Beck, I'm starting to come around
to your way of thinking. How fast
can you get going if you're
untethered?

BECK
Sorry, Commander. I already ran
the numbers. At best, I could get
25 meters per second. But I'd need
another 42 to match Hermes when I
came back.

WATNEY (OVER COMMS)
Hey guys. I got an idea --

INT. MAV

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)
Go ahead, Mark.

MARK
I could find something sharp in
here and poke a hole in the glove
of my EVA suit. I could use the
escaping air as a thruster and fly
my way to you. Since the source is
on my arm, I could direct it pretty
easy.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

LEWIS

I can't see you having any control if you did that. You'd be eyeballing the intercept and using a thrust vector you can barely control.

MARK (OVER COMMS)

Those are very good points. Even I would have to admit it's fatally dangerous. But. Consider this:

INT. MAV

MARK

I would get to fly around like Iron Man.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

LEWIS

We should have left him on Mars.

MARK (OVER COMMS)

Iron Man, Commander. Iron Man.

Lewis rubs her face. Thinks. Hmm...

LEWIS

Maybe it's not the worst idea.

MARTINEZ

No, it actually is. The worst idea. Ever.

LEWIS

Not his part. But using atmosphere as thrust...

(springs into action)

Martinez, get Vogel's station up and running...

MARTINEZ

It's up. What do you need?

LEWIS

I need to know what happens if we blow the VAL.

Both Martinez and Johanssen straighten up. What?

MARTINEZ

You want to open the Vehicular
Airlock?

LEWIS

It would give us a good kick.

MARTINEZ

Yeah. And it might blow the nose
of the ship off in the process.

JOHANSSSEN

And... all the air would leave.
And we need air. To not die.

LEWIS

We'll seal the bridge and reactor
room. We let everywhere else go
vacuo.

MARTINEZ

But we'd still have the same
problem as Watney. We can't direct
the thrust.

LEWIS

We don't have to. The VAL is in
the nose. We just point the ship
directly away from where we want to
go.

MARTINEZ

(reading the numbers)

A breach at the VAL would
accelerate us 29 meters per second.

JOHANSSSEN

Which gives us a relative velocity
of 13 meters per second.

LEWIS

Beck -- you hearing this?

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

BECK

Affirmative, Commander. It'll be
risky, but I can make that work.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

MARTINEZ

How do we open the airlock doors?
There's no way to open them
remotely, and if anyone's nearby
when it blows...

LEWIS

Right... right...
(thinks)
Vogel?

VOGEL (OVER COMMS)

Go ahead, Commander.

LEWIS

Take your suit off.
(then)
I need you to come back in and make
a bomb.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

VOGEL

Um... Again, please, Commander.

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

You're the chemist. Can you make a
bomb with what we've got on board?

VOGEL

Probably. But... I feel obliged to
mention that setting off an
explosive device on a spacecraft is
a terrible, terrible idea.

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

Copy that. Can you do it?

VOGEL

(thinks; then)

Ja.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Lewis' voice rings out through the room:

LEWIS (OVER COMMS)

Houston, be advised: we are going
to deliberately breach the VAL to
produce thrust.

CHAOS erupts at Mission Control. *WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?*

INT. HERMES - HALLWAYS

As Johanssen races down the halls:

VOGEL (OVER COMMS)

To me, Johanssen --

JOHANSSEN

That's a weird way of saying that,
but yeah, I'm coming --

INT. HERMES - LAB

Vogel works fast. He pours SUGAR into a strong glass beaker.
Drills a hole in the stopper as Johanssen enters --

JOHANSSEN

Bomb?

VOGEL

(nods)

Bomb. In a pure oxygen
environment, 16.7 million Joules
will be released for every kilogram
of sugar used. Eight times more
powerful than a stick of dynamite.

He pours LIQUID OXYGEN into the beaker.

JOHANSSEN

How do we activate it?

Vogel strips electrical wires, threads them into the stopper.

VOGEL

Can you run this to one of our
lighting panels?

Johanssen grins.

INT. HERMES/MAV - INTERCUT

Mark RIPS free a jagged edge of metal scrap from what used to
be the console.

MARK

Commander, I can't let you guys do
this. I'm ready to puncture the
suit. Let's go with the Iron Man
plan.

LEWIS

Absolutely not.

MARK

The thing is, I'm selfish. And I want the memorials back home to be just me. I don't want the rest of you losers in them.

(earnest)

Commander... call it off.

LEWIS

Oh. Okay. Well, if you want us to call it off, then I guess we have to oh wait... wait a minute. Yep. I'm looking at my shoulder patch and it turns out I'm Commander. So shut up.

MARK

(mutters)

Smart ass.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

Beck floats past the inner door as Johanssen is ripping wires out of the lighting panel. Johanssen catches his arm.

JOHANSSEN

Wait --

They share a look.

JOHANSSEN (CONT'D)

Be careful. Out in space.

BECK

Be careful setting up the bomb.

Johanssen kisses his face plate.

JOHANSSEN

Don't tell anyone I did that.

Beck smiles. Closes the Airlock door behind him.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

Johanssen races back to her post.

JOHANSSEN

Increasing Bridge pressure to 1.03 atmospheres... pressure is steady, we have a good seal.

MARTINEZ

Adjustment's ready to execute.

LEWIS
Time to intercept?

JOHANSSSEN
15 seconds...

LEWIS
We sure know how to cut it close.
Beck, Vogel -- get against the fore
wall of the airlock...

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

Beck and Vogel (both suited) brace themselves.

BECK
Copy. We're good.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

LEWIS
Martinez, how's our angle?

MARTINEZ
Dead on, Commander.

JOHANSSSEN
10 seconds...

LEWIS
Strap in.

They tighten the restraints on their chairs.

JOHANSSSEN
5... 4... 3...

LEWIS
Brace for acceleration.

JOHANSSSEN
2... 1... Activating Panel 41.

She presses ENTER.

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

We're CLOSE ON VOGEL'S BOMB as the current hits it...

KA-BOOOM! The MASSIVE EXPLOSION RIPS THE AIRLOCK DOOR TO
SHREDS --

The Hermes is blasted in the OPPOSITE DIRECTION --

Beck and Vogel are SLAMMED up against the wall --

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

Lewis, Martinez, and Johanssen endure the acceleration in their chairs. After four seconds, the ship stabilizes --

 JOHANSSEN
Bridge seal holding.

 MARTINEZ
Damage?

 LEWIS
Worry about that later. What's
our relative velocity?

 JOHANSSEN
Calculating... 12 meters per
second.

 LEWIS
Beck -- you're up --

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

 BECK
Copy.

Beck places his feet against the back wall for leverage...
AND JUMPS.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

 LEWIS
Intercept range?

Johanssen stares at the calculations. *That can't be right...*

 LEWIS (CONT'D)
Johanssen.

 JOHANSSEN
312 meters.

 LEWIS
Oh shit. It wasn't enough...

 BECK (OVER COMMS)
I have visual on the MAV --

EXT. HERMES

Beck, tethered to the Hermes, sails clear of the ship. We SPOT the rotating MAV way off in the distance --

BECK

Commander -- we're still WAY TOO FAR -- I'm not gonna make it --

INT. MAV

Mark hears the news. Steels himself.

MARK

Commander. Seriously.

(then)

I got this.

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

Lewis puts her head in her hands. All out of options.

MARK (OVER COMMS)

Commander.

God help me...

LEWIS

Okay screw it. Fly like Iron Man.

INT. MAV

And that's all Mark needs to hear.

MARK

Yes.

Mark unclips his harness. Slams his makeshift knife into his suit. WHOOSH -- the air shoots out through the puncture --

EXT. MAV

And we're OUTSIDE THE MAV -- as it tumbles away from us --

Mark Watney soars out of the ship.

MARK

(having the time of his life)

I have visual on Beck.

AHEAD IN THE DISTANCE -- there's Beck, tether trailing behind him. He tries to adjust course as the two men rocket towards each other.

BECK
Johanssen -- what's my relative
velocity to Mark?

And as our SCORE begins to BUILD...

INT. HERMES - COCKPIT

ANGLE JOHANSSSEN -- knuckles white as she types --

JOHANSSSEN
5.2 meters per second...

ANGLE MARTINEZ -- on the edge of his seat --

BECK (OVER COMMS)
Copy. Adjusting course --

ANGLE LEWIS -- heart in her throat --

JOHANSSSEN
3.1 meters per second...

INT. HERMES - AIRLOCK

ANGLE VOGEL -- ready to pull back Beck's tether the second he
makes contact --

JOHANSSSEN (OVER COMMS)
Distance to target -- 24 meters --

EXT. HERMES

ANGLE BECK -- as he counter-thrusts, fires his MMU. Trying
to slow as Mark rockets towards him --

JOHANSSSEN (OVER COMMS)
11 meters to target...

And finally...

EXT. SPACE

ANGLE MARK. As he cuts through space. Free as the
proverbial bird. The Red Planet silhouetted behind him as he
leaves it behind, once and for all.

Mark grins as he approaches Beck.

MARK
It's good to see you guys.

As the score SWELLS to CRESCENDO, these two astronauts soar
towards one another, arms outstretched...

JOHANSSSEN (OVER COMMS)
6 meters to target...

JUST AS THEY REACH EACH OTHER --

MARK

Contact.

SLAM TO BLACK.

And we stay black for A WHILE. Giving us all a chance to catch our breath.

Exhale.

THEN...

The title fades in SLOW...

TITLE: Day 1

The opening notes of Mott The Hoople's "All The Young Dudes" transition us to...

EXT. EARTH - TO ESTABLISH

Home. It's never looked more warm and welcoming.

EXT. LAUNCHPAD - DAY

As DAWN breaks on the horizon, A SPACECRAFT is readied for launch.

We're not quite sure where we are... or even WHEN we are... but don't worry, all will be clear soon enough.

ANNIE (PRELAP)

The Ares 5 team will rendezvous with the Hermes approximately 48 minutes after launch. From there, they've got 414 days of space travel ahead of them...

INT. NASA - BRIEFING ROOM

ANNIE MONTROSE stands at her place at the podium.

It's FIVE YEARS LATER. Annie's a little older, a little wiser, but she can still command a room.

ANNIE

Arriving at Mars on March 30th.
Mission is scheduled for 41 Sols.
(MORE)

ANNIE (CONT'D)

Your briefs detail the research and
experiment schedules...

And the MUSIC CONTINUES THROUGHOUT as...

INT. NASA - MISSION CONTROL

The room is ABUZZ WITH ACTIVITY as they prepare for launch.

MINDY PARK takes her place at her STATION. She's moved up in
the world, now bears the title of:

MINDY

Flight, CAPCOM. Ready to begin
preflight check.

BRENDAN HATCH takes his place as the new FLIGHT DIRECTOR.

BRENDAN

Go ahead, CAPCOM.

UP ABOVE: In the VIEWING ROOM... TEDDY SANDERS watches the
activity from his solitary seat. He has his GREEN FOLDER at
the ready beside him.

EXT. JPL - MORNING

"All the young dudes... Carry the news..."

A DEER trots through JPL grounds... it's still early yet at
the Jet Propulsion Labs in Pasadena....

But BRUCE NG is awake. And he still looks as exhausted and
rumpled as ever. But he's in a good mood. He eats breakfast
with his team outside as they watch the news reports
detailing the "ARES 5 LAUNCH."

Bruce and his team laugh, make jokes with each other. One of
them tosses food to the deer.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

Five BEAUTIFUL BLONDE CHILDREN race through the house,
wearing NASA t-shirts and jumpsuits -- we get the sense this
is the Superbowl for this family.

ALEX VOGEL grabs his youngest daughters as they race past.
He scoops them up in his arms, swings them over his head.
They laugh and laugh.

INT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

The Ares 5 astronauts secure themselves into their acceleration chairs. We settle on one astronaut in particular:

WEN JIANG. *The first Chinese national to go to Mars.*

CAPCOM (OVER COMMS)
Guidance.

WEN
Go.

INT. NASA - MISSION CONTROL

ZHU TAO listens with pride as Wen runs through his check.

VENKAT KAPOOR claps Zhu on the back. Knows what a big moment this is for his friend.

INT. PARK - MORNING

MITCH HENDERSON watches his grandson run around the park. We get the sense retirement is treating him well.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

"But we can love... Oh yes, we can love..."

CHRIS BECK accepts a bouquet of flowers from a nurse. Sets them down next to the others as he checks on...

His wife. BETH JOHANSEN. Who's holding THEIR NEWBORN BABY GIRL in her arms.

Beck climbs into the hospital bed next to them.

INT. SPACECRAFT - DAY

As we hear the TIMER CONTROLLER initiate the COUNTDOWN...

TIMER CONTROLLER (OVER COMMS)
10... 9... 8...

We settle on the final member of the ARES 5 team:

RICK MARTINEZ. He grins as he feels that all-too-familiar surge of adrenaline. *Here we go again...*

INT. HOUSE - DAY

We're MOVING DOWN THE HALLWAY of a quaint house. On the WALLS: vintage albums and posters...

Donna Summer's LAST DANCE on 7"... C'est Chic... A framed top that looks like something Gloria Gaynor wore...

TIMER CONTROLLER (OVER COMMS)

7... 6...

And mixed in among the glittery paraphernalia:

The NASA Distinguished Service Medal... The Congressional Medal of Honor...

Commander MELISSA LEWIS is glued to the screen as she watches the launch. She doesn't even look up as her husband brings her a cup of tea. He gives her a loving pat.

TIMER CONTROLLER (OVER COMMS) (CONT'D)

5... 4...

INT. NASA - MISSION CONTROL

WIDE ON THE WHOLE ROOM as the team stares back at us in eager anticipation.

TIMER CONTROLLER (OVER COMMS)

3... 2...

EXT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY

"All the young dudes... Carry the news... Boogaloo dudes..."

And as we hear the countdown reach:

TIMER CONTROLLER

1...

We FIND A MAN. Sitting by himself outside on a bench. Feeling the warm sunshine on his face.

MARK WATNEY enjoys another day on Earth.

He sips his coffee. No televisions. No phones. No news reports. Just peace and quiet. For a moment.

We hear a ROAR of CHEERS erupt from the surrounding buildings.

Mark enjoys the sun.

INT. NASA - TEACHING THEATER

The young, fresh-faced recruits in NASA's Astronaut Candidate Program watch closed-circuit footage of the launch from their stations in the teaching theater. The room is abuzz -- everyone excited, hopeful to see themselves there one day.

MARK

Okay, okay calm down...

Mark enters the room. Trots towards the front.

We may notice the walls of the classroom bear the signature lessons of the Program's Lead Instructor: *Space Pirate Etiquette... It's Okay To Dig Up the Big Box of Plutonium, Sometimes... How To Make Water Out of Rocket Fuel To Keep Yourself Alive For Just A Little Longer...*

MARK (CONT'D)

We've got a lot to learn. And we don't have much time.

Mark has the full attention of his class. Everyone's favorite teacher.

MARK (CONT'D)

Let's get to work.

EXT. MARS - DAY

"Carry the news... I want to hear you... I want to see you..."

And as the MUSIC CONTINUES its refrain, we HOLD on the beauty of the Red Planet:

Sunlight finds OLYMPUS MONS, the largest volcano in the Solar System.

CUT TO:

PHOBOS and DEIMOS orbit high above the VICTORIA CRATER.

CUT TO:

VALLES MARINERIS, ten times as long as our Grand Canyon, stretches as far as we can see.

CUT TO:

And finally...

MARK'S FOOTPRINTS remain undisturbed in the Red Martian dust.

They track all the way to the horizon.

FADE OUT.

THE END

