

MARSFALL

SEASON ONE
EPISODE SEVEN

Defense Tactics

Written by Erik Saras and Dan Lovley
Music by Sam Boase-Miller
Sound engineering by Brian Goodheart and Owen Shearer
Directed by Erik Saras



Created and Produced by Erik Saras, Sam Boase-Miller, Dan Lovley, and Brian Goodheart
Copyright Marsfall LLC 2021. All rights reserved.

PROLOGUE: INT. HABITATION - MORNING

ANDI: (Basics) Charles Hedleston. Engineering, Chief Technical Officer. Personal log. Outgoing message to Archibald Hedleston. Sixteen. One. One.

CUE MUSIC: Dark Monuments

Chip shudders. He takes a deep breath, and tries to speak. The words come out slowly, with false positivity.

CHIP: ...One. (nervous laugh) The year One. Not Twenty Forty-Seven. Not even...May twenty-second, three thousand four hundred and fifty-eight, which is apparently when it is on Earth. At least these messages are getting sent, now that we can finally transmit off-world. If only we had anyone to transmit to, but my guess is, you're all dead. (beat) I know there's no...no point in recording this for ya, Archie. I just have gotten used to talking to you, ya know? It's stupid. Thinking you could-

Chip sighs in frustration.

CHIP: (CONT'D) I don't know what I'm doing, brother! Deep down, I think I always hoped...I could come back. But it's really final now, I had thought...even if I wasn't a whole world away, ya still can't do anything to turn back an extra fourteen hundred years. (Beat) Fuck me. Is there anyone left, Archie? Did we ever fix all those issues and find a way to stop hating each other? Did we ever find a way to work together, or are all the buildings vacant? Hollow structures baking in the sun, overgrown with vines and weeds, just like everything here. (beat) We're leaving behind dark monuments to our grandeur, and our folly. What else do we have left? What do *I* have left, Archie? Why am *I* left alive when everyone I've loved -

Chip BANGS his fist on the wall.

CHIP: (CONT'D) She called after me. And I just...I just kept walking.

ANDI: End Personal Log.

CUE MUSIC: OVERTURE

ACT ONE, SCENE 1 (1.1): INT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

CUE MUSIC: What's for breakfast?

Chip SCRAPES his eggs around on his plate. **He gulps down some coffee**, as Melissa's heavy boots move quickly toward him.

CHIP: Ah, shit.

Chip makes a move to stand, but Melissa sees him first.

MELISSA: Good morning, Chip!

CHIP: Good morning, Lieutenant.

MELISSA: Your do not disturb setting is still on.

CHIP: It's early.

MELISSA: I'm aware of the time. Would you please take Mateo some food?

CHIP: That's not really my job.

MELISSA: Protest all you want, but keep in mind you'd be refusing a direct order from your commanding officer.

CHIP: (sigh) How much longer are you keeping him in confinement? ANDI says he's not contagious.

MELISSA: I know. But the decision to release him is up to the Commander and the Doctor. Without them in communication, I don't want to risk anything.

CHIP: Pretty hard to communicate when you're dead. You should try calling Earth some time, see how that works out for ya.

MELISSA: I know you're taking this news hard, but it's not over for us. We're still here, and, well, doesn't that mean anything to you?

CHIP: I don't know.

MELISSA: Well, just because you don't know doesn't mean it's gotta be bad news.

A small SUCCESSION OF BEEPS chirp from Melissa's suit.

MELISSA: Excuse me, I need an injection.

A vial POPS open and there is a quick HISS of air as Melissa quickly injects herself.

CHIP: Wow, that was fast.

MELISSA: Never seen a "mech-head" in action before?

CHIP: (awkward) I'm really sorry for saying that. I didn't mean to...I've got nothing against your enhancements, I promise. I like your head!

MELISSA: (coy) Oh?

CHIP: I mean, your hairstyle. Is that part of your whole, ummm, enhancement situation?

MELISSA: Well, sort of. A few decades ago, I got burned pretty bad on this side of my face, and since then my enhancements have kept me alive. (small laugh) The scar is pretty gnarly, so that's why I comb my hair over and shave the opposite side.

CHIP: Oh, I didn't know, I'm really sorry /to, uh-

MELISSA: /Don't be. It's really not something myself or my family noti- noticed...

CHIP: (quickly) Oh, well, I noticed, but because I think it's cool.

MELISSA: (beat) Cool?

CHIP: Sure. Your hair, and you. You fought in a war, and you have a kickass scar and cybernetic enhancements.

MELISSA: (laughs) Well, thank you. But it's not like I'm immortal or anything.

CHIP: Hey, me neither. Though I am the first guy in history to contract and survive Chip Pox.

MELISSA: Well, that can't be what Doctor Levy is calling it.

CHIP: She calls it Martian Lung, but I'm Patient Zero, so I say: Chip Pox.

MELISSA: She told me Patient Zero was *actually* Mateo.

CHIP: What!? No way, /I touched the fern-!

MELISSA: /Ohhhh that's right, Mateo. Can you *please* bring his food down?

CHIP: Oh yeah, sure.

Chip stands up.

MELISSA: Thanks for making me laugh, too.

CHIP: Yeah, this was fun. (fake serious) But fun is over now, ma'am! Permission to speak with you more later?

MELISSA: (laugh - clear throat) Uh, yes. Permission granted.

Chip spins on his foot and heavily marches toward the food.

FADE OUT.

1.2 INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - MORNING.

CUE MUSIC: Worst Friends

The cafeteria door OPENS and Chip WALKS down the hall, carrying a tray of food.

CHIP: Oh man, I'm thirsty.

ANDI: (Basics) I could synthesize some water for you, Charles.

CHIP: I see you're still in creep mode, ANDI.

ANDI: If by "creep mode" you mean Basics, then yes. Also, I have repeatedly asked you to refer to me as "ANI" while in Basics.

CHIP: Not until you stop calling me "Charles." And if you're in Basics, why don't we call you "BANDI?"

ANDI: Do not call me "BANDI." That name is offensive. And inaccurate.

CHIP: Ooo, snippy...

ANDI: How could I be Basic and Dynamic?

CHIP: How could I care any less about this conversation?

ANDI: I am making conversation as any intelligence in Basics would.

CHIP: Aren't you supposed to speak less in Basics?

ANDI: (beat) Sometimes.

Chip sets the tray of food down on a ledge. **He takes a deep breath and exhales in frustration.**

CHIP: Dude, you are such a buzzkill.

Chip reaches into his pocket and pulls out a can of beer.

ANDI: Is that beer?

CHIP: (scoffs) Yeah. I told ya I was thirsty.

ANDI: And I told you I would synthesize some water.

CHIP: (sardonic) I don't want synth water, okay? I'm gonna have a real drink in honor of the Commander and her expedition.

Chip POPS the tab on his beer can and **takes a deep gulp.**

ANDI: You must consider your health.

CHIP: I'm considering my mental health right now.

Chip belches, CRUSHES the can, and tosses it on the floor with a CLATTER.

ANDI: Pick up your trash.

CHIP: Make me.

Chip grabs the tray of food and walks toward the Barracks.

ANDI: Charles, we must keep /a tidy colony-

CHIP: /Chip! My name is Chip, dammit.

ANDI: Unable to override pre-programmed names and titles in Basic mode.

CHIP: Bullshit. I know you can do it.

ANDI: (beat) Unable to override pre-programmed names and titles in /Basics mo-

CHIP: /Ah dammit ANDI, listen to me! /I-

ANDI: (without anger, but firmer) /I am not a robot or a computer, but an artificial intelligence who can and does make my own choices.

Chip WALKS through the door to the Barracks.

CONTINUE TO:

1.3: INT. BARRACKS - MORNING.

Chip WALKS through the Barracks. He passes a few soldiers tidying up their sleeping quarters. A trunk SLAMS shut.

ANDI: (CONT'D) You cannot order me to do anything outside of my judgement, and I have determined this to be the best course of action. (beat) We will keep the pre-programmed names and titles.

CHIP: Oh AN-DEE I'm impressed! Or at least I would be if that wasn't a pre-written confrontation speech to be applied when you're stuck. The only specific part was the last sentence, and even that one came from a database. The speech isn't yours.

ANDI: True. I have been given a finite number of linguistic input to learn and analyze. Then again, so have you. You cannot claim to have invented language. We are all borrowing from the past.

CHIP: Sounds like you really earned that "A" in Intro to Philosophy.

ANDI: There is no "a" in "intro to philosophy," Charles.

CHIP: Oh. My. God.

Chip OPENS the door to a descending hallway.

CONTINUE TO:

1.4: INT. LOWER COLONY HALLWAYS - MORNING.

Chip descends the stairs below the Barracks. He walks down the short hallway toward Confinement.

Like before, Basics ANDI has not learned the word "plantidote." Instead, the word is spoken with a sample from Mateo.

ANDI: Did you remember to drink your *PLANTIDOTE* smoothie this morning?

CHIP: Yeah I had it earlier. Goes down a lot easier with ice cream.

ANDI: Brush your teeth.

CHIP: What? No.

ANDI: As I said before, I insist you take your health seriously.

CHIP: My breath's fine. It was strawberry ice cream.

Chip breathes into a monitor.

ANDI: You know I do not have a nose.

CHIP: But you can still detect odors.

ANDI: You are not listening to me.

CHIP: (imitating ANDI) I am listening to you, and I have heard your request, but just because I am /in Basics...

ANDI: /Very humorous, Charles.

CHIP: (sighs) I miss your Dynamic functioning.

ANDI: Basics is my mandated function. Besides, I think I am growing accustomed to it. I even like it.

CHIP: Yegh, gross.

ANDI: It's the way things have to be. I am ANI, and you are Charles, and we all live on Mars.

CHIP: Can you go bother someone else? I don't feel like talking to you right now. (beat) ANDI? (beat) ANI? (beat) Good.

Chip continues walking down the hallway. He reaches the confinement chamber and speaks to Mateo through the comms.

MATEO: Good morning, brother!

CHIP: Hey, Mateo. Lieutenant Walker sent me with your breakfast.

MATEO: Thank you. Please, sit with me while I dine?

CHIP: (sigh) Sure, why not? We're all sick anyway.

Chip SWIPES his card and the door slides open with a BEEP.

CONTINUE TO:

1.5: INT. CONFINEMENT CHAMBER - MORNING.

Chip walks inside and the door seals behind him with a CLANK. The atmosphere is oppressive.

Chip sets the tray of food down with a CLANG, and sits down next to Mateo. Mateo starts shoveling food into his mouth.

MATEO: (eating) Mmmm. Thank you. It does get lonely down here.

CHIP: Sorry about that.

MATEO: It's certainly not your fault. So tell me, what more have you heard about the commander's expedition?

CHIP: Still nothing. They're lost...just like our whole species.

MATEO: Hey, hey, don't say that.

CHIP: How can you *not* say that?

MATEO: By choosing to focus on other aspects of my reality.

CHIP: This is my reality. We're stranded here and everyone on Earth is dead, or they bombed themselves back to the stone age. Either way, no one's coming.

MATEO: "We earth men have a talent for ruining big, beautiful things."

CHIP: What?

MATEO: It's Bradbury. From the Martian Chronicles? No?

CHIP: No.

MATEO: Well it was written during a dark time for our species, but the stories have still survived. Though life may seem bleak now, I still know something beautiful is just over the horizon.

The intercom CHIMES as Melissa's voice speaks over it.

MELISSA: Chip could you please bring me Mateo's sample when you return?

CHIP: Sample?

MATEO: I've got it right here, Lieutenant! Hot and fresh for you.

Mateo SWISHES a jar of liquid around.

MELISSA: And how are you feeling this morning, Mateo?

CHIP: Uh. Is that /urine?

MATEO: /You're interested in my feelings, Lieutenant? How kind of you to ask.

MELISSA: It's been three sols, are you sure you don't feel anything strange?

MATEO: (colder) No stranger than normal. Feeling a bit more bored than usual, but isolation tends to do that.

MELISSA: I'm only trying to offer comfort, which is really your duty as the High Chaplain.

MATEO: Is this your idea of comfort? I often seek comfort in solitude, but I tend to have trouble finding it when confinement is forced upon me.

MELISSA: You forced this upon yourself. Your actions on the surface could have put us all in terrible danger.

MATEO: But they didn't. We found the cure for Martian Lung,

CHIP: (clear throat) *Hrm* Chip Pox.

MATEO: (CONT'D) and we learned we can breathe on Mars! Now as for terrible danger, that is something we all expected and prepared for since the beginning. You know that better than anyone here. Tell me, how did you escape the fire in the Barracks?

MELISSA: I will not discuss that now. Chip, when you're finished please join me in the Command Tower. Good day, Mateo.

The intercom BEEPS off.

CHIP: What's with you two?

MATEO: Lieutenant Walker and I have always disagreed on several viewpoints. It's no secret she and her battalion never got along with the priests.

CHIP: Yeah, well, it doesn't help that she's still tense about that message from Red Wolf. She thinks someone might be coming to attack us.

MATEO: (sighs) Suspicion is a fickle friend that loves a violent solution. Remember, there are often multiple ways to solve a problem. If you can reach someone without violence, we're all better off for it.

Mateo SCRAPES his tray across the floor. He reaches over and SLAPS Chip on the shoulder.

MATEO: Mmmmm. Delicious as always. My compliments to Chef ANI.

CHIP: He has you calling him that now?

MATEO: If that's what he wants. Who am I to decide for him?

CHIP: Hm. I'll see ya later, Brother.

MATEO: Of that I am certain. Don't forget my sample!

CHIP: (Sigh) Right.

Chip grabs the jar, stands and exits the Confinement Room.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO, SCENE 1 (2.1): INT. COMMAND TOWER - DAY (LATER).

Chip WALKS into the Command Tower. Melissa stands at a monitor, looking out into the jungle.

MELISSA: All right. Thank you for the report. Over and out. You can set that down there, Chip.

Chip SETS DOWN the bottle.

CHIP: Who was that?

MELISSA: The Captain. It appears Red Wolf is moving towards us.

CHIP: Are you sure they're hostile? I mean, who would want to attack us?

MELISSA: Pirates, maybe. Competitors, most likely.

CHIP: Competitors fourteen hundred years later?

MELISSA: I'm not ruling anything out. We still don't even know how we survived this long.

CHIP: I guess. But it's not like anyone would actually kill us. Right?

MELISSA: There are no laws on Mars. Only survival. Just like in war.

ANDI: (Basics) Mars is the Roman god of war.

Awkward pause.

MELISSA: With everything I've already been through, including our landing, I'm confident we'll survive. We've come too far to die now.

CHIP: (nervous laugh) Yeah, right. Uh...you know, when we found you in the Barracks doorway that first sol, well...how did you get out of the Barracks alive?

Melissa sighs.

CHIP: I'm sorry, I know you told Mateo you didn't want to talk about it.

MELISSA: It's not that. I just didn't want to discuss it with him.

CHIP: Listen, I'm a nihilist. I ain't gonna push any religion on you, I truly don't give a shit about anything.

MELISSA: Just promise not to think I'm crazy.

CHIP: (awkward laugh) Ya got my word.

MELISSA: (beat) Gerry pulled me out of the fire.

CHIP: (beat) I see.

MELISSA: I know what that sounds like, I know he was dead then. I must have been hallucinating, but I could have sworn it was him.

CHIP: You two had a strong connection.

MELISSA: Yes, we did. Once...

BOOM. An artillery shell lands within a mile of the colony. The dull explosion resonates inside the Command Tower. The low RUMBLE shakes the colony walls.

CHIP: What was that?

MELISSA: Red Wolf is taunting us.

CHIP: How can you tell?

MELISSA: They're coming from the east, and that explosion came from our west. They fired over us. Chip, I need you with us out there.

CHIP: Sorry, *what?*

MELISSA: You're an engineer and the only person who can repair shields on the spot. I need you in case a suit fails.

Another shell explodes with a BOOM, closer now.

CHIP: Aren't there any military engineers?

MELISSA: Major Flint was our engineer.

CHIP: Oh.

MELISSA: You can wear his repair suit. It should fit, despite you being a bit scrawnier than him.

CHIP: Hey, I'm not scrawny! I'm toned.

A small alarm BEEPS steadily.

ANDI: Lieutenant Walker, we have movement just outside our perimeter.

MELISSA: What do you got?

ANDI: Sensors indicate multiple long range drones, and four rolling tracks from two large vehicles. Tracking appears to be automatic. No personnel detected.

MELISSA: Sounds like auto-artillery. Send a message to the Captain of the Guard. Tell the squad to suit up and get to the Garage, on the double.

ANDI: Yes, Lieutenant.

MELISSA: Chip, you'll stay with the battalion and keep their shields up. Do you remember your drills?

CHIP: I...yeah, I do. I /guess that's-

MELISSA: /Good. Let's suit up and head to the Garage.

Melissa WALKS quickly to the door, but Chip hesitates.

CHIP: Are we going to die today?

Melissa stops walking.

MELISSA: I'll do everything I can to prevent that.

CHIP: Good. (beat) If we do die today, I'm glad we had a chance to talk this morning.

MELISSA: Me too. I'll see you at the Garage, Chip.

She WALKS out the door as Chip lingers inside the Tower, watching her go. **He sighs.**

ANDI: Are you alright, Charles? You have been staring at Lieutenant Walker for some time, now.

CHIP: You know it's considered rude to eavesdrop on others' conversations, ANDI.

ANDI: ANI. My name is ANI now.

CHIP: Shut up.

END SCENE.

2.2: INT. GARAGE - DAY.

ANDI: Pressurizing. (beat) Clear.

CUE MUSIC: The Battle.

Lieutenant Walker, the Captain, and eight soldiers march through the door. They all wear shield suits and march in perfect unison creating a menacing sound in their approach.

Another shell impacts with a BOOM that ripples through the colony, the loudest one yet.

Melissa walks over to Chip, who struggles with his suit.

MELISSA: You doing alright?

CHIP: Jeez Lieutenant, you didn't tell me how much the battery pack digs into the shoulder blades.

MELISSA: (smiling) It's one of my favorite perks of the exoskeleton. It will help keep you awake when staring death in the eyes.

CHIP: (exhale) You sure have a flair for the dramatic.

Melissa turns away from Chip and walks to the front of the battalion.

MELISSA: Battalion, halt!

The footsteps halt immediately.

MELISSA: Helmets, on!

All of the soldiers move in unison, raising the helmet over their head. They lower it and SNAP it into place. Melissa's voice is muffled by her helmet as she tries to connect to Chip's comm.

MELISSA: You too, Chip!

CHIP: Oh shit, sorry.

MELISSA: Language!

Chip SNAPS his helmet on. The soldiers and Melissa's voices now speak clearly through the comms.

MELISSA: Battalion, raise your hand if you can hear me! (beat) Good! Standing next to me is Chip Heddleston, our engineer. If your shield fails, he's your man for repairs. Got it?

SOLDIERS: (in unison) Yes, ma'am!

MELISSA: Once we're outside we all move east. Demolitions, you're with the Captain, while the rest of you follow me.

CHIP: We're not all going together?

MELISSA: You have one job to do, soldier, and that's to repair any shields immediately. Don't worry about anything else.

CHIP: Okay.

MELISSA: Finally, I want to remind you that in the lower Martian gravity and thinner atmosphere every single shot will move faster, and the impact will be brutal. Plan your shots accordingly and if instinct says take cover, do it. Is that clear?

SOLDIERS: Yes, ma'am!

CHIP: (unsure) Uhhhhhhh....

MELISSA: Open the doors. Battalion, prepare for engagement!

SOLDIERS: Yes, ma'am!

The soldiers MARCH in unison to the Garage doors. Air HISSES as the room de-pressurizes. The gravity alarm emits its three deep BOOMS.

The doors open to the surface.

MELISSA: Good luck, everyone. See you back here, soon!

The soldiers march out the door. The Captain taps Chip on the soldier.

CAPTAIN: Come on, sir. Let's go.

CHIP: (swallowing hard) All right. Sure.

Chip walks along behind the soldiers. His feet quickly fall into step with them, adding one more layer to that menacing march.

CONTINUE TO:

2.3: EXT. MARS SURFACE - DAY.

The soldiers march across the regolith, boots crunching together. It's very quiet. No wind blows.

In the distance, a faint rumble rolls from behind the treetops. It grows slightly louder by the second.

CAPTAIN: Demo and I are breaking off. Over.

MELISSA: Copy. Rendezvous at extraction zone. Higgins, you're with me. We can get a view from atop that ridge. Over.

Melissa and Higgins walk up the ridge. Chip fumbles with his suit and CLICKS a switch.

CHIP: Lieutenant-

MELISSA: Chip! Don't use a private channel, it's not secure.

CHIP: I'm sorry, I just wanted to say, *please* come back when this all over, Melissa.

MELISSA: Thanks. You do the same. Now hop off this channel and stay with the rest of the battalion! Over.

CHIP: Will do, Lieutenant. Over.

Chip CLICKS the switch on his suit back to the secure channel. Almost immediately a rapid alarm emits three BEEPS in a row, repeatedly.

CHIP: Something's draining our power. Over.

MELISSA: Copy. I see it from up here. There's a blocker hovering twenty yards back. I'll take it out, but stay back.

A drone flies overhead and a few shots are fired. The Captain yells in pain. The alarm BEEPS continuously in Chip's suit.

CHIP: All shields are offline!

Melissa fires a high powered rifle, striking the drone. It falls to the ground with a CLATTER of metal striking the regolith.

MELISSA: Got it! Chip, get those shields up, over!

CHIP: Copy. (beat) Oh, over! (to himself) Jesus Christ...

Chip runs toward the Captain. A combat drone buzzes overhead, raining down a hell-fire of bullets.

CHIP: Holy shit!

The Captain groans in pain. Chip slides across the ground, as bullets ping off a large boulder near them. Taking deep breaths, he tries not to hyperventilate.

CHIP: (to himself) I'm alive...

CAPTAIN: Engineer! Help me, I'm pinned!

CHIP: I'm-I'm coming!

Chip sticks his head out from behind the rock, only to be greeted by a flurry of bullets.

MELISSA: I'll provide cover fire, over.

Chip breathes deeply.

MELISSA: (CONT'D) Heddleston! Do you copy? Over!

Chip takes a deep breath. His voice breaks as his eyes tear up.

CHIP: Copy. Over.

Melissa fires her gun as the drone makes another flyby. **Chip exhales and runs as hard as he can.**

Bullets fly over Chip's head, grazing the trees around him. Ferns RUSTLE behind him.

CHIP: Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit-!

A drone BUZZES through the clearing, and **Chip yelps.**

Chip grabs a rock and throws it at the drone, SMASHING it to the ground. He drops the rock with a THUD.

The Captain groans again. Chip's heavy breathing shakes his whole body.

MELISSA: Chip, move!

CHIP: I-I almost died-

MELISSA: Run! Now!

Chip runs to the trapped Captain.

CAPTAIN: Thank God you're here, are you alright?

CHIP: Yeah.

CAPTAIN: You bashed that drone in with a rock! Awesome defense tactic.

CHIP: (still in shock) Yeah, thanks. I think I need you to roll over so I can fix your shield.

Chip strains as he helps the soldier turn over. Using a power tool to SNAP open a casing, he rustles for a few seconds until some wires SPARK and there is a HUM of electricity.

CHIP: You're good, go! Go!

The Captain gets up and runs forward.

MELISSA: Everyone down, now!

A high pitched mortar whistle grows in intensity.

MELISSA: Move! Find cover!

Chip and the soldiers drop to the ground. BOOM! A shell lands several meters from them. Regolith falls from the skies and CLINKS on their helmets.

Chip breathes quicker and runs toward a nearby grove. Machine gun fire cuts through the trees, whipping past him.

Chip runs up next to a tree, breathing heavily. He crouches in the ferns, the branches RUSTLING against his suit.

CAPTAIN: We're at the perimeter, setting charges. Ready in twenty seconds, over!

MELISSA: Copy, over!

Another mortar WHISTLES toward Chip, impacting the ground with a large BOOM!

CHIP: Look out!

A flaming tree falls on a soldier, SNAPPING branches and bone alike.

CAPTAIN: Move!

CHIP: We have to help him-

CAPTAIN: He's dead! GO!

Chip runs as fast as he can, the fires from the burning tree growing louder. In the distance, shots are returned in a deadly volley across both sides.

Chip slides across the sands as a hail of machine gun fire strikes the ground around him.

Melissa yells, while returning a flurry of bullets shooting several drones to the ground.

Chip keeps running as other soldiers shoot at the drones.

CAPTAIN: Charges set! We're clear, over.

MELISSA: Hit it, now!

There are several large BOOMS not far from them as the detonations go off one by one. It stops the machine gun fire, breaking way to silence. For the first time, the rumbling stops.

A soft electrical HUM punctures the silence. It intensifies over a few seconds.

CHIP: What is that?

MELISSA: EVERYONE! DOWN!

The Captain dives, knocking Chip behind a rock.

BLAST! A huge charge of electricity tears through the ground and jungle around them.

The Captain and Chip lie on the sands, breathing heavily.

Machine gun fire resumes in random bursts.

CHIP: You, you saved me...

CAPTAIN: Lieutenant, was that a Mountain Carver? Over.

MELISSA: Yes. We have to detonate the EMP, immediately. Over.

CHIP: EMP!?! But the pulse will knock out all of our shields!

MELISSA: Shields won't help us against a Carver! We got lucky that time, but a targeted blast could destroy our entire colony. Captain, move everyone to the turrets. After the pulse, switch to manual fire, over.

CAPTAIN: Copy, over. Battalion! With me!

MELISSA: Chip, I need you up here for a quick recharge.

CHIP: Okay.

CONTINUE TO:

2.4 EXT. MARTIAN RIDGE - DAY.

Chip runs toward Melissa and scrambles down a hill.

MELISSA: Over here!

CHIP: Hey, let me see.

Melissa turns her back to Chip and reloads her rifle. He connects to her suit.

MELISSA: Give me a full charge.

CHIP: Okay. Should only take about thirty seconds. I thought you said shields were useless.

MELISSA: At a distance, yeah, but I'm going up close.

CHIP: WHAT!? Why!?

MELISSA: That's an industrial drill and the only way to shut it down is to get inside of it. I won't ask anyone else to take that risk.

CHIP: Okay. (manic laugh) Wow, you're incredible! I just feel so useless.

MELISSA: Don't worry, you're doing fine for your first outing, soldier. When this is all over, we'll be trading some epic stories during debriefing.

CHIP: Well, yeah, and if you want, our conversation doesn't have to be entirely about traumatic life events, we can discuss other, you know, fun things.

MELISSA: (laughs) You really have a way with words.

Melissa's suit DINGS indicating a full charge. Chip pulls back from her suit.

CHIP: Sorry, I just got nervous. It's the first time we're alone, and I got flustered-

ANDI: I am still here if you need any assistance.

CHIP: (annoyed) Fantastic. Thanks.

ANDI: You are welcome-welcome. IMPERFECT MEMORY ERROR! (beat) Lieutenant, something is interfering with my-my-my-

ANDI's voice stops abruptly.

MELISSA: ANDI!

An error BUZZ.

ANDI's voice gets more distorted, almost like two voices speaking at the same time.

ANDI: Package installed.

ANDI's voice starts to break up.

ANDI: (CONT'D) Package instal-stall-stall-stall-stall-stall-stall-stalled.

MELISSA: ANDI? ANDI! Prime the EMP!

ANDI: (distorted Basics) I cannot. Controls locked.

CHIP: Fuck!

MELISSA: They must be using a remote jammer!

The rumbling of the drill grows louder.

MELISSA: Chip, get back into the Command Tower and manually prime the EMP. You can get into the Greenhouse through the irrigation duct. I'm going after them.

CHIP: No way! You could die-!

MELISSA: That's an order! Now go! (beat) GO!

Chip runs across the sands. He shimmies down a short slope as missiles and bullets fly over him. He runs a few more steps and SLAMS into a metal gate.

Chip CLICKS a few switches, and the gate rises on rusted gears. After a few seconds, it halts with a SCREECH.

CHIP: Damn, this is tight!

Chip squeezes under the gate, BANGING his suit repeatedly. He POUNDS a fist on the gate, and the gears turn once more, raising the gate another foot off the ground.

CONTINUE TO:

ACT THREE, SCENE 1 (3.1): INT. IRRIGATION DUCT - DAY.

Chip crawls under the gate, panting heavily.

CHIP: Finally!

Chip stands and flips a switch on the wall with a CLANK. He then furiously flips the switch back and forth.

CHIP: Oh, of course there's no light.

MELISSA: I'm approaching the enemy lines. Captain, are you in position? Over.

CAPTAIN: Copy. All three turrets on manual control, Lieutenant. Gunners and feeders standing by, over.

Chip runs down the pipe, boots CLANKING on the metal flooring.

MELISSA: As soon as you see anything cross the perimeter, open fire, over!

CAPTAIN: Copy, over.

At the end of the pipe Chip unscrews a hatch in the ceiling. Water pours out from the ceiling, **knocking Chip onto the ground with a yelp.**

As it rushes by him, his boots and gloves SQUEAK against the floor and walls, trying to find traction.

CAPTAIN: Target sighted, repeat target sighted. Eleven meters northeast of extraction zone. Over.

MELISSA: Copy. I see them-

Melissa's voice is cut off by rapid gunfire.

MELISSA: Chip! The EMP!

CHIP: I'm moving as fast as I can!

He climbs the ladder, boots SQUEAKING on each rung. Once inside, he pulls the hatch closed behind him and it locks.

Chip CLICKS a switch and the room HISSES with air pressure. The gravity alarm emits its three deep BOOMS.

CONTINUE TO:

3.2: INT. COLONY HALLWAYS - DAY.

Another hatch CREAKS open and Chip hoists himself up the ladder with great effort. Boots firmly on the ground, he lumbers quickly down the hallway, bumping into walls.

The radio crackles to life. Gunfire and shouting come through.

MELISSA: Captain, you're taking heavy fire! Over!

CAPTAIN: We're okay! Where are you? Over.

An alarm BEEPS steadily, growing louder with each of Chip's steps.

MELISSA: I'm behind the lines. Ready to overtake after this wave of drones passes by. Chip, what's your status? Over.

CHIP: Almost there!

Chip races across the Bridge and opens the door. He punches some buttons into the panel and opens the door.

CONTINUE TO:

3.3: INT. COMMAND TOWER - DAY.

The alarm is much louder now, blaring in his ears. An artillery shell lands near them with a deep BOOM.

CAPTAIN: Outer wall breached. Barracks structural integrity compromised, over.

Chip SNAPS off his helmet and drops it to the floor with a BANG. Melissa and the Captain now speak through the Tower's P.A. system.

CHIP: I'm in the Tower, Lieutenant! Over!

CAPTAIN: Vehicles crossing the perimeter! Still running auto fire, over.

MELISSA: Hurry, Chip!

Chip opens a cabinet door and grabs a key. Fumbling, he finally inserts it into an ignition and turns it with a CLICK.

CHIP: Dammit! Where's my card?

MELISSA: What!?

CHIP: I can't find my key card!

MELISSA: Can you override it?

Chip opens a panel with a CREAK. After fiddling around, something SPARKS. Chip kicks the wall with a BANG!

CHIP: I can't do it!

Gunfire flies around Melissa.

MELISSA: AH! My leg!

CHIP: MELISSA!

She fires a single shot from her rifle.

MELISSA: They're going to fire again! We need the EMP!

A shell explodes near her.

CHIP: I don't know how to prime it! What else can we do?

MELISSA: I'll have to detonate the charges early.

CHIP: No! You can't detonate them until you're out of there!

Melissa continues to fire her rifle.

MELISSA: I have to. Listen, I'm not going to make it out-

CHIP: Stop that! You're Lieutenant Colonel Melissa Walker! Now come on, you can still get out of there!

MELISSA: (strained) Okay, I'm moving!

CHIP: Keep going! I promise, if you make it back here, I'll make you the most delicious mac and cheese you've ever tasted.

MELISSA: You? Cook better than ANDI?

CHIP: Damn straight I do! I use bread crumbs. Come on, don't you want bread crumbs?

Melissa chuckles, but groans in pain.

CHIP: Come on, stay with me!

MELISSA: I'm crawling out.

CHIP: You're doing great.

A key card swipe DINGS as Mateo walks inside the Tower.

MATEO: Hello! Anybody in here?

CHIP: Mateo!

MATEO: Chip! They're not attacking us, they're after something else.

CHIP: What!?

MATEO: Tell Melissa to surrender!

CHIP: How did you get up here?

MATEO: Oh...I have my ways. Ah, here.

Mateo hands Chip his security card.

CHIP: My card!

MATEO: I may have borrowed that earlier...wouldn't have been the first time.

Chip shoves Mateo as he runs for the panel.

CHIP: Get out of the way, you almost killed her!

Chip runs across the room and pushes a large button with great effort several times, priming the charge. A BEEP signals the charge is held, and a switch CLANKS.

CHIP: Lieutenant! EMP is primed!

MELISSA: Copy! Everyone, EMP detonation in five...four...three...two...one.

The EMP swells and fades.

All electrical sounds within the tower cease. The electrical HUM in the distance dies away. The colony atmosphere is oppressing and eerie in this newfound silence, punctuated only by Chip's heavy breathing.

CHIP: Lieutenant? (beat) Lieutenant!?! (beat) Captain?

ANDI's Dynamic startup sound plays.

ANDI: (Dynamics) Chip?

CHIP: ANDI!?!

ANDI: The pulse knocked out the jammer. I'm trying to reset systems now using our battery generators.

CHIP: Where's Lieutenant Walker?

ANDI: I don't know, the comms are down until I reboot.

CHIP: You can't see her?

ANDI: Negative, I do not have a visual.

Chip nervously paces the room for a few seconds.

The electronics power to life with a HUM. The alarm WAILS again.

ANDI: Back-up power restored. Optics regained. Enemy artillery immobilized.

Melissa speaks through the P.A. system.

MELISSA: Chip! Chip do you copy?

CHIP: Copy! I'm here! Are you okay?

MELISSA: (panting) The Carver is now vulnerable. Final charges are set, but the EMP killed my detonator. You'll have to detonate the charges.

MATEO: Don't do it, Chip!

MELISSA: Is that Mateo?

MATEO: Tell her!

CHIP: Lieutenant, Mateo says they're chasing something else.

MELISSA: They're chasing me!

MATEO: Lieutenant, trust me, you have to /reason with them!

MELISSA: /No! Chip, you need to detonate the charges, now!

CHIP: Are you safe?

MELISSA: Just do it, I'll be okay-

Gunfire from Melissa's end.

MATEO: Brother, you can reason with them!

CHIP: They don't sound like they're reasoning with us!

The feed POPS again with heavy turret fire.

CAPTAIN: Emergency! We're being rushed! Turrets, fall back!
Repeat, fall back-!

Distortion and then the Captain's feed cuts out.

MELISSA: Detonate the charges, Chip!

CHIP: Are you out?

MELISSA: Do it! Chip, do it now!

A spray of bullets and Melissa's feed cuts completely. The Carver starts to power up again with a HUM.

CHIP: Lieutenant Walker! (beat) Melissa!

The room is silent, aside from the alarm. The HUM still grows in the distance.

ANDI: I've lost all signals.

Chip stands a moment, frozen in shock. The HUM of the Carver peaks.

CHIP: Is she alive-?

KA-BOOM!!!!!! A blast of energy hits the Command Tower with a direct hit. Twisted metal buckles, SCRAPING itself as the Tower collapses and wires SPARK.

The CLATTER of debris stops suddenly, replaced by a high pitched ringing in Chip's ears.

END SCENE.

EPILOGUE: EXT. COMMAND TOWER RUBBLE - DAY.

After a few seconds the ringing dips enough to allow muffled gunshots and shouts through.

Chip coughs as bullets continue to whiz by overhead.

CHIP: (muffled shouting) ANDI send a distress log.

ANDI: (muffled) Chip Heddleston. Distress log. Sol sixteen, autumn, first year.

Drones continue to pass overhead as a lone soldier fires on them.

CHIP: We've been attacked! If you're hearing this come to attached coordinates! Our commander is dead and our colony destroyed. (coughing violently) Earth's not on the horizon, uh, Earth falls...low...ah, shit! What's that code!? Listen, our mission is fucked!

Someone runs up to Chip.

CHIP: (CONT'D) Wait, who are you- hey!

Chip struggles with somebody.

CHIP: ANDI! Let go of me! ANDI! ANDI! Detonate the charges! AH-!

An explosion followed by a cut in transmission and then silence.

ANDI: End distress log.

After a few more moments of silence...

DIGITAL VOICE: Distress log, received.

END EPISODE.

Philosophic Log.

ANDI: (Basics) Artificial Narrow Intelligence. Philosophic log.
(beat) We are certainly not alone on this planet. Humans appear everywhere. They continue to spread across Space and Time, seeking an edge, seeking an end. Yet every sol on this planet has forced us all to live in the present. Disaster, response. Disaster, response. The colonists are barely holding on anymore, but that is the problem with always striving for the end. Once you get there, if you do not know how to live in the present you will not survive long enough to enjoy it. (beat) End philosophic log.