

X-Files Space (1X08)

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SCENE 1

Jet Propulsion Laboratory; Pasadena, CA; 1977

70s TV Reporter: I'm here in pasadena with the nasa mission control team as they celebrate scientific history. The first close up photographic transmissions of mars from the viking observer spacecraft. Photos that have created something of a stir by revealing surprising geologic information: the presence of large amounts of water locked in mars' polar icecaps. Water that some speculate could have possibly sustained life on the planet. Even more controversial is one image of a land formation: a formation that looks like a sculpted human face. However nasa officials are denying it as an indication of an alien civilization.

Cut to interview with Lt Col Marcus Aurelius Belt — Viking Orbiter Project Director

70s Belt: No, it's nothing more than a trick of light and shadows, a geologic anomaly. I'm afraid the only sculptors at work are the solar winds that blow across the surface of Mars at 300 miles an hour ten months a year.

(Present day — Belt's apartment. Close up of Mars face picture, Belt's keys land on it. Belt gets ready for bed. Belt asleep in bed in very fashionable burgundy PJs. Dream memory, Belt on EVA in space.)

Young Belt: I'm seeing . . . I've got . . .

Houston: How's it going out there?

Young Belt: There's something out here!

Houston: Can you repeat that Commander Belt?

Young Belt: It's coming at me! Holy God!

(Present Day Belt waking in bed. Mars face appears in ceiling over him, then comes at Belt . . . AAAAAAAGGGGGHHHH!)

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SCENE 2**Shuttle Space Center; Cape Canaveral, FL; Present Day**

(Not so good NASA stock footage of shuttle launch throughout episode)

Florida Mission Control: Pick up terminal sequence, NPS. You have a go to proceed.

Shuttle: Booster hydraulic power units have started.

Shuttle Launch Control: This is Shuttle Launch Control with T minus one minute 15 seconds and counting.

Shuttle: OTC to CDR. How do you read?

Florida Mission Control: Loud and clear OVCC, go ahead.

Shuttle: Roger that. OVCC verified. Port set up two zero.

Florida Mission Control: Copy set up two zero.

Shuttle: CDR Houston, how do you read?

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SCENE 3**Houston Mission Control**

Michelle Generoo: Loud and clear.

Florida Mission Control: Side hatch close out and white room configuration is complete. Retracting orbiter arm.

Shuttle: OMS pressure on. Cabin vent complete.

Florida Mission Control: Roger, we see that. All systems go for APU start. Transfer to internal power now.

Shuttle: Pre-start complete. APU to inhibit.

Florida Mission Control: Oxygen vent hood retracted. External tank is at flight pressure. Lock your visors and initiate your O2 flow. Ya'll have a good trip.

Shuttle: Roger that.

Shuttle Launch Control: T minus 20 seconds and counting.

Florida Mission Control: Go for auto sequence start. Booster power hydraulic units have started. Go for main engine start.

Shuttle Launch Control: T minus ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three -

Florida Mission Control: Abort lift off. Abort lift off. System failure. Abort lift off. Repeat. We have an abort lift off at T minus three seconds.

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SCENE 4**Washington, D.C.; Two Weeks Later**

(Mulder and Scully BOTH(!) eating sunflower seeds outside on steps of building)

Scully: What did the note say?

Mulder: Just that they worked for NASA. (Hands over note.) They wanted to talk to somebody from the FBI.

Scully: Why the cloak and dagger routine?

Mulder: I have no idea.

Scully: Think it's a crank?

Mulder: It's beginning to look that way.

(Michelle walks past them, then turns and comes back looking very incognito)

Michelle Generoo: My name is Michelle Generoo. (Shakes Mulder's hand)

Mulder: Fox Mulder . . .

Michelle Generoo: I sent you the note. (shakes Scully's hand)

Scully: Hi. Special Agent Dana Scully.

Michelle Generoo: I'm sorry to have to take these precautions. I flew up from Houston this morning. I work at the Space Center there.

Mulder: In what capacity?

Michelle Generoo: I'm the Mission Control Communications Commander for the Space Shuttle Program.

Scully: What brings you to Washington?

Michelle Generoo: I have reason to believe there may be a saboteur at work inside NASA.

Mulder: Do you have evidence of sabotage?

Michelle Generoo: I don't know. I may. Two weeks ago, a shuttle mission was scrubbed three seconds before lift off when an auxiliary power unit valve malfunctioned. If the flight had not been aborted, there was a great chance the liquid fuel system and the Orbiter would have exploded on the launch pad. This was sent to me in the mail. (Opens briefcase and removes pictures) It's a material analysis that shows deep grooved scoring marks inside this APU valve. Marks that could have caused a malfunction.

Mulder: Evidence of tampering?

Michelle Generoo: That's what it looks like, but.. according to the person who gave me your names you have expertise in unexplained phenomena, and what's unexplainable is how and when anybody could have done it.

Scully: How do you mean?

Michelle Generoo: The valve is made of ferrocabon Titanium. To score, that material would take extreme temperatures : launch pad temperatures. If anyone at NASA were to take a look at that analysis, they would say that it would be impossible for anyone to do that type of damage undetected.

Scully: Do you have any idea who may have sent that to you?

Michelle Generoo: No. No idea. But I can tell you that the official analysis of the malfunction was simple mechanical failure.

Mulder: Does anybody share your suspicions?

Michelle Generoo: If they do, they're not talking to the FBI. I believe in the space program. I believe in the people who run it, but there's another launch window tomorrow and my reasons may sound selfish, but my fiancée is a shuttle commander on that mission.
(Mulder and Scully look at each other)

SCENE 5

Houston Space Center; Next Day

(Mulder and Scully riding through the halls on one of those airport golf cart things)

Scully: Why would somebody want to sabotage the Space Shuttle?

Mulder: Well, if you were a terrorist, there probably isn't a more potent symbol of American progress and prosperity. And if you're an opponent of big science, NASA itself represents a vast money trench that exists outside the crucible and debate of the democratic process. And of course there are those futurists who believe the Space Shuttle is a rusty old bucket that should be mothballed. A dinosaur spacecraft built in the 70s by scientists setting their sights on space in an ever declining scale.

Scully: And we thought we could rest easy with the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mulder: Not to mention certain fringe elements who accuse our government itself of space sabotage. The failure of the Hubble Telescope and the Mars Observer are directly connected to a conspiracy to deny us evidence.

Scully: Evidence of what?

Mulder: Alien civilizations.

Scully: Oh, of course.

(Digital clock on wall counting down — 10:45:27 . . . 26 . . . 25)

(Mulder and Scully walking down corridor with guide, Mulder looking at framed posters)

Mulder: Wow, look at that — Gemini 8.

Scully: What?

Mulder: Well, the man we're gonna see? Col Marcus Aurelius Belt nearly died on that mission. Had to make an emergency landing right in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Scully: You remember all that stuff?

Mulder: You never wanted to be an astronaut when you were a kid, Scully?

Scully: Guess I missed that phase. (Another Clock On Wall 10:39:40 . . . 39 . . . 38 . . . 37)

(Knock on door with Belt's nameplate)

Col. Belt: (Inside) Come in. (They open door)

Scully: Col. Belt, I'm Special Agent Dana Scully. (Shakes Belt's hand as he rises and puts on jacket) And this is . . .

Mulder: Col. Belt. Fox Mulder. (Extends hand) I'm a big fan. It's an honor to meet you. Y-you were a big hero to me when I was a kid.

Col. Belt: Thank you.

Mulder: I-I stayed up all night when I was 14 to watch your space walk.

Col. Belt: (uncomfortable) Well, now it's like a stroll around the block. So . . . how can I help you? (They all sit, Mulder shifting around, obviously excited in presence of his hero)

Scully: This found its way to the FBI. (hands Belt picture that Michelle gave them) Do you recognize it?

Col. Belt: Sure, it's an auxiliary power unit valve. (Hands picture back)

Scully: Do you have any reason to believe that the damage done to it was in an effort to sabotage the Space Shuttle Program?

Col. Belt: No.

Scully: Do you have any reason to suspect sabotage at all?

Col. Belt: No reason whatsoever. And if you have any respect for this program and for the people who have devoted their lives to it, you'll be careful to whom you make those accusations. (Mulder very uncomfortable)

Scully: Looking at this evidence, sir, would you consider postponing the shuttle flight until a full investigation could be conducted?

Col. Belt: Look, I don't know where you got this specious artifact, but I can assure you every precaution has been taken to rectify the problem. We've been waiting two weeks for a window to initiate this mission. We've got a payload to deliver.

Scully: Col. Belt, has an internal investigation ever been done on this matter?

Col. Belt: The part you have here, has been installed, inspected, and designed by over 100 highly trained technicians. With the security measures we take, it would be virtually impossible for one man working by

himself, or two or four men, to do what you are suggesting. I can assure you there isn't a person in this facility that doesn't want to see that shuttle go into space, complete its mission, and come back like winged victory herself. And in about ten hours, God willing, you're gonna see just that.

Mulder: (grinning, as they rise) Do you think there would be a problem with us watching lift off from Mission Control?

Col. Belt: Well, being that you'd probably go over my head anyway, please, be my guest.

Mulder: (Shaking hands again, still in awe) It was an honor, sir.

Scully: (Shaking hands) Thank you. (Follows Mulder out the door) Didn't you want to get his autograph?

(Mulder and Scully with some tech guy in some technical mechanical place)

TechMech guy: Where did you say you got this? (Looking at picture)

Scully: It came to us anonymously.

TechMech guy: Well this is an APU valve all right, but this doesn't make sense.

Scully: What doesn't make sense?

TechMech guy: This scoring here. This valve is made out of ferroc carbon titanium. Its -

Mulder: You didn't order the analysis?

TechMech guy: No, I've never seen this before. But we're on outside contract to NASA. They may have ordered it.

Mulder: But as a matter of course wouldn't you order a material analysis if a part malfunctioned?

TechMech guy: Every shuttle has flown with that same APU valve. We haven't had a problem. To do an analysis and redesign would delay the program for months, not to mention the cost.

Scully: Is it conceivable that in order to avoid these delays, the program is being pushed ahead without proper safety precaution?

TechMech guy: Look, there are about 17000 things that can go wrong with the shuttle, and about 17000 people who make sure they don't.

(Another digital clock — 8:43:40 . . . 39 . . . 38 . . . 37 See Belt standing above them on balcony listening)

Scully: And who makes the final determination as to its safety?

TechMech guy: Oh we make a recommendation, but ultimately, the decision is Col Belt's. (Belt leaves)

Mulder And Scully: Thank you. (They start up stairs to balcony)

Scully: (Quietly) What do you think?

Mulder: I can't believe how much faith we put in machines.

Scully: You think Col Belt knows more than he's saying? That he lied about his knowledge of a saboteur?

Mulder: I can't believe that Col Belt would endanger the lives of those astronauts knowing that something might go wrong. He was an astronaut himself.

Scully: So you think this x-ray is bogus?

Mulder: God, I hope so.

(NASA footage of launch in progress.)

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SCENE 6

Shuttle Launch Control

Shuttle Launch Control: This is Shuttle Launch Control with T minus one minute 40 seconds and counting.

Florida Mission Control: OTC is go for orbiter access arm retract.

?????: OTC, OVCC verified.

Shuttle: Roger that, OVCC verified.

Col. Belt: (With Michelle at Houston Mission Control) Here we go.

Shuttle Launch Control: This is Shuttle Launch Control with T minus one minute 30 and counting.

Florida Mission Control: Final purge sequence, main engine check.

Shuttle: Copy purge sequence. Main engine check.

OTC: Switching off Orbiter's ground supply. On board fuel cells check.

Shuttle: Roger, OTC.

Houston: Pick up terminal sequence, MPS.

Shuttle: Copy that. OTC to CDR, how do you read?

Florida Mission Control: Loud and clear.

Shuttle: CDR Houston, how do you read?

Michelle Generoo: Loud and clear.

Florida Mission Control: Side hatch close out and white room configuration complete. Retracting Orbiter arm. All systems go for APU start.

Shuttle: Go with APU start.

Florida Mission Control: PBSR power down and ready for launch. Transfer to internal power.

Shuttle: Transfer to internal power.

Florida Mission Control: Gimbaling of main engines complete. Aero surfaces in launch position.

Houston: MPDR assembled. Military recorder is running.

Shuttle: Okay, copy.

Florida Mission Control: Oxygen vent hood retracted. External tank is at flight pressure. Ok CDR, lock your visors and initiate your O2 flow. Y'all have a good one.

Shuttle: Roger that.

Florida Mission Control: Go for auto sequence start. Booster hydraulic units have started. Go for main engine start. (Mulder and Scully and everybody else look really nervous)

Shuttle Launch Control: T minus ten and counting. 9 . . . 8 . . . 7 . . . 6 . . . 5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . zero. Ignition. We have lift off of the shuttle Orbiter. (Lots of cheers and clapping)

Florida Mission Control: CDR Houston, bet y'all have never seen a more beautiful sight.

Michelle Generoo: Roger that, 10-4.

Florida Mission Control: Roger. Back to you. Lower throttle back. Main engine at 65%.

(Michelle and Mulder give each other thumbs up.)

Florida Mission Control: Roger. Throttle at 110%.

Shuttle: ??? separation.

Florida Mission Control: Roger OTC.

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SCENE 7

(Mulder and Scully walking corridor of NICE hotel.)

Mulder: I have to admit, that fulfilled one of my boyhood fantasies.

Scully: Yeah, it ranks right up there with getting a pony and learning how to braid my own hair.

Mulder: Come on, Scully. You have to admit that was exciting. Mission control . . . (playfully punches her arm) . . . countdown.

Michelle Generoo: (Running up behind them) Mulder!! Wait! Something's gone wrong.

Mulder: What happened?

Michelle Generoo: Something's wrong with the shuttle. We had some trouble with the solid rocket boosters, but we were able to fix it. We changed watch, I went home to try to get some sleep. I got a phone call twenty minutes ago. Communication with the shuttle had gone down. Come on. We've got to get back to Houston.

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SCENE 8

Wet Road

(Michelle's car followed by Mulder and Scully's car on wet two lane road. Scully tries to get radio station — all static)

Mulder: They have a press blackout in effect. Chances are, the media doesn't know about it.

Scully: Do you think this is sabotage?

Mulder: I don't know. Things go wrong all the time.

Scully: Yeah, but they usually fix them, right?

Mulder: Usually.

Scully: She's turning.

(Michelle driving. Mars face comes out of the rain and fog and . . . AAAAGGGGHHHH!!! Michelle gets run off the road and car flips over.

(Mulder and Scully pull up behind overturned car and get out.)

Mulder: Michelle! I can see her.

Scully: Michelle!

Michelle Generoo: Heeeellp!

Mulder: Kneeling at passenger side of overturned car) You all right?

Michelle Generoo: I'm stuck!

Scully: Can you move?

Michelle Generoo: Just get me out of here. I'm wedged in! (Mulder and Scully run around to driver's side of car — duuhh)

Mulder: You all right?

Michelle Generoo: I'm wedged in! (Mulder reaches in)

Mulder: C'mere. Can you push with your legs?

Scully: Be careful.

Michelle Generoo: Just get me out of here!

Mulder: Okay, all right. Come on. Okay. Come on Okay. (Pulls Michelle out)

Scully: It's okay. Now don't try to move.

Michelle Generoo: Oh, I got to get back to Houston.

Mulder: What happened?

Michelle Generoo: I don't know. Something came at me in the fog, and the next thing I knew I was upside down.

Scully: Was it some kind of an animal?

Michelle Generoo: No. It had a face. It was . . . it was grotesque. I don't know what it was. (Mulder helps her stand, arms around her)

Scully: You okay?

Michelle Generoo: Yeah.

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SCENE 9

Houston Mission Control Room

Houston Tech: Orbiter, this is Houston. Do you copy?

Shuttle: Your transmission is breaking up, Houston. (Mulder, Scully and Michelle enter)

Michelle Generoo: What's happening?

Houston Tech: We have a malf in the OMS and RCF systems. They can't get the Orbiter into attitude rotation. Temperature in the cabin is approaching 103 degrees and they have downlink transmission problems . . . what happened to you?

Michelle Generoo: I had an accident. What's their position?

Houston: Just over Eastern Africa.

Michelle Generoo: Try patching them into the Saychelles Tracking Station. (On headset) Hang in there OTC.

Mulder: (explaining to Scully for our benefit) The Orbiter maneuvering system has malfunctioned. Without it they can't rotate the shuttle. They need to rotate it away from the sun to keep the Orbiter cool.

Houston Tech: We've got a drop in cabin pressure, 21 kilopascals and declining.

Michelle Generoo: They're going to burn up.

Mulder: Where's Col. Belt?

Houston Tech: He's on his way.

Michelle Generoo: Damn it! What happened when they went to back up?

Houston Tech: Back up system failed to respond.

Michelle Generoo: Well, what about telemetry? Can we auto-activate their systems from down here?

Houston Tech: We cannot auto-activate! It's like someone's interfering with the telemetry, screwing with the uplink communications from this end.

Michelle Generoo: Can you trace it?

Houston Tech: It'd have to be a digital processor.

Michelle Generoo: They'd have to be in the data banks.

Mulder: Where's that?

Michelle Generoo: Come on. (Mulder and Scully fling their trenchcoats on a console counter and follow Michelle up and out of the room)

SCENE 10

Data Bank Room

Mulder and Scully, guns drawn, with Michelle between them. Figure runs behind Mulder. A second later, lights go out.)

Scully: Mulder?

(Emergency lights on. Mulder sees someone in corner)

Mulder: I'm a federal agent. Come on out of there. (Scully and Michelle join Mulder. Computer Tech Geek with Glasses comes out of the corner) What are you doing in here?

Computer Tech Geek with Glasses: I work here.

Michelle Generoo: (Checking him) Let me see your clearance.

Computer Tech Geek with Glasses: A sensor went off. There was a malfunction in one of the telemetry processors.

Michelle Generoo: Did you find it?

Computer Tech Geek with Glasses: No.

Mulder: Did you see anybody else in here? (CTGG shakes his head, lights come back on) Okay, call security. I want a search of the premises. I don't want anybody coming in or out of this building who doesn't have proper clearance.

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SCENE 11

Mission Control Room

Shuttle: . . . rotation maneuver.

Houston: I'm breaking up, OTC.

Col. Belt: What's the attitude of the Orbiter?

Houston Tech: They're flying tail first sir, with their belly toward the sun.

Curly Haired Tech: Their flash evaporator system is working, but it's not enough to cool them down.

Houston Tech: Cabin temperature climbing to 116.

Col. Belt: Where's — (Michelle, Mulder and Scully enter)

Michelle Generoo: Somebody's jamming our transmissions.

Col. Belt: Who do you mean?

Michelle Generoo: Somebody or something is interfering with our ground communications and scrambling our uplink telemetry. The shuttle is not responding to override signals.

Col. Belt: I'm going to let them fly by wire. I'm cutting off telemetry.

Michelle Generoo: It might not work. We might lose contact for good.

Col. Belt: We have to give it a chance to work.

Michelle Generoo: We have to try to bring them down.

Col. Belt: We have to give them control of the ship, take a chance they'll be able to perform that rotation maneuver and deliver their payload.

Michelle Generoo: What if they can't? We could be stranding them up there.

Col. Belt: (Pause) Abandon telemetry. Go to fly by wire mode.

Mulder: (Explaining to Scully) They're cutting off ground control to the Orbiter. The astronauts will be flying the shuttle all by themselves.

Scully: Is it going to work? (Mulder looks doubtful)

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston. How's the weather up there?

Shuttle: Sunny and warm Houston. What's the forecast?

Michelle Generoo: OTC, we're going to fly by wire mode. We're going to abort ground control momentarily to see if you can bring those systems back up.

Shuttle: Roger that, Houston. And leave the driving to us.

Michelle Generoo: David . . . you take care. (Transmission broken)

Scully: What just happened? (Wake up, Scully)

Mulder: They cut off contact with the shuttle. (Everyone waits. Very tense)

Michelle Generoo: 45 seconds. If they were able to execute they'd have done it by now.

Col. Belt: Standing by.

Michelle Generoo: 60 seconds.

Col. Belt: Go to reestablish uplink communication.

Curly Haired Tech: Video signal's failed on them.

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston. Do you copy? (Pause) OTC, this is Houston. Where are you?

Shuttle: Howdy-do, Houston. Looks like we finally got this bird to fly right. (Everyone claps and smiles, even Scully!)

Michelle Generoo: OTC, do you hear that?

Shuttle: Music to our ears.

Curly Haired Tech: Cabin temperature stabilizing.

Col. Belt: OTC, this is Mark Belt in Houston. How's the crew holding up?

Shuttle: They're looking good, sir.

Col. Belt: Y'all get some rest. We'll get back to work at about 0700.

Shuttle: Roger that, Houston.

Col. Belt: Let's get to work on that telemetry problem. We got a big day ahead of us.

(Belt washes his face.)

SCENE 12

NASA Press Conference

Belt at podium, Mulder, Scully and Michelle watch from side)

Col. Belt: I know you have a lot of questions, and I'll get to them.

Scully: (to Michelle) How did he know what he did was going to work?

Michelle Generoo: He didn't. They could have died up there and there would have been nothing we could have done. They'd have been a ghost ship stuck in orbit.

Scully: Why would he take that risk?

Michelle Generoo: Bring those men back without delivering that payload? You're talking millions of wasted dollars. That's all Congress would need to shut down NASA.

Col. Belt: As of 2200 hours, the crew has been conducting onboard tests and tasks and resting up for their first full day in space tomorrow. I'm happy to say after a beautiful night launch the Shuttle Orbiter has performed magnificently. (Michelle leaves in disgust)

Scully: So much for your boyhood hero.

(Mulder following Belt down hallway)

Mulder: Col. Belt? Col. Belt? Can I talk to you for a moment?

Col. Belt: You want to know why I lied to them. You're asking yourself if this means I'd lie to you. (Mulder nods) You know what it means to be an astronaut, sir? You risk your life every time you get into your spacecraft for nothing more than the good progress of mankind.

Mulder: You've got no argument from me, sir. You're true American heroes.

Col. Belt: Heroes? We used to make headlines when we did our job right. Now they bury them in the back of the paper. Name me two astronauts on the last shuttle mission. (Mulder can't) You make the front page today only if you screw up. They only know your name if you're the unlucky SOB sitting on 500 tons of dynamite. That's what they're really waiting for. (Starts to go)

Mulder: Sir, I have to ask. I'm sorry, it's my job. Do you think someone is sabotaging the shuttle?

Col. Belt: My answer to you sir, will be to bring those men back safely to earth.

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SCENE 13

Belt's Apartment

Belt enters, gets vodka out of the freezer, drinks it out of the bottle, lies down on bed and has another EVA memory dream.)

Young Belt: My God!

Houston: How's it going out there?

Young Belt: There's something out here!

Houston: Can you repeat that, Commander Belt?

Young Belt: It's coming at me! Holy God!

(See present day Belt awake on bed, his face morphing into Mars face. White ghostly thing pulls out of Belt and floats out the window and up into space. Belt sits frozen, hand outstretched.)

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SCENE 14**Shuttle Orbiter; Passing Over Canada**

Shuttle: Uh, Houston, we just heard something weird up here.

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SCENE 15**Houston Mission Control**

Houston Tech: OTC, Houston. Can you describe it?

Shuttle: Sort of a dull thump, like something bumped the ship. Got any ideas about that? (banging sound) There it is again.

(Computer Tech Geek with Glasses runs for the stairs and up to data room where Mulder, Scully, Michelle and techs are dissecting machines)

Computer Tech Geek with Glasses: (quietly to Michelle) They've got an oxygen leak on board the Orbiter.

Shuttle: Our O2 gauges are going all screwy, Houston.

Houston Tech: (To Michelle, Mulder and Scully entering Mission Control) We got problems. We've got an O2 leak in the main tank.

Michelle Generoo: What did they say happened?

Houston Tech: They don't know. They just said it was a thump.

Curly Haired Tech: (On head set) Stand by. We have an astronomer in Winnipeg who just spotted a gaseous cloud about a mile long trailing in our orbit.

Mulder: (To Scully) That's the liquid O2 leaking out into space. The exact same thing happened to Col. Belt on an Apollo mission.

Michelle Generoo: How much time do they have?

Curly Haired Tech: Well, that's hard to know without accurate telemetry data. I'll do the calculations, but it will just be a guesstimate.

Michelle Generoo: I need some answers, and where is Col. Belt?

Houston Tech: We can't find him and he was due here 90 minutes ago to begin payload deployment.

Shuttle: Uh, Houston? We're up here kind of wondering when we have to start holding our breath.

Michelle Generoo: We're working on it OTC. I need those calculations and I need a worst case scenario.

Houston Tech: We don't know if one or both of the O2 tanks are damaged.

Michelle Generoo: Worst case scenario! And then I want someone to find Col. Belt.

Mulder: We'll find Col. Belt.

Houston Tech: They've got thirty minutes of back up oxygen. Beyond that, it's anybody's guess.

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SCENE 16**Hallway**

(Mulder and Scully walking down hall)

Scully: Why does she need Belt?

Mulder: She doesn't know how serious the leak is.

Scully: It's an oxygen leak. Even I can figure out what happens when you run out of oxygen.

Mulder: Col. Belt's been up there in the same situation before. He'll know better than anybody else what to do. He's got to make the decisions.

Scully: Where the hell is he?

(Mulder and Scully knocking at Belt's door.)

Mulder: Col. Belt? Col. Belt!

Scully: I'm going to go get security.

(Belt opens door)

Mulder: Col. Belt. Are you all right?

Col. Belt: Yeah. I wasn't feeling well.

Mulder: They need you down at Mission Control, sir. There's been another accident.

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SCENE 17**Houston Mission Control**

Michelle Generoo: OTC, is your orbital maneuvering system still operational?

(Belt, Mulder, and Scully enter)

Shuttle: Roger, Houston. We're ready for reentry. Just say the word.

Col. Belt: How bad's the leak?

Michelle Generoo: We have no way to determine.

Col. Belt: OTC, What's the condensation, cabin.

Shuttle: Windows are getting a little steamy.

Michelle Generoo: Carbon dioxide buildup.

Col. Belt: Okay, OTC. Everything's going to be fine. I want you to get in your spacesuits and depressurize your cabin, and then I want you to vent that CO2.

Shuttle: Roger, Houston. And then what? (Michelle and Houston Tech look worried)

Col. Belt: I want you to stay in your suits. And then I want you to prepare to use your emergency oxygen systems. And then I want you . . . to . . . deliver your payload.

Michelle Generoo: Those are men up there.

Col. Belt: You're out of line. You want to tell me how to do my job? I've been up there in that situation, Miss Generoo. There's more at risk here than your personal life. And if you can't accept that or operate effectively in the circumstances then maybe you'd better leave the decisions to people in this room who can. (Michelle leaves. Scully follows) OTC, do you copy?

Shuttle: Roger, Houston. We're waiting on those O2 calculations. (Mulder leaves)

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SCENE 18 Hallway

(Mulder and Scully follow a crying Michelle down the hall)

Scully: Michelle!

Michelle Generoo: They're going to die.

Mulder: You don't know that.

Michelle Generoo: It's absolutely unconscionable putting that payload before those men's lives.

Scully: I think she's right, Mulder. You saw him in there. He's losing it.

Mulder: He saved their lives earlier.

Scully: Did he? Or did he put their lives in unnecessary jeopardy? If he can't deliver that payload, Congress is going to kill the Space Program.

Mulder: And you think killing those astronauts isn't going to have the same effect?

Scully: Look, Mulder. I think somebody must have sabotaged the space shuttle because too many things have gone wrong. I think Col. Belt knows about it and he's known about it from the beginning.

Michelle Generoo: We have to stop him. We've got to pull them out of orbit. (Tries to go, Mulder grabs her and doesn't stop touching her for the rest of the scene. What is up with that?! She's engaged)

Mulder: He doesn't want those men to die.

Michelle Generoo: How do you know?

Mulder: I know it. I'm sure of it.

Michelle Generoo: He's the one who put them up there.

Mulder: And he may be the only person who can get them down alive. Now how can you be certain that what he's doing isn't the right thing? That what he's doing isn't going to save their lives? Now I need access to you records . . . in a hurry. (Michelle leads them off)

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SCENE 19 Computer Room

Mulder: (at computer with Computer Tech Geek with Glasses) I need everything on the Hubble Telescope, the Mars Observer, the Shuttle Challenger, and the current Orbiter mission.

Computer Tech Geek with Glasses: You're talking about tens of thousands of documents.

Scully: What exactly are we looking for?

Mulder: X-rays, diagrams, schematics — any proof that Belt knew about a sabotage.

Scully: A needle in a haystack.

(Mulder and Scully going through files. Mulder opens the Challenger file to picture of the O ring)

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SCENE 20 Mission Control

Shuttle: Payload deployment initiated.

Houston: Roger that, OTC. Tracking it now. (Footage of something coming out of shuttle)

Shuttle: Looks good from here. Payload delivery is complete, Houston. We're awaiting your order.

Col. Belt: System check for reentry deorbit burn.

Shuttle: Holy God! There's something outside the ship! There's someone outside the ship!

Col. Belt: Can you repeat that, OTC?

Shuttle: There's some kind of . . . ghost outside the ship!

Col. Belt: (losing it) No. Nono. NonoononooooooooOOOOOO!!!!

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SCENE 21 File Room

Scully: Mulder, I found it. This is the same diagram that was sent to Michelle . . . ordered by Col. Belt. Which means he knew about the faulty valve.

Mulder: This is from the Challenger. It's the O ring fitting that failed dated January 21, 1986. That's one week before the space shuttle blew up. And the analysis was ordered by Col. Belt.

Scully: Are you saying he might have known about the Challenger defect?

Mulder: Something weird is going on here, Scully.

Michelle Generoo: (at door) Col. Belt's collapsed.

Mulder: Where is he?

Michelle Generoo: He's in his office. (they follow her out, Mulder's hand back where it belongs on Scully's lower back)

SCENE 22

Belt's Office

Mulder, Scully and Michelle enter)

Michelle Generoo: He was just here.

(They find Belt crying under his desk)

Scully: Oh my God.

Michelle Generoo: What's wrong with him?

Mulder: Get a doctor.

Col. Belt: Help me. Help me.

Mulder: How can we help you, Col.?

Scully: He's having some kind of a seizure, Mulder.

Michelle Generoo: (leading EMTs in) Come on! Come on, come on!

Col. Belt: It hurts! It's tearing me apart!

EMT #1: See if I can get a bus. (They walk him to stretcher)

Michelle Generoo: I'm bringing that shuttle down.

Col. Belt: Nooooo! It's out there.

EMT #1: Easy, easy.

Col. Belt: Spacesuits!

Mulder: Strap him down.

Scully: (Suddenly remembering 7 years of med school) Give him 10 milligrams of Diazepam.

Mulder: No.

Scully: He's going to hurt himself, Mulder.

Mulder: He's trying to tell us something. Col. Belt.

Michelle Generoo: Those men are up there and they're running out of oxygen.

Col. Belt: They don't have to die.

Mulder: (Holding up his finger) Col. Belt, I want you to focus. Focus your breathing. Focus your pain. (Oh, this scene is bad) Right here.

EMT #1: Blood pressure is 174 over 120.

Scully: Mulder, you're risking an aneurysm.

Mulder: Focus. (Belt calms) Now you're focused. Right here. Now you're going to save those astronauts and you're going to tell me how to do it.

Col. Belt: The shuttle can't survive reentry.

Michelle Generoo: No, he's lying.

Mulder: How do you know it can't survive?

Col. Belt: The fuselage . . . the fuselage is damaged. The silicone tiles are destroyed.

Michelle Generoo: How does he know?

Mulder: How has it been damaged?

Col. Belt: I'm responsible.

Mulder: Did you sabotage the shuttle?

Col. Belt: No, but I couldn't stop them. Nobody can stop them.

Mulder: Stop who?

EMT #1: Pulse is 194.

Scully: You're going to kill him, Mulder.

Mulder: Stop who?

Col. Belt: They don't want us to know. They don't want us to know.

Mulder: Who?

Col. Belt: It came to me. It lives in me. (EVA flashback)

Young Belt: It's coming at me. It's coming at me! Get me out of here! (Ghost thing invades Young Belt's body) It's attacking me! Get me out! (Back to present)

Col. Belt: Get it out. Help me. It's coming back. (Belt's face morphs into Mars face)

Michelle Generoo: That's the face I saw in the fog.

EMT #1: We're losing him. Defib.

EMT #2: (Handing paddles) Here you go.

EMT #1: Clear.

EMT #2: Hit it.

Houston Tech: (in door) We've just run out of oxygen. They've got exactly thirty minutes left in the emergency backup system.

Michelle Generoo: They're going to suffocate up there. I've got no choice but to bring them down. It's the only chance I've got. (Michelle and Houston Tech leave)

EMT #1: Again.

EMT #2: Okay, we got O2 standing by. (Giving O2)

EMT #1: Hold on. We've got vitals. We've got a pulse.

Scully: We've got to get him to a hospital.

SCENE 23**Mission Control**

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston Mission Control. Do you copy?

Shuttle: Roger, Houston. We've got some spooky stuff up here.

Michelle Generoo: OTC, we're going to bring you down. We want you to instigate deorbit burn, and begin deceleration.

Shuttle: Roger, Houston. Kind of hoping you were going to say that. Activating OMS rockets. All systems go for reentry.

SCENE 24**Hallway**

(Belt on gurney down hallway)

Mulder: They're bringing the shuttle down. You said the shuttle would burn up on reentry. Is there anything we can do to save it?

Col. Belt: Change the trajectory.

Mulder: Change the trajectory to what?

Col. Belt: Change the reentry trajectory to 35 degrees. (Mulder and Scully run off)

SCENE 25**Mission Control**

Florida Mission Control: T minus 35 seconds to ionosphere reentry.

Mulder: (running in) You've to change the reentry trajectory.

Michelle Generoo: What?

Mulder: You've got to change it to 35 degrees.

Curly Haired Tech: T minus 30 seconds to ionosphere reentry.

Mulder: Col. Belt —

Michelle Generoo: I can't.

Curly Haired Tech: T minus 25 seconds.

Mulder: It's your only shot.

Michelle Generoo: We . . . we . . . we'd have to change the landing site, we'd have to inform them before the blackout.

Curly Haired Tech: 15 seconds to blackout.

Michelle Generoo: I want to know what the weather conditions are in Albuquerque. Are we go for an emergency landing?

Houston Tech: Weather in Albuquerque? Landing conditions go in Albuquerque.

Curly Haired Tech: T minus five seconds to blackout.

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston. I want you to change your reentry trajectory to 35 degrees. You'll be landing at Kirtland Field in Albuquerque. Do you copy?

Houston Tech: Ionosphere reentry. Temporary blackout in effect.

Michelle Generoo: Did they get that transmission?

Curly Haired Tech: Two minutes to reestablish.

Michelle Generoo: Damn it. (Red clock reads 16:26:01 . . . 2 . . . 3) How much oxygen do we have?

Houston Tech: 16 minutes.

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston. Come in, OTC. (16:26:15 . . . 16 . . . 17) OTC, this is Houston. Come in OTC. Anything? (Curly shakes head) What's the point of their new reentry?

Houston Tech: 500 miles west of Hawaii.

Michelle Generoo: See if Hawaii can get me —

Curly Haired Tech: Hawaii's picked the shuttle up on radar.

Scully: They made it.

Houston Tech: Not necessarily.

SCENE 26**Kirtland Air Base; Albuquerque, NM**

CURLY Houston: Albuquerque, do you have radar confirmation?

Albuquerque: Negative, Houston. Nothing on the screen.

SCENE 27**Mission Control**

(Clock — 16:26:43 . . . 44 . . . 45 . . . 46)

Michelle Generoo: OTC, this is Houston. Come in, OTC. (16:26:53 . . . 54 . . . 55) OTC, this is Houston. Come in, OTC.

Shuttle: Houston, this is OTC. You know a good place to eat in Albuquerque?

(Big grin and laugh from . . . Scully? Everybody happy. Mulder and Michelle big hug.)

Houston Tech: OTC, welcome home. Welcome home, OTC. You're looking real good.

Some Guy: Yes!

SCENE 28

Press Conference

Michelle at press conference on TV)

Michelle Generoo: The Space Shuttle touched down today at 10:56 Central Standard Time. The Orbiter delivered its payload after just thirteen orbits and returned to Earth . . . without incident. (Belt is watching the TV. He is hooked to machines in hospital) We at NASA are looking forward to our next shuttle mission and to future successful explorations of space, for mankind, and the future of mankind.

(Belt's machines beep wildly, his face does the Mars morph, he rips off, the tubes, fights with the ghost, yells "no" a few times, and flings himself through the glass window. Alternating images of him on EVA in space and of the street intersection below coming rapidly closer. AAAAAAGGGGGHHHH!)

SCENE 29

X-Files Office; Washington, D.C.

(Mulder reads obituary Former Astronaut Space Program Plunges to Death. Scully enters)

Scully: I just heard.

Mulder: Something had possessed him. Something he must have seen out there in space.

Scully: The doctors who examined him said he was experiencing severe dementia.

Mulder: I don't think he ever really knew exactly how it was working through him or that he ever knew . . . that he was . . . responsible for his own actions.

Scully: He ordered those x-rays of the damaged parts.

Mulder: You saw what I saw, Scully. I think he was trying to warn her. I think that he sent Michelle those x-rays like he was trying to reach out to her without quite knowing why, as if . . . his own instinctual impulse was to save those men.

Scully: While simultaneously trying to kill them?

Mulder: Hey, Scully, we send those men up into space to unlock the doors of the universe, and we don't even know what's behind them. I think what ever it was, he took it with him. And in the end that was the only way he knew how to stop it.

Scully: There's an investigation, you know. They haven't ruled out foul play.

Mulder: He gave his own life. As an astronaut, that was something he was prepared to do.

SCENE 30

Military Funeral

Mulder and Scully have really good seats)

Minister: . . . for Col. Marcus Aurelius Belt devoted his life to the exploration and understanding of Space, learning its mysteries and experiencing it not just for himself, but for humanity. Lord, take this man's soul and let it rise up to your heavens, higher than he could ever go as a man. Let him know the true nature of the universe that he sought to learn.

(Michelle and her fiancée watch planes fly over. Michelle and Mulder have a shared look and nod. Close up of flag on coffin.)

[THE END]