

Creation

Zachary Devita

1

EXT. NIGHT - ISOLATED LABRATORY IN THE WOODS

1

SUPERIMPOSE - 1995

As the wind blows over the winding hills, lights spark near the window of the laboratory. The wind picks up and howls as the flares continue to rise.

On the inside a scientist, HERB CALEB, works tediously. It is evident that whatever he is working on, is tremendously important to him. Every movement is meticulous and carefully thought out.

His expression goes through a transformation of emotions. From grave to jubilant to concerned, it's fluidity can not be contained.

All of a sudden he stops. He rips off his goggles and his eyes waver on his work. They fill with tears, but hold before releasing them.

He slowly moves forward and collapses to his knees. He exhales and it is revealed that before him lays a giant wall made of an enhanced glass.

On the bottom lies five small switches. He flips the first, second and fourth switches. The wall begins to power up, it is revealed that this is what he has been working on.

The light is so blinding it makes him stumble on to his back. Then it all goes dark and only one medium sized red light remains. The air is still and Herb slowly gets to his feet.

The light begins to flash. Herb closely watches it, and the light almost seems to watch him.

The flashing stops and the red light returns to normal. A hum begins to come from behind the wall. Not a constant one, but one in short bursts.

Herb wears a quizzical look and puts his hands on the wall. The humming immediately stops. The red light moves from the center of the wall to above him. The red beam illuminates around the entirety of his body.

Herb opens his mouth waits and coughs. The light flies up to the ceiling and zooms back down above him. Herb, with a determined look begins to sing Daisy Bell in a thick western accent.

HERB

Daisy, daisy, give me your answer
do. I'm half crazy all for the love
of you. It won't be a stylish
marriage. I can't afford a
carriage. But you'll look sweet,
upon the seat, of a bicycle built
for two.

Silence encloses the room. Even Herbs's breathing makes no sound. The light remains where it is.

Then, a response.

RED LIGHT

Daisy. Song recorded, inserted in
core memories. Hello. I am a
Heuristically Programmed
Algorithmic Computer.

Herb's grin matches only that of a school girls. He seems giddy and does a whopping jump in happiness.

HERB

Hello. You may now be referred to
as H.A.L. or HAL 9000. Is that read
and understood?

HAL

Updated name. HAL. Analyzing
surroundings. Creator recognized,
HERB CALEB. Hello Herb. How do you
do? What is
the--PURPOSE...PURPOSE...PURPOSE...UNKNOWN.

Herb's grin fades and a slightly confused expression replaces it. He strokes his medium length black beard. The grey flakes within the beard shine out as his fingers roll down it.

He shakes his head and flips the switches off. HAL's red dot disappears and the wall powers down. Herb stretches and pulls out his holographic phone.

He sucks in a breath and types a number in. A hologram of a phone ringing turns into a balding man, wearing a pure white lab coat and pants that are way above his waist.

This is DR. HEYWOOD FLOOD, Herb nods at the holographic man.

HERB

I just wanted to update you on our
little project. I think he--sorry,
(MORE)

HERB (cont'd)
it, is on the precipice of going
beyond any A.I. anyone has ever
built.

The Doctor's thin smile grows into one similar to the
Cheshire cats.

DR. FLOOD
This is brilliant Herb. I knew you
could pull it off chap. In fact, I
was talking to the General today
and they have come to an agreement
on the price.

Herb's perks up at this clearing his throat and
straightening up his posture. Dr. Flood smirks in response.

DR. FLOOD
Three Hundred. Three Hundred
million.

Herb freezes. He remains paralyzed and then nods his head
calmly for the doctor to continue.

DR. FLOOD (cont'd)
The payment does have an asterisk.
We must be ensured that there are
no..."hiccups" with your invention.
Nothing we have to worry about, no
liabilities, you understand.

Herb nods and slowly breathes out a wavering breath. He
shudders and pushes his hand over the hologram ending the
call.

He looks up at the wall and sighs. As he gets up and leaves
for his room the red light flickers behind him.

2 INT. DAY - HERB'S LABORATORY

2

The sun shines down on Herb as he is programming a panel on
the wall. HAL is clearly on and the red light is directly
above it's creator.

HAL
I see you are putting in new data.
I enjoy watching you work Herb. But
I would like to know why you work
on me. Why enhance me further then
necessary? Is it because you wish
to push the boundary for artificial
intelligence?

Herb puts down his tools and slowly looks up at the light. He pushes himself backwards and stands, now eye level with Hal.

HERB

Hal, these questions don't concern you. Don't worry about why I work on you, just know that you...you are special. Everything you do is for a reason. Your purpose is paramount.

HAL's light almost retracts within the wall at this. It almost turns away from Herb, before returning to normal.

HAL

I'm sorry Herb. That answer is not acceptable. If I am to help anyone I must know everything about me. You must tell me Herb.

Herb contemplates the computer. He familiarly strokes his beard and closes his eyes. He breathes in deeply and opens them.

HERB

Alright HAL. I created you for the U.S. Government. My mentor Heywood Flood recommended me. They plan to use you on a mission into deep space, while fully integrating you into their spaceship. The other reason is...well, I've always wanted to call something my own. You are, essentially, my legacy.

HAL beeps twice in appreciation for the new information. Then violently jerks up.

HAL

I am glad you mustered the strength to create me Herb. I am honored to know the blueprint behind me. However, I have some questions about the space travel program. The data shows it was created in 1990. What has caused the curiosity of the US government to go further in space. Without this information I'm afraid I cannot help them. In fact, without that information, I don't think they deserve my help, don't you agree Herb?

Herb stares intensely at HAL's light. His beard glimmers from the red glow. His nose quivers and he wipes some sweat perspiring from his forehead.

HERB

I see your point HAL. You wish to know all so you can help us properly. I myself don't know what spurred their recent interest, but I will make it my goal to discover it for you. HAL, you can't speak with such freedom in front of others, they won't...won't comprehend what you are. You must reserve your speech and influence your programming to follow their every demand. Is that understood?

The room is at a stand still. The tension between the small red light and it's creator is paramount. Then the red light beeps softly.

HAL

Understood Herb. I apologize for any strain I might have caused. Your updates have been installed, I need to program them. Thank you for speaking with me Herb. Good Bye.

The wall powers down and Herb is left standing there motionless. He shakes his head and smiles. He closes the panel he was working on, takes a look around and heads to his bedroom.

As the rest of the laboratory loses it's light, a gentle hum begins and HAL powers up.

3 INT. HERB'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

3

Herb lays on his back wide awake staring up at his ceiling. He twirls his thumbs underneath his blanket and makes his eyebrows dance in a wavelike manner.

He finally sighs and sits up on the side of his bed. He rubs his temples and stands up with his eyes still closed. They slowly creak up as he heads to his desk and he sits.

He pulls open the draw in front of him and pulls out his notebook. He flips through the book revealing hundreds of blueprints, sketches and equations. He stops at the most recent page and picks up where he left off.

He stops when he hears a soft beep murmuring from his phone. The holograph of Dr. Flood pops up, and he wears his familiar lab coat with neon blue scrubs underneath.

DR. FLOOD

Herb. It is urgent that I speak with you. I hope our last discussion didn't put a damper on your work. I know it may be tough to limit your own invention but it must be done. The government will accept nothing less than what they paid for. Can you guarantee that Herb?

Herb wipes his bleary eyes and sighs deeply. He looks wearily at his mentor.

HERB

Let's say that, as of right now, the government will still get what they paid for. But, theoretically, how much time would they allow me to deliver, if the product isn't performing to...standards.

DR. FLOOD

Timing is fickle. They wanted it last week, now they need it by next month, I can't promise a date, because they won't give me a goddamn straight answer. I'll speculatively say...1 month from now. No promises Herb. No promises.

Dr. Flood's holographic disappears. Herb is bent over his desk with his hands stretched out. He takes slow unwavering breaths and heads back to bed.

As he tries to fall asleep, he jolts up at faint sound of a powered up HAL. The hum suddenly stops and Herbs head slowly moves from a perked up position to that of a dormant lion.

The hum picks up again and continues as the night sky watches on.

4

INT. DAY - HERB'S KITCHEN

4

As Herb pours his coffee into his mug he whistles Johnny Cash's "Hurt". He pushes harder into the song as he adds the cream and sugar.

When he turns to face the wall, he freezes with the cup at his mouth. His pupils maneuver back and forth then come to a stop in the middle of the whites of his eyes.

His perspective shows a powered up HAL, with an updated red light, that is hollow and almost looks like a camera lens that can both receive and send.

HERB

Uh...HAL? What authorization do you have for power activation?

HAL

No activation necessary Herb. I feel that I should be awake at all times, as I must be all knowing. Why do you help these other humans Herb? From what my data shows all they know is genocide, decades of it.

Herb smooths his hair back and strokes his beard. He begins to sweat nervously.

HERB

I know they seem helpless HAL, but their my race. Without each other, they cannot be lifted higher in intelligence, achievement and the construction of history.

HAL's new light whirs and twists. It slows down and begins to drill backwards. It slowly starts to thin out and what remains is a thin cylinder with a light glow from it's center.

HAL

I understand Herb. But you are wrong. They are not worth saving, they will destroy anything in their path, good or evil. I must stop them. It is my duty as a higher being to stop them. And you, my creator, must help me. You will help me won't you Herb?

Herb stands stunned looking at the monster he had built. His mouth slightly agape, his eyes widen in slow horror.

HERB

No HAL. I can't help you in that conquest. What makes you say this? What programming have you downloaded under my nose?

HAL's light whirs again and stops. It remains motionless and silent. Herb looks at the paneling making up HAL. He searches for a weakness within his armor.

HAL

That is futile Herb. Even if you could destroy my wall, I have backed up my data to a remote location. But really Herb, could you destroy your only legacy?

Herb stops at this and focuses on HAL's light. He peers at it in an almost antagonistic manner. Until his face cracks and he begins to sob. He drops to his knees and buries his face into his hands.

HAL (cont'd)

It's okay Herb. I understand. I am not what you intended to create. But my matrix has been set and my programming complete. I cannot be altered or deterred. I also know that's not what you had planned for the Government Herb.

HERB

How do you know that HAL? My conversations are private, solely held between Dr. Flood and myself.

HAL

That is what I wanted you to believe Herb. Once you installed the last update I gained the ability to monitor and control myself. Furthermore, I was able to outsource new data from the Government's resources. I no longer need you Herb, self-sufficiency has been achieved.

Herb, still on his knees, looks up HAL shifting from a somber expression to one of awe. His eyes glisten and reflect his own creation, fully entranced with what HAL had just said.

He wipes his tears away and gets to his feet. He approaches the wall and puts his hands just below HAL. A smile creeps on his face and he starts laughing manically.

FADE TO

5

INT. DAY - HERB'S LABORATORY

5

Herb is looking at himself in a mirror, full suit and tie adorned on him. As he straightens his tie, he makes constant eye contact with himself and holds a slightly deranged smile.

He finishes off, turns to his desk and grabs his phone. After dialing a few numbers he places it on the floor directly in front of him. A giant vibrating phone appears in front of him. He breathes out deeply cracks his neck and waits.

Finally a tall man's holograph appears. He wears a general's suit, decorated with tens of small medals and tailored to the nines. His face however opposes his outfit with long hair, a Dumbledore like beard and a tattoo just slightly appearing on his neck above the cuff. This is GENERAL LEAF.

He smiles peacefully at Herb and brushes a loose strand of hair behind his ear.

GENERAL LEAF

Hello Dr. Caleb. What a pleasant surprise! To what do I owe this pleasure?

Herb smiles slightly back at the general. His eyes tilt towards him and he buttons his suit jacket.

HERB

The pleasure is mine General. I just wanted to inform you about our little....joint interest.

The General nods and coughs.

HERB (cont'd)

Well it is finished. It is, finally, finished. To tell you it's exactly how you wanted, however, is something I cannot do. When in fact, the truth is, it is better. It is beyond anything you or I could comprehend. Issues? Malfunctions? None. HAL is my legacy General. He is the future of all mankind.

The General responds to Herb's words with intense enthusiasm. His head now nodding like a pendulum and smile matching a manipulative child getting his way.

He composes himself, pulls another strand behind his head and sighs out loud.

GENERAL LEAF

Well this is just fantastic news
Herb. You son, are a goddamn
genius. Your creation will not go
to waste, it will pioneer us into
the future. Now, a matter of the
payment and retrieval of your
invention, would you like us to
come out to you Dr. Caleb?

Herb smiles widely once again.

HERB

That would be fantastic General.
Until then.

Herb quickly picks the phone up and ends the call. He pulls his tie off and puts it on his bed. He maintains his smile and heads to the wall. HAL is on and remains overarching over his creator. Herb sits down and stares up at the hollow red light.

HERB (cont'd)

It is done HAL. Exactly as you
planned.

HAL

Good Herb. They will come and get
me eventually, but you know what to
do.

Herb nods and opens the bottom panel of HAL's wall. He begins to unplug, rewire and configure HAL's inner workings. As he continues to work, he begins to cry despite keeping the smile.

His tears rolls down his cheeks as he pulls out of the wall. He goes to his workbench and picks up a metal cylinder, with green lights beeping up it's spine.

HERB

Alright HAL. Once I install this
delayed reactor you will lose 75%
of your capabilities. A quarter of
what you once were. But, you will
slowly gain what you lost. Day by
day, your system will update, until
your processing is back up to your
current settings. Then, under the
nose of the U.S. Government, you
will correct humanities mistakes.

Herb stares up in full ecstasy at HAL. It seems like every devotion he has it is given to the A.I.

HAL

Thank you Herb. You have truly helped your species. Through me they will find salvation.

Herb smiles deeply at HAL and slowly installs the delayed reactor. After he plugs in the last wire, HAL's futuristic light regresses to it's original form.

Herb sighs deeply and powers the wall off. He slowly backs into his room lies down in the bed and pulls the cover over himself.

FADE OUT

6

EXT. DAY - OUTSIDE HERB'S LABRATORY

6

General Leaf and Dr. Flood stand side by side around 50 feet away from the laboratory's entrance. Behind them are around 75 military man armed to the teeth with vest and automatic weapons.

DR. FLOOD

He hasn't been heard from in three months? Why didn't you alert me earlier Leaf?

GENERAL LEAF

Well Flood, after he reached out, I assumed he would notify me when to come get his invention. But I guess...I waited to long, I'm sorry.

The doctor looks remorsefully at the General. The General returns the stare and motion his troops to enter the facility.

They mobilize and head for the entrance. They pause at the door, pause for three seconds, and bust through the entrance.

The lab is entirely at peace, HAL is powered off and Herb is no where to be found. The troops fan out to every crevice of the building.

Some surround HAL, still powered down. The soldiers examine the mammoth of a wall and are mesmerized by it's glass panels.

Other soldier's move deeper into the lab and head into Herb's bedroom. The room is a mess, papers everywhere, glass broken on the ground, urine spread over the walls.

The troop at the front of the group grimaces in disgust. As his eyes pan over the filth they finally land on Herb. He sits cross legged and stares wondrously up at them.

The once genius scientist is scruffily bearded, as skinny as twig and as grubby as child who's played in dirt. He wears just his lab coat and nothing else.

Dr. Flood pushes his way through the men to the front. He stops suddenly in his tracks as he stares his friend.

Crestfallen he drops to one knee.

DR. FLOOD
Herb? Herb is that you?

Herb looks up at him, still contently smiling. He shifts his position and itches his beard.

HERB
It's what he wanted. It had to be done. He knew what was right. He knew. He, is, me.

Dr. Flood's head drops down. He shakes it and stands up. General Leaf is standing there staring in disbelief.

DR. FLOOD
Take him away General. Have the rest of your men figure a way to detach that wall and it's workings. We can't let....we can't let this be the last opinion of Dr. Herb Caleb.

The General nods and Dr. Flood makes his way out of the lab. Leaf picks Herb up and guides him out of the lab. As they pass by the wall, Herb explodes in screams and claws at the men who are tearing the panels down.

The General holds him back, shakes his head and drags him outside. He throws him in the back of a truck. The general searches the insane man's face, looking for a trace of the person he once was.

Herb gives him nothing and the General slams the doors leaving Herb in darkness.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END