

Buzz Armstrong's Unsolved Space Mysteries

Written by  
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Draft 2

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EXT. MAGNUM INDUSTRIAL AREA - DAWN/DUSK

Walking toward the camera from a distance, BUZZ ARMSTRONG, 28, has the look of a pretentious adjunct professor in college. He wears a sport coat with a commemorative "American Hero" Lance Parker T-shirt.

BUZZ

It's the fate that every astronaut dreads when they dream of ascending to the heavens; being lost in space with no hope of rescue. Now, imagine being caste as a liar after experiencing something so absolute - you would swear on your life that it was real. Your truth meets the public's consensus at an intersection called controversy. A perfect place for judgment in the court of Unsolved Space Mysteries.

Unsolved Space Mysteries title introduction: An extraterrestrial autopsy photo that jump cuts - moving closer to the creature's face while morphing into a creepy human face; Buzz Armstrong press pass; redacted NASA documents.

NASA archive footage that corresponds with the dialogue.

BUZZ (V/O)

December. 1993. Houston, Texas. After twenty-two months of grueling physical and mental competition to determine the fittest astronaut. Lance Parker beat out fellow astronaut and rival, Wayne St. Claire in contentious fashion to command Project Exodus. A mission of equal part experiment and significance; a solo, one way trip to begin the colonization of Mars.

INT. NASA HQ - UNKNOWN

"Archive" footage of Pre-Mission LANCE PARKER. He is clean cut looking - confident, charming, eager. Unseen reporters ask questions as their cameras flash on Lance's face.

REPORTER #1

Do you think you're crazy for doing this, Lance?

LANCE

It's relative. I think anybody willing to do this has to be a little crazy, right? But it's not like I'm talking to pigeons. You'll have to interview the lady on the subway this morning for that kind of crazy.

Small, but hearty laughter is heard.

HARD CUT

REPORTER #2

What are you going to miss the most, Lance?

LANCE

No question, my everything. She's probably in bed right now, but I want to dedicate Project Exodus to my one year old daughter, Venus Andromeda - Daddy will love you forever, baby.

HARD CUT

REPORTER #3

Are you afraid of death, Lance?

LANCE

...The reward of being legendary outweighs the risk of death.

NASA archive footage of a rocket launching.

BUZZ (V/O)

After a successful launch of Project Exodus on February 12th, 1995 - Commander Lance Parker rocketed toward the colonization of the Red Planet.

Picture demonstrating the distance between Earth and Mars, with 'the point of no return' highlighted where Lance's capsule is.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)

Having just passed the point of no return - things took a turn for the worse on day 134 of Project Exodus; when there is only enough fuel to complete the mission to Mars, but an insufficient amount to return home.

A subtitled transcript with a corresponding picture icons of Lance/Mission Control.

LANCE (V/O)

Houston, it feels like there is a magnetic field pulling me, but I'm getting no read on that. Over.

MISSION (V/O)

We're also not seeing any kind of disturbance, Flight. Over.

LANCE (V/O)

Houston...This can't be right, but the front of module appears to be accelerating faster than the rear. Over.

MISSION (V/O)

...Alright, Flight....Are you experiencing any other visual anomalies? Over.

LANCE (V/O)

This is surreal...the front...bending like taffy.

MISSION (V/O)

...Everything looks fine down here, Flight. How are your oxygen levels? Over.

LANCE (V/O)

Houston, this is the strangest thing I've ever seen. Over.

MISSION (V/O)

Describe what you're seeing, Flight. Over.

LANCE (V/O)

It's like something you'd see a child blow...a giant sphere-like bubble in the distance. I can see through it... It's everything...and nothing...This is truly the end.

MISSION (V/O)

You sure you're doing okay, Flight? Everything is normal down here.

LANCE (V/O)

...

MISSION (V/O)

Lance?

LANCE (V/O)

(Calm)

Event horizon, Mission. I'm going for it...All hope is los...Mission...I'm sorr...

Lance's communication turns to white noise.

MISSION (V/O)

Flight, please repeat that...

Lance?...Lance? Do you copy?

Newspaper clippings announcing Lance's death; funeral pictures; Bill Clinton speaking; People mourning.

BUZZ (V/O)

NASA broke the tragic news after communication was lost on July 1st, 1995. Telling the world that Project Exodus was a failure, and that Lance was dead - accelerating his celebrity from simple astronaut to world hero.

Pictures of government hearings; sections of the Project Exodus Commission Report.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)

Two years later, Lance's bravery and courage was only amplified after NASA released the "Project Exodus Commission Report" on the incident. In the report, the commission affirmed Project Exodus was a failure because NASA did not adequately prepare Lance for the extreme mental strain of passing the point of no return, solo. Experiencing an incurable sense of helplessness alone and unchecked, caused Lance to lose all hope, and presumably committed suicide in space. Case closed, right? Not quite.

INT. JACK HOUSE - DUSK/NIGHT

BUZZ (V/O)

On December 21st, 2012 a video surfaced.

Mid-iPhone video -- JACK is walking toward his window.

JACK  
I saw something flash outside before  
I--(Interrupted)

As JACK is getting closer to the window trash cans are rattled and tipped over outside.

JACK (cont'd)  
What the hell is out there?

JACK opens the window curtain - after a few seconds of trying to focus and see what is out there. BOO! A naked Lance Parker suddenly walks across frame.

HOLD FRAME: on Lance looking toward the camera - a la Bigfoot.

BUZZ (V/O)  
Lance Parker's inexplicable return to Earth after seventeen years forced NASA to admit they lied to the public. They stated that Project Exodus launched unmanned because Lance Parker went AWOL the night before the scheduled launch. This admittance of failure and subsequent cover up created a watershed moment of distrust and hatred.

Various videos of family, friends, acquaintances on their opinion of the incident.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
Some directed their vitriol toward NASA.

CITIZEN #1  
Defund those crooks. We should be putting more money into military spending anyway. We're so close to robot soldiers.

CITIZEN #2  
I'd be into space funding more if NASA had hot astronauts. Sex sells, y'know?

BUZZ (V/O)  
But most directed their anger toward Lance.

CITIZEN #3  
Lemme tell you something, Lance.  
Where I come from.  
(MORE)

CITIZEN #3 (cont'd)

You puss out going to space? Well, shit. I can't tell the difference between you and a pedophile now.

CITIZEN #4

If Lance Parker was here right now? I'd fuck that coward up two times.

CITIZEN #5

I don't know? I think I believe something happened to Lance. Everything NASA says doesn't add up. The truth exists. It just needs to be found.

EXT. MAGNUSON POND - DAWN/DUSK

Buzz is sitting and turns to the camera.

BUZZ

I couldn't agree more, brave citizen. I fundamentally believe Lance Parker was sucked into a wormhole while on a mission to Mars, and we are just pawns in an elaborate cover up...of a cover up. Both sides of this coin have not been revealed. I must track down Lance Parker to discover the truth.

EXT. CARKEEK PARK - DAY

Buzz is being followed by a cameraman as he approaches, VENUS ANDROMEDA, 24, sitting on a bench. Buzz introduces himself by shaking her hand.

Newspaper clipping: "Genius comes in two: World hero Lance Parker's daughter attending Stanford next Fall"

BUZZ (V/O)

My journey began with finding his estranged daughter, Venus Andromeda; a scholarship student at Stanford University.

Newspaper clipping: "Lance Parker back from the dead?!"

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)

Until her father inexplicably returned during her Junior year.

(MORE)

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
 The overwhelming negativity directed  
 toward Lance's supposed French  
 leave...

Urban magazine 'Hot or Not' list: comparing Tom Petty (Hot)  
 to post-mission Lance (Not).

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
 ...took its toll on the handcuffed  
 Venus, and started affecting her own  
 pursuits adversely.

Newspaper clipping: "Venus Parker loses out on prestigious  
 California science grant due to questions swirling around  
 father"

Newspaper clipping: "Guilty by association? Venus Parker  
 leaving Stanford, cites "Personal Issues," as reason"

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
 Venus became a public pariah for the  
 collateral damage of her father's  
 alleged lies, which forced her to  
 escape the public's eye and drop out  
 of Stanford.

EXT. PARK - DAY

"60 Minutes" style walk-n-talk, with Venus expressing  
 herself, and Buzz listening intently.

BUZZ (V/O)  
 My thinking went; finding Venus  
 wouldn't be hard, but getting her to  
 talk would be tricky - considering,  
 Venus' past reluctance to speak to  
 the media. However, to my surprise,  
 Venus agreed to an interview on the  
 condition that only the REAL truth  
 about her father be told; precisely  
 my modus operandi.

INT. VENUS INTERVIEW LOCATION - DAY

Venus addressing the camera directly.

VENUS  
 My name is Venus Andromeda Parker.  
 I'm the daughter of Lance Parker, and  
 I'm here to tell the truth about him.

Three camera interview setup.

BUZZ

I suppose the place to start would be - when was the last time you saw your father, Venus?

VENUS

It's been about three years.

BUZZ

What was the circumstance?

VENUS

He showed up at my 21st birthday party uninvited, two hours late - and left twenty minutes later.

Photograph of post-mission Lance handing a girls doll to the embarrassed Venus.

VENUS (cont'd)

And somehow in twenty minutes he stole a bag of dog food, a tent, and a few kitchen knives from me.

BUZZ

That seems unlike Lance.

VENUS

Really? I'm also pretty sure he took a shit in the tank of my toilet.

BUZZ

Come on, I don't even have to play devil's advocate. That could have been anybody in the place. Classic party joke.

VENUS

That's not the point. The point is my Dad is an asshole. I don't see him for twenty years, and out of nowhere he shows up for like twenty minutes, AND steals from me!

BUZZ

What was he like that day?

VENUS

Drunk? High? I don't know...He was sputtering nonsense. After everybody started hating him he drowned his lying ass in a bottle.

BUZZ

What do you mean "lying?"

VENUS

What did YOU mean by the "truth" earlier?

BUZZ

That your father obviously got sucked into a wormhole.

VENUS

Jesusfuckingchrist. You're one of those people? NASA admitted they lied and that he never launched.

BUZZ

Those people? Without "those people" - without people like ME! The truth would lay concealed. I am a truth seeker.

VENUS

Well, the truth I know about my dad is that he is a deserter that orchestrated the most elaborate 'deadbeat dad' scheme ever, so he didn't have to raise me.

BUZZ

Geez Louise, who has the doctorate in conspiracy theory now? I really don't get why you're down on the poor guy?

VENUS

I worked so hard to get to Stanford. I had friends. I was dating. I was happy. Then HE showed up again.

BUZZ

Awesome. Perfect timing.

VENUS

No! People thought I knew the whole time, and I had to drop out of school...and now I work at a coffee shop with a shit ton of debt, and no degree...thanks to my dad. The lying coward who ruined my life.

BUZZ

Maybe I missed something, but, how does this relate to your Dad's journey to other galaxies?

VENUS

That's a joke, right?

BUZZ

Earnest questions from a Doctor of conspiracy theory.

VENUS

Ugh - You want that sensationalized crap, go talk to his old fly boy buddy, Wayne St. Claire - MY condition was that I'd give you nothing but the truth about my father

BUZZ

Fine. And what's the truth?

VENUS

That Lance Parker...my father...is a black sheep of humanity, and needs to be put down like an injured animal.

BUZZ

Jesus. Haha. WOW! Haha. Well, I know where you stand. Good thing I don't date 'Negative Nancy's' Haha.

VENUS

Good thing I don't date journalists.

BUZZ

(obviously)

Oh, I'm not a journalist.

HARD CUT

EXT. WAYNE ST. CLAIRE PROPERTY - DUSK

In a continuous shot Buzz' cameraman, RIK, follows him as he walks up to the house, and knocks. Gender/Age-neutral DANA, answers, and Buzz shows them the printed picture of the young Wayne St. Claire. Dana points outside to the back of the house, as Buzz thanks them and proceeds.

BUZZ (V/O)

Although the interview with Venus fell flat in regards to the ultimate truth about Lance Parker. Her breadcrumb of Wayne St. Claire, armed me with his address from public records, and a picture I printed all by myself from the Google at the public library.

EXT. WAYNE ST. CLAIRE FRONT DOOR - DAY

Buzz walks up to a door on the side of a garage - he knocks on the door respectfully, but repeatedly.

An ailing MAN in a bathrobe, cautiously opens the door. The light of day exposes the Man's clear hangover, as he leers at the camera. Buzz carefully looks down at the picture, and back up to the Man - they look nothing alike.

BUZZ  
(very unsure)  
Wayne St. Claire?

MAN  
Who's asking?

BUZZ  
Buzz Armstrong: truth seeker.

MAN  
...Ass. Hole.

The ailing Man turns upset, and slams the door in Buzz's face. Concerned, Buzz walks away.

BUZZ (V/O)  
I was certain I had found Wayne St. Claire, but if first impressions are everything; I may have ruined mine... It was time to get diplomatic.

Again, walking up to the door, this time Buzz is holding a gift in a paper bag when he knocks on the door.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
The key to all good diplomacy is with a unique gift.

The Man opens the door.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
A gift that not only expresses, "I care about you."

Buzz extends the gift toward the Man. The Man takes it, and begins ripping off the paper bag.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)  
But more importantly says, "After surveying your life - I think you could use this"

The Man finishes ripping, and reveals a bottle of malt liquor. He looks up, and apathetically stares at Buzz.

INT. WAYNE ST. CLAIRE LOCATION - DAY

MAN/WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(apathetic)

My name is Wayne St. Claire. Lance Parker is a real piece of shit and ruined my life - rival wouldn't even begin to describe how I--fuck it.

Three point interview set up. Wayne St. Claire drinks heavily from his malt liquor, as Buzz is taken aback by his lethargic attitude.

BUZZ

So...Wayne?...Mr. St. Claire?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

I don't give a fuck anymore.

BUZZ

Alright, Wayne it is. Tell me, Wayne. How's life been?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Awful.

BUZZ

...Anything else?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

...No. That about sums it up, bugs.

BUZZ:

Great! - That's a perfect segue into what your thoughts on Project Exodus are?

Wayne takes a long pull from his malt liquor.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Money making scheme.

BUZZ

...Would you like to expand on that?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

It was never about going to Mars.

BUZZ

Ooooo, what was Project Exodus about? Aliens? Intergalactic trade agreements? The true origins of human life?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

No. It was about NASA selling lunch boxes and shit with some pretty boy astronaut on it.

BUZZ

Oh...That seems far fetched.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Look at what you're wearing.

Wayne references Buzz' commemorative 'Lance Parker: American hero' t-shirt.

BUZZ

Oh, my NASA-licensed Lance Parker national hero commemorative t-shirt?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

How much you spend on that? Ten bucks? Twenty?

BUZZ

Mine was fifty-dollars because I got the vintage version that already has holes cut into it. Hot shit, right?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Somebody at NASA got paid.

BUZZ

Right?! Capitalism is the shit!

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

...I'm starting to regret accepting your gift of peace.

BUZZ

Why's that, Wayne? I think we're getting along famously.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

I just really don't like thinking about this, and HIM, and everything that happened. I have enough fuel of regrets to power two lifetimes. It's just...It's all bullshit, bugs.

BUZZ

It's Buzz. But more importantly,  
what's bullshit?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(obviously)

...NASA throwing that sham of a  
competition - turning something  
legitimate into a goddamn screwjob  
beauty contest.

BUZZ

Wow. That's quite the accusation. Why  
was NASA so down on you?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

I didn't fit in with the scheme.

BUZZ

...I don't follow.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Gene told me I wasn't good looking  
enough. Charming enough. I don't  
know - Mom's didn't want to fuck me,  
and Dad's didn't want to have a beer  
with me.

BUZZ

Well yeah, compared to Lance Parker.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

But I was the better astronaut - I  
had the right stuff, and Lance  
didn't, bugs!

BUZZ

Are you sure America just wasn't  
ready for a ginger astronaut?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Excuse me?

BUZZ

Don't get my wrong, Wayne. I don't  
want to sound gingerist, but...if  
that competition was strictly about  
appearances - I get it from NASA's  
perspective. At the least, they'd  
save money on sunscreen.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

What the fuck are you talking about?  
It wasn't because I have red hair and  
pale skin, you idiot.

BUZZ

Then what was it? You're obviously  
still bitter.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

You know Lance sent me a letter last  
year.

BUZZ

A letter divulging EVERYTHING about  
Project Exodus?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

I'm so stupid, bugs. I honestly  
thought Lance was apologizing for  
everything he'd done to me.

BUZZ

Why would Lance be sending you an  
apology?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(obviously)

...Because he fucked me out of  
Project Exodus and got me blacklisted  
forever.

BUZZ

Lance?! That seems out of character.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Y'know halfway through our  
"competition" he demanded NASA drug  
test both of us to ensure legitimacy.

BUZZ

Lance Parker: always the champion of  
fair play.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Except I tested positive for drugs;  
coincidentally after Lance started  
offering to make my protein shakes  
the week before.

BUZZ

Ah - the old professional baseball  
defense.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

What kind of astronaut tests positive for lethal amounts of steroids, and some tribal drug found deep within the Amazon rain forest?

BUZZ

You, apparently.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

I've never done a drug in my life, bugs!

Wayne takes a professional drink of his malt liquor.

BUZZ

Uh-huh.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Look, if I lost Project Exodus because of my appearance - fine. I could have moved on - But NASA, Gene...LANCE - He had to go a step further and ruin my reputation forever.

BUZZ

Hey, Wayne, baby, it's all in the past. It doesn't matter anymore.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

...It doesn't matter anymore?

BUZZ

Exactly. Lance got sucked into a wormhole and likely experienced the fifth, maybe even the sixth dimension, and you didn't. Big deal!

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

...It's all so clear to me now.

BUZZ

What? Lance getting sucked into a wormhole?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(Sad)

The opposite. It took YOU coming into my life for me to realize it doesn't matter if Lance got sucked into wormhole. Regardless, he got sucked into the same downward spiral as me.

BUZZ

Sure?

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(Sadder)

I remember when Gene warned us that the stress of Project Exodus could ruin our lives. No friends. No Family. No hope.

BUZZ

You keep mentioning this 'Gene' person.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

(Saddest)

It's ironic that neither of us had to travel to Mars to ruin our lives...We did it right here on Earth.

The sadness of Wayne St. Claire has left Buzz without a response.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE (cont'd)

...Pardon me. I need to use the bathroom.

BUZZ

Of course. Take your time.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE

Thanks...It shouldn't take too long, bugs.

BUZZ

No problem...My name is BUZZ by the way, Wayne.

Wayne walks out of frame, and Buzz sits awkwardly. He checks his phone, and asks Rik the cameraman how things are looking.

Muffled GUNSHOT in a different room.

BUZZ (cont'd)

What the hell was that?

Very concerned, Buzz gets up to investigate - Rik the cameraman follows.

BUZZ (cont'd)

Wayne? - You alright? I heard a loud bang.

INT. OUTSIDE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Buzz approaches the bathroom door and taped to the door are two notes. The note to the left is an address "7523 Lakemont Dr." - the note to the right simply says, "Leave me - WSC"

EXT. WAYNE ST. CLAIRE FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Appalled, Buzz walks out of Wayne St. Claire's house looking distraught.

INT. CAR - VARIOUS

Shots of a dispirited Buzz looking lost in thought: passing highway signs; moving road, etc.

Buzz doesn't say anything - just pulls up to a house numbered '7523'.

EXT. GENE'S HOUSE - DAY

Buzz walks up to the front door and warily knocks, afraid of what might come next.

A MAN answers the door

MAN  
Can I help you?

Concerned, the Man gives a look at Buzz as if he's seen hell.

INT. GENE LOCATION - CONTINUOUS

Gene addresses the camera.

GENE  
My name is Eugene Armitage, but everyone just calls me 'Gene'. I was the Flight Director on all of Lance Parker's missions, including Project Exodus, but I'm not sure if I can talk about him.

Three point interview set up

BUZZ  
From what Wayne St. Claire told me--  
(Interrupted)

GENE

Wayne St. Claire?! Ha! I haven't seen that ol' son of a gun in...twenty years? How the hell is he?

BUZZ

...He's been better.

GENE

Yeah...I guess we all have.

BUZZ

With all due respect, you still have a job at NASA - More than Wayne or Lance can say.

GENE

Without saying too much, they could stir things up. NASA culture is all about keeping your head down and avoiding ALL conflict.

BUZZ

That seems cowardly.

GENE

Well, this coward is pay grade level GS-15, and sitting on a sweet pension from Uncle Sam.

BUZZ

How did you regard him?

GENE

Uncle Sam isn't a real person, Buzz.

BUZZ

No. Lance. Others have...well - Perhaps you can paint a better picture of Lance Parker?

GENE

Oh...I don't know? I got a good job, Buzz.

BUZZ

What about something declassified?

GENE

I don't - I would need to run that up the ladder.

BUZZ

Come on, Gene. It's just two guys talking.

GENE

Yeah, with cameras.

BUZZ

Is that the problem? What if we made you anonymous?

GENE

I just can't let my mouth to get me in trouble.

BUZZ

It'll be fine - everything will be darkened, and your voice will be morphed in post-production. Same thing they do for scabs, snitches, and scared y-cats. No one will no it's you, John Doe.

Buzz winks repeatedly at Gene.

GENE

...I suppose that alleviates my concern.

BUZZ

Great! What's your best story about Lance Parker?

GENE

Well, Lance could be unorthodox - get under people's skin, sure. But what rubbed people the wrong way was that he was equal part scientist and artist.

BUZZ

See, this is exactly the kind of stuff I need to hear. Plenty paint him as a very unsavory human.

GENE

The Lance I knew could turn an ordinary spacewalk into avant-garde performance art by doing LSD.

BUZZ

Wow. Dropping acid in space seems reckless. Was Lance not disciplined?

GENE

I defended him as Flight Director - I told NASA that's who he was as an artist. Always pushing boundaries.

BUZZ

So...Who was he as a scientist?

GENE

When he was "peaking" - he purposefully deactivated the heat shield on the shuttle.

BUZZ

Lance put his fellow astronauts at risk?

GENE

Not in his head. In his head, he was completing an experiment of the highest importance.

BUZZ

To see if he and his crew would disintegrate?

GENE

Precisely. Art meets Science.

BUZZ

Jesus Christ.

GENE

Well, they didn't disintegrate.

BUZZ

It's not about the outcome, Gene. It's that no one can objectively say anything positive about Lance.

GENE

That's not entirely true. I bet you no one has told you how funny Lance was?

BUZZ

...No. I would have figured he was a very serious person.

GENE

Really quite the opposite. Lance always had me in stitches, always ribbing me, always deadpanning that he made love to my wife and was the father of my son, William.

Gene points to a picture behind him of Gene and William. William clearly looks like Lance.

GENE (cont'd)

Hahaha! It's just nonsense! My wife and I have a holy contract with each other.

BUZZ

It's official: Lance Parker is an asshole.

GENE

Hey, I object to that. If he was such a bad person, why did I suffer from extreme guilt and sadness when he disappeared?

BUZZ

Referring to Lance going AWOL before the launch?

GENE

...Right.

BUZZ

For a mission that launched unmanned - you seem very distraught about the result.

GENE

Of course I am - I had no idea where they took him!

BUZZ

They?

GENE

...NASA.

BUZZ

Right...I thought you were going to say Martians or something.

GENE

'Fraid not. Nothing outrageous about the truth.

BUZZ

Wayne St. Claire told me the truth about Project Exodus was never about Mars. It was NASA creating a cash cow out of an attractive astronaut.

GENE

The truth is exactly as we told the public when Lance returned a few years back: NASA knew we could never regain the trust of Americans if we told them our fittest astronaut went AWOL. So we cut our losses, and launched unmanned.

BUZZ

Why though?

GENE

We concluded that the initial cover up was necessary because it'd be more expense for NASA to keep up the illusion of colonizing Mars, than to just tell the world that Lance killed himself on the journey.

BUZZ

I guess I get the initial logic. But why didn't NASA just come clean in the "Project Exodus Commission Report"?

GENE

Well, the unintended consequence of our decision was that the world fell in love with the idea of Lance, and NASA was profiting greatly off of his merchandise. So we let sleeping dogs lie.

BUZZ

So Wayne was right?

GENE

In a roundabout way, sure. I mean, no. I don't know? I don't want to rock the boat.

BUZZ

What do you mean in a roundabout way? The entire basis of creating and continuing the lie was because NASA was making money off Lance.

GENE

Sure - but what is the truth? You could have ten people witness the same thing, and each one of them would have a different truth.

BUZZ

Are you one of those ten people, Gene?

GENE

What? No - it was just an analogy to show there are other ways to look at things.

BUZZ

Like Lance getting sucked into a wormhole.

GENE

Exactly...OR, him NOT getting sucked into a wormhole. I don't know?

BUZZ

Did Lance launch, Gene?

GENE

Stop calling me that. I thought this was anonymous.

BUZZ

Was Lance Parker on that ship?

GENE

He WAS...not on that - you know, the DETAILS are hazy to me right now.

Gene is getting flustered, and doesn't know how to respond. Buzz attacks.

BUZZ

It's a simple question, Gene.

GENE

I asked you nicely to stop calling me that! I don't know this Gene person - Who's Gene?

BUZZ

You know something, Gene! Tell me what happened to Lance Parker!

GENE

Something inexplicable happened to my friend because I sent him up there!

BUZZ

So he did launch?!?!

GENE

Noooo! He disappeared! He left me! He left his daughter! And I don't know where he is?!

BUZZ

Because of a wormhole?!?!

GENE

Because...get out of my house, Buzz!

BUZZ

Gene, you need to help your friend. Help me find your friend.

Gene starts escorting Buzz out of his house.

GENE

I have no friend.  
(clearly painful)  
Lance Parker is a liar. A phony. And the only experience he has is cowardice!

EXT. GENE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gene slams the door in Buzz' face. Dismayed, Buzz turns around.

BUZZ

Turn off the camera, Rik. It's over.

The cameraman Rik begins taking candid still photos of Buzz unknowingly on his journey back to his home.

BUZZ (V/O)

And just like that - it was over. Like death's fatal blow, my exit was swift and unexpected. I was left with nothing but my thoughts and the open road. The perfect ingredients to create a rich stew of irrational thoughts and self-doubt. I thought I had failed myself. I felt I had failed my hero Lance.

(MORE)

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)

And most importantly, I knew I had failed my viewers. I was determined to return home and tell every child I could find to NEVER follow their dreams because being letdown is the WORST. Reinforce the idea to quit whenever you come across your first hurdle because work is hard. And most of all, feel entitled to reward yourself even though you've accomplished nothing, because your happiness is more important than anything.

The last still photo is of Buzz arriving home and there being an unmarked package sitting on his front porch.

BUZZ (V/O) (cont'd)

However, as fate would have it, an unmarked package lay on my stoop. Inside the package contained: A letter from the sender, Anonymous.

A picture of the typed out letter to Buzz.

ANONYMOUS (V/O)

Dear Buzz, I apologize for our meeting. I usually have a penchant for details. However, I couldn't let my pension (sic) for details risk my future ;) Best of luck, Anonymous :)

BUZZ (V/O)

A historic memo from universally renowned sex machine, and President of the United State, Bill Clinton - twenty four hours after Houston lost contact with Lance.

A picture of the memo

BILL CLINTON (V/O)

To Project Exodus Director Eugene Armitage I have been briefed on the extraordinary situation that has befallen American Astronaut, Lance Parker. It is with executive order that I command NASA to conceal the known facts. We need to angle this story that Mr. Parker simply could not handle the mental strain of the mission, and took his own life. God forgive us, but the truth is inexplicable. Sincerely, Bill Clinton

BUZZ (V/O)

Lastly, and most importantly, the package contained a map with mysterious, yet very specific markings that say LP-X. Where would this marking lead me to in my search for Lance Parker?

A picture of a map with a dotted-route that leads to a 'LP-X' clearly marked and circled.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LANDSCAPE - DAY

Wearing a very Steve Irwin-inspired outfit, Buzz looks out over a mountain landscape, eventually turning to address the camera.

BUZZ

To a place deep within the mountains, where moonshine is water; trash is white, and cousin is wife. A perfect location for society's undesirables to burrow...and probably cook methamphetamine.

EXT. LANCE PARKER LOCATION - DAY/DUSK

Holding a compass, Buzz circles his surroundings looking down at the map Anonymous sent.

BUZZ

Hmmm, X marks the spot.

RIK

I've been to some scary places, but this place gives me the spooks.

BUZZ

Of course it does. We're in meth country.

Rik the cameraman looks around, and sees a tent/small campsite lightly camouflaged fifty yards ahead.

RIK

You see that ahead?

BUZZ

Good eye. Hold on to your butts... Carefully, this production doesn't have insurance.

RIK  
 Seriously?

Rik stops, but continues as Buzz carefully moves toward the tent.

BUZZ  
 (shouting)  
 Excuse me? Is anyone in the tent? I  
 come in peace.

Buzz and Rik getting closer to the tent.

BUZZ (cont'd)  
 My name is Buzz Armstrong, and I'm  
 looking for Lance Parker.

Behind, a tree branch on the ground is cracked. Rik immediately pivots to see what is there - nothing.

RIK  
 What the fuck was that?

BUZZ  
 It's fine. We're in the forest - it  
 was probably an animal.

RIK  
 I got a baaaaad feeling about this.

Rik turns back to Buzz who is about to open the flap on the tent. Spooked, Rik carefully approaches the tent - BOOM - out of nowhere LANCE PARKER attacks Rik, and the camera goes black.

HARD CUT

INT. 60 MINUTES INTERVIEW - UNKNOWN

Behind a black background, Buzz, with a large, bloodied bandage around his neck, sits with LANCE PARKER, who looks like a hybrid of John Rambo and Rust Cohle. Lance has a six pack of cheap canned beer and smokes regularly.

BUZZ  
 Genius. Rebel. Explorer. One of  
 America's most fascinating and  
 polarizing personalities. Love him,  
 or...mostly hate him. NASA's former  
 resident bad boy, Lance Parker.  
 Thanks for taking some time out to  
 talk.

Lance pops open a beer.

LANCE

...I can't accept your kudos when the cosmic calendar dictates my schedule.

BUZZ

Right - Uh - We've heard a lot about Project Exodus and your role in it - maybe you could describe your side of the story?

Lance pulls out a small crack pipe from his pocket, and loads it with meth.

LANCE

You gonna plumb my depth with that fully loaded question?

BUZZ

I'm sorry. I guess I'm still a little starstruck right now.

LANCE

Thanks. It's always nice to meet a true fan.

Lance puts the crack pipe to his lips and lights up.

BUZZ

Wait - Are you smoking crack right now?

Like a deer in the headlights, Lance puts the pipe down.

LANCE

Meth.

BUZZ

Uhhhhhhokay...

LANCE

It helps me remember.

BUZZ

I guess do what you gotta do to start talking.

Lance lights up and takes a deep hit of meth - becoming clearly high, but uniquely more lucid as he continues to drink and smoke cigarettes.

LANCE

THEY told me the interconnected symbiosis between myself and Project Exodus had been building to that moment 138 days into the mission for 13.8 billion years.

BUZZ

That's how you view Project Exodus? As some sort of manifest destiny?

LANCE

Not me, brother - Them.

BUZZ

Who is them?

LANCE

The proprietors of my cosmic destiny.

BUZZ

NASA?

LANCE

Ha - You wouldn't believe me even if I told you.

BUZZ

Try me. I have a doctorate in conspiracy theory.

LANCE

What you see in sci-fi here - it's what ya get there, kimosabe.

BUZZ

...Let me get this straight, Spock - Battlestar Galactica - Predator? Those are all real things?

LANCE

That's what my galactic paragon, Lando told me in a galaxy far, far away.

BUZZ

...Lando? Lando Calrissian? The character played by Billy Dee Williams, talked to you? Sure.

LANCE

If you want to be thought a liar, always tell the truth.

BUZZ

Then, be that as it may, what did Lando tell you?

LANCE

The highest high's and the lowest low's. It was so significant being insignificant.

BUZZ

What does that even mean?

LANCE

Imagine a hot fudge sundae.

BUZZ

(what?)

Okay.

LANCE

See, the universe is the ice cream - the fudge is dark matter - the nuts are all the planets - and I'm the cherry on top, brother.

BUZZ

Right.

LANCE

You see how insignificant I am in comparison to the other components of the universe?

BUZZ

But still significant because a sundae needs a cherry?

LANCE

Exactly.

BUZZ

That's a terrible analogy, Lance. If you're such a significant part of the universe - why'd you come back? Someone order their sundae without the cherry?

LANCE

No. Lando sent me back.

BUZZ

So, Lando Calrissian sends you back...because?

LANCE

I saw too many colors. He said I wasn't ready. I needed to fix what I broke.

BUZZ

I see - so on a scale from one-to-ten: ten being, "I'm a full-blown drug addict!" to one being "I just like having a good time...all the time!" Where would you place yourself, Lance?

LANCE

Heavy doses of universal enhancers continue to benefit the selfishness of my own body and mind.

BUZZ

So - ten?

LANCE

Numbers are just constructs created by man. What really counts is that the cosmic energy I emit has been richer and more profound.

BUZZ

Do you regret prioritizing your relationship with drugs over the people that once loved and cared about you?

LANCE

I've come to the conclusion that their destinies are insignificant toward the cause of creation and source of all energy and life.

BUZZ

So you have nothing for your daughter, Venus? No love to send?

LANCE

Ha - Love. Man's greatest folly.

BUZZ

That seems very shortsighted, Lance.

LANCE

The galaxy imbalance increases with observations that are neither questions nor statements.

BUZZ

...It was a statement. I can't keep this up anymore, Lance. Y'know, you were my hero at one time.

LANCE

Thanks. It's always nice to meet a real fan.

BUZZ

No. You talk nothing but nonsense. You cut my throat. And you smoke meth like it's not a big deal. I'm sorry, but after meeting you, I don't think you launched and you're definitely not my hero anymore.

LANCE

The only positive effect one can have on someone's life is being disliked.

BUZZ

Is that what you honestly believe?

LANCE

Since day one.

BUZZ

So that's your justification for abandoning your daughter...or, cheating Wayne St. Claire out of Project Exodus?

LANCE

Destiny realized. Like all powerless men, Wayne St. Claire's existence is meaningless without cosmic accelerant like myself.

BUZZ

That seems harsh for man that just-  
(interrupted)

LANCE

Killed himself because of me. I know.

BUZZ

How did you know that?

LANCE

(shocked)

They...They just told me.

Lance pulls out a small device from his pocket.

BUZZ

Who the hell is, they?

LANCE

Lando told me I would know when to use it.

BUZZ

Stop doing that. We're talking about a real person that killed himself because of you! Not Lando Calrissian!

LANCE

He told me I'd meet my cosmic destiny where I least suspected it...Wayne St. Claire. Ha...I'll be damned...

Lance pushes the device button and disappears.

BUZZ

Whoa...What...Rik?

RIK

(casual/professional)

Yeah, Buzz?

BUZZ

What just happened?

RIK

It appears Lance used that device to transport himself somewhere.

BUZZ

That's the craziest thing I've ever seen. Poof! Gone!

RIK

I really wish I could get rid of that hot spot in the left of frame.

BUZZ

You're talking about hot spots right now?!

RIK

I don't know? What do you want to talk about?

BUZZ

What do I want to talk about?! Jesus Christ - Lance Parker just disappeared.

RIK  
And I've moved on.

BUZZ  
How are you so casual about this?

RIK  
When I was a war corespondent in Africa, I saw a group of elephants get blown up by a car bomb. Now that was crazy.

BUZZ  
It's not as crazy as someone with a history of disappearing -  
DISAPPEARING IN FRONT OF US!

RIK  
I guess it's a matter of opinion. Crazy to me is a giant mammal exploding - crazy to you is a drug addict disappearing. Good to know.

BUZZ  
Listen, Rik. I don't like your attitude right now.

Lance Parker returns from the wormhole he created. However, he's returned with Wayne St. Claire, alive and well.

BUZZ (cont'd)  
(shocked)  
Wayne St. Claire?!

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE  
Goddamn it - I was this close.

BUZZ  
You saved his life, Lance.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE  
Are there any booze here? I'll start getting sick if I don't have a drink.

LANCE  
(friendly)  
Here, take my meth, old friend.

Lance gives Wayne his crack pipe.

WAYNE ST. CLAIRE  
Egh - It'll do.

Wayne takes the pipe, and sits down as he starts sparking the crack pipe.

LANCE

Lando told me I would know when I righted all my wrongs - and repaired my moral compass. I can feel it! I have fulfilled my cosmic destiny! I am not forever among the stars!

Lance stretches his arms out as if to be accepted by a higher power. Buzz and Wayne watch as Lance goes through the motion again - this time jumping in the air with his arms stretched.

LANCE (cont'd)

I have righted my wrongs and I am now forever among the stars!

Disheartened, Lance tries one more time - this time yelling louder and clearer.

LANCE (cont'd)

I repeat: I have fulfilled my cosmic destiny! I am now forever among the stars!

Nothing - Silence, except Wayne St. Claire taking a hit of meth.

LANCE (cont'd)

(yelling at the heavens)

You galactic pieces of shit said you would take me back when I did something good in my life! I saved Wayne St. Claire! What else do you want from me?! I AM NOW FOREVER AMONG THE STARS!...

BUZZ

Maybe you have more wrongs to right there, Lance.

Lance has a very sad realization that he can't fake being nice, and that he has WAY more people to apologize toward.

LANCE

...FUUUUUUUUUUU--(Cut off)

CREDITS