

FIND US ALIVE EPISODE 31: SPEAKING/LISTENING

HARSH FLUORESCENT BUZZING, LONG PAUSE

LANCASTER

So, what's- what's going on?

HARLEY

I'm taking over your part of the research. For the 14B stuff.

LANCASTER

Right.

PAUSE

LANCASTER

Well, uh, have a seat-

HARLEY

I like standing. I'm a standing guy now.

LANCASTER

Oh. I'm- I'm still gonna sit, though.

CLOTHES RUSTLE, LANCASTER SITS

ANOTHER AWKWARD PAUSE

LANCASTER

So, uh, where should we start?

HARLEY

Let's start before you lost your mind!

CLICK

KLEIN

You know what else sucks? The lights being- not overhead. They're so bright in the worst way and they're all shining directly into my damn eyes. I hate fluorescents. Gonna smash at least one tube right before the next Reset.

Alright. Anyway. I should probably give you an actual update, shouldn't I? I've been pretty close in touch with everyone so far. Maintenance is stretching our

food supplies the best they can, we should be able to make it to the end of the cycle with what we've got. Won't be comfortable, but nobody's gonna starve. I'm giving Engineering a break, for obvious reasons. I know you weren't crazy about the idea of the vigil, but you can ban mourning all you want next cycle. It's not like there's much for them to do right now, anyway.

It's too early to say with Botany. They said it might not be until next week that shocked plants start to die. Plus, they're having their own internal... drama. They're all mad at each other about something, I dunno. I'm sure they'll get over it.

Medical has set up a system for the cyclical screenings they want to do on all of us. They'll be ready to go once we Reset. And Dash One injuries aside, Gravett wants to check people more thoroughly for other physical effects that the anomaly or the Resets may have on us. Something we've been missing, I suppose.

Research is a bit stunted as well. Most of us aren't in shape enough to regularly go to and from the observation booth. I'm going to get out to BH-9 today to look at the state of the rift. We've got at least one working camera on it, thank god, but I want to get a look myself.

CLICK

LANCASTER

So obviously I couldn't get people to come to the conclusion themselves. I think that- that goes without saying. All the notes in the world didn't- couldn't stop me from getting distracted.

HARLEY

Yeah.

LANCASTER

But I had- you know, I started working on this theory about- about memetic anomalies and the- how they can change how the human brain works.

HARLEY

(sarcastic)

Oh my god really?

LANCASTER

SixtyThreeTwenty does- has a noticeable memetic effect. It's a secondary effect, sure, but it's still- it still has a serious impact. Lack of focus and observation leading to the creation of more Dash One instances. You can't stop it from happening if you don't NOTICE it's happening. And those of us who are "immune," the 14B people, can't stop it because we're prevented from bringing it up at all.

HARLEY

As I am painfully reminded every time I broadcast to an audience of no one.

PAUSE

LANCASTER

Anyway, I had an idea about using the anomaly's memetic effect to manipulate a person's Psychic Resistance itself.

HARLEY

As in *change* it?

LANCASTER

Exactly. Or- or I mean, that was the idea. I don't- I'm not sure HOW I would-

HARLEY

Like, exposure therapy?

LANCASTER

No- I mean- well- I mean- No. That's- that's not really how Psychic Resistance works, right?

It's not a LINEAR scale, it's actually-

HARLEY

You could, for example, FORCE the anomaly on somebody.

PAUSE

LANCASTER

That- No, that's not what I'm saying.

CLICK

FLUORESCENTS BUZZ AND SPARK

KLEIN

That is a shock hazard for sure.

WALKIE CLICKS

KLEIN

Maintenance? There's a broken socket in... You know what? Nevermind. It's out of the way, and I'm sure our staff is smart enough not to grab exposed wires with their bare hands.

Most of them, anyway.

FOOTSTEPS CONTINUE

KLEIN

At least this hallway is still horizontal.

DISTANT FOOTSTEPS, SHOE SQUEAKS.

KLEIN

Yo! Who's down there? You on your way to BH-9?

LOVE

(farther down)

Huh?

KLEIN

Love?

LOVE

Yeah? What?

KLEIN

What are you doing all the way  
down here?

LOVE  
Stuff, I dunno!

KLEIN  
Raddagher, too? Who's in the  
office?

LOVE  
We had to go- uh-

RADDAGHER  
Get something. Um- Pick up an  
object.

LOVE  
Yeah, we had to get something. It  
was- really important. Super  
important.

KLEIN  
What uh... what was it?

PAUSE

RADDAGHER  
(crosstalk)  
Uuuuuuhhhhhhhh-

LOVE  
(crosstalk)  
Mind your own BUSINESS, Klein!  
It's Surveillance stuff! It's just  
stuff we need for Surveillance,  
GOD!

RADDAGHER  
(crosstalk)  
Yeah.

LOVE  
(crosstalk)  
We have to go.

RADDAGHER  
Yeah.

LOVE  
(under her breath)  
Come ON-

HURRIED FOOTSTEPS INTO THE DISTANCE

PAUSE. THE FLUORESCENTS HUM

KLEIN

What the hell.

CLICK

ECHOING CELL AMBIENCE

LANCASTER

No, I'm telling you, between organizing the game and doing regular Psych work and everything else, that's ALL I have from- from before.

HARLEY

Alright-

LANCASTER

But I really think that- I really think some valuable data came out of the whole experience!

HARLEY

You'll forgive me if I don't entirely believe you.

LANCASTER

I mean it definitely gave me a different perspective. I think I- I think it could really benefit our research.

HARLEY

We couldn't get anything useful out of D-1.

LANCASTER

D-1... What's been happening with D-1? Has he been any different?

HARLEY

He's starting to act up again, since the detonation.

LANCASTER

Really? How? Like, what's he doing?

HARLEY

I don't trust you enough to tell you that.

BEAT

LANCASTER

What do you- what do you possibly think I could do with that information?

HARLEY

Communicate telepathically, I don't know.

LANCASTER

Communicate telepathically.

HARLEY

The point is you're anomalous and therefore untrustworthy.

LANCASTER

Okay- okay, even if I AM anomalous, that doesn't mean I'm incapable of HELPING YOU.

HARLEY

So I should give you whatever you need? So you can have another shot at "fixing" us?

LANCASTER

...This isn't even about me, is it?

HARLEY

I don't know what else it WOULD be about.

LANCASTER

Harley, why don't you tell me how YOU feel? About everything that's going on?

CLICK

RECORDER AUDIO

KLEIN

Hey. Me again.

Uhh, updates. Updates. I sent a couple of the younger members of Maintenance to check on that Reality Anchor part. See if anything interesting has happened to it in this mess. Not that we'll be able to do much with it right now. We'll see about it next cycle. Maintenance is handling it

for now, since Engineering is...  
taking a break...

Hmm. Sorry, I'm kinda distracted.

Anyway, Maintenance said it got  
knocked partially off the scaffold  
it was mounted on. Looks like  
nothing too important got broken,  
but there's one little lever on  
the side that came loose. Almost  
broke off. But we don't even know  
what it's for, and it's probably  
something that superglue can fix.  
No big deal.

There's- uh, there's some things  
going on with Botany, and Security  
is- up to stuff...

I'm sorry, I need to go check on  
something. I'm going to finish  
this later. Bye.

CLICK

HOLLOW CONTAINMENT CHAMBER AMBIENCE, FLUORESCENT BUZZING

LANCASTER

Are you doing okay?

HARLEY

I am so great. I am thriving.

LANCASTER

Stop. Stop, PLEASE stop doing  
that.

HARLEY

Why?

LANCASTER

Because it isn't helpful!

HARLEY

I didn't come all the way down  
here for help. I came to get your  
research so I can fix everything  
you messed up.

LANCASTER

I'm trying to give you as- all the  
information that I can give you.  
Why are you- why are you so



adamant about not hearing anything  
from when I was Dash Three'd?

HARLEY

There is very little evidence  
indicating that you are not STILL  
a Dash Three.

LANCASTER

You didn't answer my question.

HARLEY

Because your Dash Three info is  
unreliable.

LANCASTER

Okay, fine. But- but why are you  
so nervous about talking to me?

HARLEY

I'm not nervous!

LANCASTER

Okay- your body language isn't  
exactly subtle.

HARLEY

I'm not playing therapy with you  
right now.

LANCASTER

Are you playing therapy with  
anyone ever?

HARLEY

Are YOU?

LANCASTER

This isn't about me.

HARLEY

It is explicitly about you,  
actually. Half of this fiasco is  
about you. You're the second  
biggest problem on the roster  
right now.

LANCASTER

Not about my mental health-

HARLEY

It is literally ENTIRELY about  
your mental health!

CLICK

HALLWAY AMBIENCE AND ECHO, KLEIN'S FOOTSTEPS

KLEIN

Love? Just calling to ask what you've been up to. Somebody on Security told me you and Raddagher have been going back and forth across the site all day. Something up? Over.

WALKIE BEEPS

PAUSE

WALKIE BEEPS

LOVE

Everything is fine!

PAUSE

KLEIN

That distinctly sounds like everything is not fine, over.

LOVE

Nope! Everything is good. We just had to- to get some... stuff. Move it around. You know. The objects. From earlier. Over.

KLEIN

What objects?

LOVE

You know! Stuff. For- Look, the Security office is really uncomfortable, okay? We're just trying to- I dunno, make it less uncomfortable.

KLEIN

Alright-

LOVE

JESUS, Klein, GOD, why can't you just LEAVE US ALONE. FUCK.

PAUSE

KLEIN

Are you done?

LOVE  
(totally casual again)  
Yeah, I'm done.

KLEIN  
Alright. I'm coming down.

LOVE  
KLEIN, NO, DON'T-

HARD CLICK AS WALKIE SHUTS OFF

KLEIN  
Yeah. They're up to something.

CLICK

BACK TO HOLLOW REVERB AND HARSH FLUORESCENT BUZZING OF  
LANCASTER'S CONTAINMENT CELL

LANCASTER  
No, it's not!

HARLEY  
Yes, it is!

LANCASTER  
"Mental health" and "being an  
anomaly" are not the same thing!

HARLEY  
So you admit you're an anomaly?

LANCASTER  
What- no! That's not what I'm  
saying, I'm saying whether or not  
I am and- and my mental health-  
they're not the same issue?

HARLEY  
I fail to see how having an  
anomaly in your brain is not a  
mental health issue.

LANCASTER  
Because it's- it's different  
fields of study, alright?

HARLEY  
Your mental health was garbage way  
before you got Dash Three'd.

LANCASTER  
No, I- what? No, it wasn't.

HARLEY

(laughing)  
Yes, it was!

LANCASTER

I was doing fine!

HARLEY

Prove it. Say one thing to prove it.

LANCASTER

I- I was eating vegetables. Like, almost every day-

HARLEY

(rapid crosstalk arguing)  
OH, you ATE A VEGETABLE? No no, you're right, that fixes everything. I did read once that carrots cure depression. I think it was in Foundation Science Digest? You know, maybe if we all just eat enough veggies it'll get us out of here! That's the missing piece! The solution has been in front of us the whole time! No, I'm listening to you GREAT, the issue at hand is that nothing you're saying is making sense! You probably just lured me in here so you could kill and eat me or something, I don't know.

LANCASTER

(rapid crosstalk arguing)  
Okay, okay, no, shut up, you're just being shitty on purpose. I've been taking care of myself! I have been sincerely trying my best. Of course that isn't what I meant! You don't have to be rude, you know, it's not- I feel like you're not listening to me. Maybe it would make more sense if you actually let me finish? I'm NOT going to KILL and EAT you?! I don't even know where to START if I was ever going to kill or eat YOU!

PAUSE

TONE LIGHTENS FOR A MOMENT. HARLEY CHUCKLES A LITTLE

LANCASTER  
Can- would you just please listen  
to me?

BEAT

HARLEY  
Don't.

LANCASTER  
Don't what?

HARLEY  
You're trying to lighten the mood  
so I won't be mad at you.

LANCASTER  
That's- I wasn't doing that on  
purpose.

HARLEY  
*Something* was.

PAUSE

HARLEY  
I'm going to go. You can tell me  
the rest later.

FOOTSTEPS ON LADDER RUNGS

LANCASTER  
Wait, wait, Harley, I can't leave  
it like this-

HARLEY  
I'm going.

LANCASTER  
You're running from the problem,  
Harley!

HARLEY  
You're the problem, Lancaster, I'm  
running from you.

LANCASTER  
Yeah, as if you aren't-

DEEP RUMBLING OF A TREMOR. THE LADDER  
RATTLES

HARLEY  
Woah-

RUMBLING QUIETS AFTER A MOMENT

SITE COMM CLICKS ON, KLEIN'S VOICE  
REVERBERATES THROUGH THE ROOM

KLEIN

Big Dash One just went off.  
Everybody find a small room and  
shelter in place until Security  
takes care of it. Standby for  
further instruction.

SITE COMM CLICKS OFF

HARLEY

Son of a bitch.

CLICK

QUICK FOOTSTEPS ECHOING THROUGH A LONG  
HALLWAY.

KLEIN

Cheers, Halldi. Thanks for taking  
care of it. Over and out.

WALKIE BEEPS

KLEIN

Alright- I'm checking in, whether  
they want me to or not. I'm not  
about to ride this out in a  
closet. If Love doesn't like it,  
too bad.

RAPPING ON DOOR

KLEIN

Hello? Anybody in there?

LOVE AND RADDAGHER WHISPER AND GIGGLE INSIDE

KLEIN

Love? Raddagher? I need somewhere  
to shelter in place, I'm coming  
in.

LOVE SHOUTS BEHIND THE DOOR

LOVE

(behind door)  
KLEIN NO WAIT-

KLEIN

What? What's going on in there?

LOVE  
JUST- JUST GIVE ME A SECOND!

KLEIN  
Is everything alright? Did you  
feel the tremor?

LOVE  
YEAH WE FELT THE TREMOR BUT  
EVERYTHING IS FINE DON'T OPEN THE  
DOOR

KLEIN  
Screw it, I'm coming in.

DOOR HANDLE RATTLES, COMMOTION BEHIND THE  
DOOR

DOOR OPENS PARTIALLY

LOVE  
Don't come in!

PAUSE

KLEIN  
You are a mess.

LOVE  
I know!

KLEIN  
Your uh... might wanna button up  
your shirt a little bit.

LOVE  
Don't tell me what to do.

KLEIN  
Alright, yeah. I think I'm gonna...  
I think I'm gonna shelter in  
place- elsewhere...

LOVE  
THANK YOU.

KLEIN  
But one question-

LOVE  
What?

KLEIN

..Is that a leaf in your hair?

PAUSE

RUSTLING

LOVE

NO.

RADDAGHER

(whispering)

Is she gone?

KLEIN

I'm going! I'm going.

LOVE

Okay. Great. Bye.

KLEIN

Bye. Uh, stay in there until I  
give the all clear.

LOVE

(chuckling)

Oh, we will.

DOOR CLOSES

PAUSE

LOVE AND RADDAGHER TALK QUIETLY INSIDE. LOVE  
GIGGLES.

KLEIN

Oh, god. Ew. Yup! Locking down in  
a closet it is.

CLICK

HOLLOW REVERB, FLUORESCENT BUZZING.

LONG PAUSE.

LANCASTER

Can't you say something?

HARLEY

No.

LANCASTER

It'd be a good time for it.

NO RESPONSE.



LANCASTER

Come on! I'm really trying, here!

HARLEY

You're "trying" to convince me you're not a Three, and it isn't going to work.

LANCASTER

Because I'm not! I SWEAR I'm not!

HARLEY

I don't BELIEVE you!

LANCASTER

Why are you turning up your nose at information that you need to keep doing memetic research?! I have the information!

HARLEY

You already told me the only stuff I can actually use! I'm not using any of the "research" you did while you were fucking insane!

LANCASTER

This is clearly not even about the research anymore.

HARLEY

What?

LANCASTER

Because if it was, you- you would be taking whatever you could get, right? You'd be collecting data, that's how anomaly research works!

HARLEY

Then what IS it about, pray tell?!

LANCASTER

I think you're angry about what happened, and you're taking it out on me!

HARLEY

I have every right to be angry at you!

LANCASTER

I'm SORRY, okay?!

HARLEY

Sorry for what? What are you sorry for?

LANCASTER

I'm sorry I cut you! I was out of control and I wasn't in my right mind and-

HARLEY

I don't fucking care about the cut, Lanc!

LANCASTER

Then WHAT are you so-

HARLEY

(more desperate than angry)  
Why didn't you TELL me?!

BEAT

HARLEY

You let it get worse and worse for an entire MONTH and you never said anything! It never occurred to you that maybe I would want to know?! That I might want to HELP you?

LANCASTER

...I just thought I could handle it by myself-

HARLEY

You aren't SUPPOSED to handle it by yourself. That's what you're always telling us. That's why you have team members. That's why you have therapists. That's why you have FRIENDS, Orion!

PAUSE. LANCASTER DOESN'T RESPOND.

HARLEY

You're a hypocrite. How do you expect your patients to trust you when you don't take your own advice?

LANCASTER

I just don't want to burden anybody with-

HARLEY

Are other people a burden to you when they ask for help?

LANCASTER

No, of course not, but-

HARLEY

Then why would you think YOU would be one?

PAUSE

HARLEY

I would have helped. If you asked. I'm angry that you didn't.

LANCASTER

I'm sorry.

HARLEY

You're not a burden. Nobody's a fucking burden.

SITE COMM CLICKS ON.

KLEIN

All clear, everybody. Security found the Dash One responsible. We think. Shelter in place lifted, go do whatever you want.

SITE COMM CLICKS OFF.

PAUSE

LANCASTER

Uh, are you- are you gonna go?

HARLEY

Yeah. I'm gonna go.

LANCASTER

I'm sorry, Ed.

HARLEY

I know. But I reserve the right to still be pissed. I'm going to go- I don't know. Do something to work that out.

LANCASTER

Yeah, I- I get it.

HARLEY

Maybe put something together. All the things you learned last cycle. It might help convince people

you're not... AS crazy. Put it in a binder, maybe.

LANCASTER  
(chuckling)  
Yeah. A binder.

HARLEY  
Well, um... See you around.

LANCASTER  
See you around.

CLICK

HARLEY'S OFFICE AMBIENCE

CHAIR SQUEAK AS HARLEY LEANS BACK

HARLEY  
Hm.  
  
I'm still mad. I don't know how long that will take to wear off. There's something comfortable about anger. Easy. It's simpler to be angry than it is to be hurt.

I really do hate feeling like this.

(tone change)  
So instead, I impart my thoughts to you, Overwatch Command. I know you don't care about my personal life, but at this point, I don't care. I'm telling you anyway. What are you going to do? Fire me? From out there?

(chuckles)  
Maybe I should listen to him. Hear him out about the stuff that happened while he was in the process of becoming a Dash Three. Because he's right, it's still valuable information, even if it IS coming from an unreliable source. I shouldn't let my emotions get in the way of that.

So I'll be taking over his research. Whatever he's learned about the...

The...

Hm. The... stuff. That he's doing.

What is he doing?

It's on the tip of my tongue, hold  
on a moment. It'll come back to  
me.

HARLEY WAFFLES FOR A FEW MORE SECONDS AS HIS  
VOICE FADES OUT.

END EPISODE