

15 Minutes to Midnight: Opening Cinematic

Written by

Harry

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FADE IN

INT. BUREAU OF TEMPORAL CORRECTIONS

We slowly open to a long, narrow hallway stretching out in front of the camera. Footsteps echo from behind as THE AGENT walks forwards, stepping into frame but not visible from the waist up.

CUT TO:

INT. BUREAU OF TEMPORAL CORRECTIONS-DISPATCH CLOSET

LIGHTS FLICKERING. From above, we see The Agent sit down behind a stainless steel table, leaning back just slightly in his chair. The Agent looks like a generic white male, exactly the kind of face you would forget about the moment it's out of sight. The chair creaks slightly, the only sound in the room before THE HANDLER walks in. A frail elderly woman with a momentary distaste for most anything, she sits down in the opposing chair and drops a file on the table. The Agent leans in, looking down at the papers.

THE AGENT
Where am I going?

THE HANDLER
Havernale High, 2018.

The Handler pushes the file closer to him, expression neutral. The Agent stares her down for a moment before picking up the file and looking through it. A few faces jump out to him before a symbol on the back of the folder of a crescent moon sticks out like a sore thumb.

THE AGENT
An Apocalypse? At a high school? I'm not on doomsday duty today, not after last week. Give it to Steve.

THE HANDLER
Steve's dead.

THE AGENT
Oh, well shit.

The Handler stares him down once more, adjusting her rimmed glasses.

THE AGENT (cont'd)
Fine, fine okay. What's the window looking like?

THE HANDLER
The window is 15 minutes with a Reset count.

THE AGENT
I get Resets for this? Hells you should've led with that, easy job then. What's my Manifold rate?

THE HANDLER
20% and that's a strict cap. If you muck around too much, you'll get a spiral effect and that just means more work.

THE AGENT
So, I've got a 15 minute loop while stuck in a high school reunion and 20% acceptable rate of changes? Could be worse, could definitely be worse.

The Handler takes the file back, laying out pictures of a few different potential points of interest.

THE HANDLER
From what we can tell, one of these people is responsible for a nuclear detonation later on in their lives and we've traced the inciting incident back to this moment. Somewhere in these 15 minutes, somebody plants the seeds to destroy the planet.

THE AGENT
So find who it is, give them the ol' therapy pep talk and then get a move on?

THE HANDLER
There may also be a malicious actor in the building, signs are pointing towards another traveler influencing the situation but Apocalypses are always messy when it comes to analysis.

The Agent stands up, picking up the file before heading to the doorway.

THE AGENT
Mission received. You got a name for me?

CUT TO:

EXT.HAVERNALE HIGH-2018-7:10 PM

Text appears on screen, 15:00 and begins slowly counting down as it moves towards the bottom right corner of the screen. The Agent appears in a flash of blue light, now wearing a pair of glasses in a dark button down shirt with black pants. He blinks, grabbing his mouth and runs over towards a nearby trash can, vomiting into it. Gagging slightly, he shakes his head a bit and starts patting himself down. His right hand feels something in one of his pant pockets and starts pulling it out.

THE AGENT
Not Clubs, Hearts or Diamonds please,
I'm really not in the mood for-

The Agent pulls out a Seven of Hearts playing card as his demeanor shifts, a loud groan emanating from him.

THE AGENT (cont'd)
Great.

He folds up the playing card and takes a small earpiece out of his other pocket, placing it in his ear. There's a small clicking sound followed by a shrill beep as CLUBS's voice echoes over the device.

CLUBS
Tell me you read the file today.

The Agent starts walking towards the doors to the schools gym, talking under his breath.

THE AGENT
Clubs I always read the file, when
have I not read the file?

CLUBS
Cuba, '62.

THE AGENT
In my defense, I already knew what
was happening.
(MORE)

THE AGENT (cont'd)
The file didn't have anything new, it
was just some beauracratc nonsense.

CLUBS
(Sighing in
frustration)
Nonsense like the name of your
target?

THE AGENT
Exactly, nonsense. So, I know what
I'm here for but who am I actually
supposed to talk to?

CLUBS
We...don't know. This whole event is
a temporal black box. We know who
went into it and we know what it
caused. Everything that happened
inside? No records or testimonials to
pull from.

THE AGENT
...how many black boxes have been
successfully deciphered?

CLUBS
Almost one, enough so that Apollo 13
only got damaged instead of
detonating.

THE AGENT
So I'm aiming to only have one nuke
fly instead of World War Three?

CLUBS
Seems that way. Your cover name for
the night is James Eller. The real
Eller's currently dealing with
unexpected car troubles so you should
be clear. The loop window is 15
minutes, please don't break time.

THE AGENT
Only bend it, as per usual.

The Agent starts to open the door before asking a question.

THE AGENT (cont'd)
Actually is there anything I need to
know about Eller? Anything they might
remember him for.

CLUBS

Nope, James Eller was a last minute transfer student in 2008. He got through his last year of high school without drawing much attention so feel free to improvise.

THE AGENT

The gift of a blank slate, see you inside Clubs.

CUT TO:

A title card appears over a black screen: 15 Minutes to Midnight.