

RED VALLEY: SEASON 1 EPISODE 1
'Tortoise'
by
Jonathan Williams

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Character List

Warren Godby

Gordon Porlock

Karen Godby

Doug Holder

Switchboard Operator #1

Switchboard Operator #2 (Tracey)

Switchboard Operator #3

Switchboard Operator #4

Jennifer

SEASON 1 EPISODE 1

'TORTOISE'

SCENE 1

**THE ABRUPT CLICK OF A TAPE
RECORDER BEING SWITCHED ON.**

MALE VOICE #1: (D) Was that it? Is it on?

MALE VOICE #2: Um, hang on a sec...(OFF) Oh, wait. (CLOSE) Yeah, it's on.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) Okay.

MALE VOICE #2: Uh, yeah. Go ahead.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) Wait, shall we start this conversation again, or what?

MALE VOICE #2: No, no. Let's just carry on.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) This doesn't feel very formal to me.

MALE VOICE #2: Well it isn't formal, is it. It's private, I thought that was the point.

MALE VOICE #1 SIGHS.

MALE VOICE #2: What?

MALE VOICE #1: (D) I want you to take this seriously, okay?

MALE VOICE #2: I do. I am.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) I need you to.

MALE VOICE #2: I promise you, I'm taking this seriously. Come on, you asked me to record it, I went and got a dictaphone, like you asked. Go ahead, please.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) How much do you know about cryonic preservation?

MALE VOICE #2: Cryonic...preservation? Like...is that cryogenics?

MALE VOICE #1: (D) No. It's not like that at all. Everyone knows the word cryogenics, that's not what this is. I mean, that is part of it, maybe that's where it started, I don't know. There isn't a cryogenics division any more, I mean, that I know of. Who knows.

MALE VOICE #2: Right.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) But cryogenics is not the term I'm trying to explain. Cryogenics deals with the production of extreme low temperature, and the effects of those temperatures. I'm talking about cryonics. And that deals very specifically with one thing.

MALE VOICE #2: Okay.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) Human beings.

MALE VOICE #2: Human beings.

MALE VOICE #1: (D) The preservation of human beings at extreme low temperature.

MALE VOICE #2: You mean like Walt Dis -

MALE VOICE #1: (D) I swear to God if you say anything about Walt Disney's frozen fucking head I am hanging up this phone right now.

CUT.

SCENE 2

A PHONE CALL. HOLD MUSIC PLAYS
SOFTLY, AND THEN ABRUPTLY CUTS AS A
PHONE IS PICKED UP.

FEMALE VOICE: Good afternoon, thanks for holding. You're through to Storage Solutions, how can I help?

WARREN: Oh, hi. I wonder if you can. I'm Warren Godby, I'm from Accounts.

FEMALE VOICE: Good afternoon Mr Godby, how can I help?

WARREN: Um, yes. I'm trying to find the department that looks after one of the company's facilities.

FEMALE VOICE: Which facility would that be?

WARREN: Its a seed vault.

FEMALE VOICE: A what, sorry?

WARREN: Yeah, it sounds weird to me too. A seed vault. I think its a cold storage thing, for keeping emergency crop supplies.

FEMALE VOICE: That doesn't sound like anything we have here.

WARREN: Oh really, I thought Storage Solutions would be the right place -

FEMALE VOICE: No, try Agric Solutions.

WARREN: Agriculture. Good idea. Well tha -

FEMALE VOICE: Thank you Mr Godby have a great afternoon.
Goodbye.

WARREN: : Goodbye -

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

ANOTHER LINE IS RINGING. ANOTHER
FEMALE VOICE PICKS UP.

FEMALE VOICE #2: Hello Agric Solutions this is Heather speaking, how can I help?

WARREN: Hi Heather, this is Warren Godby from Accounts. I'm looking into a facility we have on our books and I can't actually find the department it comes under.

HEATHER: You can't find the department.

WARREN: No, it sounds silly doesn't it.

HEATHER: What facility is it?

WARREN: It's a seed vault. For storing, uh, seeds. I was pointed towards you guys.

HEATHER: Never heard of it.

WARREN: Oh. That's a shame.

HEATHER: Is there anything else I can help you with today?

WARREN: Uh...well I really wouldn't mind speaking to -

HEATHER: Mr Jacobs is on annual leave till the 17th.

WARREN: Who's Mr Jac -

HEATHER: Thanks for your call, goodbye.

WARREN: Hey, could I -

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

ANOTHER CALL, ABRUPTLY:

VOICE: Sorry, what did you say it was?

WARREN: A seed vault.

VOICE: A what?

ANOTHER CALL.

WARREN: Is that Geographical Science?

VOICE: Nope, this is Bio Science.

WARREN: Sorry, do you have the extension for Geo -

ANOTHER CALL

WARREN: : I don't know, it's a vault, they use it to store seeds.

VOICE: Well, yeah, I gathered that much.

WARREN: Do you know who the Head of Department is that looks after it?

VOICE: Do I know?

WARREN: Yes.

VOICE: Yes what?

WARREN: What?

VOICE: You mean yes please.

WARREN: ...that's...that's not how you use please.

VOICE: You're rude. Who's your head of department, I want to speak to them.

WARREN: Forget it. Thanks. Or please, whatever.

CLUNK AS PHONE GOES DOWN, BUT
DOESN'T DISCONNECT.

WARREN: (LOW) Dick.

VOICE: I'm still here.

WARREN: Oh. Not you. Someone else. Who's a dick.

HOLD MUSIC PLAYS IN BACKGROUND.
THE RUSTLE OF FOOD WRAPPING.

KAREN: He wants to come in Wednesday.

WARREN: That's too long to not have a shower.

KAREN: That's all he can do. And he wants to do the cabinet doors.

WARREN: What's wrong with the cabinet doors?

KAREN: He wants to put those slow closing hinges on them. So they don't slam.

WARREN: Why? Do we slam them too loudly?

KAREN: I don't know.

WARREN: Are people complaining that we slam our cabinets too loudly?

KAREN: Who cares, it's his money.

WARREN: We tell him the shower's broken, and he wants to change the hinges on the bloody cabinets.

KAREN: He said it'll extend their lifespan.

WARREN LAUGHS AND COUGHS ON HIS SANDWICH. KAREN JOINS IN.

KAREN: You alright there?

WARREN: The lifespan!

KAREN: I know. He's such a dick.

WARREN: Sorry Mr Landlord, how many slams have these cabinet doors had? Two, three thousand?

KAREN: Ha!

WARREN: Sorry honey, we can't move in here. There's just been too many slams per cabinet here. It's false economy.

KAREN: And there's no shower.

WARREN: And there's no shower.

ANOTHER LINE IS RINGING. IT IS PICKED UP.

MALE VOICE: Warren!

WARREN: Doug. Hey.

DOUG: Just checking in.

WARREN: Yeah. Good to hear from you.

DOUG: Are you having fun?

WARREN: Ha, yeah. It's a goose chase alright.

DOUG: No one biting?

WARREN: I've been bounced around all day. I've still got some more to follow up on.

DOUG: You're getting an idea of the size of the company now.

WARREN: It's...ridiculous.

DOUG LAUGHS.

WARREN: I'm sorry, it is!

DOUG: No, you're right. It is.

WARREN: I've never known anything like it.

DOUG: Welcome to Overhead, buster. Keep digging.

CUT.

SCENE 3

AN OPEN OFFICE ENVIRONMENT - IN THE
DISTANCE THERE IS THE SOUND OF
COMPUTERS TAPPING, SOME ONE SIDED
CONVERSATION FROM PHONE CALLS.
NOTHING CLOSE BY. FOOTSTEPS
APPROACHING.

FEMALE VOICE: (OFF) Gordon, this is Mr Godby from Accounts. He asked to see you.

GORDON: (CLOSE) Oh. Hi. I didn't have an appointment booked in.

FEMALE VOICE: (OFF) I've never booked an appointment in for you before.

GORDON: (CLOSE) I - uh, yeah, okay. Thanks, Jenni - oh. She's gone.

WARREN: Yeah. I'm glad its not just me.

GORDON: What's that?

WARREN: Just, it seems really hard to talk to anyone round here. Everyone's so...occupied.

GORDON: Well don't take it personally. They're probably just worried you're here to 'streamline' their department, or close it down completely, something like that.

WARREN: Right. It's a shame there's such a reputation that goes with Accounts. I'd like to change it, if I could.

GORDON: Are you new?

WARREN: Yeah. Three months in.

GORDON CONSIDERS THIS.

WARREN: Anyway, I really don't want to take up much of your time, so I'll just...anyway. I've been round the houses a bit looking for something. An account, unsurprisingly. I thought it was an ongoing project but I can't find a trace of it anywhere, so I thought I'd try Archives next. I know some departments get repurposed and maybe renamed, so...right. What it is, is...well, I think its a seed bank, or vault or something. Like the one they have up in Svalbard, in Norway. Like an end of the world resource of all the essential crops and seeds and whatever. I'm starting to feel like this is a practical joke.

GORDON: You're talking about the Red Valley Seed Vault.

WARREN: Sorry, the what?

GORDON: How long did you say you've been with the company?

WARREN: Um. Three months. Sorry, what's Red Valley? Is that a name or a place -

GORDON: Do you have a card I could take?

WARREN: Oh. Yes!

WARREN DIGS AROUND A MOMENT AND
PRODUCES A LITTLE CASE OF BUSINESS
CARDS.

WARREN: You're actually the first person to ask for one of these babies. There you go. This is great, the Red Valley Seed Vault, right?

GORDON: You've definitely never heard of it?

WARREN: This is the first time I've heard anything about it. There's just the usual loose ends in the budget review and my line manager asked me to follow up on this.

GORDON: Your line manager.

WARREN: Doug Holder. Nice guy.

GORDON: Red Valley was a smallholding next to a very small mountain called Beinn Bagg, in the Outer Hebrides. Affectionately known as Bean Bag. Only, no one's got any affection for it so we just called it Ball Bag.

WARREN: Ball Bag?

GORDON: Indeed.

WARREN: You were there? You worked there yourself?

GORDON: No, I was just part of the redevelopment team. The land was snatched up by the government during the Cold War, and they built a small missile tracking base on it. Tiny unit, skeleton crew. People had been throwing around the idea of an emergency crop resource in the event of a nuclear incident, and as the site was already militarised, isolated, they started working on a vault. Then the Cold War ended.

WARREN: And I guess the money stopped.

GORDON: It did. It stood empty until Overhead acquired the company that had built the vault for the government. They bought it out entirely, and that's when I was put on the team. To modernise the vault, to improve it to the highest standard.

WARREN: Why wasn't it finished?

GORDON: You tell me, Accounts swooped in and killed it before we ever got the plans approved.

WARREN: I wish I had an answer for that.

GORDON: If, uh...If you want to see, I've still got the file for those plans, on my screen right here.

WARREN: Yes, yes, that'd be great.

GORDON: Just...come round here then.

WARREN: Oh, um. Right.

GORDON: Just scooch round here.

WARREN AWKWARDLY DRAGS HIS CHAIR
ROUND TO GORDON'S SIDE OF THE DESK.

GORDON: Here we go.

WARREN: Um. This is just a bunch of adverts for tortoises.

GORDON: (CLOSE) I know. I'm buying a tortoise.

WARREN: (CLOSE) Why are you -

GORDON: (CLOSE) Swear to me you've never heard of the Red Valley Seed Vault until I just told you.

WARREN: (CLOSE) What? Why -

GORDON: (CLOSE) Swear to me. Or we're going to have a problem.

WARREN: (CLOSE) I swear.

GORDON: (CLOSE) You'd never heard of it?

WARREN: (CLOSE) I'm learning lots of new things today.

GORDON: (CLOSE) You swear?

WARREN: (CLOSE) I swear.

GORDON: (CLOSE) You *swear*.

WARREN: (CLOSE) Could you take your hand off my knee?

GORDON: (CLOSE) Look Warren. If they're sending the butter-wouldn't-melt 'uh, um, uh' new boy looking for Red Valley, it'll be for a reason. Not a happy touchy-feely smiley reason, a creepy, suspicious, nasty one. Trust me.

WARREN: Look, Mr Porlock, you've been really helpful and I'm very grateful. But I said I wouldn't take up much of your valuable time and neither of us have blinked for the last minute or so, so -

GORDON: (CLOSE) Keep your voice down. Are you recording this, Warren?

WARREN SIGHS.

WARREN: (CLOSE) Am I what?

GORDON: (CLOSE) Recording this. You should be. I am.

WARREN: (CLOSE) You're recording this conversation. Right now.

GORDON: (CLOSE) You bet I am.

GORDON TAPS A NEARBY MICROPHONE,
HIDDEN ON HIS DESK.

WARREN: Right, this is very funny, this is a very fine joke. I'm sorry if Accounts have treated you badly in the past -

GORDON: (CLOSE) I'm not making fun of you Warren. If I wanted to do that I'd draw attention to your pubey beard and your little toddler hands.

WARREN: Thanks, I feel much better now.

GORDON: (CLOSE) Stationery is just down the corridor, there's dictaphones in there, go in and help yourself. I want you to tape every conversation you have now Warren. You might need it.

WARREN: Righty ho. Will do.

WARREN GETS UP TO LEAVE.

GORDON: I know how many are there. I'll count them once you're gone.

WARREN: It's been great meeting you Mr Porlock.

GORDON: Call me Gordon.

WARREN: I sure will.

GORDON: Warren?

WARREN: Yes.

GORDON: Have you...streamlined any other department yet?

WARREN IS SURPRISED AT THE QUESTION.

WARREN: Yes. A meat-printing project.

GORDON: Meat-printing?

WARREN: Yeah. Like organic 3D printing. It was a bad project, we closed the whole department.

GORDON: And how did that feel?

PAUSE.

WARREN: It was awful.

AWKWARD SILENCE.

WARREN: Don't get a tortoise.

GORDON: Why not?

WARREN: They'll never love you back.

EXITS.

CUT.

SCENE 4

**WARREN'S CAR - VOICEMAIL MESSAGES
ARE PLAYING ON SPEAKERPHONE.**

VOICEMAIL: (D) You have 3 new messages. First new message, received today at 15.34 hours.

GORDON: (D) Warren. I very much enjoyed our meeting this afternoon -

WARREN: Yeah, right.

GORDON: (D) - and I'd be happy to help. My mobile number is 07796 -

WARREN: Who *is* this guy.

GORDON: (D) -4316.

VOICEMAIL: (D) To listen aga -

KEYPAD TONE

VOICEMAIL: (D) Message deleted. Next new message received today at 16.15 hours.

GORDON: (D) Hi Warren. I'm sending you something. To your house. I hope you don't mind, I got your address from payroll. I just pretended to be you on the phone. It was funny actually.

VOICEMAIL: (D) To listen again, press 1. To save -

KEYPAD TONE

VOICEMAIL: (D) Message deleted. New message received today at 16.18 hours.

GORDON: (D) ...Playing this back in my mind, I'm probably really creeping you out, aren't I. I'm sorry. I don't get to talk about this stuff very much. I'm sorry I pretended to be you on the phone to payroll and shouted at them to give me your address -

INCOMING CALL TONE INTERRUPTS.

GORDON: - probably sounded weird when I just blurted that out in my last message -

TONE AGAIN.

WARREN: Fuck.

GORDON: - anyway, call me when you get my package, I sent an Overhead courier actually so you should -

TONE AGAIN. PICK UP.

WARREN: Hey.

KAREN: Hey, where are you?

WARREN: I got stuck on the M4, I'm sorry. I'm just past Newbury.

KAREN: You're going to miss tea.

WARREN: I know. I'm sorry.

KAREN: There's a package for you. Courier delivered it a little while ago.

WARREN: How the fuck did he do that?

KAREN: Who?

WARREN: Don't worry. I've got some calls to make babe, I'm really sorry.

KAREN: ...Okay. I'll see you when you're back.

HANGS UP.

EPISODE 1 SCENE 5

RINGTONES. PICK UP.

GORDON: (D) Warren Godby.

WARREN: Mr Porlock.

GORDON: (D) Gordon. Please.

WARREN: Right. Gordon it is.

GORDON: (D) Did you get my package?

WARREN: I did. You got that here very fast.

GORDON: (D) The item wasn't with me, it was at a storage locker in a facility we have near Chepstow. Nearer to you than it was to me. No one knows what it is, it's just another box with another barcode on it. You've opened it?

WARREN: Yes, I have. It's an old dictaphone cassette.

GORDON: (D) You haven't listened to it yet.

WARREN: No. I wanted to speak to you first. You know the voicemails you left me earlier, the whole getting my address thing -

GORDON: (D) Yes yes yes. I'm sorry about that. I just wanted to move quickly, throw you right in so to speak.

WARREN: Throw me in to what?

GORDON: (D) Are you recording this conversation?

WARREN: No, I -

GORDON: (D) That is the one thing I asked you to do! If you're not being careful enough, even at this stage, I don't know if I want to take this any further -

WARREN: Gordon, the only purpose of my visit was to understand the use of funds in and around a seed vault facility, Red Valley or wherever it is, to answer an inquiry from Doug Holder, my line manager. This is all very -

GORDON: (D) Please turn on your recorder. Hold it up to the phone and record it.

WARREN: Fine. Hang on.

PHONE IS PLACED DOWN. WARREN
RUMMAGING IN BAG.

GORDON: (D) You're alone I take it.

PHONE IS PICKED UP.

WARREN: Sorry, say that again?

GORDON: (D) You're alone.

WARREN: Yes, it's late, my wife's in bed already.

THE ABRUPT CLICK OF A TAPE
RECORDER BEING SWITCHED ON.

GORDON: (D) Was that it? Is it on?

WARREN: Um, hang on a sec...(OFF) Oh, wait. (CLOSE) Yeah, it's on.

GORDON: (D) Okay.

WARREN: Uh, yeah. Go ahead.

GORDON: (D) Wait, shall we start this conversation again, or what?

WARREN: No, no. Let's just carry on.

GORDON: (D) This doesn't feel very formal to me.

WARREN: Well it isn't formal, is it. It's private, I thought that was the point.

GORDON SIGHS.

WARREN: What?

GORDON: (D) I want you to take this seriously, okay?

WARREN: I do. I am.

GORDON: (D) I need you to.

WARREN: I promise you, I'm taking this seriously. Come on, you asked me to record it, I went and got a dictaphone, like you asked. Go ahead, please.

GORDON: (D) How much do you know about cryonic preservation?

WARREN: Cryonic...preservation? Like...is that cryogenics?

GORDON: (D) No. It's not like that at all. Everyone knows the word cryogenics, that's not what this is. I mean, that is part of it, maybe that's where it started, I don't know. There isn't a cryogenics division any more, I mean, that I know of. Who knows.

WARREN: Right.

GORDON: (D) But cryogenics is not the term I'm trying to explain. Cryogenics deals with the production of extreme low temperature, and the effects of those temperatures. I'm talking about cryonics. And that deals very specifically with one thing.

WARREN: Okay.

GORDON: (D) Human beings.

WARREN: Human beings.

GORDON: (D) The preservation of human beings at extreme low temperature.

WARREN: You mean like Walt Dis -

GORDON: (D) I swear to God if you say anything about Walt Disney's frozen fucking head I am hanging up this phone right now.

WARREN: I don't know what you mean.

GORDON: (D) Don't fucking laugh at me.

WARREN: I'm not laughing at you. I just don't know what you're trying to tell me.

GORDON: (D) Fine. You want to save the backstory for later, we'll do it that way. Some people have their bodies frozen at the point of death in the hope that one day they can be brought back to life. A handful of very optimistic and very rich people. We own one of the companies that do that.

WARREN: Okay.

GORDON: (D) Yes. Okay. That's all legal, that's all above board. People can spend their money on whatever they want. Liposuction, buy-to-rent housing, a National Trust membership, fine. You want all your blood drained out and exchanged for a cryoprotectant compound that'll preserve your organs and tissues in the chance you can be resuscitated one day and live in the future, be my guest. But no one wants to talk about how we get to that future, Warren.

WARREN: What are you talking about?

GORDON: (D) Those people, with their bodies frozen at minus 273 degrees. They're not interested in what happens between the moment of brain death and the moment they pop out in the year 3000 and get handed the keys to their own fucking Starship Enterprise or whatever they're expecting. They're not interested in the cost. And I don't mean money, Warren, hard as that might be for someone like you to understand.

WARREN: Gordon -

GORDON: There's not a lot of seeds in the Red Valley Seed Vault, Warren. Listen to the tape. Don't tell Doug Holder. And record everything you do.

HANGS UP.

END.