

[The following is the first cinematic of the game. It begins as soon as a player starts a new campaign.]

010 JUNGLE INTRO

010LA01 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

Twisted boughs spiral into the canopy above. Their leaves gleam under a film of moisture from a recent rain. A silvery mix of sunlight and mist filters down to the jungle floor.

The scene is quiet and still, except for the slow drip of collecting rainwater. The jungle holds its breath.

The face of a marine then comes into focus. He is almost invisible against the dense, green background. His eyes glitter behind his camouflage face paint.

He signals to the rest of his squad that the way is clear. In response, a handful of other marines reveal themselves.

They move in formation, silently creeping through the foliage. They carefully pick their way across streams and through fallen jungle debris.

The point man crests a rise and signals a halt. He carefully scans the surrounding brush, then waves the marines ahead.

010LA02 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

SERGEANT JOHNSON steps forward from the emerald gloom. He chews on his trademark cigar as he looks down at what the marines have discovered.

Below him lies the MASTER CHIEF. He is unmoving, covered in mud and the scars of a hundred battles.

A marine tech kneels by the Chief. He flips open a panel on the Chief's arm and attaches a small laptop.

MARINE TECH

Armor's taken a hell of a beating.

The tech gets to work. Johnson's gaze follows the swath cut through the jungle from the Chief's prone form up to the broken forest ceiling above.

The marine brings Johnson's attention back to the Chief.

MARINE TECH
No vital signs, sir.

Thunder rumbles. Johnson takes the cigar out of his mouth. He bows his head for a moment, but then quickly refocuses.

JOHNSON
She in there with him?

MARINE TECH
No, sir. No sign of the A.I.

010LA03 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

Johnson looks away. After a moment, he sighs and turns to a comms marine.

JOHNSON
Call in a Hornet. We're not leaving
him here.

The comms marine nods and keys his communication gear.

COMMS MARINE
This is Lima three-seven-one. We
need VTOL and heavy lift gear.

Johnson addresses the tech as the comms marine continues in the background.

JOHNSON
See if his mission data is intact.

The tech nods and plugs his laptop into a port on the Chief's helmet. Johnson wanders a few paces away from the scene.

010LA04 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

On the laptop's screen, a series of images flash past. Text scrolls over top of brief glimpses of the Halos, the Prophet of Truth and the Covenant, and the Gravemind and the Flood.

The system then glitches and freezes on an image of CORTANA.

The Chief's hand twitches. The tech glances over, but the hand is still once again.

MARINE TECH

Did he just...

010LA05 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

Seen from the Chief's point of view, the marines suddenly reel back in shock.

MARINE TECH

Whoa! Sergeant!

Johnson turns and jogs back over. When he arrives, he finds the Chief alive, and risen to one knee.

Johnson shakes his head in disbelief. Then he lets out a short laugh and pops his cigar back into his mouth.

JOHNSON

Takes more than a little tumble to
knock the shine off a Spartan, boys.

Johnson walks to the Chief's side and places a hand on his shoulder to keep him from trying to stand.

JOHNSON

Take it easy, Chief. We got you.
(a beat)
Let's give the man some space!

Johnson waits until the lingering marines have moved off a ways. He then lowers his voice.

JOHNSON

Chief, where's Cortana?

010LA06 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

Before the Chief can answer, a flurry of movement from the jungle puts the marines on alert.

But they relax when they see that it is only the second fireteam arriving. They lower their weapons.

But the Chief looks right past the marines, at the imposing bulk of the ARBITER.

The Chief glances down at Johnson's sidearm. Seeing this, Johnson reassuring places a hand on the Chief's shoulder.

JOHNSON
Relax, Chief. The Arbiter's with
us. For now.

010LA07 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

The second fireteam takes in the scene.

MARINE #1
I don't believe it! We heard he was
dead.

The Arbiter and Chief don't take their eyes off each other.

ARBITER
Were it so easy.

The Arbiter then looks over at Johnson.

ARBITER
We must leave this place. Now. The
Prophet of Truth will not rest until
he finds us.

Johnson nods.

JOHNSON
All right. Let's get him up.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 010 jungle

*Player training immediately follows the cinematic. The marine
tech scurries back to the player's side. The HUD is initially
scrambled.*

MARINE TECH
The good news - no concussion. The
bad news - your tactical overlay is
totally fried. I'll do a hard reset
and install some upgrades.

The HUD is reset, switching to the new display.

MARINE TECH
Chief, no time for calibration. Can
you follow this light?

For look training, the tech moves his penlight in front of the Chief, describing a pattern for the player to follow.

JOHNSON

Okay, Chief. Let's get you on your feet.

The first person Chief is animated to stand, and the player now towers over the marines. At this point, movement control is enabled.

JOHNSON

Let's move out!

The player follows the marines through the jungle, learning the basics of navigation.

For the remainder of the mission, the player will fight against the primary Covenant races as he attempts to reach the Pelican rendezvous point. He will be trained on the core weapons, grenades, and combat tactics.

Once the player reaches the Pelican, he will press X to board. The next cinematic follows that extraction.]

010LB EXTRACTION

101LB01 EXT. KILLIMANJARO JUNGLE

As a Pelican hovers about the extraction point, the Master Chief, Arbiter and marines enter its bay. The Pelican lifts off toward the jungle canopy.

020 SECRET BASE

020LB01 EXT. KILLIMANJARO FOOTHILL SKY

The Pelican skims over the treetops.

PELICAN PILOT (RADIO)

This is Delta Four Niner, requesting landing.

The Pelican continues forward even though no landing strips or airfields are visible.

MALE A.I. (RADIO)

Four Niner, you are cleared and
welcome. Bring her in easy.

The Pelican slows and then hovers in place. It then suddenly
drops downward, disappearing beneath the trees.

020LB02 INT. SECRET BASE. CAVERN HANGER

The Pelican descends through a large opening in the ceiling of
a hangar hewn from solid stone. The dropship settles onto its
landing gear and the engines power down.

The party disembarks and follows Johnson through the bay.
There is little activity here, and few people. The voice of
the A.I. that welcomed them resonates through the space.

MALE A.I. (PA)

All able-bodied techs report to
maintenance for emergency repairs.

A set of doors opens, and the computer voice gets louder.

020LB03 INT. SECRET BASE. TRIAGE AREA

Johnson leads the Chief and Arbiter through a doorway and into
a scene of chaos. Laid throughout the space are the casualties
of battle. The injured and the dead.

MALE A.I. (PA)

Medics, please update survivor and
morgue rosters.

Medics run between triage stations, stretchers, and body bags.
Smears of blood cover the ground.

JOHNSON

Welcome to Club Med.

Moans of pain escape the lips of the wounded and the dying. The
clatter of instruments and footfalls resound through the space.
It is bedlam.

INJURED MARINE

...Somebody...help me...

MEDIC

I still need morphine here!

The trio carefully makes its way through the chaos. All eyes are on the Chief as he passes. Medics, technicians and wounded marines stare and mutter.

MARINE #1
...a Spartan...

MARINE #2
It's him...

The Chief watches everything, seeing the damage, the injured and the fallen. The Arbiter doesn't give it a second look. He has seen it all before.

JOHNSON
We've been holed up here since
Mombasa fell. So far, they haven't
found us.

Johnson leads them away, putting the chaos behind them.

O20LB04 INT. SECRET BASE. COMMAND CENTER

They enter a quieter but more intense space, which currently serves as the command center. The makeshift nature of the place speaks volumes as to how far humanity has fallen.

The Chief is taking in the scene when a familiar voice cuts through the muted crowd murmurs.

MIRANDA (O.S.)
Tell them to hold their positions
there! We can't do anything for them
until nightfall!

MIRANDA KEYES strides into the room, trailing a subordinate, who then immediately nods and runs off.

A technician then calls her over to his console.

MARINE TECH #1
I have Lord Hood for you, ma'am.

LORD HOOD appears on a viewscreen as Miranda arrives.

LORD HOOD
Commander Keyes.

MIRANDA

I need an update on the fleet, sir.

LORD HOOD

We have three operational frigates holding station over the arctic pole. Hidden, for the moment.

MIRANDA

Radio Atacama. They should have four frigates in dry dock there.

Lord Hood notices the Chief behind Miranda.

LORD HOOD

Master Chief.

Miranda turns.

MIRANDA

Chief...

Miranda's moment of pause is gone in an instant. She turns back to the screen and resumes without missing a beat.

MIRANDA

Sir, I'll have to get back to you.

LORD HOOD

Understood.

020LB05 INT. SECRET BASE. COMMAND CENTER

The screen switches off as the Chief, Johnson, and the Arbiter approach Miranda.

MIRANDA

Chief. Is Cortana with you?

The Chief pauses and then shakes his head grimly.

MASTER CHIEF

She stayed behind.

At that moment, a tech rushes up, carrying a clipboard and listening intently to some communication on his headset.

MARINE TECH #2

Ma'am, we're receiving word regarding Auckland Naval.

MIRANDA

Report.

The tech stares uncomfortably at the Arbiter. The Arbiter sees the exchange of glances and gets the message.

ARBITER

Fine. But we will not stop Truth with words and waiting.

The Arbiter turns and leaves. Johnson looks to follow.

JOHNSON

I'll make sure he stays out of trouble. Our boys are still a might jumpy 'round Mr. Personality.

Johnson jogs to catch up with the Arbiter. The two leave.

020LB06 INT. SECRET BASE. COMMAND CENTER

The tech has been distracted by the departure. Miranda prompts him to continue.

MIRANDA

Auckland? What's their status?

MARINE TECH #2

Uh, they're gone, ma'am. An orbital strike. They're all gone.

Miranda says nothing. She stares at the report. The other tech runs up with yet another problem.

MARINE TECH #1

Ma'am, comms needs another cipher key to bring the new array online.

Miranda silently presses the clipboard into the hands of the first tech. She nods and heads through a doorway.

020LB07 INT. SECRET BASE. OUTSIDE COMMAND CENTER

Miranda rummages through a cabinet full of gear. The Chief comes out to join her. They are all alone.

Miranda soon becomes frustrated in her search. For the first time, cracks appear in her cool facade. She violently slams items around in her search.

Then, she abruptly stops and takes a deep breath.

MIRANDA

If he were here to see this...

After another moment, she turns to look up at the Chief.

MIRANDA

It's good to have you back, Chief.

She straightens and regains her composure.

MIRANDA

There's something you should see.

The Chief and Miranda emerge on a ledge overlooking the vast African savannah. The view is dominated by a huge artifact, slowly being unearthed by Covenant cruisers circling above.

MIRANDA

This is what they came for. This is what they started a war to find. It's Forerunner, and it's been buried here for thousands of years.

020LB08 INT. VOI OUTSKIRTS. ARK

The view sweeps across this awful wound in the planet's skin. Ships scorch the earth and haul away rock. The dome of the artifact is burnished in the glow of the African sun.

The shot switches to a computer display, briefly outlined with data, then stripped to a clean real-life depiction.

MIRANDA (V.O.)

They launched a precision strike, wiping out military targets all over the Earth.

The view pulls out from the Kilimanjaro region to reveal the destruction that the Covenant has wrought.

11B09 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The view rises through the atmosphere, passing the glowing wreckage of an orbital defense platform. Covenant ships own the space above the planet.

MIRANDA (V.O.)

Thermonuclear, subaquatic, orbital
defenses. All gone in mere hours.

The image flickers, reestablishing that this is only a computer display. And then, abruptly, the image vanishes and the Prophet of Truth appears in its place.

PROPHET OF TRUTH
...the time of struggle and sacrifice
is over! The time of reward and
exultation is at hand!

020LB10 INT. SECRET BASE. COMMAND CENTER

Pulling out from a single monitor, the Prophet of Truth can be found sermonizing on a dozen others in the command center. An angry tech slams his headset down.

MARINE TECH #1
Damn it! He's broken through again!

Miranda and the Chief watch Truth continue.

PROPHET OF TRUTH
Through my strength and unwavering
devotion we have secured a place
beside Those Who Went Before.

The technicians go about their usual efforts to purge the comm frequencies. The Chief continues to watch, however.

PROPHET OF TRUTH
It is I who will guide us to our
glorious reward. My Great Journey!

Behind Truth, an attendant Brute appears. He steps forward and whispers something inaudible to the Prophet. The Prophet listens briefly and then looks directly into the camera.

PROPHET OF TRUTH
Very good.

With a wave of his hand, Truth switches off the feed.

The Chief turns to Miranda and the others. The techs are returning to their business, and Miranda is scanning a report. The background murmur of work resumes.

MIRANDA

He's been preaching for days now. We can only jam the signal for maybe an hour at a time before--

MASTER CHIEF
He knows we're here.

020LB11 INT. SECRET BASE. COMMAND CENTER

Miranda looks up at the Chief. The room falls silent. Miranda regards the Chief a moment and then turns to a tech.

MIRANDA
How are the comm channels?

MARINE TECH #1
Wide open. For once.

Miranda bows her head and considers this for a second.

MIRANDA
Send the evacuation signal.

MARINE TECH #1
Ma'am?

MIRANDA
Do it! And inform Lord Hood.

MARINE TECH #1
But where do we go?

Miranda looks up at the Chief. The Chief nods.

MIRANDA
To war.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 020 base

As the cinematic ends, the base goes on alert. Marines prepare to repel the invaders.

MARINE #1
Let's do it.

MARINE #2
Yeah.

MARINE #3

'bout time.

In the background, the wail of warning sirens is accompanied by flashing lights.

MALE A.I. (PA)

All stations to high alert. We have multiple incoming. This is not a drill.

The following mission has the Chief fending off the Covenant, sealing up the base, and enabling the evacuation. At the end of the mission, he leads a counterattack toward the Ark.

Mission 030 outskirts

The Chief leads the assault toward the Ark. Vehicle combat is introduced as they near the town of Voi, on the edge of the excavation crater.

Mission 040 voi

040LA HIGHWAY

040LA01 EXT. TOWN OF VOI

Chief leads a ragged convoy into the town of Voi. Dead bodies and wrecked cars fill the tunnel.

The Chief and his forces push into the occupied town of Voi. As the Chief fights toward a huge Covenant gun emplacement, the Ark begins to open.

Then, as he's on the verge of capturing the gun, the Ark activates, tearing open a vast slipspace rupture in the sky.

The Chief presses X to enter the Covenant supergun and uses it to attack Truth's ships. The following cinematic begins after the Chief destroys a Covenant cruiser with the gun.]

040LB COVENANT FLEE

040LB01 EXT. VOI GUN EMPLACEMENT

Fragments of the destroyed cruiser rain down around the town. As the smoke and flame clear, the Chief sees Truth's ship accelerating toward the terrible energies above.

The Forerunner ship lances into the heart of the phenomenon. The iris seethes and roils as it accepts the intrusion. Then, with a dramatic outpouring of light, the ship vanishes.

One by one, the remaining Covenant ships follow. The humans below stare up in utter disbelief.

The Covenant armada is leaving.

040LB02 EXT. VOI GUN EMPLACEMENT

MARINE #1

They're buggin' out!

The Chief steps out of the gun emplacement's control cabin, head tilted skyward as he takes in the spectacle above.

MARINE #2

And don't let the door smack yer asses
on the way out! Hoo-rah!

Marines cheer as more ships plunge into the vortex of energy. The Covenant occupation of Earth is over.

The roar and dust of an arriving Pelican quells the reverie. Miranda, Johnson, and the Arbiter hop from its troop bay to join the Chief.

MIRANDA

I don't believe it. It's over.
It's really over.
(a beat)
You did it.

JOHNSON

Somebody mind explaining to me what
I just saw?

MIRANDA

ONI is calling the anomaly a fixed
slipspace event. A gateway.

She watches the last Covenant ship depart through the portal.

040LB03 EXT. VOI GUN EMPLACEMENT

MIRANDA

This is what they wanted all along.
And now that they've found the path,

they've taken it. Their Great
Journey.

The Arbiter steps forward and dismisses the notion angrily.

ARBITER
The Great Journey is a myth! A
thousand years of Prophet lies.

MIRANDA
Myth or no, they're gone.

ARBITER
You would turn your back on such a
threat? This is no victory.

MIRANDA
Our first priority will be closing
the portal, just in case. Wherever
they've gone, we're going to slam the
door behind them.

ARBITER
And let Truth escape?

MIRANDA
Yes! Anywhere is better than here.

MASTER CHIEF
Where does the portal lead?

040LB04 EXT. VOI GUN EMPLACEMENT

Miranda calms and the Arbiter steps aside to cool off.

MIRANDA
We're not sure. But frankly, we
don't care.
(a beat)
We're safe now.

A comms marine runs up to Miranda.

COMMS MARINE
Commander Keyes, we're setting up a
perimeter around the artifact.

Miranda walks off to deal with this new situation.

MIRANDA

Good. Coordinate with the locals to round up the wounded and prepare them for medevac...

The Chief leaves Miranda to it.

Turning, he finds himself head and shoulders above a growing throng of awe-struck marines. They laugh and clap each other on the back. But he is not sharing their exuberance.

He's looking over their heads, at the Arbiter alone on the periphery. The Chief follows the Arbiter's solemn stare upward to the glowing portal.

[This cinematic leads directly into 2LA_flood_crash.]

050LA FLOOD CRASH

050LA01 EXT. VOI. STREETS

The sun hangs low in the sky, casting long shadows across the battered walls of Voi. Higher above, the slipspace portal continues to glow eerily.

Marines and civilians wander the streets. The adrenaline has worn off and reality has sunk in. Celebration has given way to hard work. Soldiers have set aside weapons to assist in the rescue and clean-up efforts.

They search rubble piles for trapped victims. A marine directs a warthog driver as they use the winch to pull away a large piece of debris.

MARINE #1

Easy, easy.

The warthog inches back, and a slab of concrete is pried up. Another marine kneels down by the opening and yells inside.

MARINE #2

Can anyone hear me?

050LA02 EXT. VOI. SQUARE

Covered bodies are arranged in neat rows. Civilians and marines alike walk up and down the lines, trying to identify the dead.

A marine sergeant stands on a pile of rock, addressing the crowds with a megaphone.

MARINE #3

(Swahili)

Food and fresh water are available in
the east square! Rationing is in
effect!

050LA03 EXT. VOI. STREETS

Workers pile Covenant bodies for disposal. Others walk aimlessly, in shock, either at the unexpected win or the incredible losses.

The Chief walks through it all, still holding his weapon and ready to fight.

He moves against the human current. His gaze sifts through the chaos, searching for trouble. But there is nothing.

Then he abruptly stops. The human tide continues around him. The Chief stands stock still while the world runs past.

And then, just as suddenly, he is alone. It is as if the eye of the storm has passed over him. It's far too quiet and far too still.

A flock of birds abruptly takes to the air.

The Chief glances around, scanning the sky for some threat, some reason for his unease. His gaze eventually comes to rest on the portal.

050LA04 EXT. VOI. STREETS

Just then, an unearthly roar causes the Chief to whirl around. The sky rips open as a ship erupts from slipspace.

The Flood-infested, almost unrecognizable craft streaks overhead, clipping the tops of buildings. Chunks of debris from both the ship and the buildings rain down.

The craft descends out of view beyond distant structures. Civilians and marines run for their lives.

A moment passes.

050LA05 EXT. VOI. STREETS

And then a flash of light blossoms on the far side of town. A deafening boom and shock wave follow. The blast knocks scattered marines and civilians off their feet and threatens to put even the Chief off balance.

Then, a veil of dust and sand rolls across the city, plunging it into an artificial dusk, lit by a dim blood-red sun.

The humans become moving shadows within the pall. And other shapes now move amongst them.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 050 floodvoi

The Chief fights against the Flood through the streets of Voi. Eventually, he gets a Cortana channel transmission. The Chief is then ordered to enter the Flood ship, find the source of the transmission, and blow up the reactor.

060LA CRASH SITE

060LA01 INT. FLOOD SHIP

The Chief drops into the Flood Ship via a hole in the hull. He confirms that the immediate vicinity is clear and then prepares to delve deeper inside.

Mission 060 floodship

The Chief delves into the ship to find the source of Cortana's message. After fighting through a series of passages, he enters a Flood-encrusted chamber, just barely recognizable as Covenant underneath.

At one end of the room, a console pokes through the resin and slime. The following cinematic begins when the player presses X to access the console.]

060LB CORTANA MESSAGE

060LB01 INT. FLOOD SHIP. BRIDGE

When the Chief presses the button, Cortana's holographic image suddenly coalesces over the remains of the machine.

MASTER CHIEF
Cortana?

CORTANA

There isn't much time.

MASTER CHIEF

Are you all right--

CORTANA

This is just the beginning.

MASTER CHIEF

What do you...

The Chief trails off as her image shudders. Cortana abruptly changes posture and picks up a sentence midway through.

CORTANA

--High Charity--

(shudder/skip)

It's coming for Earth--

(shudder/skip)

--legions of Flood with it.

060LB02 INT. FLOOD SHIP. BRIDGE

The Chief bows his head. He keys his communications suite.

MASTER CHIEF

I found the source. It's not her.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

Damn.

MASTER CHIEF

This message...It's a warning.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

All right. Find out what you can.

But then get to that reactor core!

MASTER CHIEF

Understood.

The Chief turns back to face Cortana's message. He tries a few buttons on what little console remains exposed.

CORTANA

We have a chance.

(shudder/skip)

--Ark holds the key.

An inhuman moan, unlike any Flood sound yet heard, echoes from a distant source. The Chief glances away from the recording long enough to acknowledge it.

060LB03 INT. FLOOD SHIP. BRIDGE

CORTANA
--through that portal!

The Chief tries to scrub forward.

CORTANA
--Gravemind--

A shadow moves somewhere behind the Chief. He looks back again, but immediately returns his focus to the message.

CORTANA
--it knows--

The approaching horror moans again. The Chief can hear its footfalls on the putrid ground.

MASTER CHIEF
Come on.

CORTANA
--hold out--

The Chief slams the console once with his fist. Cortana's image solidifies and she seems to look right at him.

CORTANA
--They're evolving.

Out of time, the Chief punches into the guts of the machine and rips a device out of it. Cortana's holographic recording winks out of existence and the room falls dark.

The Chief then turns and raises his weapon. He scans the shadows and readies himself for his unseen enemy.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 060 floodship cont'd

Moments after gameplay resumes, the player will meet his first Pureform. From this point forward, Pureforms will be part of the Flood forces.

The Chief fights deeper into the ship, reaches the reactor, sets it to overload, and then races to escape. He eventually comes back to a chamber open to the exterior.

The Chief stands at this smoking hole in the ship's hull. Explosions and jets of plasma flame signal the ship's impending destruction. The Chief has nowhere left to run.

Then the dust and smoke whip aside in the downwash of a Pelican. The dropship descends, nose toward the Chief.

The Pelican swivels, bringing its rear doors around to the Chief. But when it does, it reveals a hold full of Elites.

Johnson shoulders past the hulking warriors.

JOHNSON

No time for stare-downs! Let's go!

The cinematic begins when the player presses X to board.]

060LC SHADOW OF INTENT

060LC01 EXT. AIRSPACE OVER VOI

The Pelican tears through the banks of dust and smoke covering the city. It streaks higher and higher.

Below, explosions glow bright beneath the city's dark shroud, like flashes of lightning in the clouds. The explosions increase in size and frequency as the Pelican ascends.

And then the reactor detonates.

A supernova blossoms where the town of Voi once was. The haze is instantly obliterated as the globe of energy expands.

The blast wave slams into the Pelican. The small craft is thrown about, but recovers and holds its upward course.

060LC02 INT. PELICAN

The Chief and Johnson brace themselves at the rear hatch. They watch the mushroom cloud form on native soil.

JOHNSON

We saved as many as we could. Those that were left, they weren't human anymore. We both know that.

MASTER CHIEF

Yeah.

The Chief turns away from the scorched earth below.

060LC03 EXT. AIRSPACE OVER VOI

The Pelican leaves the devastation below and plunges into the clouds. Once through, it discovers a small fleet of Covenant cruisers in orbit above.

Slipspace ruptures announce the arrival of more cruisers. The stragglers join formation with the others.

060LC04 INT. PELICAN

Johnson has returned to his seat in the copilot's chair. The Chief stands behind him, staring at the ships above.

JOHNSON

The cavalry has arrived. And they brought fresh horses.

The Chief looks back at the Arbiter in the troop bay.

ARBITER

My brothers. One cannot fight a war without an army.

Johnson chuckles and jerks a thumb at the Chief.

JOHNSON

Might want to ask him about that.

060LC05 EXT. AIRSPACE OVER VOI

The Pelican draws nearer the battle cluster. It heads for the only capital ship, the *Shadow of Intent*.

CUT TO:

060LC06 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. DECK

The Pelican has landed between two Phantoms on an upper level pad. The Chief and Johnson walk away from it, while the Arbiter hangs back with his Elites.

JOHNSON

They'll be asking about Cortana.

The Chief stops and produces the device he ripped from the console. Johnson notes his reluctance to hand it over.

JOHNSON

She's a big girl, Chief. She can take care of herself. We'll get her back.

The Chief nods and gives the device to Johnson.

060LC07 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. DECK

He then looks up as an old friend appears ahead of them. 343 GUILTY SPARK emerges from the far doorway. A pair of Elites carry him within an energy prison.

The group passes by, and the Chief and Guilty Spark exchange glances. This is the first time they've seen each other since the destruction of the first Halo.

GUILTY SPARK

Reclaimer?

The captor Elites carry him toward one of the Phantoms.

The Arbiter catches up and notices the Chief watching Spark. He hardly gives the monitor a second look as he passes.

ARBITER

The Oracle. He will expose the Prophet's deception. The Council will know the truth.

MASTER CHIEF

Make sure it's the whole truth.

Johnson moves away, in the direction the Arbiter went.

JOHNSON (O.S.)

C'mon. Let's get you cleaned up.

The Chief watches Guilty Spark a moment more. The monitor gazes back, concealing mysteries behind his unreadable eye.

FADE OUT.

060LC08 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

Lord Hood sighs over black.

LORD HOOD
This is getting us nowhere.

FADE IN:

The Arbiter, SPEC-OPS COMMANDER, Miranda, Johnson, and a handful of other VIPs stand around a meeting table. Lord Hood and a few other officers are present on video screens.

There's a frozen image of Cortana projected above the table.

LORD HOOD
Commander, if you'd just listen to what she's saying.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
I have. This is madness.

The Chief enters and catches them in the middle of the discussion. The Arbiter observes his arrival and meets his mirrored gaze. The rest of the room is oblivious to both.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
That you would have us put our trust, our lives, in the hands of this machine!

Johnson moves over to join the Chief on the periphery.

060LC09 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

JOHNSON
(whispering)
They've been running in circles for an hour now.

MIRANDA
With all due respect, that "machine" has more brains than everyone in this room combined--

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
You're forgetting yourself, human.
Your race survives thanks to our
mercy. Would you throw that away?

LORD HOOD
Commander Keyes--

MIRANDA
Sir, we've come too far and endured
too much. This is our only chance!

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
Bah! If you truly knew what it meant
to endure--

ARBITER
Enough!

The room falls silent. The Arbiter glances at the Chief.

ARBITER
Play it again.

The Spec-ops Commander grudgingly restarts the message.

060LC10 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

CORTANA
There isn't much time.

The Chief takes a step forward, approaching Cortana's image.

CORTANA
The Flood is sending a ship to Earth.
I'm placing this message into its
telemetry relay to warn you. This is
just the beginning.

(a beat)

By the time you receive this message,
High Charity will have already
entered slipspace.

(a beat)

It's coming for Earth, bringing
legions of Flood with it.

060LC11 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

Cortana seems to look right at the Chief. Her voice even lowers slightly, as if confiding solely in him.

CORTANA

But there's something the Gravemind doesn't know. We have a chance.

(a beat)

There's a Forerunner artifact under Mombasa. It's why the Covenant attacked Earth.

(a beat)

It's part of a slipspace network spanning the galaxy. It generates a portal to a place called the Ark.

(a beat)

The Ark holds the key. A weapon that can stop the Flood. The Chief will understand when you find it.

(a beat)

If Earth, if humanity has any hope of surviving, the answer is through that portal! You must gain control before Truth, or all will be lost.

060LC12 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

The Spec-Ops Commander, having heard the message far too many times, can no longer keep quiet. The resumed argument runs over Cortana's continued message.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

Even if your machine speaks true, such a mission would be suicidal!

CORTANA

I'm doing my best to slow the Gravemind down, but it knows I'm in the system now. It's destroying the network, bit by bit.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

The Prophet of Truth has already passed through the portal. He is undoubtedly prepared for pursuit.

MIRANDA

How can you be so sure?

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
Because I would be.

The Chief ignores them as Cortana's voice drops.

CORTANA
I'm running out of places to hide.
I'll hold out as long as I can,
but...But it...they...They're
evolving. I'm not sure...
(a beat)
I...I have to think. I have to--

The recording shudders and dies.

060LC13 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

MIRANDA
There's still a chance.

The Chief looks up from the dead recording.

MASTER CHIEF
It's our only chance.

Everyone quiets at the Chief's sudden contribution. After a moment, the Arbiter breaks that silence.

ARBITER
We share the same enemies. And if
this cause gives us opportunity to
defeat both, we must act.
(a beat)
We will find this weapon. We will
stop the Parasite. And we will see
the Prophet burn.

After a moment of pause, the Spec-Ops Commander acquiesces.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
Fine. We will grant the humans our
favor. For now.

060LC14 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. DECK - LATER

Miranda strides ahead of the Chief across the deck.

MIRANDA

The arrogance! So generous of them
to put us under their "protection".

She looks back the way she came, as if she could see the bridge
and the Elites remaining there.

MIRANDA

You know who that Arbiter is, don't
you? He was once commander of the
entire Covenant fleet. He led the
forces that destroyed Reach and
dozens of our other colonies.

MASTER CHIEF

I know.

Miranda wasn't expecting this. It gives her pause. She looks
away for a moment, before returning to business.

060LC15 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. DECK

MIRANDA

Lord Hood doubts that the ships
remaining here can hold off the Flood
for long. Nevertheless, he's giving
us everything he can spare.

Miranda gazes at the Earth through the hangar opening.

MIRANDA

Our orders are simple. Stop Truth.
Find the weapon. And come home.

The Chief steps to her side. Together, they watch a pair of
Stalwart-class UNSC frigates enter the hangar.

060LC16 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The Elite fleet hangs imposingly above the planet. A few more
of the human frigates drift toward the capital ship.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (RADIO)

Attention, all column commanders.
We are mobilizing the fleet.

060LC17 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. DECK

Miranda heads toward the docking frigates.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (RADIO)
The *Shadow of Intent* will lead an
assault through the portal.

The capital ship beings a slow maneuver, pushes the Earth out
the Chief's sight. He turns and walks away.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (RADIO)
The majority of the fleet will remain
to garrison this system.

060LC18 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The other cruisers begin reforming their lines.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (RADIO)
Prepare yourselves, my brothers!
Make peace with this life.

Two cruisers move in to flank the *Shadow of Intent*.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (RADIO)
For we no longer fight by the will of
the gods. We defy them!

The *Shadow of Intent* and its companion cruisers power toward
the portal. Their seraph escort peels away as they approach
the slipspace horizon.

Ribbons of energy snake out from the portal and splash across
the ships' hulls. The portal seems to grow larger and brighter,
eager to consume them.

The *Shadow of Intent* then plunges inside. The corona flares
impossibly bright, until the whole scene is lost in a blinding
whiteness.

[*This cinematic leads directly into 3_LA_waypoint_arrival.*]

060LC19 EXT. SPACE

The edge of the galaxy. The Milky Way fills half the view.
Beyond, a canvas of unfamiliar flecks of light. Not stars, but
distant galaxies.

The exit portal shines, its radiance mixing with that of a nearby
sun of alien hue.

The portal suddenly flares as the *Shadow of Intent* powers across its boundary. Energy roils along its hull and arcs over to the cruisers that follow in its wake.

The portal has deposited them on the outer reaches of an atmosphere. There's the barest hint of some fantastic structure hidden behind the veil of clouds.

060LC20 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

The monitors display a single view outside the ship. The image of the Milky Way overshadows all.

The Chief, Arbiter, Spec-Ops Commander, and other officers take in the sight.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

Isn't that...

ARBITER

Our galaxy. We're beyond the rim.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

Impossible. A planet, out here?

The Spec-Ops Commander turns this question on a subordinate.

ELITE TECHNICIAN

That's no planet. It's an artificial structure, much larger than even the sacred--

The technician is cut off by a sudden explosion that rocks the entire ship.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

Report!

ELITE OFFICER

Multiple contacts! They were using the star to mask their signatures!

060LC21 EXT. SPACE

Covenant cruisers and Seraph fighters scream toward the Elite ships like Zeros out of the sun. The Seraphs strafe the larger ships, while the cruisers fire their plasma cannons.

The *Shadow of Intent* and its escort turn to meet the threat.

060LC22 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

Another tremor runs through the ship.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
Order all craft to engage! And
prepare our surprise. We'll give
these fools their fight.

The Chief and Arbiter look at each other.

ARBITER
This isn't your kind of engagement.

MASTER CHIEF
No.

ARBITER
Let's find some ground.

060LC23 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. HANGAR BAY

Seven UNSC *Stalwart*-class frigates fill the huge hangar bay. This is the surprise waiting for Truth's blockade. Crews hurriedly load vehicles and arms to ready them for launch.

The Chief exits a doorway and heads for the *Providence*, where Miranda waits.

In the background, Johnson has a platoon lined up and set to board the *Ningbo*. He yells over the noise of the battle and preparations.

JOHNSON
I've heard the scuttlebutt going
round. You're being asked to go
god-knows-where and do
god-knows-what alongside
god-knows-who.

The Chief watches Johnson pace in front of his men.

JOHNSON
You may be wondering, is this my
fight? Can I trust these
split-chins? And what's up with all
the damn purple?

Johnson stops and faces the group.

JOHNSON

The answers are doesn't matter,
doesn't matter, and doesn't matter!

(a beat)

Do you trust the corps?

MARINES

Sir, yes, sir!

JOHNSON

Do you trust your guns?

MARINES

Sir, yes, sir!

JOHNSON

And do you trust yourselves to kick
all kinds of enemy butt?

MARINES

Sir, yes, sir!

060LC24 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. HANGAR BAY

The Chief, Johnson, and Miranda all look up as an announcement comes over the PA.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER (PA)

All craft, prepare for launch!

JOHNSON

You heard the alien bastard! Get
your asses on this bird and show me
what the corps is made of!

The marines cheer and file into the troop bay as the last of the gear is loaded. Johnson steps onto the loader as it begins to retract and button up the ship.

Across the hangar, he sees the Chief following Miranda aboard the *Providence*. Spotting each other, the Chief and Johnson salute before disappearing into their respective ships.

060LC25 EXT. SPACE

As the space battle rages, the *Shadow of Intent* opens its main hangar. Following a spew of Longswords and Seraph fighters, the seven frigates launch into the fray.

Though underpowered relative to the Covenant cruisers, the frigates make up for it with their speed and maneuverability. They weave through the chaos, racing for the structure below.

060LC26 INT. SHADOW OF INTENT. BRIDGE

The Spec-Ops Commander watches the battle progress in a holo tank. He keys a communications console.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

Arbiter, we've tracked Truth's ship to the structure below. Break for it and secure a landing zone. We'll do our best to cover you.

ARBITER (RADIO)

Let them know our anger.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER

And purge their sin. Good luck, brother.

060LC27 EXT. SPACE

Four of the frigates peel away from the main battle group. The *Providence*, the *Ningbo*, the *Madrid*, and the *Ophir* dive into the atmosphere and toward the object hidden beyond.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

They're clearing a path! Go, go!

They dodge plasma volleys and the burning debris of battle.

Seraph fighters descend on them and rip into the *Madrid's* hull like it was paper.

OPHIR PILOT (RADIO)

The readings on this structure...
It's huge! Are we sure about--

The *Ophir* takes a full plasma barrage in the nose and vanishes in blue fire.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

Hold course! This is it!

The *Providence* and the *Ningbo* skim across the hulls of cruisers, dodging turret fire and the pursuing Seraphs.

The frigates then crest the top of the last Covenant cruiser. They get the briefest glimpse of some incredible structure before becoming lost in the clouds.

060LC28 EXT. WAYPOINT ATMOSPHERE

The *Providence* and the *Ningbo* barrel through the atmosphere. Violent gusts of wind assail them. Before long, the two frigates drift apart and out of visual contact.

The *Providence* remains on course, descending hard. The clouds begin to thin, revealing solid ground waiting below.

070LA WAYPOINT ARRIVAL

070LA01 EXT. WAYPOINT. GRANDFATHERLANDS

The *Providence* deploys Phantoms and Pelicans as it soars over the environment. Anti-aircraft fire tracks the larger ship as the smaller dropships dive below their firing arcs.

Overhead, the space battle rages. The burning hulks of ships and other debris rain down like a meteor shower.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 070 waste

The Chief lands with sharpshooter marines and stealth Elites. He is given a mission briefing to secure a landing zone for the Providence. Over the course of the mission, the space battle continues in the sky.

The Chief rounds up stranded allies. He clears the way for the frigate and is rewarded with a shiny new tank. He then leaves in search of a way through a great wall.

In searching, the Chief comes across a Phantom crash site, littered with dead Elites. From inside the wreckage, he hears the familiar voice of Guilty Spark calling out.

GUILTY SPARK

Hello? Is someone there?

GUILTY SPARK

It appears my escort neglected to release me prior to expiring.

GUILTY SPARK

Reclaimer?

GUILTY SPARK

It is you!

GUILTY SPARK

Could I trouble you to open this contraption? I informed them that such precautions were unnecessary, and now look at the result.

Spark will continue spouting a few permutations of simple dialogue until the player presses X to release him.]

070LB 343 FOUND

070LB01 PHANTOM CRASH SITE

Guilty Spark shakes free of his confines. He floats up and faces the Chief.

GUILTY SPARK

Thank you!

The Chief steps back and raises his weapon to cover Spark.

GUILTY SPARK

Is something wrong?

MASTER CHIEF

Have you forgotten? What happened back on Halo.

Guilty Spark inclines himself, like a puppy tilting its head.

MASTER CHIEF

You wanted to cut my head off.

GUILTY SPARK

Ah, yes. Completely necessary at the time. Your construct had taken the activation Index. And you were trying to destroy the installation.

(a beat)

You succeeded, in point of fact.

MASTER CHIEF

And you survived.

GUILTY SPARK

As did you.

The Chief lowers his weapon slowly.

MASTER CHIEF

And you're not going to try taking my head again.

GUILTY SPARK

No.

(a beat)

Not now.

070LB02 EXT. PHANTOM CRASH SITE

The Chief takes a breath and steps out of the wreckage. Guilty Spark follows, to where they can survey the landscape. Elated, Spark slowly begins to float upward and away.

GUILTY SPARK

Ah, magnificent, isn't it? I can't wait to see what my antecedents--

MASTER CHIEF

Hold it!

Guilty Spark stops and looks back down at the Chief. He sees that the Chief has raised his weapon again.

MASTER CHIEF

There's something here I need to find. And you're going to help.

GUILTY SPARK

But...but I have no protocols here.

MASTER CHIEF

Then I guess you're available.

Guilty Spark sighs and descends.

GUILTY SPARK

If this Reclaimer has need of me--

MASTER CHIEF

What I need is a way through that wall.

070LB03 EXT. PHANTOM CRASH SITE

GUILTY SPARK
Very well! Let me see...

Guilty Spark floats off screen to the left. The Chief watches him go, but doesn't make a move to follow.

A moment later, Spark returns.

GUILTY SPARK
No, that's not it.

The monitor passes the Chief and flies off screen to the right. Again, the Chief doesn't budge.

After another moment, Spark returns and pauses at the edge of the screen.

GUILTY SPARK
Are you coming?

The Chief grudgingly starts to follow.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 070 waste cont'd

The Chief follows Guilty Spark into a Forerunner interior, made accessible only through Spark's interactions with Waypoint's systems. This leads them to controls that open the path through the wall for the Chief's allies.

All the while, Spark is yammering away about Waypoint, as well as events from the first two games.

Once past the wall, the Chief reaches the vast ocean of Waypoint. He enters a huge Forerunner structure perched in the cliffs.

This structure turns out to be reminiscent of the shaft from Silent Cartographer. In its depths, the Chief finds a huge map room overlooking the ocean.

The cinematic begins when the Chief presses X to activate the console there.]

070LC WAYPOINT REVEAL

070LC01 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

The Chief steps back from the panel as a holographic grid splays out to the horizon of Waypoint. The lines bend and contort into a topographic map of the visible terrain.

Then the hologram changes scale, effectively causing all of Waypoint to materialize in the chamber. A blinking icon represents their current position.

ARBITER

This place would dwarf even the sacred rings. But what purpose could it serve way out here?

As the image is forming, Guilty Spark floats into the space.

GUILTY SPARK

The Ark? My understanding is that it was designed as a haven, safe from the effect of the rings.

Guilty Spark floats happily to their side, overlooking the miniaturized representation of Waypoint.

GUILTY SPARK

The portal network connects to several retreat points throughout the galaxy. Or so it would seem.

070LC02 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

MASTER CHIEF

We need to find its central control point.

ARBITER

Perhaps more importantly, we must ensure that the Prophet of Truth does not.

The Arbiter turns to Guilty Spark.

ARBITER

Oracle. Where would one go to take control of this place?

070LC03 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

GUILTY SPARK

An excellent question!

Spark zooms the hologram in to a random point.

GUILTY SPARK
Hmmm, no. Not there.

He zooms out and then down to another point.

GUILTY SPARK
That's not it either.

He repeats this again, seemingly content to search all of Waypoint one postage stamp at a time. The Arbiter gives the Chief a look. The Chief shakes his head.

GUILTY SPARK
My, this facility is immense. Still looking.

MASTER CHIEF
Try the center.

GUILTY SPARK
What?

Spark zooms out and then focuses on the center of Waypoint.

GUILTY SPARK
Oh, yes! Fascinating!

070LC04 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

ARBITER
Oracle, are you not familiar with this place?

GUILTY SPARK
I am aware of documentation...

The Arbiter grabs Spark and pulls him close.

GUILTY SPARK
Apologies. But my protocols cover the administration of installation zero-four. And...
(a beat)
Well, I've never been here before.

The Arbiter releases Spark, who shakes off his manhandling and returns to the hologram. The Chief is still focused on the map.

MASTER CHIEF

Truth could be there already.

Guilty Spark zooms into the middle again. He highlights the Barrier and causes it to flash.

GUILTY SPARK

Perhaps not. It appears that there is a barrier preventing access to the Ark's core. The one you seek will be unable to enter easily.

070LC05 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

Spark returns to playing with the hologram. He occasionally murmurs an "interesting" or "fascinating".

ARBITER

Then there's still hope.

The Chief radios Miranda.

MASTER CHIEF

Commander, what's your status?

MIRANDA (RADIO)

We've lost all but two frigates and a single cruiser. All have disengaged and gone to ground.

MASTER CHIEF

We have a lead. We'll need a lift.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

With Truth's fleet owning the skies, that's easier said than done, Chief.

Partially hidden by the hologram and unnoticed by all, a Phantom appears on the distant horizon.

070LC06 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

The Arbiter glances at the Chief.

ARBITER

We can't close that distance in time on the ground.

Guilty Spark sighs.

GUILTY SPARK
If only the Ark's transport system
could help.

The Arbiter and Chief both look at Spark.

GUILTY SPARK
Oh, my. Didn't I mention that?
(a beat)
I suppose I could reprogram it to take
you to the Barrier.

MASTER CHIEF
Do it.

Spark turns back to the console and starts working.

070LC07 INT. ADMINISTRATIVE NODE. MAP ROOM

GUILTY SPARK
Certainly.

The Chief turns, speaking again to the unseen Miranda.

MASTER CHIEF
Commander, we have a plan. We'll
keep you informed.

GUILTY SPARK
(background)
Of course, the route will pass
through the Veneration Zone.

MIRANDA (RADIO)
Understood. Keyes out.

GUILTY SPARK
(background)
Given the security designation of
that area, I'm not sure how the
Guardians will--

Guilty Spark is cut off as the Phantom suddenly rises up through
the hologram from below. It unleashes with all of its turrets
and causes everyone to scatter.

The Chief and Arbiter take cover from the Phantom's blasts.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 070 waste cont'd

Gameplay resumes with the Phantom hovering just inside the chamber.

The Chief receives a mission briefing instructing him to get to the transport that Spark reprogrammed.

The Chief fights down to a gondola station. All the while, he is harried by Banshees, Phantoms, and the enemies they drop off.

Once at the gondola, the player presses X to start it (and the outro).

070LD TRAIN DEPARTS

070LD01 EXT. GONDOLA STATION

The Chief enters the Gondola.

However, things will not go as smoothly as planned once the gondola reaches the foggy forests of the Veneration Zone.

080LA TRAIN ARRIVES

080LA01 EXT. GUARDIAN FOREST

The Chief's Gondola reaches the Guardian Forest.

Mission 080 forest

On his way to the Barrier, the Chief's gondola makes an unplanned stop in the foggy depths of a forest. In his search for another way out, the Chief encounters the Guardian for the first time.

He is later informed that this mishap could be turned to their advantage. This forest complex controls the defenses of Waypoint. And if he can activate them, they could turn the tide against Truth's fleet.

The Chief reaches the top of the forest complex and activates three generators. When he triggers the last, he is sealed inside the chamber.

What the Chief once thought to be a building turns out to be a gigantic strato-sentinel. It rises from the forest floor, chunks of dirt and moss tumbling from its metal belly.

The room he's in turns out to be an integral component to the machine, and he becomes trapped inside as it heads skyward. When the Chief finally finds his way back outside, he is already far above the forest canopy.

In the sky around him, countless other strato-sentinels rise. The Covenant ships open fire, but the machines seem nigh invulnerable. The Chief watches as they clamp onto Truth's ships and pull them to the ground by shear weight alone.

Glancing up, the Chief sees that his sentinel is heading for a cruiser directly above him. He has to get out of there!

Luckily, Johnson has a Pelican inbound. The dropship arrives and keeps pace with the strato-sentinel. All the Chief has to do is jump.

The cinematic begins when the Chief jumps for the Pelican.]

080LB ACTIVATED DEFENSE

080LA01 EXT. WAYPOINT AIRSPACE

The Chief falls toward the Pelican. The sky around him is filled with the chaos the strato-sentinels have wrought.

080LA02 INT. PELICAN

Marines look up as a heavy thud sounds from the roof of the dropship. It is followed by the screech of metal on metal.

A moment later, the Chief swings himself down and inside the Pelican's bay.

Johnson glances back at the Chief in the hold. The Chief reaches up and gives the Arbiter a hand. Once the Arbiter is in, Johnson taps the pilot's shoulder.

JOHNSON

We're good! Let's go!

080LA03 EXT. WAYPOINT AIRSPACE

The Pelican pulls away from the strato-sentinel, accelerating down and away.

080LA04 INT. PELICAN

Johnson joins the Chief and Arbiter in the back. They look out the rear hatch at the carnage in the sky.

JOHNSON

Not bad.

080LA05 EXT. WAYPOINT AIRSPACE

Cruisers and other debris of battle fall from the sky, glowing like embers from a great fire.

The Pelican screams through the smoke of a crashed cruiser.

080LA06 INT. PELICAN

Johnson moves back up to the cockpit.

JOHNSON

We got a clear shot at the Barrier now. Radio the *Providence* and the *Ningbo*. Tell them to rendezvous with us-- Whoa!

080LA07 EXT. WAYPOINT AIRSPACE

A strato-sentinel suddenly appears through the smoke and nearly swallows the Pelican whole. The pilot banks hard to one side and narrowly avoids the thing's metallic maw.

Johnson stares back at the thing as it recedes behind them.

JOHNSON

And tell them to not get eaten.

The Pelican soars toward the distant Barrier.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

090LA ALPINE ARRIVAL

090LA01 EXT. ALPINE

The Pelican approaches the Barrier. As it cruises, other Pelicans swoop in and join formation behind it.

Ahead of them, imposing Forerunner pylons describe a line along the snow-capped peaks of the mountains. Drawn between them is a shimmering field of energy.

The Pelicans veer left and fly parallel to the Barrier.

090LA02 INT. PELICAN

The Chief sits in the troop bay of the lead Pelican with a squad of marines.

Chewing a cigar, Johnson addresses the men from the cockpit doorway.

JOHNSON

Listen up!

Though sitting, the men straighten, as if at attention.

JOHNSON

The Chief needs to get past this barrier. And a shiny metal bluebird told me that this is the place to do it.

Johnson takes his cigar out of his mouth and sweeps a steely gaze across his men.

JOHNSON

We're a long way from Earth, but the end is in sight. Stay sharp. And fight well. We're almost home.

090LA10 EXT. ALPINE

The Pelicans descend toward the valley floor.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 090 alpine

The Chief starts gameplay in the back of the Pelican. He can see other Pelicans drop their men and gear ahead of him. Then his Pelican lands and lets him out.

The Chief and his forces then proceed to breach the successive gates of the Barrier, hot on Truth's heels.

The Chief succeeds in deactivating the second of three gates. As he returns outside, he will receive his first Cortana transmission since arriving at Waypoint.

The transmission is extremely garbled, and mixed strangely with audio that sounds like it could be coming from the Elites. Though largely unintelligible, the combined transmissions convey a feeling of desperation and horror.

The following cinematic triggers when the Chief reaches the base of the structure he was just in.]

090LB HC CRASH

090LB01 EXT. ALPINE

The Chief and Arbiter emerge outside. The Chief taps the side of his helmet, in response to the prior transmissions.

A marine drives up in a Warthog and hops out to greet them.

MARINE #1

Sir! We've just received a report from the *Providence*. Long range observation has located the Prophet's forces on the other side of the Barrier. They're moving to--

Behind the marine, in the distance, a flaming chunk of debris suddenly slams into a mountainside.

An avalanche of snow roars down on them, accompanying the shockwave. The Chief whirls the marine around and shields him with his body just as it hits.

All is lost in a wash of white.

FLASH TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

090LB02 EXT. ALPINE

The Chief straightens and releases the dumbstruck marine. The landscape around them has been changed by the wave of snow and ice. The Warthog is half-buried in a drift.

Then, flashes of light from the portal cause them to look skyward. Countless other chunks of dark matter float through the sky like embers, only to then be transformed into darting meteors as they hit atmosphere.

These harbingers are followed a moment later by an ungodly roar from the portal. A huge mass appears, silhouetted against the portal's brilliance.

High Charity has arrived.

The turbulent nature of its arrival has had catastrophic results. Huge sections of the giant worldship are sheered off and rain down on Waypoint. The core that remains slowly moves across the sky.

MIRANDA (RADIO)
Chief! Are you reading me?

090LB03 EXT. ALPINE

The Chief places a hand to his helmet and keys his radio.

MASTER CHIEF
Go ahead, Commander.

MIRANDA (RADIO)
Through the portal. Is that what I think it is?

MASTER CHIEF
The Flood.

A chunk of High Charity crashes nearby, punctuating the pronouncement.

MIRANDA (RADIO)
I don't understand. Why would they come here?

The Chief and Arbiter look at each other.

ARBITER
If the Flood take control of the Ark...

MASTER CHIEF
They could spread anywhere in the galaxy.

ARBITER
And never fear the Halos again.

090LB04 EXT. ALPINE

The Chief looks back up at the chaos in the sky. The core of High Charity hits the atmosphere and begins a rapid descent. Then, with a collision that shakes all of Waypoint, it crashes on the far side of the Barrier.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 090 alpine cont'd

The Chief has to contend with the immediate Flood presence in the valley.

Up in the sky, additional flares of light mark the arrival of a few badly-damaged Elite ships. They limp across the sky.

The Chief gets a mission briefing update shortly thereafter.

MIRANDA (RADIO)

We're getting reports from the Arbiter's people.

(a beat)

The Flood crippled the fleet. But they bypassed Earth. Didn't even give it a second look. They headed straight for the portal.

For the remainder of the mission, the Chief's allies comment on the strangeness of the Flood coming here. The comm channel is choked with allied chatter on the subject.

100LA CITY GATES

100LA01 EXT. ALPINE

The Chief enters Forerunner City.

Once they've cleared a way through the Barrier, they will progress into the Forerunner City. It is here they will find the control citadel for all of Waypoint.

Mission 100 forecity

The Chief leads an attack force through the ancient city, toward the citadel where Truth is making his last stand. But the humans and Elites have competition. The Flood also seem intent on crushing Truth and the Covenant.

During the mission, the player gets a mission briefing from Miranda. That briefing is abruptly cut short, however, as Miranda and her people come under attack.

The Chief fights through the Covenant's last hurrah just outside the citadel. He and the Arbiter then enter, moving through the abandoned spaces of the Citadel foyer.

On vast, billowing Forerunner tapestries around them, the Prophet of Truth rails madly.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

The demon has failed. The traitor has failed. Yet I have succeeded.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

It is close now! The faithful can feel it! And the faithless are too late to stop me!

The following cinematic begins when the player presses X to enter the citadel's gravity lift chamber.]

100LB MIRANDA

100LB01 INT. CITADEL ELEVATOR FOYER

The Chief and Arbiter hurry toward the grav lift. Truth continues his rant on the tapestries around them.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

...and so the souls of the unworthy shall fuel the fires of my ascension. And the Great Journey begins at last!

ARBITER

We are too late! He is lighting the Rings!

The Chief and Arbiter can only watch as a terrible scene then plays out on the tapestries.

100LB02 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

Truth calls back to the shadows.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Bring it forth!

In response, a Brute drags Miranda before an eager Truth. She struggles, but can do little in the Brute's grasp.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Now...

In desperation, Miranda slams her shoulder into her Brute captor's side. He loses his balance just long enough to give Miranda an opening. She yanks a pistol from his holster.

She then whirls about as the other Brutes begin to close on her. Truth recedes behind their protective front.

MIRANDA

You bastards used me once! I
won't...

Miranda tries to cover the entire group as they close in around her.

MIRANDA

I won't let you...

But it's hopeless. There are too many.

Miranda begins to lower the gun slowly. She takes a breath. And then she quickly raises the barrel to her temple.

Just then, slender fingers of surprising strength wrap around her throat from behind. The Prophet of Truth looms in over her shoulder.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Not yet, child.

Miranda gasps for breath. The pistol falls from her fingers. She claws at Truth's hand as he begins to choke her.

The Brutes part as Truth forces her toward the console.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Through this impious vessel, let my
purity triumph and my will be done.

Closing his eyes in bliss, Truth brings down his hand down on top of Miranda's, forcing her to activate the Halos.

Light spreads from the panel, illuminating systems and activating a series of warning lights. The entire room comes alive with the urgent sounds of activation.

Truth opens his eyes and smiles.

Then, with the barest flick of his wrist, he snaps Miranda's neck. She falls to the ground, dead.

100LB03 INT. CITADEL ELEVATOR FOYER

The activation effect spreads throughout the citadel. It reaches the foyer in which the Chief and Arbiter stand.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Do you not feel it? My sublimation
is at hand! I am becoming!

ARBITER

He's insane. He will annihilate us
all. He must be stopped!

The Chief says nothing. He stares at the image of Miranda's crumpled form.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 100 forecity cont'd

The player fights up through the citadel, against the ever-diminishing Covenant forces. The Flood press in from all directions, tearing through the Brute honor guards.

Yet, during this ascent, the Flood cease to oppose the player. They stand eerily aside and urge the player forward.

GRAVEMIND CHORUS

Hurry, human. We will clear the
path. But it is your hand that must
stay this madness.

The following cinematic begins when the player presses X to open the doors to the citadel's central chamber.]

100LC CONFRONT TRUTH

100LC01 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

As the doors slide open, a scene of utter horror is unveiled.

The room looks far different than the one shown only a short while ago on the tapestries. The bodies of Brute honor guards are strewn everywhere. Blood spatters every surface and pools of it glitter in the shadows.

Their mangled bodies already course with Flood infection.

As the Chief and Arbiter carefully pick their way through the carnage, the Chief discovers the body of Miranda. She is bloodied and broken, crumpled near a wall. He kneels momentarily by her side.

Meanwhile, the Arbiter approaches a dividing wall. Seeing something beyond, he stops short and covers at the corner.

The Chief sees the Arbiter's reaction. He closes Miranda's eyes and then stands to join the Arbiter.

When he looks past the corner, he sees a lone figure.

100LC02 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

The Prophet of Truth huddles on the ground before the main console. The lights pulse as the countdown nears its conclusion.

The Arbiter can no longer stay still. He presses forward. But the Chief stops him. Something's not right here.

Truth turns his head and sees the Chief and Arbiter.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

Demon! You...you can help me...The Great Journey must commence. The sacred rings must fire...they must...they must...

GRAVEMIND

...must be stayed and extinguished. Left lifeless in the gulf. For the sake of all life, see this undone.

It is too late for Truth. As he turns, a mass of Flood tentacles can be seen, bursting from his chest and spreading over his torso like writhing weeds.

His face is ruined and pulsing with Flood infection. When he speaks, his voice quavers between his own and the more powerful, clinical voice of the Gravemind.

PROPHET OF TRUTH

No, Demon. Stay your hand! Let the fire burn and I shall ascend. Now is my time. I will...I will...

GRAVEMIND

...will never see the Great Journey
concluded. A lie for the weak and a
beacon for the deluded.

Truth suddenly looks directly at the Chief, leaning towards him.
But it is the Gravemind's voice that speaks.

GRAVEMIND
End this conflict. Stop the rings
from firing.

100LC03 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

The Arbiter's anger and impatience get the better of him.

ARBITER
Could this be what your construct
sent you to do? To fire the Halos?

The Chief shoves Truth into the arms of the Arbiter. He steps
to the console and glances up at the display.

MASTER CHIEF
No.

Chief slams a gloved hand down on the glowing panel.

The flashing icons slow and dim. Red lights sink to a cool blue.
The countdown that had changed the entire nature of the Citadel
comes to a halt.

100LC04 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

Quiet descends and there is a moment of stillness. Only Truth's
sobs break up the silence.

But then those sobs turn into a rumbling, building laughter.
The triumphant laugh of the Gravemind.

Powerful tentacles suddenly smash into the control panel. All
around them, lights flicker and die.

More tentacles burst forth from the panels and systems, emerging
from the shadows and plunging into the surrounding devices.
They are tearing and rending machinery, wrecking it
deliberately and absolutely.

GRAVEMIND

You have served us well. Our chains
are loosed and our shackles broken.
We are free.

Suddenly, a panicked Guilty Spark swoops into the room.

GUILTY SPARK

No, no, no, no, no! This simply
won't do! The link to the array is
broken! The installations can no
longer be activated! The Flood
cannot be stopped!

100LC05 INT. WAYPOINT CONTROL ROOM

The Chief and Arbiter put their backs to the proverbial wall
as Brute combatforms rise from the corpses around them.

GRAVEMIND

Your usefulness is spent. Rest will
be your reward.

The Prophet of Truth, fully infected, rises.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 100 forecity cont'd

*When gameplay resumes, the Chief has his crosshairs squarely
on the Flood-infected Truth. All he needs to do is pull the
trigger and the Covenant is undone.*

*The Flood advances furiously from the shadows, intent on
eliminating the Chief and Arbiter. They are continually
forced downward, into the bowels of the Citadel.*

*But every now and then, deep in the horrifying dark, the player
glimpses a shimmer of blue.*

*Eventually, the Chief and Arbiter become trapped in a space as
the Gravemind sends wave after wave down upon them.*

The next cinematic begins when the last wave is defeated.]

100LD HALO REVEAL

100LD01 INT. CITADEL ROOM

The last shell casing clatters to the ground. The Chief and Arbiter are surrounded by the corpses of countless Flood. Rivulets of blood and viscera are splayed across the floor.

ARBITER

This is futile. We will not stay
this Flood with bullet and blade.

Guilty Spark, helpless with despair, follows.

GUILTY SPARK

Everything is ruined! Ruined!
What will we do?

ARBITER

The Oracle is right. The Parasite
has won. The weapon your construct
spoke of was a fool's errand.
Perhaps the Gravemind has taken her
mind as it took the Prophet's.

The Chief ignores them. He stands before a locked door. For a brief instant, he sees a startling flash of Cortana.

The Chief forces the door open. He stares down the darkened corridor beyond at...nothing.

ARBITER

What is it that you see?

The Chief speaks, almost as if to himself.

MASTER CHIEF

Something...

100LD02 INT. CITADEL CORRIDOR

The Chief starts slowly forward. Far ahead, he sees the briefest glimpse of Cortana's ethereal form before it flickers and vanishes around a corner.

The Chief turns the corner. Further ahead, in the gloom, the vision reappears and flickers, as if beckoning him.

The Arbiter cautiously follows at a distance. But he plainly cannot see the phantom Cortana.

The Chief strides ahead, picking up speed. His mirrored gaze searches for the fleeting illusion.

MASTER CHIEF

Cortana. Stay with me...

Again, the apparition appears for the barest moment, leading him around another corner.

When the Chief makes this last turn, he finds a room.

100LD03 INT. CONSTRUCTION CONTROL

There's a final glimpse of Cortana's ghostly form beside a console, and then she's gone.

The Chief steps forward slowly. He studies the console.

It has a single recognizable icon. A split circle, spinning in opposite directions, like pieces of a puzzle.

The Chief and Arbiter exchange a glance.

And then the Chief pushes the button.

A calamitous noise! Gigantic locks thunder and reverberate as the walls split and flood the dim space with daylight.

The ceiling and walls unfold around them, opening to a vista of Waypoint's core. High Charity is a vast ruin in the distance. Overhead, the portal continues to shine.

And then, a titan rises.

Halo.

Its incredible mass is lifted slowly by unknowable technology. Legions of strato-sentinels move gracefully around it, raising huge sections of the ring into place.

The surface of the ring is visible, though terraforming is incomplete. Deserts give way to bare metal. Dry ocean beds gape like mouths, and only sparse vegetation is visible from this distance.

But there is no doubt. It is a Halo.

100LD04 EXT. CONSTRUCTION CONTROL LEDGE

ARBITER

How can this be? A Halo! Here!

GUILTY SPARK

Of course. This facility detected the loss of installation zero-four and began construction of a replacement immediately.

ARBITER

We have found your weapon!

GUILTY SPARK

Oh, I'm afraid not. Although the weapon system is operational, the installation cannot be fired without the Activation Index!

Guilty Spark's voice begins to recede as he floats upward and away toward the ring.

GUILTY SPARK

And that will not be fabricated until construction of the installation is complete...

As the wind whips and howls around them, the Chief realizes what he needs to do.

MASTER CHIEF

Cortana.

The Chief strides purposefully toward the exit.

110LA HC ARRIVAL

110LA01 EXT. HIGH CHARITY

The Chief flies toward the High Charity crash site. His banshee is lost in the blackness within.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 100 hc

The Chief delves into the Flood-haunted corridors in search of a dying friend. He follows broken images of Cortana as he descends into the belly of the beast.

The Chief overcomes an extremely difficult Flood encounter and then enters the ruins of the Inner Sanctum.

The chamber has been completely overtaken, with only a few elements recognizable beneath the Flood infection. The stasis prison, which once held 343 Guilty Spark, is the only source of light in the room.

And floating above that device is the most horrific depiction of Cortana's fragmented mind that the Chief has yet seen. She writhes within invisible bonds, unable to see or hear.

A plasma field surrounds her, seemingly torturing her. She moans a freakish chorus of sounds, not even words, set to no human cadence or speed. All else is silent and still.

When approached, the player is prompted to press X to breach the field.

Player control is taken away, but the action continues in first person. The Chief's empty hand reaches out and presses against the field. The barrier sparks and sends violent arcs of energy up his arm. But the field appears to weaken.

The Chief thrusts his other fist forward. The Chief's HUD shorts out and vanishes as more plasma crackles across his armor. But the field starts to give.

Following one final push, there's a spark and a sudden flash, and then the entire scene goes dark.

The cinematic begins in blackness.]

110LB RESCUE CORTANA

110LAB01 INT. HIGH CHARITY. INNER SANCTUM

The screen is completely black.

A moment passes.

Then, over the blackness, the Chief speaks.

MASTER CHIEF

Cortana?

A moment more of silence over black. And then...

CORTANA

(barely a whisper)

You found me.

A speck of soft blue light slowly pulses to life over the console. The faint glow catches the edges of the Chief's armor, silhouetting him against the black and causing shadows to shift around the room.

MASTER CHIEF

Thanks for the bread crumbs.

The light grows stronger and brighter, illuminating the room in calming blue as Cortana's image coalesces.

CORTANA

So much I forgot. So much lost. But I knew...I knew you'd come.

MASTER CHIEF

Are you all right?

CORTANA

I...I will be.

110LAB02 INT. HIGH CHARITY. INNER SANCTUM

Cortana's image is nearly whole. She pauses, taking a deep breath. She then looks at the Chief, fully seeing him for the first time. She manages a smile.

CORTANA

It's good to see you again.

MASTER CHIEF

It's good to be seen.
(a beat)
I would have come sooner.

CORTANA

I know. You had a job to do.

The Chief nods.

MASTER CHIEF

I found the Halo.

CORTANA

I knew you'd figure it out.

MASTER CHIEF

You can fire it, right?

CORTANA
Of course. I still have this.

110LAB03 INT. HIGH CHARITY. INNER SANCTUM

She causes the Index to materialize beside her.

CORTANA
The activation Index from the first Halo. A little souvenir I hung on to, just in case.

The Index dematerializes back into Cortana.

CORTANA
So, do you have a plan to get us out of here?

MASTER CHIEF
Thought I'd improvise.

Cortana smiles. She holds out her hand to him.

The Chief reaches out and takes her hand. She disappears in a surge of energy that rushes through his armor.

Then the Chief hears her back in his head, where she belongs.

CORTANA (V.O.)
Let's finish it.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 100 hc cont'd

The Chief and Cortana fight back through High Charity. But their escape will not be an easy one.

As they return to the mausoleum exterior, the Gravemind appears. His putrid bulk spills from an opening below the mausoleum. His voice echoes through the cavernous space.

The Gravemind taunts and laughs, all the while lashing out with tentacles and his minions.

What follows is a massive objective encounter versus the Gravemind and his horde of Flood. The Chief seemingly has no hope of escape, but a plan slowly begins to collect in Cortana's mind. A plan she concocted long ago.

The Chief blindly follows Cortana's instructions, trusting that her sanity is intact and that she knows what she's doing. Every step is seemingly meaningless, but in the end, her plan comes to fruition.

The Chief sets off a chain reaction that pins the Gravemind and then drops the full mass of the mausoleum down upon him.

The Gravemind disappears in a great gush of fetid slime.

The Chief is then able to reach a disabled Pelican. Cortana reactivates it and they fly to the Halo.

The outro and the following cinematic being when the Chief presses X to enter the Pelican.]

110LC LEAVE HC

110LC01 INT. HIGH CHARITY

The damaged Pelican rises slowly from the Flood-encrusted flood. It drifts upward toward a tear in the hull and the light of day beyond.

110LC02 EXT. WAYPOINT UPPER ATMOSPHERE

A lone Pelican sweeps through the clouds. Waypoint falls away beneath it to be lost in the whiteness.

CORTANA (V.O.)

All right. What's our situation?

110LC03 INT. PELICAN

The Chief sits in the pilot's seat. The Arbiter stands in the cockpit doorway. Cortana is displayed on a dashboard holo panel.

MASTER CHIEF

Earth is crippled. Truth is dead.
And the Flood have taken the Ark.

CORTANA

I can't leave you alone for a minute.

110LC04 EXT. WAYPOINT UPPER ATMOSPHERE

As the dropship crests the upper reaches of the atmosphere, the end comes into view.

Against a backdrop of the Milky Way, the Halo hangs serenely.

The Pelican soars across the Halo's superstructure, passing under the shadows of mammoth strato-sentinels that continue to toil away, oblivious to the stories of Waypoint.

110LC05 INT. PELICAN

The Chief and Arbiter gaze up at the Halo.

CORTANA

Just think, if we hadn't destroyed the first ring, this one wouldn't be here now to end it all.

(a beat)

Almost as if we planned it.

MASTER CHIEF

Did you?

110LC06 EXT. SPACE ABOVE WAYPOINT

Rounding the rim, the ship plunges into the Halo's own atmosphere and descends through the clouds.

110LC07 INT. PELICAN

Cortana coyly avoids answering the Chief.

CORTANA

We should warn the others.

She then radios Johnson via the Chief's headware.

CORTANA (RADIO)

Sergeant, this is Cortana.

After a moment, Sergeant Johnson appears on a small viewer.

JOHNSON (RADIO)

Good to have you back, Cortana.

CORTANA (RADIO)

We don't have much time left, Sergeant. What's your status?

JOHNSON (RADIO)

It was getting too hot on the ground.
What's left of us are holding station
about 50 klicks from the city gates.

CORTANA (RADIO)

Good. Round everyone up and head for
the slipspace rupture. Stop
anything that tries to go through.

JOHNSON (RADIO)

Wait. What exactly are you planning
to do?

CORTANA (RADIO)

When it's time to go, you leave and
don't look back. You'll know when.

110LC08 INT. PELICAN

It takes a moment for realization to dawn.

JOHNSON (RADIO)

Now hold on, I lost you both once
already! No way I'm gonna sit by and
lose you again. I'm coming to--

CORTANA (RADIO)

Sergeant!
(a beat)
We'll be right behind you.

Johnson grumbles briefly.

JOHNSON (RADIO)

You bet you will. Johnson out.

The viewscreen goes black.

110LC09 INT. PELICAN

MASTER CHIEF

It won't be that easy.

CORTANA

When was it ever?

120LA HALO ARRIVAL

120LA01 EXT. HALO

The Pelican passes over a valley of bare metal, eerily reminiscent of one the Chief explored so long ago. It begins a hazardous descent, coming in too hot and too fast.

The damaged Pelican makes a landing that might be better classified a controlled crash.

120LA02 INT. PELICAN

CORTANA

This ring almost killed us once.
It's going to get another chance.

The Chief shuts down the smoking engines.

CORTANA

It was never meant to be fired under these conditions. The activation will have catastrophic results for both facilities.

(a beat)

You're okay with that, right?

The Chief rises.

MASTER CHIEF

Yeah.

He passes the Arbiter on his way to the rear hatch. He stops in the doorway and looks back at the Arbiter.

MASTER CHIEF

You don't have to stick around for this.

The Arbiter hefts his carbine defiantly.

ARBITER

I watched from safety as you destroyed the first sacred ring, and was damned for it. I'll not be damned twice.

The Chief nods.

120LA03 EXT. HALO. VALLEY

The Chief hops out of the Pelican onto the naked metal skin of the Halo.

He stands there a moment, taking in the sight. The portal gives the ring a second sun, casting an eerie light.

The Chief's gaze traces the curve of the Halo through the sky. He then levels his head and steels himself for the final push.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 120 halo

The Chief fights through the valley, to the ziggurat. The Flood oppose him with an unrelenting fury. And during this sequence, the Chief discovers through their Gravemind chorus that killing the giant plant on High Charity meant nothing.

GRAVEMIND CHORUS

Did you think us defeated? One body may fall, but thousands will rise to take its place.

GRAVEMIND CHORUS

Such arrogance! Eons of waiting. Watching. Planning. And you would obliterate it all in an instant!

GRAVEMIND CHORUS

You are but one man! And we shall be your end!

As the Chief climbs the ziggurat against the Flood horde, he gets some unexpected help. Johnson appears on scaffolding high above with a pump laser.

CORTANA

Sergeant, I gave you an order!

JOHNSON (RADIO)

Last I checked, you weren't military, Cortana. Besides, I got everyone safe on the *Ningbo* and ready to go at a moment's notice.

JOHNSON (RADIO)

We'll get you out on the *Providence*. Just do your thing!

Johnson covers the Chief as he climbs the ziggurat. Eventually, the Chief reaches the top and heads inside.

The following cinematic begins when he presses X to open the doors to the control room itself.]

120LB JOHNSON

120LB01 INT. HALO. HALL OUTSIDE CONTROL ROOM

The Chief pulls his hand away from the panel and waits.

CORTANA

To think, we once fought so hard to
stop this thing...

There is no response from the door. The Chief tries again.
Still nothing.

CORTANA

Something's not right.

An explanation comes in the form of a familiar humming.

GUILTY SPARK (O.S.)

Let's see. Capacitance layer at
83%. Yes, yes. Very good.
Reserves are stable...

CORTANA

That son of a...

(a beat)

Get us in there!

The Chief sets down his weapon, plants his feet, and shoves his armored mitts into the gap between the doors. With Herculean strength, he begins to slowly pry them apart.

The doors resist, as unseen mechanisms try to keep them in a closed position. Sparks fly and servos scream in protest.

JOHNSON

Chief!

Johnson runs up and joins the Chief. He puts his shoulder to the door and tries to help, to little or no effect.

CORTANA

Sergeant, you shouldn't be--

Johnson interrupts with a grunted reply.

JOHNSON

With all due respect, Cortana, stuff
it. You two aren't the only ones
fighting for Earth.

As the gap widens, the Chief can see inside. Just as before,
a circular walkway rings a huge hologram of the Halo.

Guilty Spark momentarily passes across the narrow view as he
happily explores his rebuilt control room.

The gap has widened enough for Johnson to pass through, but not
the Chief. Seeing this, Johnson slips through the doors.

CORTANA

Sergeant!

Guilty Spark stops short as he discovers Johnson.

GUILTY SPARK

Oh! Hello!

Johnson ignores Guilty Spark.

JOHNSON

I can handle this! Pass me the
widget!

Guilty Spark flies closer.

GUILTY SPARK

What's this?

The Chief struggles with the doors, forcing a shoulder inside
to keep them from closing. Time is against him. Johnson looks
at him expectantly.

The Index then materializes before the Chief. He hesitates,
but Johnson makes the decision for him by snatching it away.

MASTER CHIEF

Wait!

Johnson runs toward the console.

JOHNSON

Just hold the door!

Guilty Spark follows Johnson like a pestering fly.

GUILTY SPARK
Apologies, but protocol dictates
that the facility be deployed into
the network.

Unheard, Guilty Spark putters after Johnson.

GUILTY SPARK
Should the Flood spread beyond the
confines of the Ark, we will trigger
the entire array as before.

JOHNSON
Never gonna happen.

GUILTY SPARK
Please understand. Activating the
installation here will destroy it.
(a beat)
And...and I just got it back.

Johnson reaches the console.

JOHNSON
Sorry, Sparkplug. But it's time to
kiss yer hoop goodbye.

GUILTY SPARK
I'm afraid I cannot allow this to
happen. And though I loathe to do
these things myself...

The Chief nearly has the doors open. He looks up, hearing the
change in Spark's tone.

GUILTY SPARK
I will not allow this installation to
be destroyed.

Johnson senses the danger a moment too late. He tries to turn
and raise his weapon, but it's no use.

Guilty Spark hits Johnson squarely in the back with a lethal
energy blast.

CORTANA
Johnson!

Johnson reels and then falls. The Index drops from his limp fingers and clatters across the walkway.

The Chief actually bellows with rage. It is the only emotion ever displayed by the man inside the armor.

In a surge of adrenaline, he practically tears the doors from their proverbial hinges. He charges toward Guilty Spark.

Guilty Spark swoops down and absorbs the Index into his shell. He then floats upward and turns toward the Chief.

GUILTY SPARK

And you, Reclaimer? What would
you--

Spark is cut off by the Chief's fist. The devastating punch sends the monitor flying backward.

As Guilty Spark recovers, the Chief kneels down to retrieve Johnson's pump laser. He then stands and faces his enemy.

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 120 halo cont'd

When gameplay resumes, it isn't so much a battle as an opportunity to play out the Chief's rage in real-time. The player unloads blast after blast with the pump laser. Each shot causes Spark to scream in agony.

Once Spark has taken enough hits, he explodes gloriously. The following cinematic begins as Spark dies.

120LC ACTIVATION

120LC01 INT. HALO. CONTROL ROOM

The Chief retrieves the Index. As he returns to the console, he kicks Guilty Spark's remains off the walkway.

He then kneels at Johnson's side. He appears to be dead.

The Chief is about to leave him, when Johnson speaks up.

JOHNSON

Chief...The *Providence*...a few
klicks upspin. Brought a Warthog.
You...you can make it.

CORTANA

Save your energy, Sergeant. Chief,
if we get him into a cryo tube--

JOHNSON

Ain't you heard, Cortana. War's
over...

Johnson dies.

120LC02 INT. HALO. CONTROL ROOM

The Chief stands. He looks down at his friend somberly.

CORTANA

Let's finish this.

The Chief walks over to the control panel.

He looks up at the hologram of the Halo. Flecks of snow drift
down through an opening high above and sparkle as they pass
through the projection. The moment is serene.

The Chief slots the Index and activates the Halo.

120LC03 INT. HALO. CONTROL ROOM

The control room comes alive. A brilliant beam of energy shoots
skyward from the base of the cavernous chamber. The Halo is
preparing to fire.

But the process is too much for the unfinished ring. The
control room's sensitive systems begin to overload, as tremors
shake the very foundation of the Halo.

CORTANA

Get us the hell out of here!

[GAMEPLAY: Mission 120 halo cont'd

*The Chief races back out of the control room and climbs out of
the valley. He returns to the area where Johnson came from and
discovers the promised Warthog. The Arbiter defends the
vehicle from the Flood.*

Cortana locates the Providence. They may have a chance. Begin glorious trench run finale!

As they race across the Halo's surface, the plates begin to buckle and collapse. Huge fonts of energy and molten metal erupt all around them.

Finally, the frigate comes into view. But it is beginning to slide down into the core of the Halo. The following cinematic begins when the Warthog successfully makes one last insane jump into the bay of the falling ship.]

130LA ESCAPE

130LA01 INT. FRIGATE

The Warthog flies into the frigate. It careens off a support, skids sideways across the metal floor, and then slams to a stop against a far bulkhead.

The Chief and Arbiter jump out of the smoking vehicle.

CORTANA

We don't have much time! Get me down to the engine core. I'll do what I can to speed this thing up.

The Chief starts to run toward an opening leading down. The Arbiter yells after them.

ARBITER

And just who's flying this thing?

CORTANA

You are! Go!

The Chief drops into the innards of the machine. The Arbiter runs the other way, toward the bridge.

130LA02 EXT. WAYPOINT ATMOSPHERE

The frigate rises slowly into the sky. Overhead, the charge of the Halo Effect blazes. Its energies begin to mingle dangerously with those of the portal.

130LA03 INT. FRIGATE. BRIDGE

The Arbiter sits in the pilot's seat. Through the viewport, he sees all of Waypoint clearly for the first time.

The frigate then suddenly lurches as it gains speed.

130LA04 EXT. SPACE AROUND WAYPOINT

The *Providence* screams toward the portal. The slipspace horizon is nearly within reach, but it fluctuates wildly.

130LA05 INT. FRIGATE. ENGINE CORE

Cortana is present in holographic form on top of the engine control core. The Chief stands near her and looks out through a lower level window.

Cortana sighs.

CORTANA

I've done all I can. But I doubt it will be enough. Looks like our luck has finally run out.

(a beat)

I'm sorry.

MASTER CHIEF

We'll make it.

Outside, the Halo Effect is blinding. The ring itself is lost against the brilliance.

CORTANA

It's been an honor working with you, John.

The Chief looks over at Cortana for a moment. She smiles.

MASTER CHIEF

We'll make it.

He reaches out to her.

130LA06 EXT. SPACE AROUND WAYPOINT

The entire facility is overcome. Explosions ripple across its surface. Wild eruptions of energy vent outward into space. And at its center, the Halo readies to fire.

The frigate speeds upwards. The portal ahead begins to destabilize rapidly through chaotic fits and spasms.

And then the Halo fires.

A spectacular wave of energy splashes across Waypoint. It consumes everything it touches.

The frigate races ahead of the effect. But the destructive wave closes on it like a voracious animal.

As the frigate nears the failing portal's horizon, everything is lost in a pure white light.

[GAMEPLAY: There is none! The game is over! Woo hoo!

This leads directly into a cutscene back at Earth.]

130LB EARTH

130LB01 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The slipspace portal shudders violently. In a fraction of a second, it grows to twice its size and then suddenly implodes. It dies just as the *Providence* appears.

Inertia carries the ship forward. As it swings past, it is revealed that the entire back half has been sheered off in the portal's demise. Vents of gas, sparks, and debris trail behind the hulk of metal like a comet tail.

Ahead rests the Earth. It is battered and scarred, a victim of Truth's occupation and the drastic measures taken against the Flood. The scars on the land are visible from orbit, but the conflict has passed. Humanity will survive.

The beam of energy once keeping the portal sustained finally shuts down. With both the portal and beam gone, the scene feels empty and calm.

The only motion is that of the frigate as it drifts lifelessly toward the planet.

130LB02 EXT. EARTH. OUTSKIRTS

The petals of the Ark begin to close.

Around its periphery, the towers descend back below the shattered earth.

Then, at its center, the locks of the final petals shut with a conclusive, resounding boom. The sound echoes across the landscape like a peal of thunder dwindling off to silence.

130LB03 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The frigate coasts forward, nearing the Earth's atmosphere.

FADE TO BLACK.

Then, over black, a few moments later.

MARINE TECH (RADIO)

We've got a single heat signature
inside. Moving in.

FADE IN:

130LB04 EXT. EARTH. OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

A group marines creep toward the frigate crash site. Fire and smoke obscure the details of the scene.

They draw in on a darkened doorway. Their barrel-mounted flashlights probe the opening but cannot penetrate the black.

Then, after a few suspenseful moments, the Arbiter appears. He is shaken and badly hurt, but he is alive.

And he is alone.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

130LB05 EXT. EARTH. OUTSKIRTS - SUNSET

The waning rays of the afternoon find a humble memorial.

Pulling back, a squad of marines is revealed, all with heads bowed. Lord Hood stands before them.

LORD HOOD

The storm has passed. The war is
over. Humanity has survived, but at
a terrible cost.

Behind them all stands the Arbiter and a small group of Elites. They keep a respectful distance from the humans.

LORD HOOD
When we leave this place, we will set
ourselves to rebuilding. Set
ourselves to the future.

Hood glances at the Arbiter and the Elites.

LORD HOOD
All of us.

The Arbiter nods solemnly.

LORD HOOD
But some lives, some places, will
never be rebuilt. To remember, this
hillside shall remain barren.

The ridge overlooks the war-torn land and the Ark responsible for bringing that conflict to Earth. The huge Forerunner device sleeps once again.

LORD HOOD
While the rest of our wounds may heal,
this scar will remain, as a memorial
to those lost.

He looks down at the memorial.

LORD HOOD
Their sacrifices shall not be
forgotten.

Hood leads them in a moment of silence. Even the Arbiter and his Elite comrades honor this act of remembrance.

After a few silent seconds, Hood snaps a salute. The other marines follow his lead, and the ceremony comes to a close.

The marines and Elites begin to somberly file out. The Elites head for a group of Phantoms sitting in the distance.

130LB06 EXT. EARTH. OUTSKIRTS - SUNSET

Hood stops beside the Arbiter, who is looking back at the memorial.

LORD HOOD

I had my doubts about you and your kind. But you stood beside Earth's greatest, to the bitter end. I'm sure, had he survived, he...

Hood trails off, unable to complete the thought. Instead, he composes himself and extends a hand to the Arbiter.

LORD HOOD

Thank you.

The Arbiter glances down at Hood's hand. Without taking it, he turns away, looking back at the memorial.

Lord Hood pulls back his hand, uneasy. He turns to leave.

The Arbiter then looks at Hood.

ARBITER

After all this, you don't actually believe he's dead, do you?

Hood stops and looks back at the Arbiter.

ARBITER

Were it so easy.

The Arbiter then walks off, toward a waiting Phantom.

Above, the remains of the Elite fleet and a single surviving human frigate hang low in the sky. Pelicans and Phantoms fly freely about, giving the world a new sense of life.

130LB07 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The Elite cruisers begin slow maneuvers, orienting themselves for departure. Phantoms shuttle the last of the away Elites back to the ships.

130LB08 INT. ELITE CRUISER. BRIDGE

The main doors slide open and the Arbiter steps onto the bridge. The assembled Elites stand, a gesture indicating that the Arbiter is once again considered Fleet Commander.

The Spec-Ops Commander stands before the main screen, looking up at an image of the Earth. The Arbiter walks to his side.

The Spec-Ops Commander steps to one side, in deference.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
Your orders, Commander?

The Arbiter gazes at the image of the Earth a moment more.

ARBITER
We have been away at war for so long.
I would like to see our own world and
know it is safe.

The Spec-Ops Commander nods.

SPEC-OPS COMMANDER
By your word.

ARBITER
Take us home.

130LB09 EXT. LOW EARTH ORBIT

The Elite ships finish their maneuver. One by one, they then begin to jump out of the system.

For the first time since the war began, a world survives to witness the Covenant depart.

130LB10 EXT. EARTH. OUTSKIRTS - DUSK

The sun has just set behind the memorial.

Up in the sky, the Elite ships disappear in silent flashes of light. Behind them, the stars are starting to come out.

Closing in on the simple memorial, an engraving can be read.
"In memory of our sons and daughters, fallen in the defense of
Earth and her colonies - July 7th, 2553"

And beneath the inscription, someone has roughly carved a simple addition:

"117"

[The credits roll at this point. They are immediately followed by 8_LE_epilogue.]

130LC EPILOGUE

130LB01 EXT. SPACE. UNKNOWN LOCATION

Deep space. Unknown constellations.

An unstable slipspace event suddenly blooms and then almost as quickly collapses. But in that time, the other half of the *Providence* passes through the portal.

It slowly tumbles through space, completely uncontrolled. Like the other half, it trails debris and plumes of gas.

130LB02 INT. FRIGATE

Pitch black.

MASTER CHIEF

Cortana?

No response.

MASTER CHIEF

Cortana, are you all right?

A moment passes, and then...

CORTANA

I...I'm not sure.

(a beat)

I've gone black.

Suddenly, the Chief's headlamp illuminates the scene.

CORTANA

Well, I see your sense of humor survived intact.

The Chief sweeps the light through the space. The beam finds particulate floating in the vacuum.

CORTANA

And the rest of your vitals appear normal.

(a beat)

I guess we made it. Sort of.

The Chief propels himself in zero-g and explores the space. The machinery is darkened and already caked with frost. There are no signs of power or movement.

MASTER CHIEF

What happened?

CORTANA

I'm not sure. The portal was growing unstable. The destination solution was in flux. And we appeared to hit it just as the slipspace field was collapsing.

130LB03 INT. FRIGATE

The Chief comes to the sheered section of the ship. He grabs an overhead grip and looks out at the strange constellations.

MASTER CHIEF

So where are we?

CORTANA

I'm not sure. These stars don't match anything I have on record. Though they feel oddly familiar.

130LB04 INT. FRIGATE

The Chief kicks a piece of debris out into the void. It tumbles away until it is lost against the blackness.

CORTANA

I wonder how our better half turned out.

MASTER CHIEF

He made it.

130LB05 INT. FRIGATE

The Chief returns inside and moves through the darkness.

CORTANA

So we have no slipspace drive. Limited power. And we're drifting in the middle of nowhere.

The Chief stops himself in a doorway. Within the darkness beyond, machine lights glow faintly.

He floats toward a console and places his hand on the control pad. Cortana appears on the holo-panel above it.

CORTANA

But we did it. Truth and the
Covenant. The Flood. It's
finished.

MASTER CHIEF

It's finished.

The Chief checks his weapon and then secures it to a cleat.

CORTANA

But I have no idea where we are. It
could take days, weeks, even months
to reach anything.

The Chief presses a button. The darkened machines beside him
light up and cast a warm light across his armor.

As he pulls back, a cryo chamber is revealed.

The Chief looks down at Cortana. She smiles.

MASTER CHIEF

Wake me when we get there.

The Chief enters the module. The lid closes.

The Hushed Casket sleeps once again.

FADE OUT.

*[On Legendary difficulty, 8LE_epilogue is followed by
8LF_legendary_ending.]*

130LD LEGENDARY

FADE IN:

130LD01 EXT. SPACE. UNKNOWN LOCATION

The broken frigate drifts silently through the blackness.

A title card reads: "7 years later"

The frigate recedes into the distance.

A corona of light appears. A sun moves out from behind a massive
planet in silhouette.

The light grows, swallowing the tiny frigate. And just before the scene is lost in the brilliance, the surface of the planet is momentarily exposed.

A great city covers an entire continent. The lights and structures are arrayed in a familiar symbol.

The Seventh Column.

They are not alone.

FADE OUT.