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| 1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)<br>21 October 2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                 | 2. REPORT TYPE<br>Briefing Charts |                                          | 3. DATES COVERED (From - To)<br>30 September 2016 – 21 October 2016 |                                                 |
| 4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE<br>Collisionless Electrostatic Shock Modeling and Simulation                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5a. CONTRACT NUMBER                                                 |                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5b. GRANT NUMBER                                                    |                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER                                          |                                                 |
| 6. AUTHOR(S)<br>Daniel Crews                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5d. PROJECT NUMBER                                                  |                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5e. TASK NUMBER                                                     |                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          | 5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER<br>Q02Z                                        |                                                 |
| 7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br>Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC)<br>AFRL/RQRS<br>1 Ara Drive<br>Edwards AFB, CA 93524 - 7013                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                 |                                   |                                          | 8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION<br>REPORT NO.                            |                                                 |
| 9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)<br>Air Force Research Laboratory (AFMC)<br>AFRL/RQR<br>5 Pollux Drive<br>Edwards AFB, CA 93524-7048                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                 |                                   |                                          | 10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)                                    |                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          | 11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT<br>NUMBER(S)<br>AFRL-RQ-ED-VG-2016-287 |                                                 |
| 12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT<br>Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited. The U.S. Government is joint author of the work and has the right to use, modify, reproduce, release, perform, display, or disclose the work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   |                                          |                                                                     |                                                 |
| 13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES<br>For presentation at University of Washington; (21 October 2016) PA Case Number: #16490; Clearance Date:10/14/2016<br>Prepared in collaboration with ERC                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                 |                                   |                                          |                                                                     |                                                 |
| 14. ABSTRACT<br>Viewgraph/Briefing Charts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                 |                                   |                                          |                                                                     |                                                 |
| 15. SUBJECT TERMS<br>N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                 |                                   |                                          |                                                                     |                                                 |
| 16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                 |                                   | 17. LIMITATION<br>OF ABSTRACT<br><br>SAR | 18. NUMBER<br>OF PAGES<br><br>37                                    | 19a. NAME OF<br>RESPONSIBLE PERSON<br>D. Bilyeu |
| a. REPORT<br><br>Unclassified                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | b. ABSTRACT<br><br>Unclassified | c. THIS PAGE<br><br>Unclassified  |                                          |                                                                     | 19b. TELEPHONE NO<br>(include area code)<br>N/A |



# Air Force Research Laboratory



## Collisionless Electrostatic Shock Modeling and Simulation

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**Aerospace Systems Directorate**

**Edwards AFB, CA**

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# Overview



- **Motivation and Background**
- **What is a Collisionless Shock Wave?**
- **Features of the Collisionless Shock**
- **The Shock Simulation Model**
- **Simulation Results and Verification**
- **Future Work**



# Background



## Who am I?

- Grew up in Olympia, WA, The City of Champions
- B.S. Aerospace Engineering 2016 | UW, Seattle
- Start Graduate Program at UW Autumn 2016
- Hobbies:
  - Studying classical guitar,
  - Observing the sky,
  - Appreciating existence and nature.



# Investigation Motivation



## What's the Point?

- **The 1D Collisionless Ion-Acoustic Shock Wave:**
  - Has a simple premise
  - Is rich in nonlinear effects difficult for theoretical prediction,
    - Wave Dispersion
    - Wave-Particle Interaction
    - Various Wave Dissipation Mechanisms
  - Shock structure is an active area of research. In particular,
    - Capacity to create ion beam of super-shock velocity.
- **Validation of Simulation Frameworks**
  - The shock is a model problem for simulation code validation.

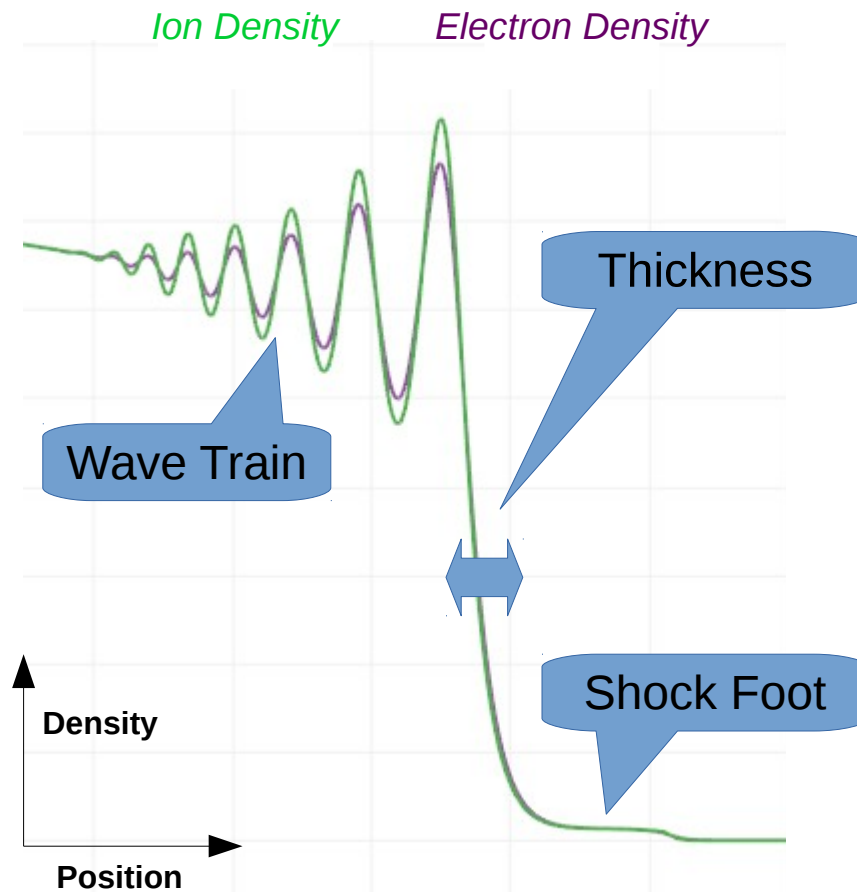


# The Collisionless Shock Wave



## Electrostatic Shock Features

- Propagation occurs via collective electric interactions
- Shock front is dispersed across many Debye lengths
- Wave is accompanied by an electric field perturbation
- Two classes of shock:
  - Subcritical:  $M < M^* \sim 1.8$ 
    - Accompanied by undulating wave-train
  - Supercritical:  $M > M^* \sim 1.8$ 
    - Increase in dissipation
    - Reflects almost all ions





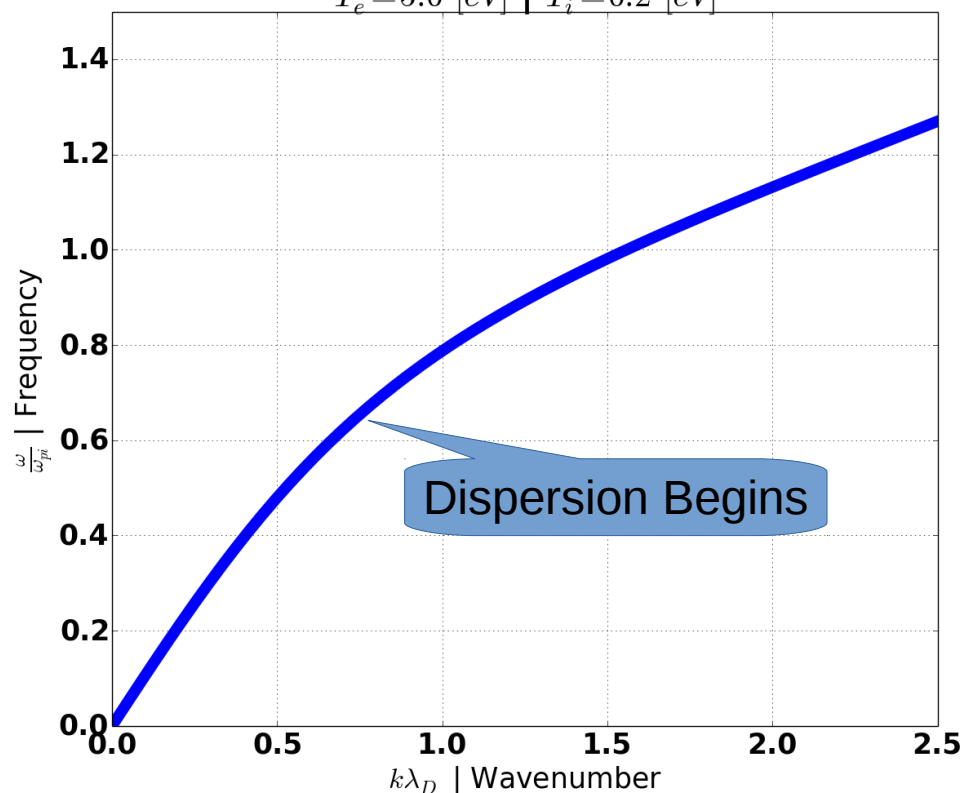
# Details on Shock Structure



## Shock Thickness

- Ion-acoustic dispersion relation predicts the electron contribution to acoustic speed to decay for wavelengths approaching the Debye length.
- Imagine shock formation: nonlinear steepening of an acoustic disturbance.

$$T_e = 5.0 \text{ [eV]} \mid T_i = 0.2 \text{ [eV]}$$



Wave steepening is balanced by dispersion;  
short wavelength components recede from  
the wavefront.

$$t \approx k_D^{-1}$$

### Linearized Ion-Acoustic Dispersion Relation

$$\left(\frac{\omega}{k}\right)^2 = \frac{1}{1 + (k\lambda_D)^2} \frac{T_e}{m_i} + \gamma_i \frac{T_i}{m_i}$$



# Details on Shock Structure



## Wave Train Properties

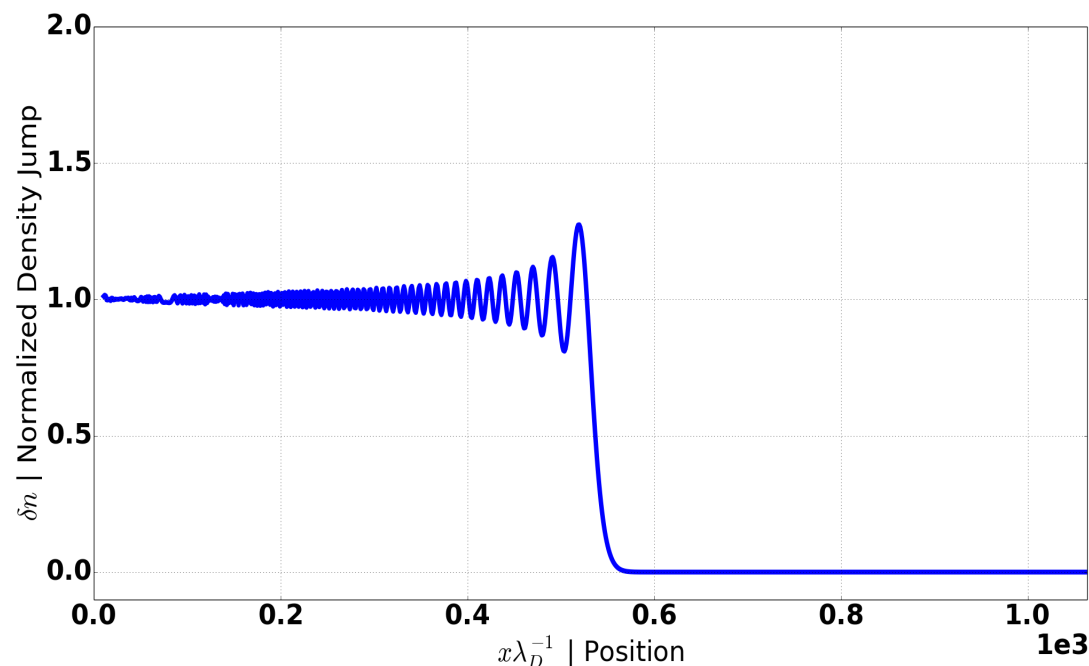
### – Linearized Model of Dispersive Shock, the Integrated Airy Function:

- Linearization of the fluid equations with piston-like boundary conditions gives a solution for the shock behavior.
- Assumes cold upstream ions, therefore neglecting shock reflection.

$$n(x, t) = n_0 + \frac{\delta n}{2} \int_{\beta}^{\infty} Ai(\alpha) d\alpha$$

$$\beta = \left(\frac{2}{3}\right)^{\frac{1}{3}} \left(\frac{\lambda_D}{x}\right)^{\frac{1}{3}} \frac{(x - C_s t)}{\lambda_D}$$

$$C_s = \left(\frac{T_e}{m_i}\right)^{\frac{1}{2}}$$





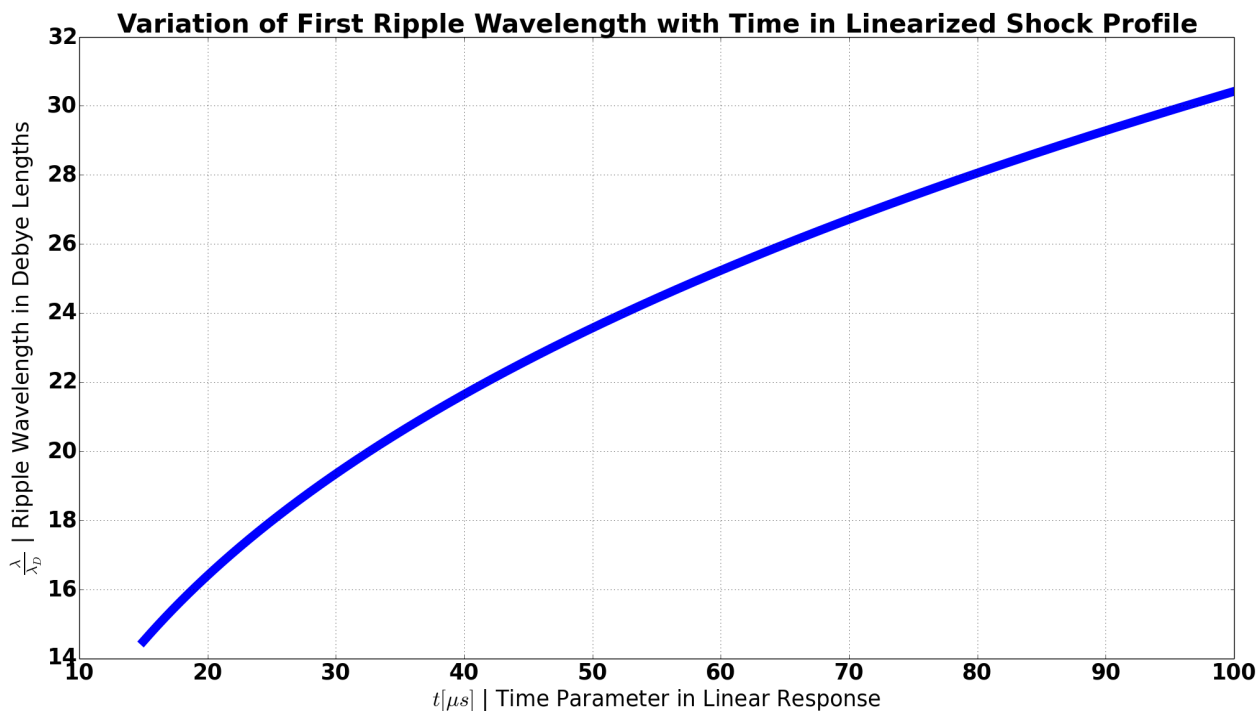
# Details on Shock Structure



## Wave Train Properties

### – Linear Model Predicts:

- The wave train spreads out in time; peak-to-peak wavelength increases.
- No variation of non-dimensional wavelength with electron temperature.
- The wave train increases in frequency towards the back of the train.

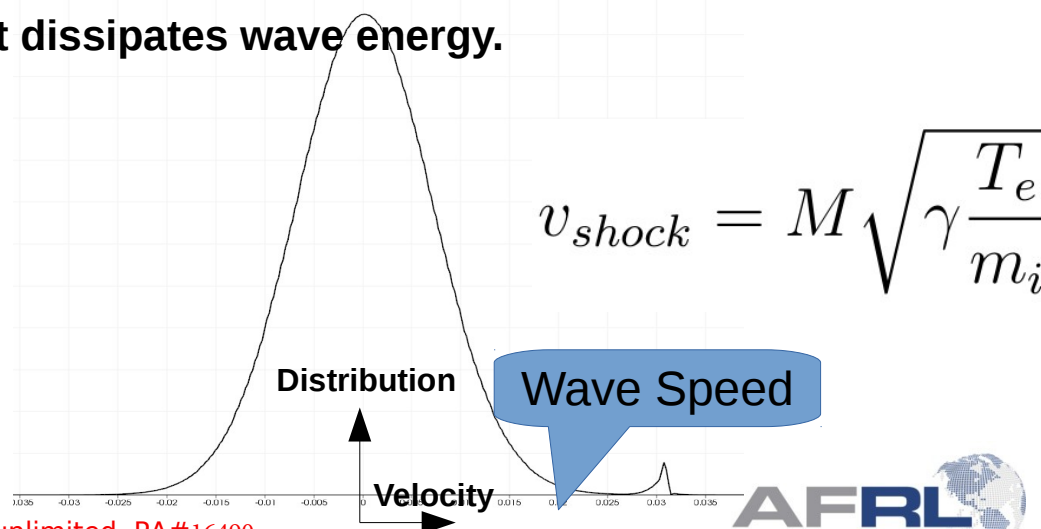




# Details on Shock Physics

## Sources of Collisionless Wave Dissipation

- Landau Damping:
  - A form of wave-particle resonance. Resonant particles sap wave energy.
  - Damping is proportional to slope of distribution function at wave velocity.
  - Higher electron temperature means greater shock speed, so less damping.
- Ion Reflection / The Shock Foot:
  - Higher shock strength brings a greater potential difference.
  - Ions unable to traverse difference are reflected downstream.
  - Formation of the shock foot dissipates wave energy.

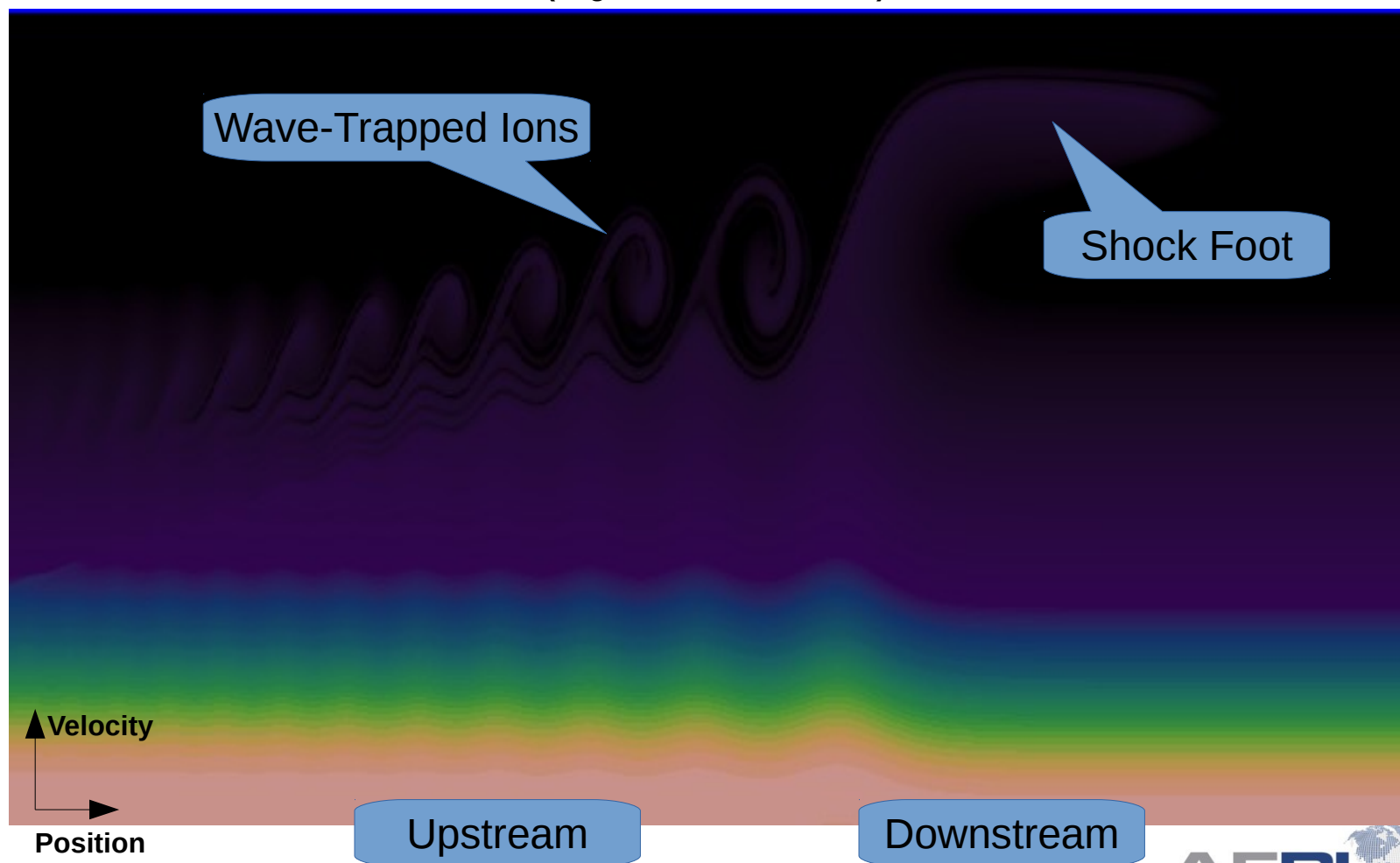




# Details on Shock Physics



## Phase Space Indicators of Wave Dissipation (Log View of Distribution)





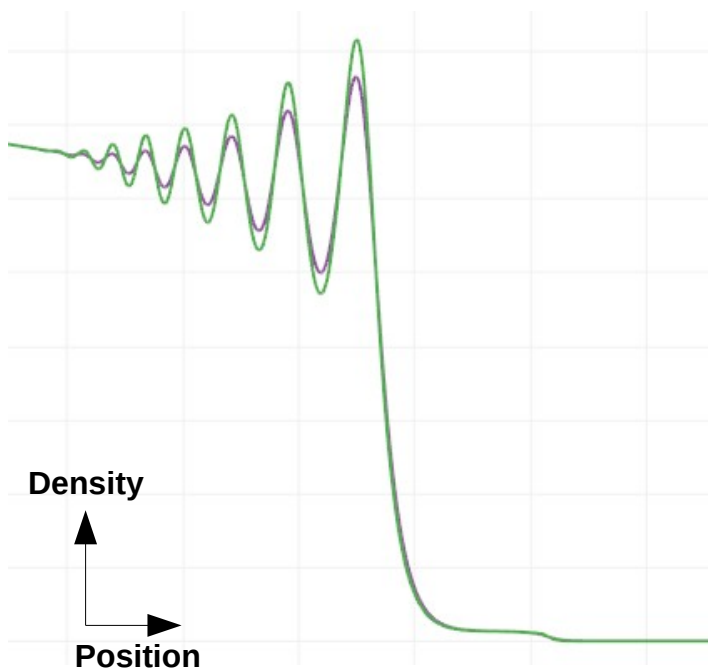
# Dissipation Controls Wave Train



## Under- and Over-damped Shocks

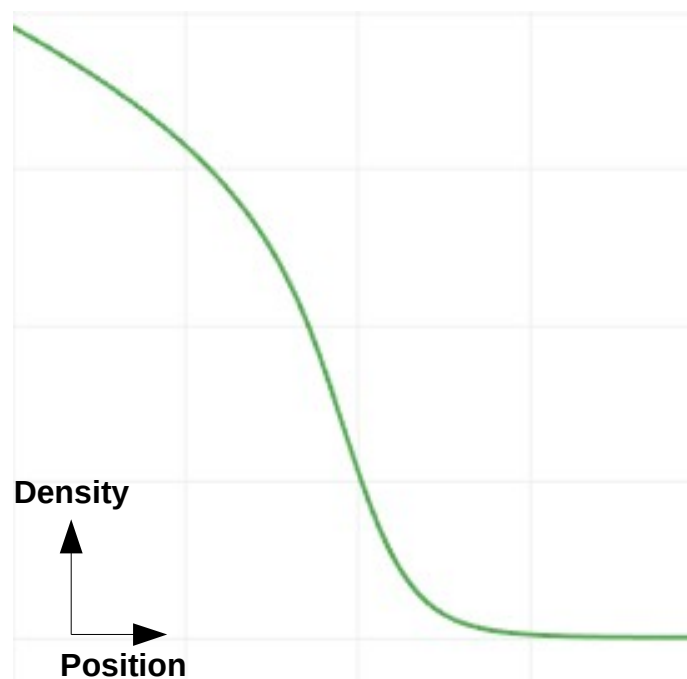
### – Under-damped:

- Dissipation is weak, ripples persist.
- High  $\frac{T_e}{T_i}$



### – Over-damped:

- Strong dissipation damps ripples.
- Low  $\frac{T_e}{T_i}$



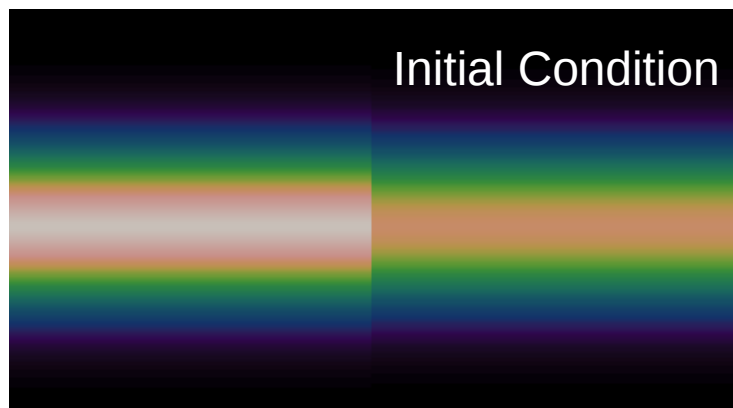


# The Simulation Model

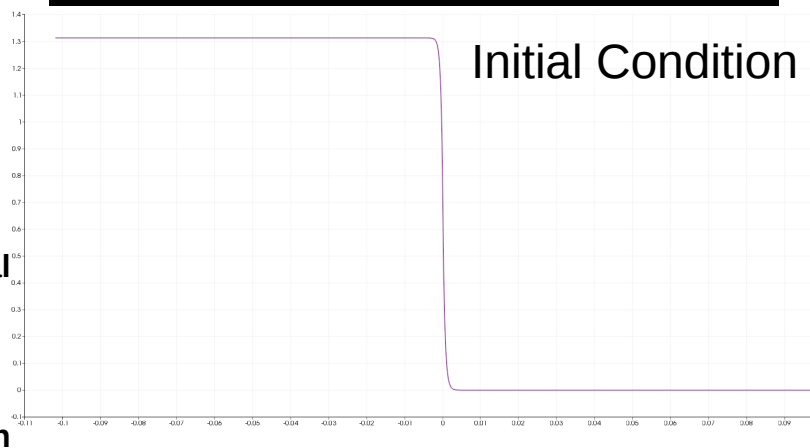
## Initial Conditions: Ion-Acoustic Shock Tube

Shown: Velocity Distribution Function (VDF)  $f(x, v)$   
And Potential Profile  $\phi(x)$

High Particle Density    Low Particle Density



Velocity  
Position



Potential  
Position

## Kinetic Model

Vlasov Equation 
$$\frac{\partial f}{\partial t} + v \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial x} - \frac{e \nabla \phi}{m} \cdot \frac{\partial f}{\partial v} = 0$$

Poisson Equation 
$$\epsilon_0 \nabla^2 \phi + \rho = 0$$

Boltzmannian Electrons 
$$n_e = n_{ref} \cdot \exp \frac{\phi}{T_e}$$

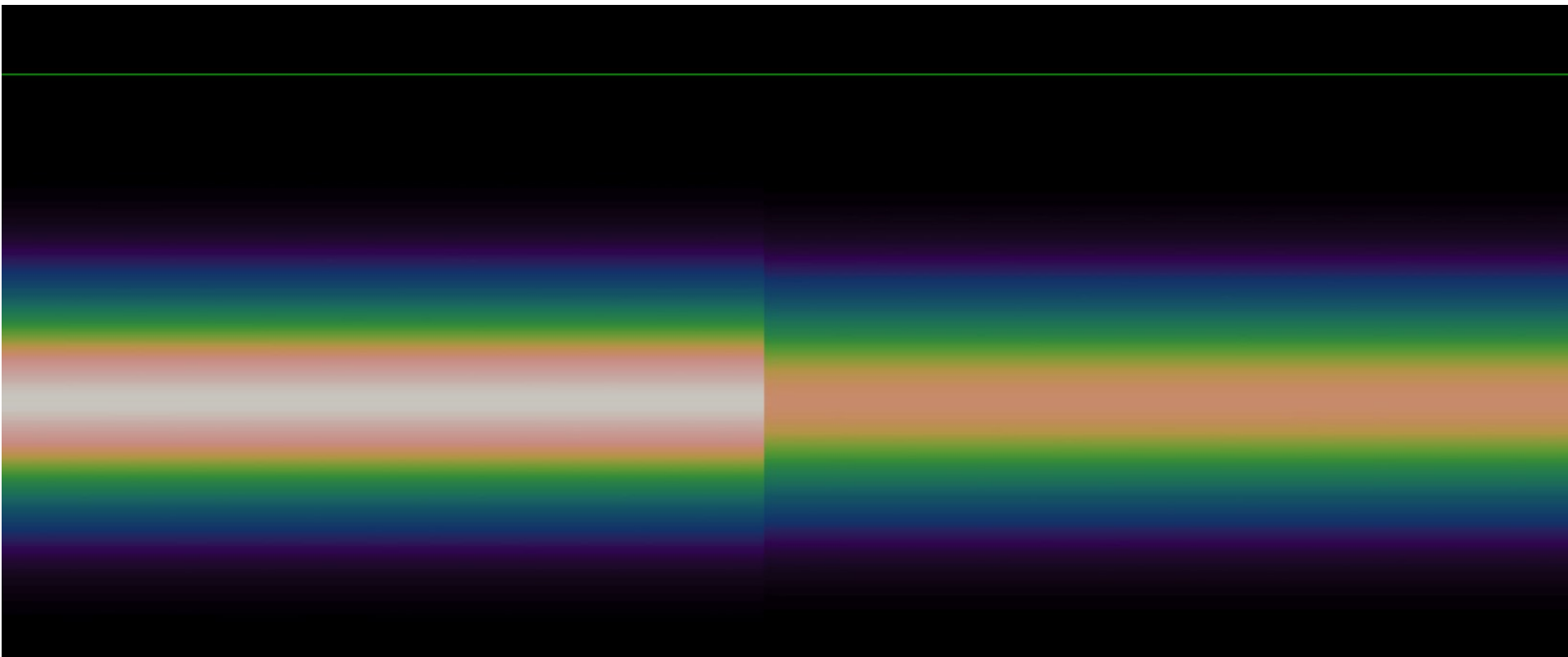
## Simulation Procedure:

- Solve Poisson's equation for potential.
  - VDF for ion density
  - Electron density from  $\exp \frac{\phi}{T_e}$
- Update the distribution function via Vlasov equation.
- Repeat.





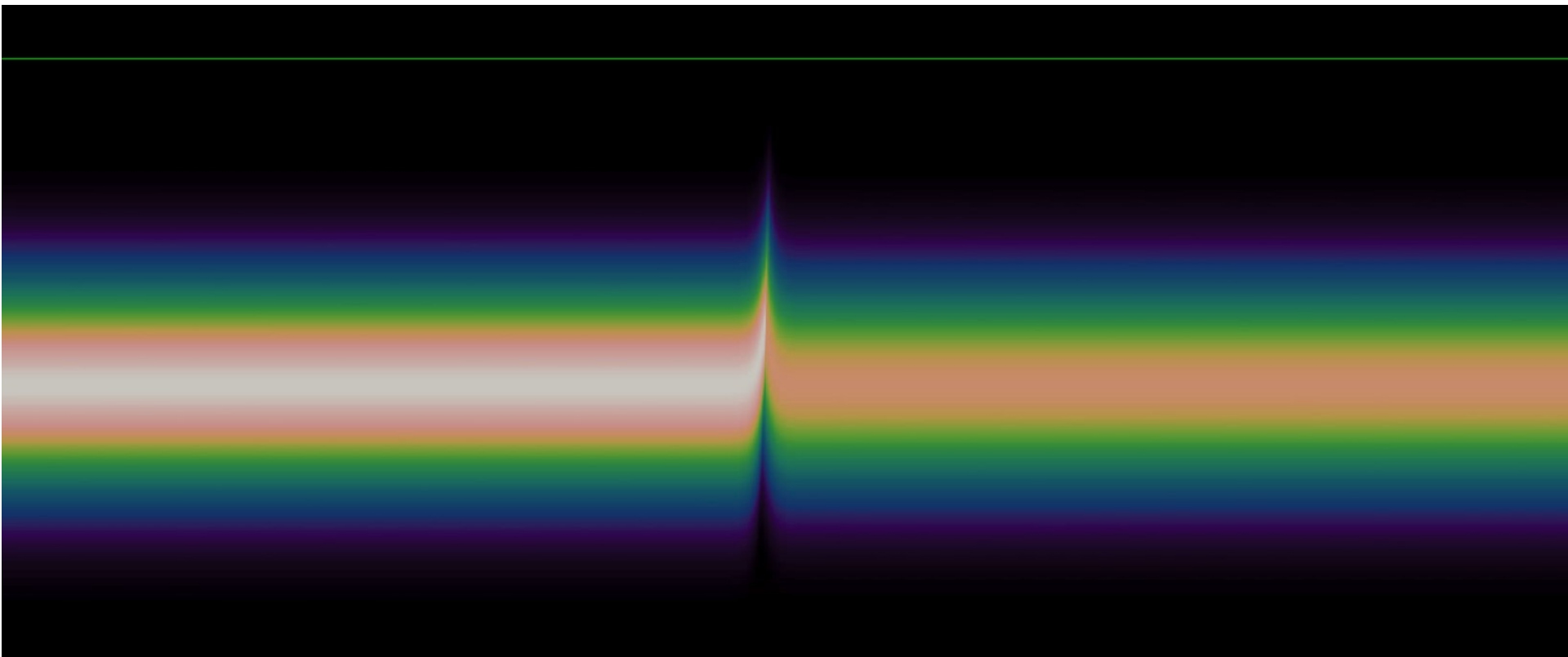
# Typical Simulation Result



Lightly Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 5 eV | ( $T_e/T_i = 25$ )  
Density Difference: 30%



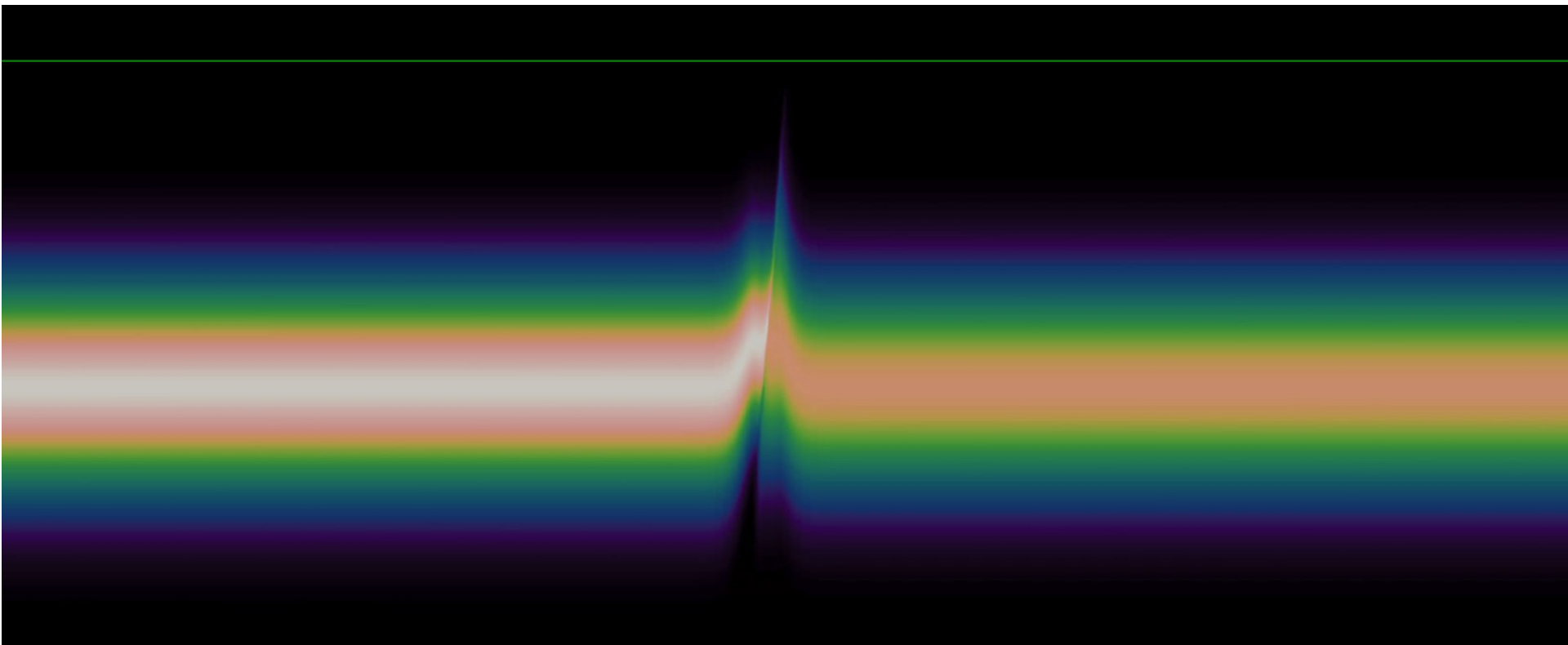
# Typical Simulation Result



Lightly Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 5 eV | (Te/Ti = 25)  
Density Difference: 30%



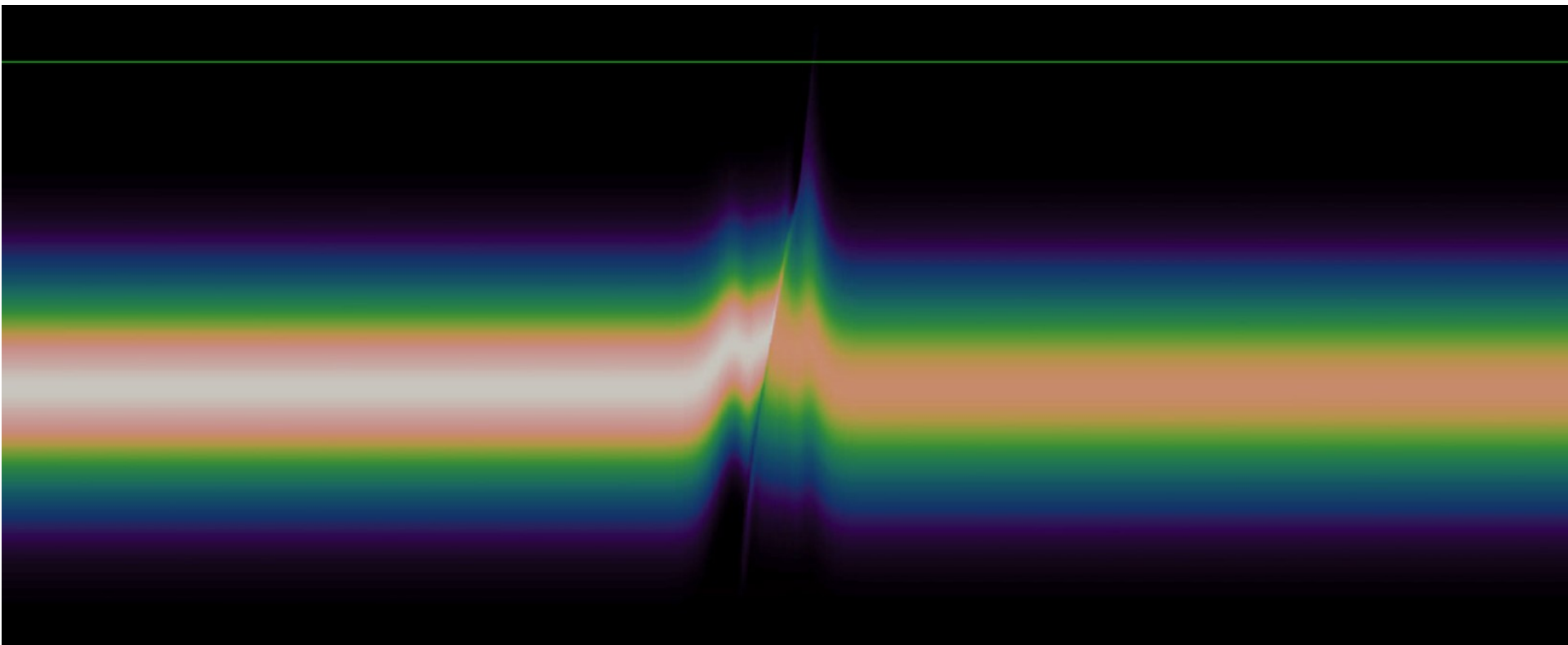
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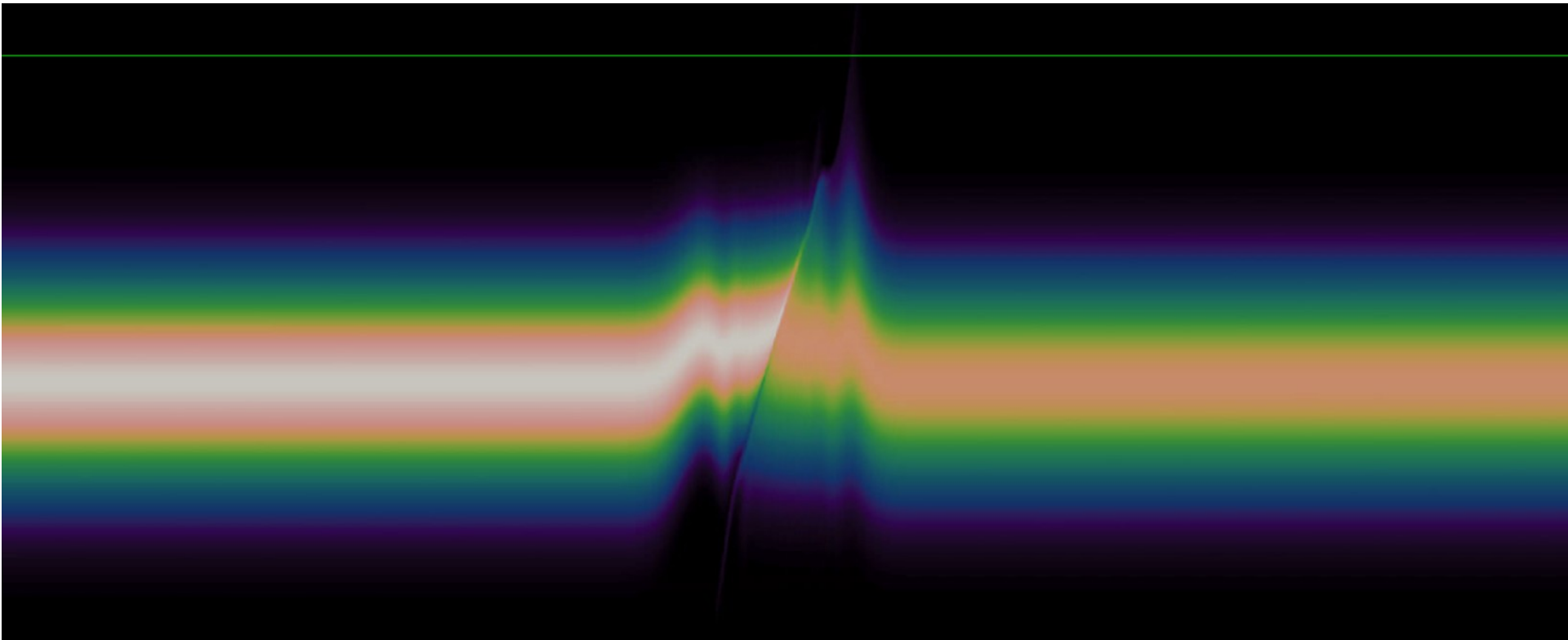
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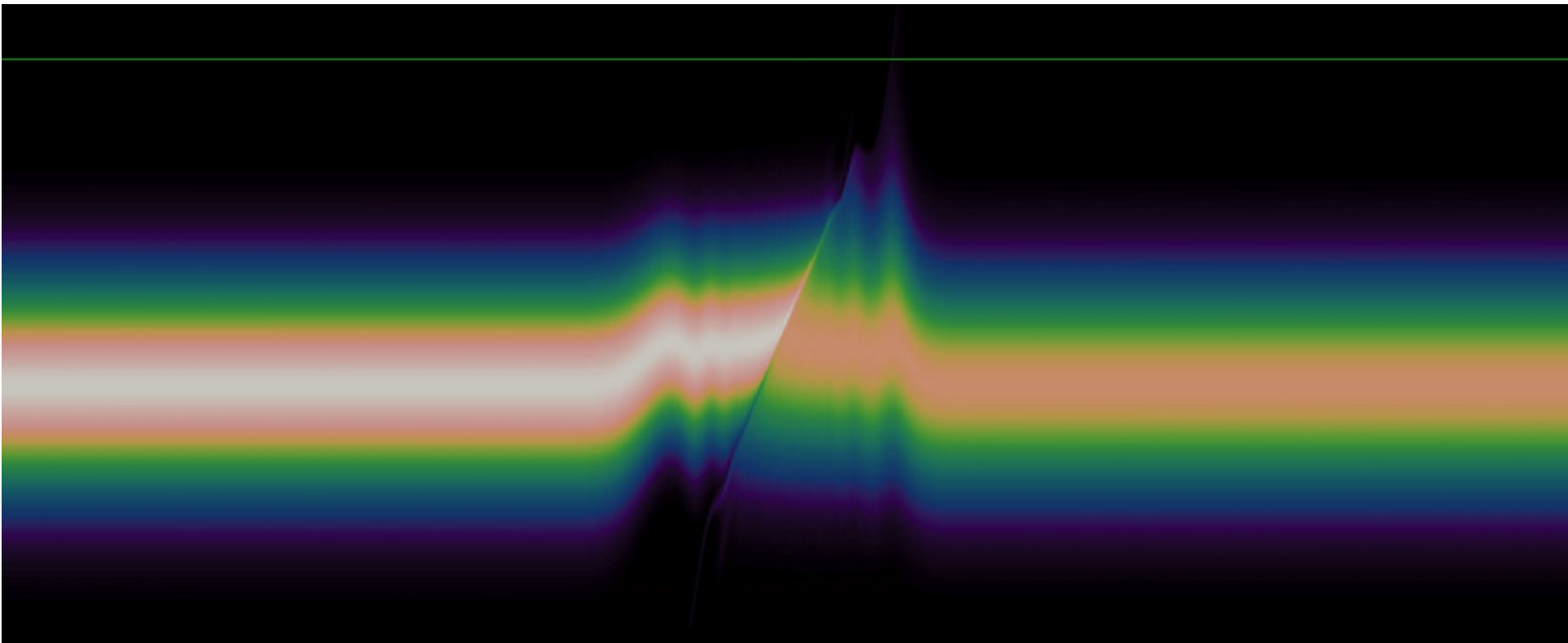
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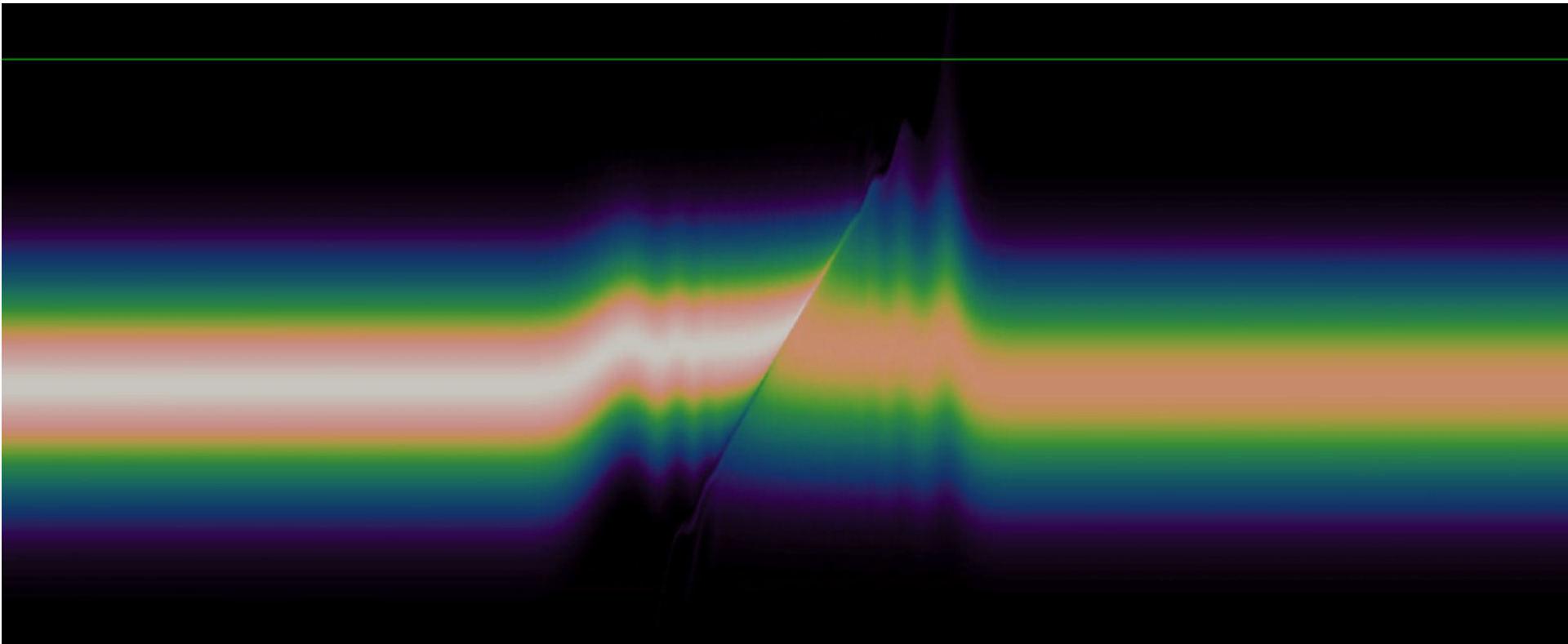
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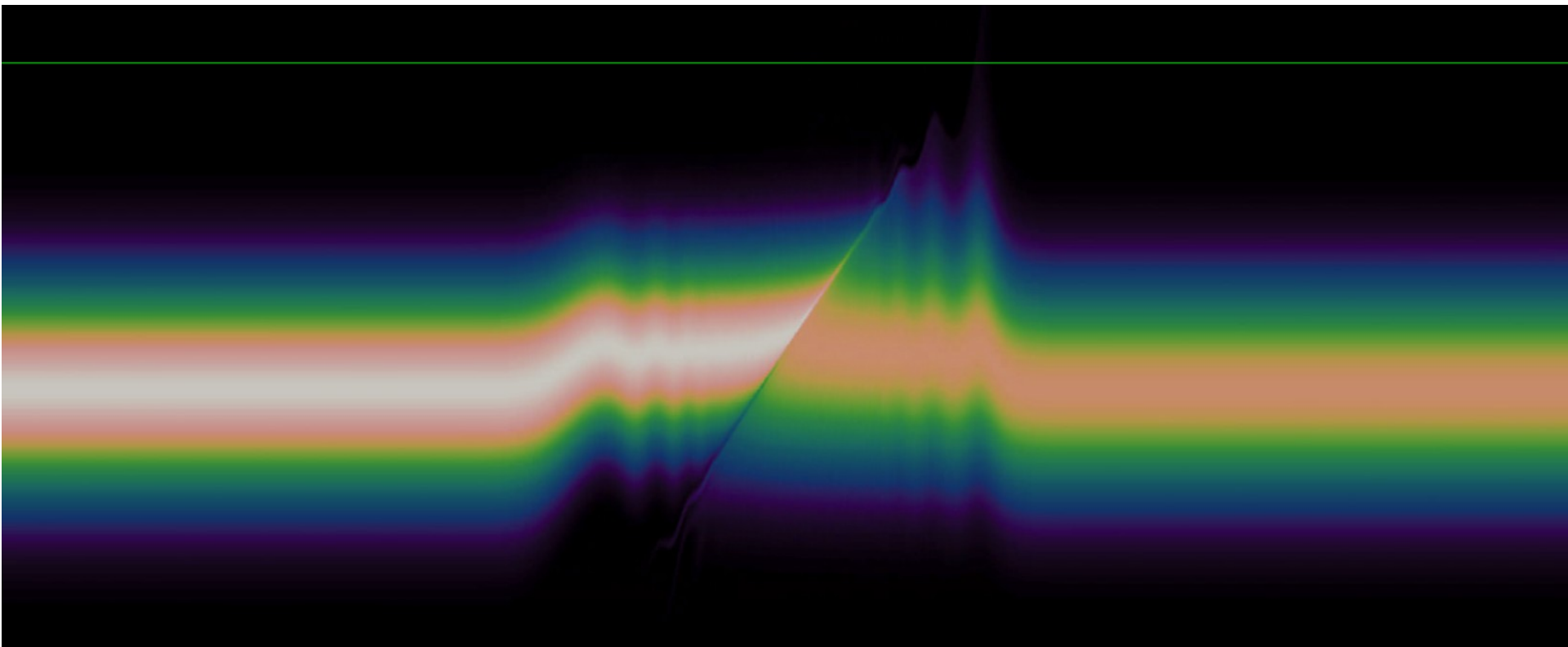
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Lightly Damped Case  
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Density Difference: 30%



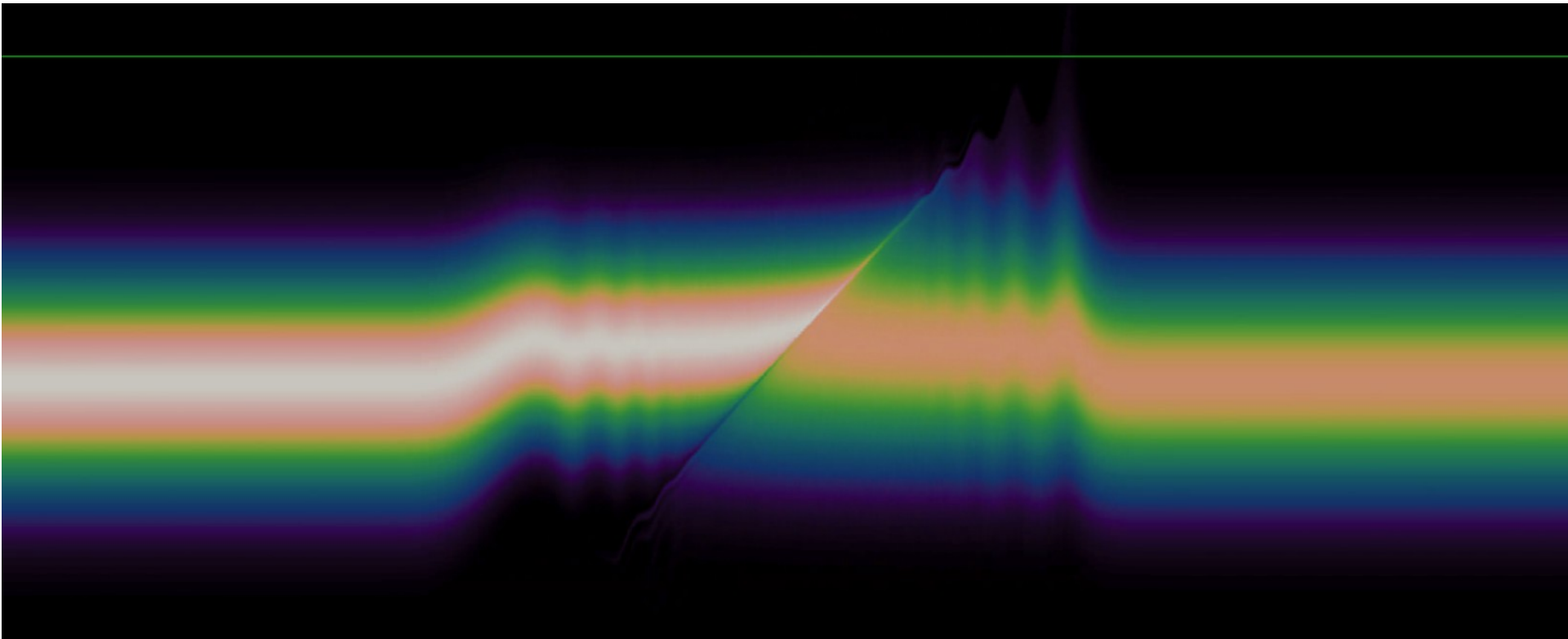
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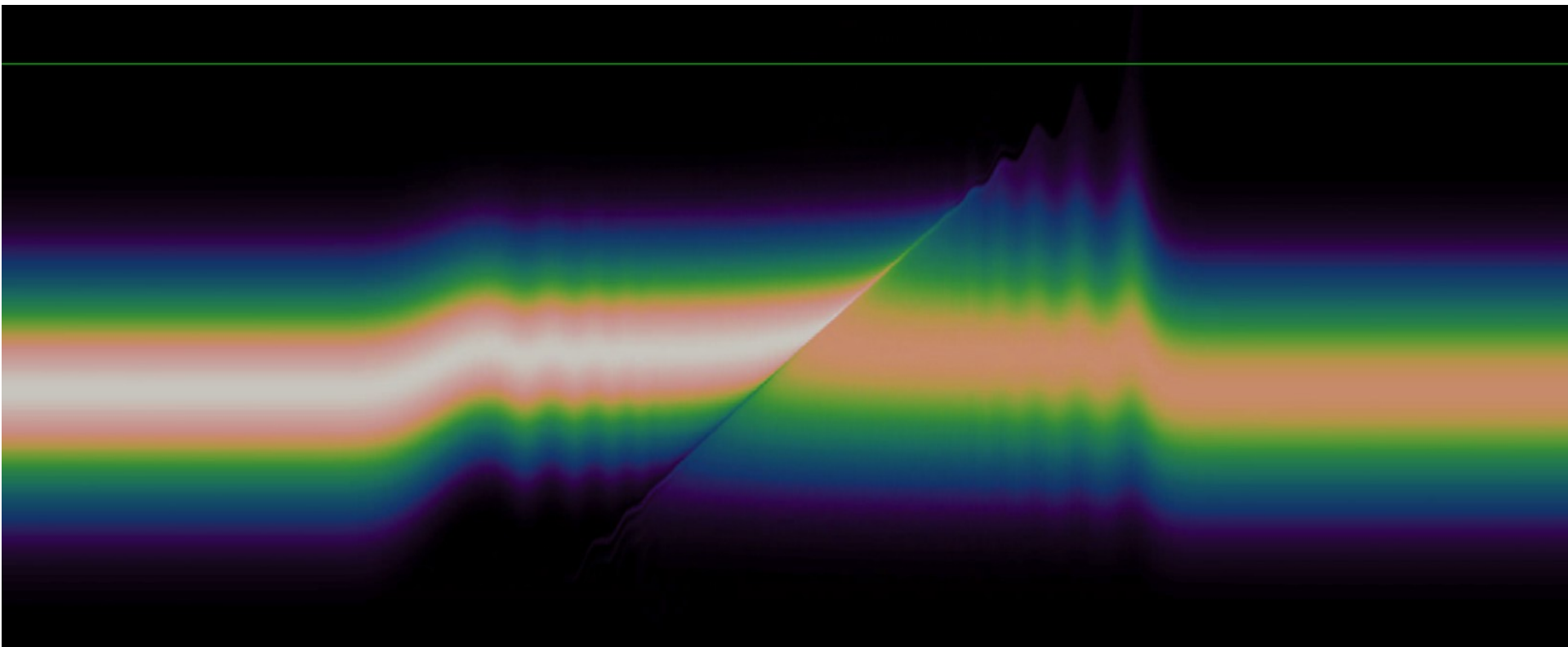
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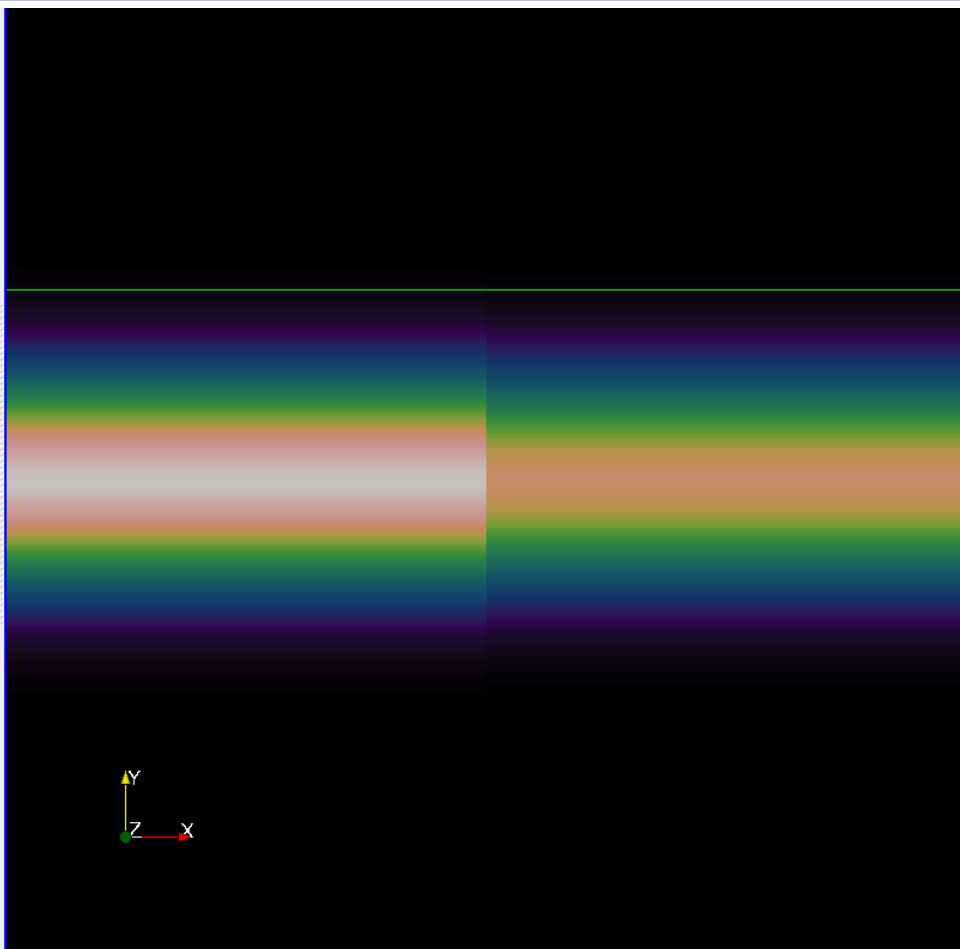
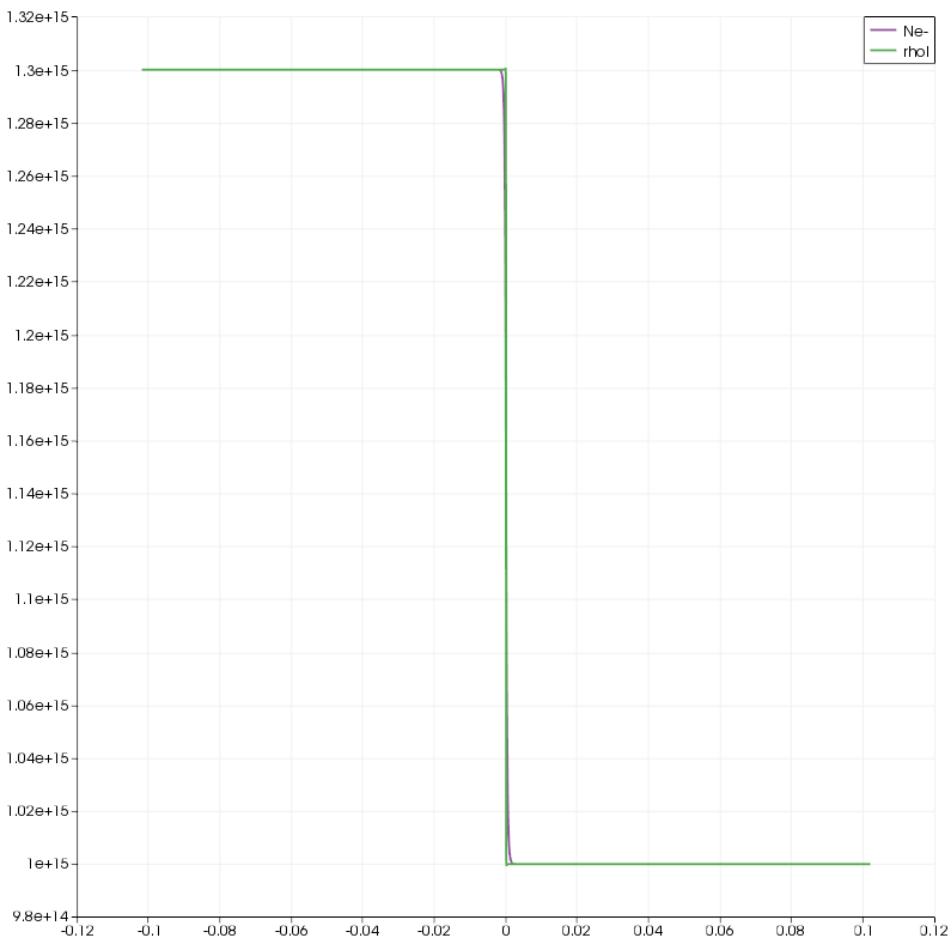
# Typical Simulation Result



Lightly Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 5 eV | ( $T_e/T_i = 25$ )  
Density Difference: 30%



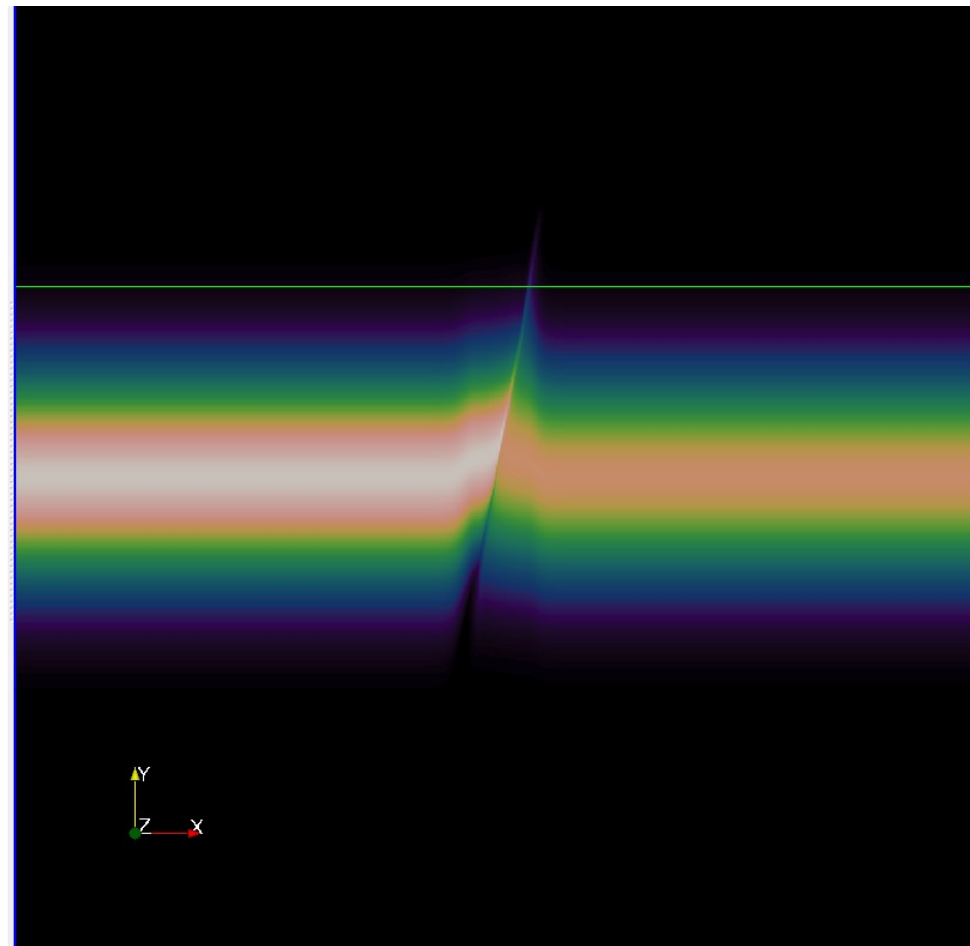
# Typical Simulation Result



Heavily Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 1.5 [eV] | ( $T_e/T_i = 7.5$ )  
Density Difference: 30%



# Typical Simulation Result

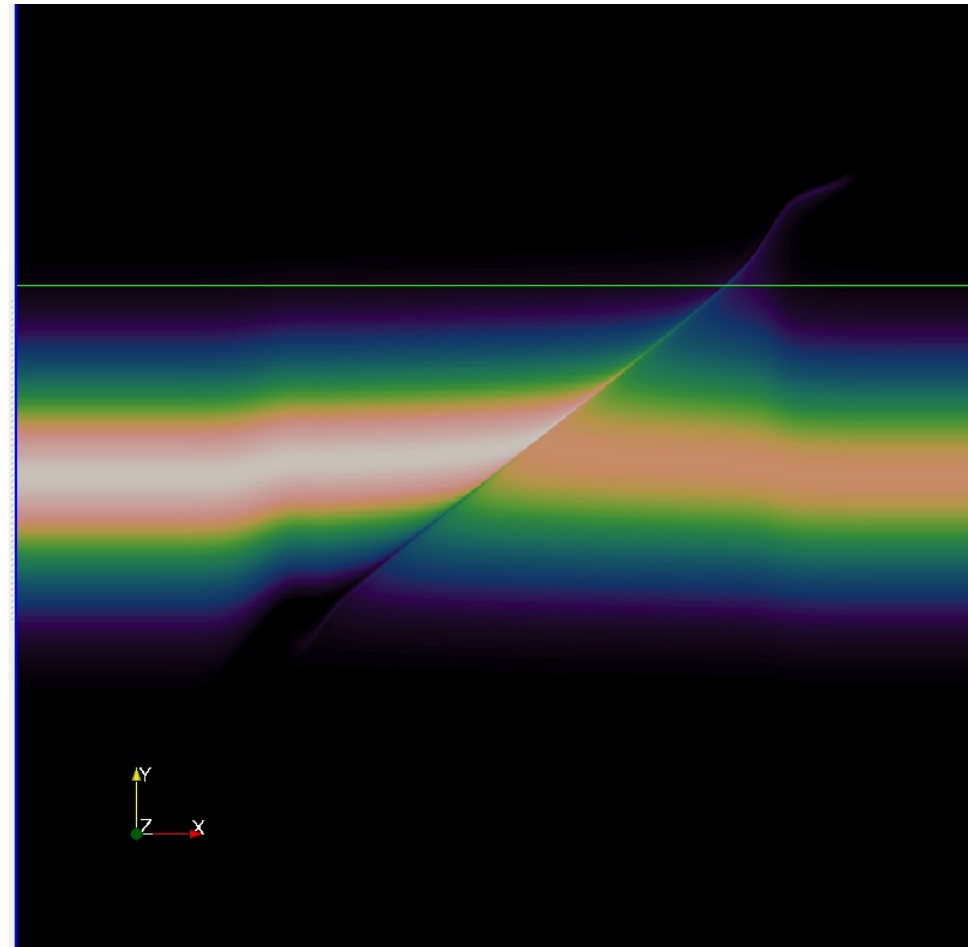


Heavily Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 1.5 [eV] | ( $T_e/T_i = 7.5$ )  
Density Difference: 30%





# Typical Simulation Result



Heavily Damped Case  
Electron Temperature: 1.5 [eV] | ( $T_e/T_i = 7.5$ )  
Density Difference: 30%

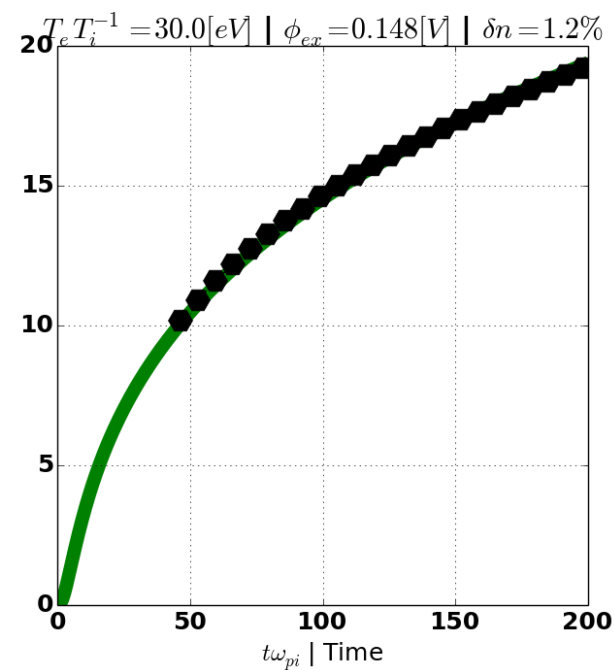
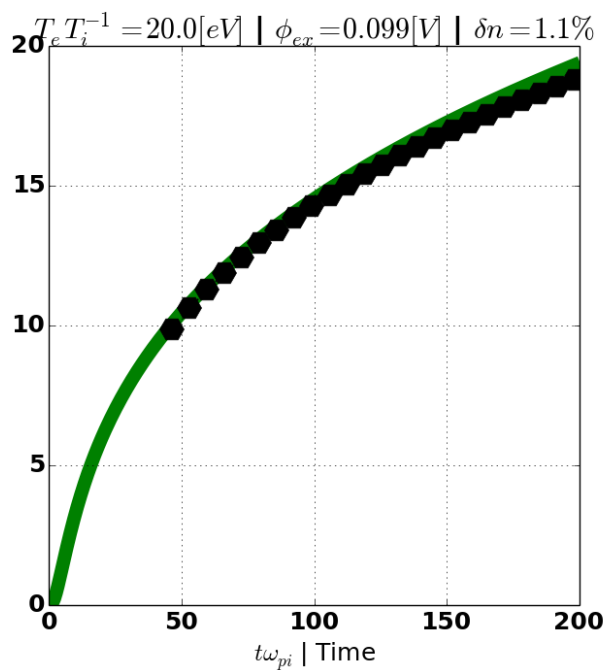
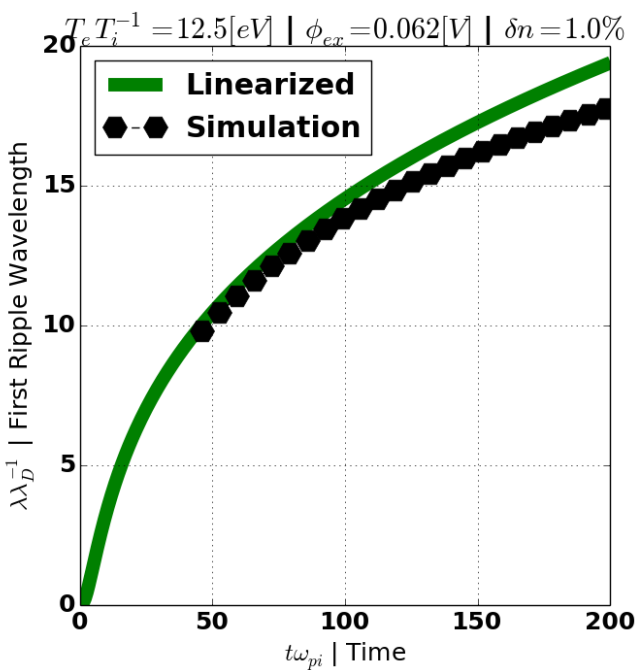


# Model Verification

## Comparison with Linearized Solution

### – Evolution of the First Ripple Wavelength:

- Simulated weak shocks (1% jump) for different temperature ratios.
- Greater ion reflection at lower electron temperature alters the first ripple.
- Agreement improves with hot electrons, as ion reflection decreases.



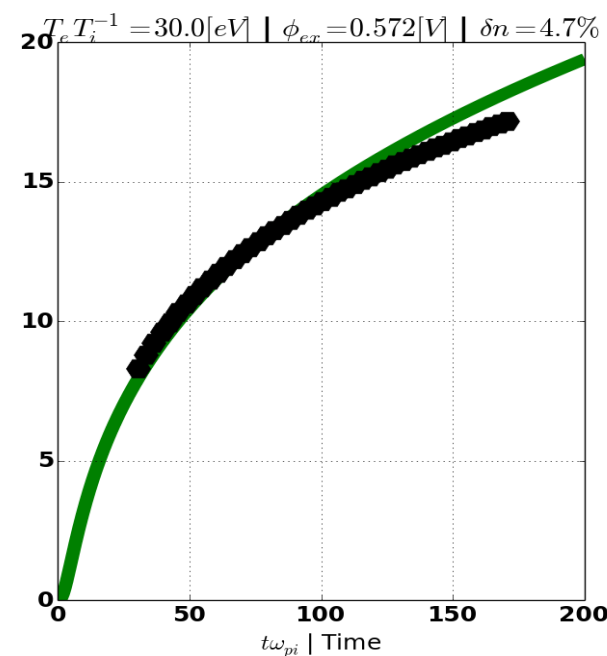
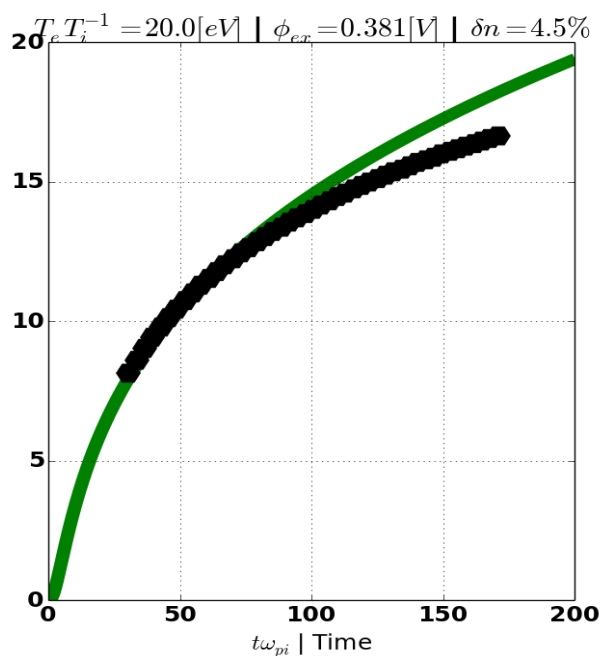
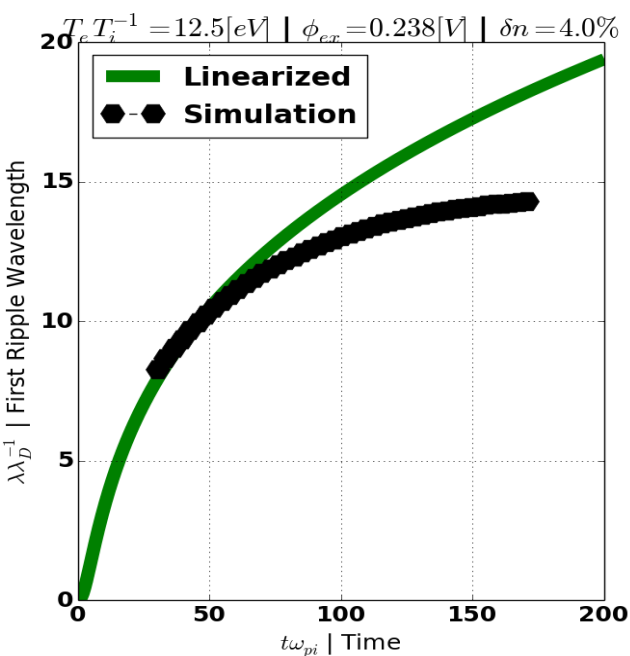


# Model Verification

## Comparison with Linearized Solution

### – Evolution of the First Ripple Wavelength:

- Stronger shocks (4%) show poorer agreement at lower electron temperature.
- Stronger shocks reflect more ions, causing stronger dissipation.
- Agreement with linearized model improves with electron temperature.





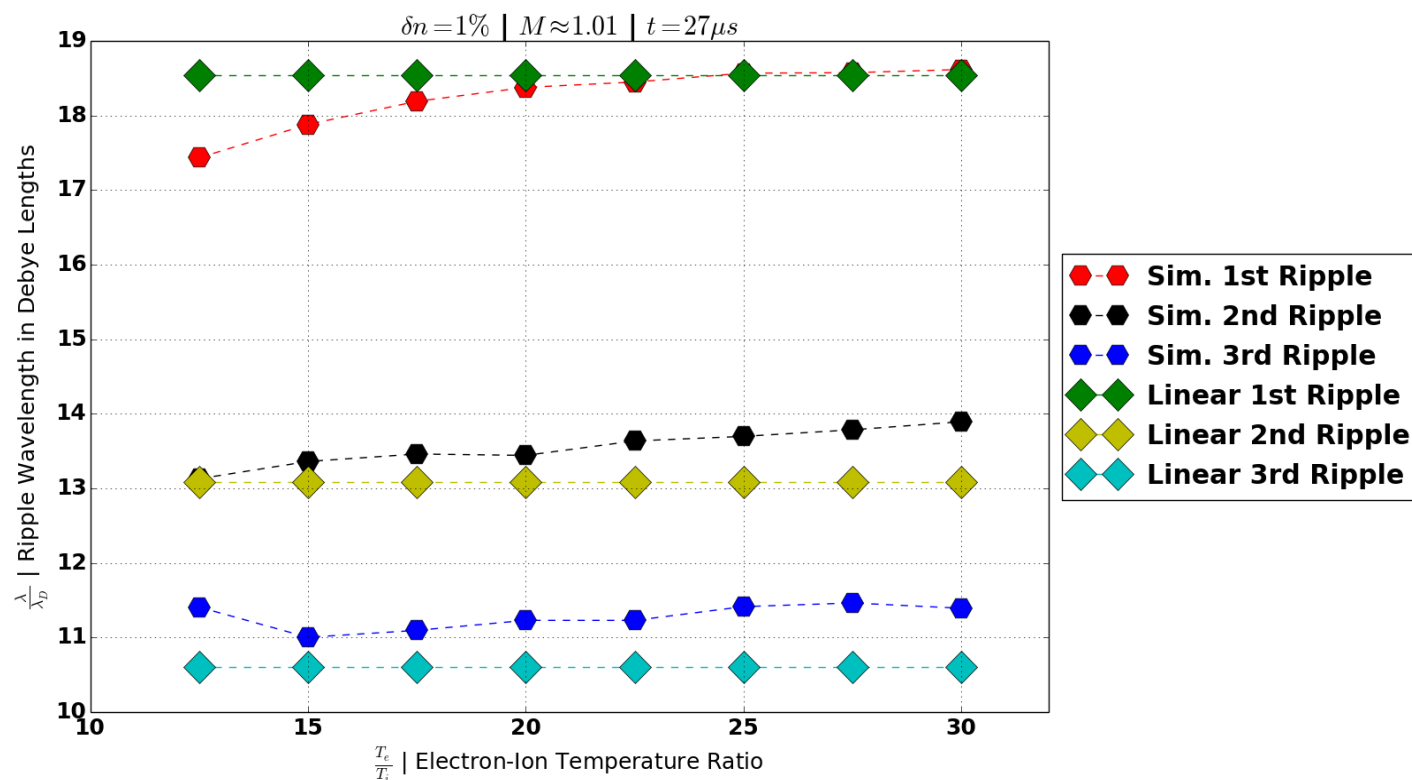
# Model Verification



## Comparison with Linearized Solution

### – Trailing Ripple Wavelengths:

- Subsequent wave train ripples diverge from the model.
- Simulated ripples do not approach zero wavelength like the linearized model.





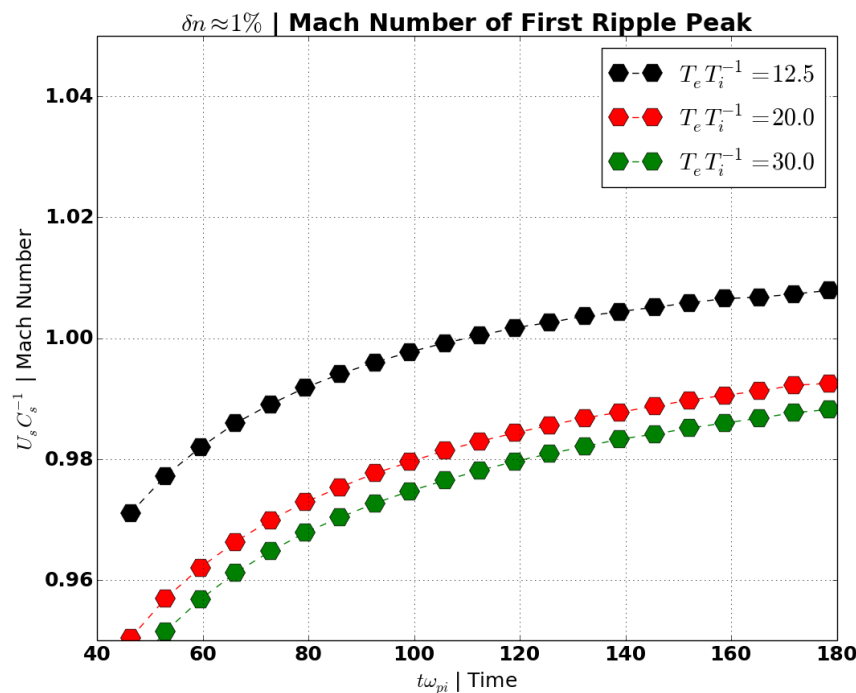
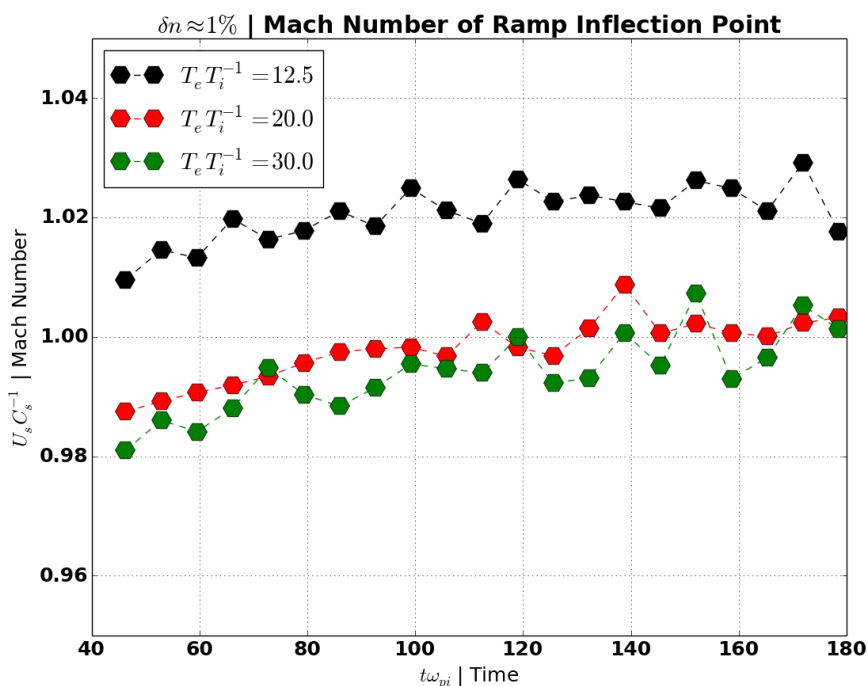
# Results on Shock Structure



## Other Weak Shock Results

### – Shock Mach Number:

- For the same density jump (1% here),
  - Shock speed increases with electron temperature, Mach number decreases.
- The first wave train oscillation peak travels less quickly than the shock ramp.





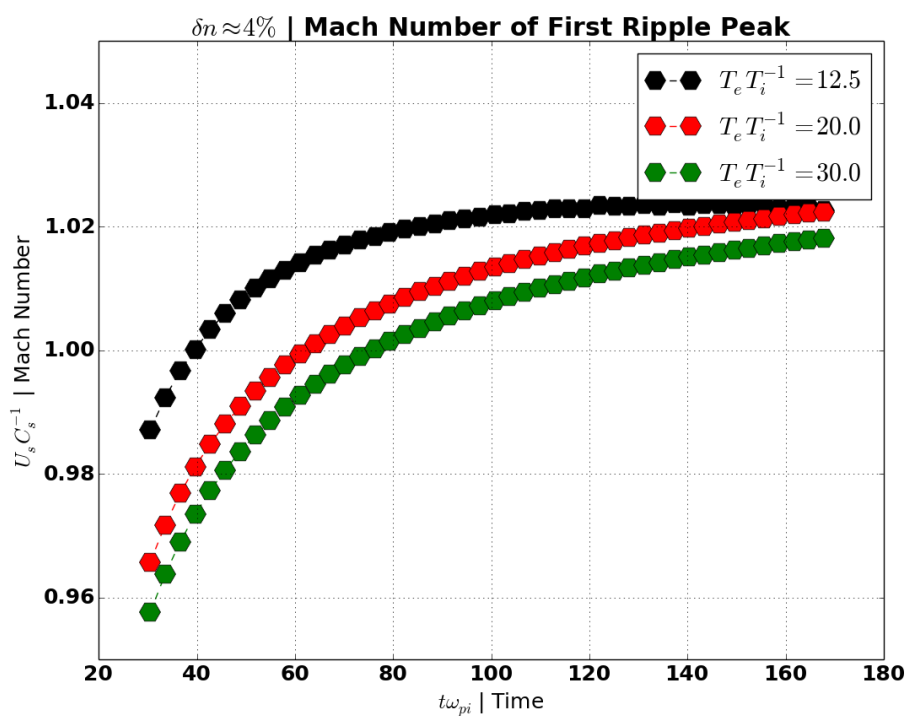
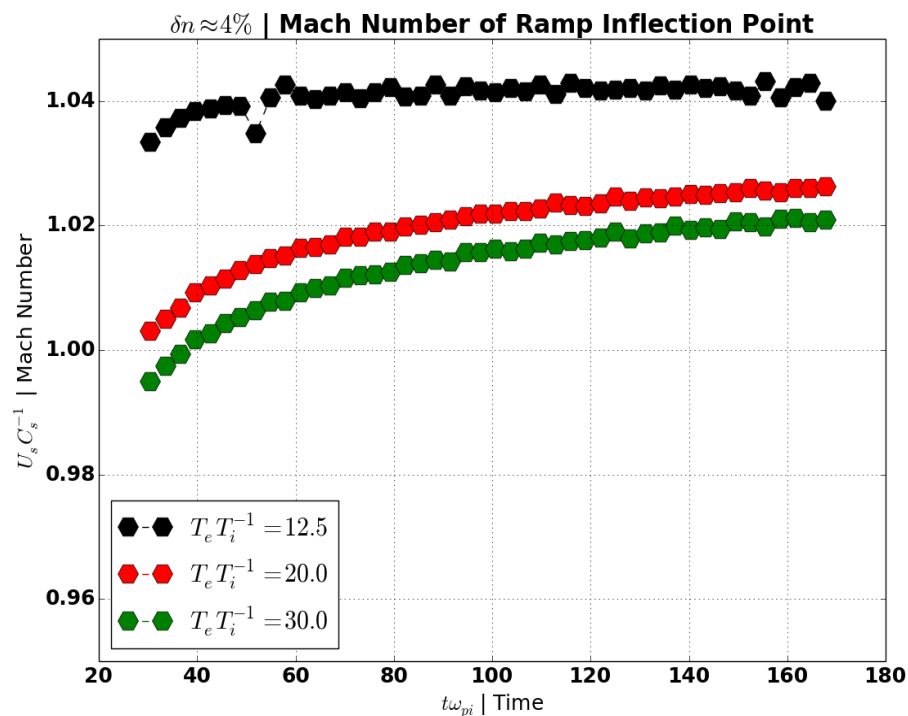
# Results on Shock Structure



## Other Weak Shock Results

### – Shock Mach Number:

- The same trends are apparent for slightly stronger shocks (4% jump here).
- Ion reflection appears to damp the shock acceleration.





# Model Validation

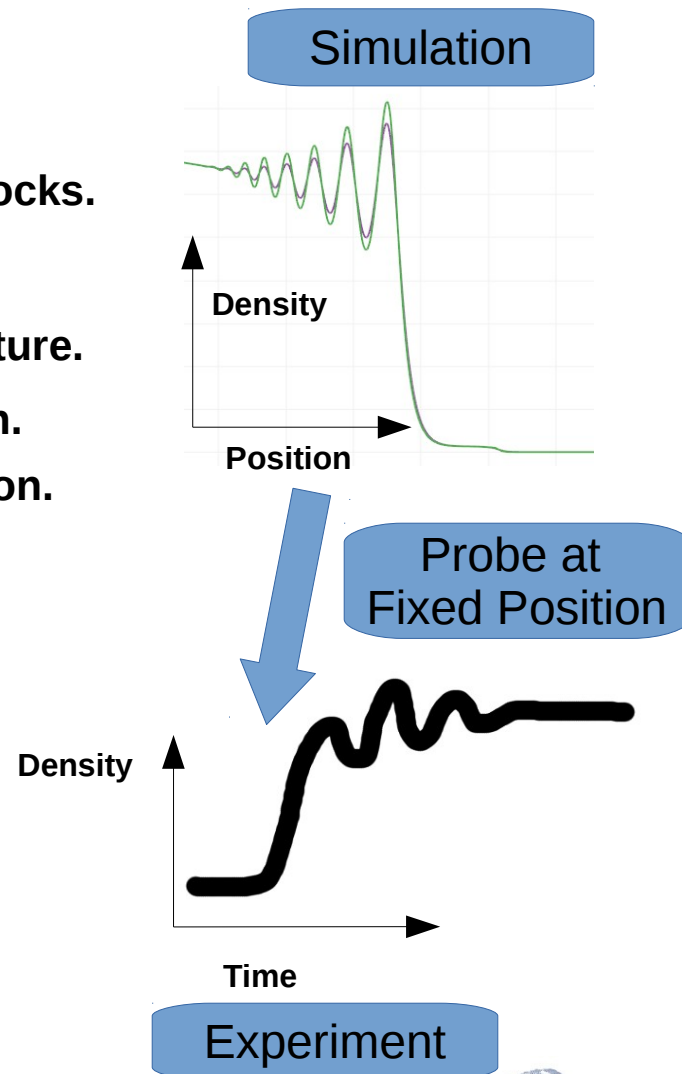


## Gathering Experiment Data

- Double Plasma Device:
  - Can produce low Mach number collisionless shocks.
- Diagnostics:
  - Langmuir probes; density and electron temperature.
    - Shock speed, and density at fixed position.
  - Ion temperature is necessary for proper validation.

## Validation Comparisons

- The Wave Train:
  - Simulation suggests ripples should occur for:
    - Moderate Mach numbers ( $\sim 1.2 - \sim 1.6$ )
    - High electron-ion temperature ratio ( $>10$ )
- Wave Train Wavelength
- Shock-Front Mach Number
- Reflected Ion Beam Velocity





# Towards Validation and Extension



## Towards Validation of Collisionless Model

- Verification:
  - Simulated weak shocks agree with the linearized cold-ion solution.
- Validation:
  - Results should be compared to experimental shock data.
  - Inconsistencies in published 1969 double-plasma device data hampered validation.

## Future Work: Extension to Moderately Collisional Problem

- Collision Operators:
  - Presence of a few mean collisions in shock transition invalidates Vlasov equation.
  - The collisional ion-acoustic shock requires the full Boltzmann equation with appropriate choice of collision operator.
  - Moderately collisional shocks should be hybrid dispersive-dissipative shocks.
- Validation of Collision Algorithms:
  - Tuning parameters in a shock experiment can yield moderately collisional data.



# Back Up Slides

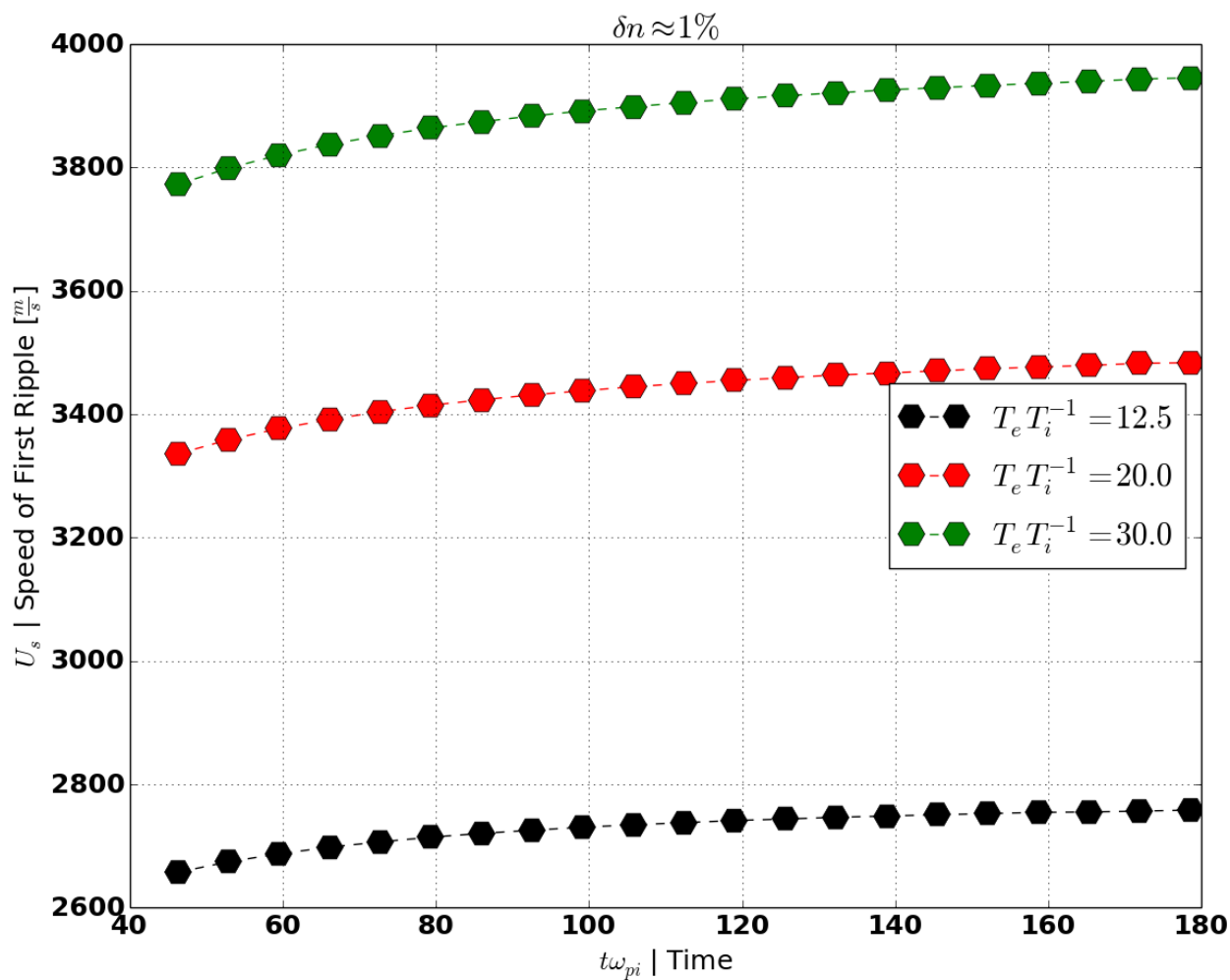




# Results on Shock Structure



## Example of Shock Speed at 1%





# Details on Shock Structure



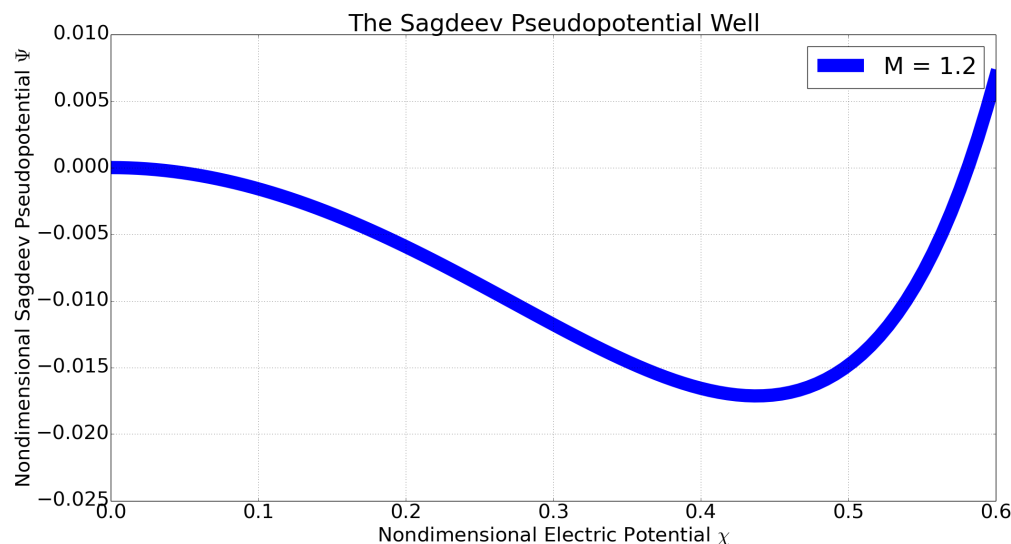
## Wave Train Properties

### – Sagdeev Pseudopotential:

- An analogy to motion in a potential well, describes oscillations in wave train.
- Dissipation within the well leads potential to settle at the minimum.

$$\frac{d^2\chi}{d\xi^2} = -\frac{dV(\chi)}{d\chi}$$

$$V(\chi) = 1 - e^\chi + M^2 \left( 1 - \left( 1 - \frac{2\chi}{M^2} \right)^{\frac{1}{2}} \right)$$





# Electric Field Details

