

TEMPUS FU*IT

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An EXECUTIVE stands at the front of a Conference Room making a business presentation to a bunch of MANAGERS dressed in suits. As the Executive drones on, CHRIS, lean, early-30s, boyish-looking in his casual attire, sits near the back of the room next to the exit. He struggles to maintain focus as the lecture is seriously stultifying. Chris's eyelids grow heavy. Just as Chris is about to nod off, MORTY touches his colleague's shoulder which revives him. Morty is about ten years older than Chris, a trifle paunchy, and sports a bad comb-over.

MORTY

(Whispers)

Had enough of this bullshit?

CHRIS

(Whispers)

I had enough ninety minutes ago.

MORTY

(Whispers)

Step outside with me for a sec. I have something to tell you.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Chris and Morty stand in the Hallway just outside the Conference Room door.

CHRIS

What's up?

MORTY

I got the funding.

CHRIS

Seriously?

MORTY

Did you ever doubt me?

CHRIS

Well--

MORTY

--I got the fucking funding! That investor group in Abu Dhabi is ready to seed half a million.

(MORE)

MORTY (CONT'D)

Add to that the 600K from Hanna and my family and I can finally get Morque Technologies off the ground.

CHRIS

That's fantastic, Morty.

MORTY

I want you to come on board, Chris. Be my first employee.

CHRIS

Gee, Morty. I'm flattered, but you know I don't have the cash to buy in. I asked my father-in-law but the tight-assed bastard refused.

MORTY

Forget the partnership angle. It's not necessary now that the Ay-rabs are in. I need you and your gigantic brain. The research you're doing is essential to the project.

Chris appears conflicted as he rubs the back of his neck. He seems non-committal. Morty presses.

MORTY (CONT'D)

C'mon. Do you see yourself sitting through another couple thousand of these uninspiring strategy presentations right up to the day they hand you a Timex and an empty cardboard box? You want to spend the rest of your career in this sclerotic corporation?

CHRIS

I don't know. Not really, but the future is a murky place, Morty.

MORTY

Listen, no pressure or anything but I'm moving fast, Chris. I put a down payment on a building. I hired a super business manager. Her name is Arielle--

CHRIS

--I thought I was going to be your first employee.

MORTY

OK, second employee. Who cares?
You'll be chief scientist. That's
better than business manager.
What'dya say, Chris?

CHRIS

What about salary? Benefits?
401K? Minor incidentals like that.

MORTY

Well, I can't match what you're
getting now, but if the project
succeeds we'll be wealthier beyond
what we could ever imagine as
corporate vassals.

CHRIS

Let me think about it, Morty. Give
me a day or two at least.

MORTY

Of course.

CHRIS

Gotta run it by Lori who will have
her usual share of reservations.

MORTY

Sure.

Chris glances at his watch.

CHRIS

We better get back in there.

Chris opens the Conference Room door. The Executive
continues his presentation. He seems not to have progressed
beyond where he was when Chris left the room. Chris notes
the incredible sense of boredom sullyng the faces of the
crowd in attendance. Chris backs out and closes the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When do we start?

Morty takes Chris's hand and shakes it vigorously.

MORTY

Thank you thank you thank you!
This is gonna be great.

EXT. LAB - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE CARD: Eight Years Later

Establishing shot of a nondescript grayish brick factory-like building poorly lit by a lone streetlight. A small sign indicates the name of the business: Morque Technologies. One of a million small tech companies dotting the industrial landscape of the greater San Francisco Bay region.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Chris, now in his early-40s but still boyish looking with his full head of hair hunches over a computer screen atop a long wooden lab table. He sits on a spare, steel stool with wheels. Morty, early-50s, thinner hair and expanded waist, stands off to the side out of Chris's view. Morty quietly clasps his briefcase and makes a move for the exit. A time-clock on the wall CLICKS to 8:00 PM which breaks Chris's concentration. He looks over his shoulder just in time to see Morty creeping away.

CHRIS

Where the hell you are going,
Morty?

Morty freezes and turns to face Chris sheepishly. He glances at the time-clock and then looks down at his shuffling feet.

MORTY

I, uh, have to meet Arielle at that
new restaurant in Telegraph Hill.
I'm already a half hour late, and
you never know about traffic.
(beat)
You understand, don't you, Chris?

Chris turns back to his computer screen, a scowl on his indignant face.

CHRIS

Oh sure. No problem, Morty. I'll
just plod along for another few
hours. My wife and kid don't care
if I work eighteen hours a day.

MORTY

I'm really sorry, Chris. Leaving
you here alone. You're doing a
great job.

CHRIS

Right. Have a swell time.

MORTY
Thanks. I, uh, I'm finally going
to propose to Arielle.

Chris spins around, startled.

CHRIS
What!?! I mean, really? You...
you're gonna get engaged? To
Arielle? And get married?

MORTY
Yeah. Why? Does that surprise
you?

CHRIS
A little. You two haven't gone out
that long.

MORTY
It's been a year already.

CHRIS
A year? Jesus, I guess never
realized that. It's only been
about a year since Hannah died.

Chris turns back to his computer, but he's staring off in the
distance.

MORTY
Yeah, but she was sick for a long
time. You know that. I guess when
she passed I was ready to move on.

CHRIS
Yeah, well... What're you going
to do if Arielle says no? That
could happen, y'know.

MORTY
Kineahora. I can't think about
that.

CHRIS
Well don't hang yourself if she
turns you down. Who can ever
predict what independent-types like
her will do.

MORTY
What do you mean?

CHRIS
Listen, get going. Don't keep her waiting. I'll see you tomorrow.

MORTY
OK. Oh wait, no.
(snaps his fingers)
I'm going to Seattle tomorrow. Gotta meet with that new supplier about their defective components. Those assholes refuse to acknowledge they're at fault. I'm taking Irving Slutsky with me.

CHRIS
Whoa. Irving the Slut, huh?

MORTY
I wish you wouldn't call him that.
(beat)
Those assholes are gonna find out indemnification's just another word for nothing left to procreate with.

CHRIS
Lyrical. Let me know if you need anything.

MORTY
Will do. Thanks.

Morty leaves, and just as the door clicks shut Chris snarls to himself.

CHRIS
Selfish bastard. Has to have everything for himself.

Chris types some commands into the computer, stands up, stretches his back, and heads for the bathroom.

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

Close-up of the computer screen which displays a scrolling list of error messages. Chris comes back from the bathroom, sees the colossal failure of his program, and slams his hand on the table.

CHRIS
Goddammit!

Chris sits down hard upon the stool. Aggravated, he stares at the screen for a moment then shuts off the computer.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

Chris rubs his temples. He rolls atop the stool across the floor to another table where a pile of mail sits, including a copy of TIME magazine. The sound of a mechanical HUM O.C. distracts Chris momentarily. He looks around for the source of the noise, shrugs and grabs the magazine. He looks incredulously at the cover. C.U. of the cover: a picture of VLADIMIR PUTIN, Time's Person of the Year for 2007. Extreme C.U. of 2007.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Vladimir Poon-tang? They named that Cossack man of the year? Jesus H. Christ.

INT. DINER - DAY

Chris sits in a booth drinking a cup of coffee. ARIELLE walks in and sits across from him. She's an attractive, sharply-dressed, dark-haired, mid-30s Jewish-American princess.

CHRIS

(Sardonically)
Congratulations, Arielle.

Chris raises his coffee cup.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

To the future Mrs. Morty F. Klein.

ARIELLE

I don't have a drink to toast with.

Chris calls across the Diner to a WAITRESS.

CHRIS

Miss? Coffee black for m'lady, and another laced with arsenic for me.

ARIELLE

(Chuckling)
Oh Chris, don't be so dramatic.

CHRIS

I can't believe you said yes to him. He's a dozen years older than you and double your weight. More than double.

ARIELLE
He's also single with no ex-wife
baggage--

CHRIS
--Convenient.

ARIELLE
And Morty's very generous with his
money. I need some stability now
that I'm a woman of a certain age.

Arielle looks at the reflection of her teeth in the backside
of a spoon.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)
Oh, and he swears he loves me.

CHRIS
Ah, but you had more fun with me.

ARIELLE
Yeah, well. You had your chance,
Chris. It has to be over now.

CHRIS
C'mon, Darling.

Chris reaches across the table but pulls back when he's
interrupted by the Waitress who arrives with a coffee. She
refills Chris's cup then departs.

ARIELLE
I'm sorry Chris, but let's face it -
you're never going to leave Lori.
Truthfully, I don't really want you
to anymore.

CHRIS
You'll change your mind.

ARIELLE
I'm engaged now, Chris. I want it
to work out with him.

CHRIS
Um, does Morty know about us?

ARIELLE
Heavens no! And I want it kept
that way. Okay?

Chris nods, but he's not happy. As Arielle picks up her cup
Chris notices her lovely engagement ring.

CHRIS

Nice ring. I guess there's no limit to how garish they can make a zircon these days.

ARIELLE

Very funny. This is a De Beers. I know because I picked it out myself. You're familiar with the six month salary rule, aren't you?

CHRIS

I thought it was three.

Arielle smiles deviously.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Well, whatever it is, I'm sure Morty heard it as the "deny your employee a raise for six years" rule.

ARIELLE

Oh, don't complain so much. Pretty soon you and Morty will be rolling in cash once you get that invention of yours working. Whatever it does.

Arielle reads a menu.

CHRIS

Yeah right.

(beat)

Knowing Morty he'll foist a pre-nup on you.

ARIELLE

The hell he will. I've worked at Morque Technologies a long time - I'm sharing in all the riches that await us.

Chris absentmindedly turns his coffee cup.

CHRIS

Are you sure you want to go through with this? I mean, are you really, really--

Arielle snaps the menu shut and flashes a brilliant white smile.

ARIELLE

--Order me a grilled cheese sandwich, will you, Chris darling?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE CARD: 2009 - Two Years Later

Chris and Morty sit at a table in the Restaurant with their significant others: LORI who is Chris's wife, and Arielle who is now married to Morty. Chris and Morty appear a couple years older, although Arielle seems the same. Lori, a sensibly-coifed and plainly-dressed woman, is the same age as Chris.

The four diners are just about finished with their meals.

MORTY

Aren't you going to eat your langostinos, Chris? They're damn good.

Chris picks at a pile of langostinos on his plates. A trifle inebriated, he speaks a bit too loudly and fumbles with his utensils.

CHRIS

I don't usually eat food that resembles cockroaches, Morty. I wish I could. I'd exterminate the lab once and for all. Y'know, fry up a coupla hunnert roaches every day for lunch - Rachel Rae style.

Chris mimics the shaking of a skillet.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Wipe 'em all out in a month. Maybe even two weeks.

LORI

Oh, Chris--

CHRIS

--Arielle, you're the office manager. Can't you hire a decent exterminator to blast the place once and for all?

MORTY

C'mon, Chris. We're supposed to be celebrating Morque Technologies' tenth anniversary.

ARIELLE

That's right.

(Raises her wine glass)
To Morque Technologies - another
ten years.

Morty and Lori, but not Chris, raise their glasses. Chris slumps.

CHRIS

Really? Another ten years? I can't believe we've been working on that freaking invention that long. No way can I go another ten years.

MORTY

Sure you can. We're gonna make history, Chris. Take history. Shape history.

CHRIS

Profound, but I don't think I can go another ten weeks let alone ten years. I'm tapped out.

MORTY

No you're not, Chris. I know you. Have patience. You don't want to stop now. I have a feeling we're getting real close. Your latest calculations are promising.

CHRIS

Yeah, right.

MORTY

That's what I told Abu Dhabi. We gotta deliver. No choice.

CHRIS

Shit.

LORI

Who's Aboo Dobby?

Chris rolls his eyes.

MORTY

Abu--

CHRIS

--He's the last surviving Munchkin from the Wizard of Oz, Lori.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

The midget with that orange dildo-looking thing on his head who climbs under Dorothy's dress.

LORI

I'm sorry I asked.

CHRIS

Aboo pokes Dorothy's ass with his dildo-head just as the Wicked Witch disappears in a ball of flames holding a can of Maxwell House.

MORTY

That's right. She used to do commercials for Maxwell House Coffee--

ARIELLE

--I've been thinking about some ways to streamline the procurement process--

CHRIS

--Not now, Arielle. We're celebrating, remember? Ten years!

Chris hoists his wine glass and guzzles it down. Arielle glares at Chris, and then stares at Morty in a demand for satisfaction. Morty instead hails the WAITER.

MORTY

Check please.

The Waiter places a bill in the center of the table. Chris looks off in the distance hoping Morty will pick up the check, which after an uncomfortable moment he does. Morty studies the bill and pulls out his wallet.

MORTY (CONT'D)

Uh, Chris. You and Lori owe \$87.50 plus tip.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lori and Arielle walk out of the Restaurant together ahead of Chris and Morty. The women stroll down the sidewalk side-by-side. Morty pulls Chris aside.

MORTY

I really wish you would be nicer to Arielle, Chris.

CHRIS
Yeah, well...

MORTY
She's a good business manager...
and my wife. Try to be a little
more civil.

Chris kicks a pebble on the sidewalk.

MORTY (CONT'D)
You two used to get along so well.

CHRIS
Yeah, you're right. We did.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

Chris escorts Arielle by the hand to a secluded section of the Woods (Big Basin Redwoods State Park, e.g.) Both appear to be several years younger.

ARIELLE
I've lived out here half my life
but I never took time to wander
into these woods. They're kind of
haunting.

CHRIS
Yeah, they are. I come here after
work sometimes when I've had a
particularly frustrating day in
front of that goddamn computer.
Being among these behemoths puts it
all in perspective for me.

Arielle caresses a Sequoia tree.

ARIELLE
How old are these trees?

CHRIS
I bet some are close to two
thousand years. Maybe more.

ARIELLE
That kind of makes me sad.

CHRIS
Why's that?

Chris moves closer to Arielle.

ARIELLE

Think of all the people who have been born, and have died, while these trees went on living. It makes me feel insignificant. I don't like to feel insignificant.

Arielle reaches for Chris's arm.

CHRIS

Arielle, darling, you're very significant to me.

ARIELLE

That's sweet.

CHRIS

Someday soon, I promise--

Arielle places her finger on Chris's lips.

ARIELLE

--Don't.

She kisses him.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

Don't promise. Make it happen. I'll wait.

Arielle walks half-way around the Sequoia, opposite from Chris.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

This spot is really secluded. And so quiet. All day long I hear traffic on 101 roaring past the office.

CHRIS

Y'know, now that I think of it, I've never run into another person in all the times I've been here. Strange.

ARIELLE

Really? No one?

(beat)

These pine needles look soft enough to lie in.

Arielle lies down and throws Chris a come-hither smile.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lori lies in bed. Chris paces the Bedroom in his underwear and speaks to his wife while brushing his teeth. He has a half-way decent body.

CHRIS

Can you believe that bastard? The head of the business and he can't even pick up the check for the illustrious big one-oh anniversary celebration. What a schnorrer.

LORI

And what about that Jaguar he bought for Arielle? That must have set him back a bit.

CHRIS

Shit yeah. A fucking Jaguar. Unbelievable. She stocks paper and writes checks to the water department, and I'm the asshole with a Hyundai.

LORI

Um, maybe you should try to get your old job back.

CHRIS

Are you serious? I quit there a decade ago, for god's sake. The company doesn't even exist anymore.

(beat)

Morty's right: I can't quit.

Chris walks into the Bathroom where he can be heard O.S. SPITTING into the sink.

CHRIS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's like that game I used to play on dumbass history majors back at CalTech.

LORI

What game was that?

CHRIS (O.S.)

I auctioned off a fifty dollar bill to the highest bidder, but the second-highest bidder had to fork over his final bid to me for nothing in return.

LORI
Why would they do that?

CHRIS (O.S.)
Because that was how the game was played. That was the rule. Anyway, once it gets going no one wants to be the second-highest bidder. Sometimes I'd get as much as two hundred bucks for a fifty.

LORI
I don't get it.

Chris comes back and climbs into bed.

CHRIS
What I'm trying to say is that I'm so goddamned invested in this invention, I can't quit. I can never quit.

Chris rolls away from Lori sullenly.

LORI
Hmmm.
(beat)
That was a pretty expensive meal for what we got, don't you think?

Sparked by the invitation to be indignant about the evening's meal, Chris rolls back quickly toward Lori.

CHRIS
Eighty-seven bucks for tilapia and phony crab legs dipped in red dye number two? Yeah, I'd say a bit steep. And those cockroachy langostino things. I tried one - tasted like sewage. Jesus. I'll probably get food poisoning.

LORI
Albert's dentist told me he's going to need braces and some kind of appliance - that's what he called it, an appliance - to fix that dent from sucking his thumb.

CHRIS
Super. I guess I'll just push retirement out another ten years.

Chris sits up, his face contorted.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Damn, I think I'm gonna puke.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Morty's at his desk poring over documents. Chris sits at the lab table tinkering with a triangular, metallic object with a greenish surface. It's the device the two scientists have been working on for a decade which they've dubbed the PENTACHORON. Chris attempts to insert a rod through the greenish surface but is rejected. The Pentachoron emits a SCREECH whenever Chris probes. And the harder he presses the louder the noise.

CHRIS
This fucking thing simply will not work.

Morty looks on impassively. Chris tries again, only to be met with the same irritating noise.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Goddammit! This machine is nothing but misery. Misery ex Machina!

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

Chris hunches over his computer. Morty dons his coat and heads for the door. It's 11:30 on the time-clock.

MORTY
See you tomorrow, Chris.

CHRIS
Is today Friday or Saturday?

Morty hesitates.

MORTY
Uh, I think Friday.

CHRIS
OK. See you tomorrow.

Morty leaves.

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

Chris is hard at work on the computer. The time-clock clicks to 3:00 AM but Chris doesn't notice.

He finishes typing, stands up, stretches his back, then connects the computer to the Pentachoron using a thick black cable.

While the computer downloads to the Pentachoron, Chris walks around the Lab, absentmindedly picking up things. He checks out a photo of Morty and Arielle from their wedding. Chris places his thumb over Morty's image and dwells on the beauty of Arielle. Suddenly a PING emanates from the computer, indicating "all done." Chris shuffles back to the lab table. He once again tries to insert the rod through the greenish surface, this time succeeding. Instead of producing a screech the Pentachoron emits a soothing, electronic HUM. It's the same sound Chris heard while looking at the Time Magazine cover in 2007.

CHRIS

Oh my god! Please be true.

Chris inserts and reinserts the rod, succeeding each time. Chris bolts to his feet and makes a call.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Morty? Get your fat ass back to the lab right now!

(beat)

Nothing's wrong. I think the fucker might be working.

(beat)

Just now.

(beat)

OK. See ya.

Chris hangs up the phone, and with an exhausted yet satisfied smile on his face, runs his fingers through his hair.

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Morty's Bedroom is mostly dark, dimly illuminated by a night light. Morty sits on the edge of the bed, pulling on his pants. Arielle rouses.

ARIELLE

Where are you going?

MORTY

Sorry. Did I wake you up?

Arielle groans.

MORTY (CONT'D)
Going back to the lab. Chris says
he thinks he got the device to
work.

Arielle rolls away from Morty.

ARIELLE
Where are you really going?

MORTY
To the lab
(beat)
Don't be like that. This could be
important.

ARIELLE
I hope so. How much longer do we
have to wait for that thing to pay
off?

MORTY
Patience my dear.

ARIELLE
I've been patient, Morty. When do
we see some money?

MORTY
You sound like a gold-digger,
Arielle.

ARIELLE
Well, what do you expect?

MORTY
I gotta go.

ARIELLE
Don't wake me up if you come back.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Chris places the Pentachoron onto a stand on the lab table
while Morty sets up lights and a video camera.

MORTY
Y'know, if this works we're going
to be multi-millionaires.
Transporting objects into the past
will be transformational.
(MORE)

MORTY (CONT'D)

Imagine, being able to send a letter warning JFK not to drive by the Book Depository Building with the top down. Or telling Neville Chamberlain not to cut a deal with Hitler.

Chris continues to fiddle with the device.

CHRIS

I don't know, Morty. I think the better use of the Pentachoron would just be to observe history, not try to change it. Don't you remember that Star Trek episode when Captain Kirk falls in love with that wench from Dynasty? And he has to let her get run over by a car to put things back the way they were?

MORTY

Yeah. You might be right.

CHRIS

I mean, maybe if Kennedy hadn't been assassinated he would've gone bonkers from syphilis and ordered a nuclear strike on Bermuda.

MORTY

(Smiling)

Wow, I never thought of that.

(beat)

Anyway, the really lucrative use of the Pentachoron will be when we can look at the future. That's the big money ticket.

CHRIS

Listen, Morty. We've spent a ton of other peoples' money and untold man-hours just trying to get this thing to send objects into the past. Looking into the future is a long way off.

Chris's face suggests he might be fibbing. Concerned that Morty may read something into his tone, Chris becomes emphatic.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Believe me. It's years off. Maybe decades. A grand challenge problem, to be sure.

MORTY

Still, just think of what we could charge greedy Wall Streeters for a glimpse of the stock market in 2050?

CHRIS

Assuming it still exists.

Morty shrugs.

MORTY

Well, if it doesn't, that info would also bring a pretty penny.

CHRIS

I'd be happy just to look out thirty years to see whether Scarlett Johansson is still a piece of ass.

MORTY

Who?

CHRIS

Scarlett-- Nevermind.

(beat)

I bet Arielle's getting antsy. She probably has a plan in the works right now to spend all your proceeds.

MORTY

Well, that's why they invented offshore accounts. I have to protect the business, right?

CHRIS

Of course.

(beat)

You have an offshore account?

Morty shakes his head at the stupidity of his offhand revelation of a material secret.

MORTY

Well, that's not for public broadcasting. I mean, Arielle's a great gal, but she has a serious sweet tooth for the finer things.

Chris smirks as he hooks up a final cable.

MORTY (CONT'D)

I have to protect--

CHRIS

--I get it, Morty. We all have our secrets. Promiscuities of the past; felonies in the future.

(beat)

OK, that's it. Shall we boot her up, boss?

MORTY

Damn, I'm more nervous than I was at my bar mitzvah. Maybe I should take a shit first.

Morty massages his lower abdomen.

CHRIS

C'mon, man. We're about to make - look at - history... maybe. Can't you hold it in for fifteen whole minutes?

MORTY

Have you ever suffered from irritable bowel syndrome? It's not very much fun.

Morty's face goes from a grimace to one of relief.

MORTY (CONT'D)

OK. The pressure's subsided. Fire up the Pentachoron, Chris. Video monitor alpha is ready.

Morty positions himself with the video monitor. Chris picks up a long, slender probe which has a small video camera and audio device on the tip. He holds the tip in front of his face, the image of which is displayed on a large video monitor. Chris speaks into the tip.

CHRIS

Testing... testing... one, ten, eleven. Hundred, one oh one, one ten.

As he speaks, his image and words are projected on the monitor.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

OK, Morty. Here we go.

MORTY
Geez, I'm nervous.

Morty rubs his abdomen again, looking like he might soil himself any minute.

MORTY (CONT'D)
Video is rolling.

Chris carefully and gently inserts the slender tube into the greenish surface, and as he does the Pentachoron emits the electronic HUM.

CHRIS
Kinda like a colonoscopy, huh?

MORTY
Shhh.

The monitor displays a colorful snowstorm of noise, then suddenly an image appears. On the monitor: Chris, looking ten years younger, sits on a steel stool staring at the cover of Time Magazine from 2007.

CHRIS
(On TV)
Vladimir Poon-tang? They named
that Cossack man of the year?
Jesus H. Christ.

Slackjawed, Morty drops the video camera. After a moment when he and Chris exchange looks of wonderment, Morty grabs his gut and runs O.C.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Chris's modest suburban backyard is prepped for a barbecue. Picnic tables have been set up on the patchy grass, and a charcoal grill stands on a concrete patio. It's a bright, sunny day and Chris accompanies his thirteen-year old son ALBERT by the grill.

CHRIS
Now son, you're in charge of
getting the grill ready, OK?

ALBERT
Sure thing, dad.

CHRIS
 We're going to have about a dozen
 guests, so make sure you fill the
 grill with briquettes. And don't
 dump too much lighter fluid on 'em.

ALBERT
 I won't.

CHRIS
 I don't like burgers that taste
 like the deck of the Exxon Valdez.

ALBERT
 I get it, Dad. Don't worry.

CHRIS
 Alright, then. Take it away. I
 have to help your mother with
 something upstairs.

Chris walks toward the back door leading into the house as
 Albert unloads a bag of charcoal into the grill.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Lori is about to walk into the bathroom, a towel wrapped
 around her body when Chris barges in.

CHRIS
 Drop the towel and hop into bed.

Chris starts to strip off his clothes.

LORI
 C'mon, Chris. I have to get ready.
 Did you forget we invited fifteen
 people to come over at noon - which
 means they'll start showing up at
 eleven.

CHRIS
 Lori, when's the last time we were
 together? Six months? Longer?

LORI
 Well, whose fault is that?

CHRIS
 I accept full responsibility. Too
 much work. I know.

(beat)
 (MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I promise to cut back, but right now I've got a chubby that needs immediate attention.

Chris drops his trousers.

LORI

There's not enough time.

CHRIS

Look, I'll probably last a minute.

LORI

That sounds romantic. A whole minute. No thanks. Besides, Albert will hear us.

CHRIS

No he won't. He's in the backyard starting a fire. It'll take him a half-hour to light that crappy Walmart charcoal.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Albert shakes the last drops of lighter fluid onto the charcoal, strikes a match, and tosses it onto the briquettes. A huge flame brushes him back.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Chris lies in bed. Lori sidles up next to it.

LORI

OK. But I insist on some special service from you first.

(beat)

You know what I want.

Lori flicks her tongue across her lips. Chris smiles wanly. Not his specialty.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - DAY

From behind the closed bedroom door:

LORI (O.S.)

Ow! When's the last time you shaved?

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

Albert cooks meats on the grill. Lori, her mother MARJORIE, and some FEMALE GUESTS set plates, pour lemonade, and put out bowls of picnic food. MALE GUESTS mill around drinking beer. One advises Albert on his grilling technique. Lori's father BERNIE sips a martini. He's over-dressed for a picnic.

Lori calls out to the crowd.

LORI
Time to eat everyone. Find a seat.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY (LATER)

All the guests are deeply involved in stuffing their faces with Chris's free food. Chris sits across from Lori at the end of the picnic table. He sniffs his charred burger and wrinkles his nose. He nibbles haltingly at the edge of the burger. Lori interrupts the communal gorging.

LORI
Everyone, everyone. Can I have your attention?

Some guests reluctantly suspend eating, others press on.

LORI (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming this afternoon. Chris was too shy to say why we arranged this picnic on such short notice. So I'll tell you: Chris and his company made a major breakthrough.

Chris smiles uncomfortably and acknowledges some mumbled congratulations from the guests. Bernie is not one of them; he prefers to project skepticism by dabbing the corners of his mouth with a checkered napkin.

CHRIS
Thanks for coming by everyone.

LORI
(Eagerly)
Tell them about it honey. Don't be shy.
(To everyone)
You know, I never could understand what Chris does at work - it's so complicated. All these years and I still don't get it.

Lori turns her palms upward and shrugs playfully in benign befuddlement. Chris squirms.

LORI (CONT'D)
C'mon. Tell them what you did,
honey.

BERNIE
Yes, Chris, tell us what you did.

LORI
Now, Dad--

Chris narrows his eyes at the veiled challenge from Bernie, his never-satisfied father-in-law. Chris scans the table and finds each guest awaiting a response to the provocative Bernie.

CHRIS
--Well, Bernie, it's pretty hard to
explain, and anyway, it's highly
confidential. But, let me--

BERNIE
--Oh, c'mon Chris. You've been
saying that for years.
(To Marjorie)
He's been saying that for years,
Marjorie.

Some guests chuckle at the put-down. Chris steams.

CHRIS
Well, Bern, we proved our device
can transport objects through time -
into the past! We can look into
the past!

Take that! Chris scans the table for a positive reaction, but expecting awe he is met instead with stares from the guests that suggest they think he's out of his mind. After a moment, Bernie pipes up.

BERNIE
What the hell are you talking
about?

CHRIS
Just what I said. It hasn't been
perfected, but we proved we can put
objects into our device and make
them appear in another time.

BERNIE

Wait, did I hear you right? You're building a time-machine? Oh, for Chrissake. I suppose you built a perpetual motion machine, too, while you were at it.

Bernie and Marjorie laugh heartily along with a few others around the table. Lori looks down at her plate and chomps somberly on an ear of corn. Chris picks up his burger and replies without looking at Bernie.

CHRIS

I should use it to go back to yesterday and toss your invitation to my barbecue in the garbage.

LORI

Please--

BERNIE

--Well, maybe you'll be so kind as to let me use it to go back 20 years and tell my baby girl to marry Charles Kemp instead of getting invested with you.

CHRIS

Invested?

Chris rubs his temples. Bernie drinks his martini.

LORI

Now Dad. Mom--

ALBERT

--Will you be able to send objects into the future too, Dad?

LORI

Eat your hamburger, Albert.

CHRIS

Like I said, it's pretty complicated. Mom, can you pass me the beans.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lori loads dishes into the dishwasher. Evidently a bit loaded, gripping a plastic cup of sloshing beer, Chris lumbers in from the Backyard.

CHRIS
The last cretin finally left.
Jesus Christ.

LORI
I'm confused, Chris. A time-
machine?

CHRIS
Your father is an asshole, Lori.
Even worse than your asshole
brother and his asshole family.

LORI
What's my brother got to do with
anything?

CHRIS
Charles Kemp? Really? That
poindexter buddy of your brother's?
I gotta be compared to him? That
hedge fund rapist?

LORI
Well, Dad always liked him. He's
smart.

CHRIS
Smart? He's the dumbest
millionaire I ever met. Guy
couldn't find his toaster in the
fucking kitchen.

LORI
Why are you so angry? I married
you, not Charles Kemp.

Chris guzzles the rest of his beer and throws the cup toward
the garbage can, missing by a mile.

CHRIS
Yeah? I suppose King Charles the
Kemp was better than me at
cunnilingus, too.

LORI
(Aghast)
What are you talking about?

CHRIS
I don't know. I guess I'm a bit
drunk.

(beat)
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's just that, what pisses me off is that your old man wouldn't loan me the money back then to buy into the business at the start. You know. He could've helped me - and you - but he had to be a prick instead.

(Imitating Bernie's voice)
Too risky. Inadequate business plan. Blah blah.

(Normal voice)
Any excuse to keep his money tucked inside his tight ass.

LORI

Chris--

CHRIS

--Makes no difference now. I'm basically Morty's indentured servant. 24 by seven monkey.

Chris grabs a beer from the refrigerator and skulks off.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/ALBERT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris walks quietly into Albert's Bedroom where his son is tucked under the covers facing away from the open door. Light streams across the bed. Chris places his beer on the dresser and sits on the edge of the bed.

CHRIS

You awake, Al?

Albert rolls over and faces Chris.

ALBERT

Hi Dad.

CHRIS

You have a nice time today?

ALBERT

Sure.

CHRIS

Good job on the charcoal. Real hot. And even, too. Nice.

Chris burps.

ALBERT

Thanks, Dad.

CHRIS

Um, don't pay attention to your dopey grandfather. He just likes to pick on me a little. He's only joking around. You understand, don't you, Al?

Albert looks like a sad puppy dog.

ALBERT

Dad, will you be able to send objects into the future?

Chris hesitates.

CHRIS

Y'know, I'm not supposed to talk about it. Even with family. But you were the only one at the table this afternoon who asked an intelligent question.

ALBERT

Will you, Dad?

Chris hesitates some more.

CHRIS

Yes, Al. I'm getting really close. I hope to run some tests in a couple weeks. But this has to be our secret. Even Dr. Klein doesn't know I'm working on it.

ALBERT

How come?

CHRIS

Well, just call it leverage.

ALBERT

What's that?

CHRIS

It means maybe I can convince Dr. Klein to give me a nice raise. Even make me an equal partner in the company.

ALBERT

That would be good.

CHRIS
 Sure would, Al. After my latest
 test I'm really optimistic about
 the Pentachoron.

ALBERT
 Pentachoron?

Slightly unnerved that he revealed the name of the device,
 Chris pats Albert's head.

CHRIS
 Go to sleep now, Al.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Wobbling, Chris rings the doorbell of Morty's House. After a
 moment Arielle opens the door and is shocked to see her ex-
 lover.

CHRIS
 Hey! You miss me, darling?

ARIELLE
 Are you nuts? What are you doing
 here?

She looks at an expensive watch on her wrist.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)
 It's after 2.

CHRIS
 Can I come in?

ARIELLE
 No! And you're goddamned lucky
 Morty is out of town.

CHRIS
 Yeah, I know.

ARIELLE
 Jesus Christ.

CHRIS
 Good guess, but no, I can't walk on
 water. Yet.
 (beat)
 C'mon, Arielle. I'm a master of
 the universe now. I finally got
 that fucking thing to work. Aren't
 you just a little bit impressed?

ARIELLE
 Congratulations. What do you want?

CHRIS
 Let's go somewhere romantic. Give
 me a chance to talk you into
 ditching that blob of cellulite.

ARIELLE
 You're drunk.

CHRIS
 Affirmative.

ARIELLE
 And deluded.

CHRIS
 Wrong. I'm completely luded.

Chris makes a move to step inside but Arielle pushes him
 back.

ARIELLE
 Listen, Chris. I'm happy for you
 and Morty. You two have worked so
 hard for this--

CHRIS
 --I've worked so hard. Morty?
 Well, that's debatable.

ARIELLE
 Maybe, but he's the owner. And
 that counts for about 90 percent,
 wouldn't you agree?

CHRIS
 Ninety - what? Are you crazy? I'm
 the brains of the operation. You
 used to love me for my big brains.
 (beat)
 And my big--

ARIELLE
 --Go home, Chris. Just go home.
 Go to bed.

CHRIS
 Okay. Let me in.

ARIELLE
 I can't.

Chris backs off. Suddenly his manic behavior turns sullen.

CHRIS

I know.
(beat)
I still love you, Arielle.

ARIELLE

Chris, please.

CHRIS

Don't make me cry, Arielle.

ARIELLE

I'm closing the door now. Do you
want me to call you a cab?

Chris stumbles backward and falls into a hedge.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

Shit. Are you OK?

Arielle helps an ashamed Chris extricate himself. He's scratched up.

CHRIS

Geez, I'm sorry, Arielle. I mean
it. Damn, what an asshole I am.

ARIELLE

Here, let me help you clean up.
Can you walk?

Arielle leads Chris into Morty's House.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Chris sleeps in his bed. The alarm clock reads 10:30. Chris writhes and jerks from what might be a bad dream. The phone RINGS, startling Chris out of his turbulent slumber. He slings his legs out of bed and sits on the edge for a moment allowing the phone to ring three more times before answering.

CHRIS

(Hoarsely)
Hello?

INTERCUT with an Airport Waiting Area.

MORTY

Chris? You sound awful. Celebrate
a bit too hard yesterday?

CHRIS
Yeah. Too much beans, beer and
ball-busting.

MORTY
Arielle said you came over last
night.

Uh oh. Chris straightens up.

MORTY (CONT'D)
Did you forget I'm in Seattle?

CHRIS
Uh, yeah. Totally.

MORTY
I'm in the airport. Just about to
get on the plane.

CHRIS
I came by to drop off some
leftovers from the barbecue, that's
all.

MORTY
Oh, she didn't mention that. Are
they kosher?

CHRIS
Oh yeah. Don't worry, no bacon in
the pork 'n beans. Too bad you
couldn't be there.

(beat)
Uh, why're you calling? Did I do
something... is something wrong?

Chris brushes his hair with his hand and is surprised to see
tiny bits of a bush fall from his scalp.

MORTY
Wrong? No. Maybe. The Ay-rabs
are getting nervous about our
perceived lack of progress. But
now that the device works we can
hold them off for six months, maybe
a year.

CHRIS
That's great.

MORTY

Yeah. That's why I'm calling. I'm sending you to Abu Dhabi to rep Morque Technologies. Meet Sheik El-Khoury and his towel-tufted gang of investment people.

CHRIS

I, uh, um, what about you?

MORTY

I can't go. Doctor says I gotta cut back on flying so much. Bad for the veins in my legs. Blood clots and all that shit. Anyway, you deserve a nice vacation.

With a roll of the eyes, Chris MOUTHS the word "vacation".

MORTY (CONT'D)

It was your hard work that got the Pentachoron to work. You ever been to Abu Dhabi?

Chris again smirks - Morty knows damn well he hasn't.

CHRIS

No, never. Sounds good, though. When should I plan to go?

MORTY

Tomorrow.

Chris rubs his eyes. Fuckin' A.

MORTY (CONT'D)

I'll email you the details. I've already asked Arielle to get you a hotel, so don't worry about that. Safe travels, Chris.

Chris hangs up the phone and falls back into bed.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/ATTIC - DAY

Chris roots around his claustrophobic attic, pushing aside boxes and clothing until he reaches a set of worn luggage. He drags the luggage to the hole in the floor leading back to the ground floor.

CHRIS

Albert! Come here and help me get the luggage down from the attic.

ALBERT (O.S.)
In a minute, Dad.

CHRIS
Hurry up. I have to run some
leftovers to Morty's house before
he gets back from Seattle.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/ALBERT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Albert sits on the edge of his bed texting a message with his cell phone.

ALBERT'S P.O.V. - CELL PHONE SCREEN

Which shows a text message to his friend DECLAN - "Kewl story
2 tell u"

BACK TO SCENE

Albert sends the message, stows the cell phone in his pocket and hurries out of his Bedroom.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris drops a box of leftovers on Morty's front stoop, hustles to his car and bolts out of the driveway. A moment later Morty pulls in, exits his car with a suitcase and walks toward the front door.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

As though he were a genius solving a complex spacial puzzle, Chris packs clothing and supplies into his luggage so that each item fits precisely, with no wasted spaces. He places an iPod and some magazines in his computer bag and in the process discovers a porno DVD.

CHRIS
Jesus. Can't take this to Abu
Dhabi. Might get caned or
something.

LORI (O.S.)
What's that, Chris?

Chris quickly secrets the porno DVD into his drawer.

CHRIS
Nothing. Will you be ready to
drive me to the airport at two?

LORI (O.S.)
For the third time, yes.

Chris places a call which he puts on speakerphone while he resumes packing.

MORTY (O.S.)
You leaving soon?

CHRIS
Yeah, just about. Hey, I was wondering... what do you think about letting me upgrade to business class. Y'know, it's a really long flight.

MORTY (O.S.)
Man, I don't know. We're really hurting on cash flow. You can appreciate that, can't you, Chris?

CHRIS (O.S.)
Sure. Not liquid enough and all that. I understand. Talk to you when I get in.

MORTY (O.S.)
Travel safe. And thanks for the left--

Chris hangs up.

CHRIS
(Mutters)
Fucking miser.

LORI (O.S.)
What's that, Chris?

CHRIS
Nothing. You gonna be ready to go at two?

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Morty lies in bed watching TV. Arielle stands nearby, brushing her hair.

ARIELLE
Are you just gonna lie around all day? You told me we could go to Napa.

MORTY

Okay, okay.

ARIELLE

Who just called?

MORTY

Chris. He wanted to upgrade his ticket to Abu Dhabi. I had to nix it, though. Too expensive.

ARIELLE

I'm getting worried about him. Maybe he needs a break - a sabbatical, or something.

MORTY

Nah, that's just the way he is.

ARIELLE

Still though--

Morty gets out of bed.

MORTY

--Let's go to Napa.

ARIELLE

Maybe you should have a contingency plan.

MORTY

For what?

Arielle paws through a dresser drawer.

ARIELLE

Protection. Now that the invention works, why don't you ease him off the project, before he tries to--

MORTY

--To what?

ARIELLE

I don't know. Renegotiate his contract, maybe. Demand a bigger share. Hold the device hostage until he gets what he wants.

Arielle pulls a flowery shirt from the drawer.

MORTY

What does he want?

Arielle looks at herself in the mirror.

ARIELLE
I don't know. I--

MORTY
--Ah, don't read too much into his eccentricities. He's a loyal guy. We wouldn't be where we are without him.

ARIELLE
Well--

MORTY
--Don't worry. Chris will be fine.

Arielle foists the shirt on Morty.

ARIELLE
Here, put this on.

Morty takes the shirt then checks his watch.

MORTY
Listen, baby, I really should go to the lab for a couple hours. I'll drive us to Napa later this afternoon. Maybe tomorrow would be better, now that I think about it.

ARIELLE
Jesus, Morty.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Lori parks her car by the curb outside the Airport departure gate. Chris hops out and retrieves his luggage from the trunk. He addresses Lori through the car window.

CHRIS
I'll try to call you from Abu Dhabi when I get in.

LORI
Try? You better call.

CHRIS
Well, who knows what kind of technology they have over there.

LORI
 It's not Outer Mongolia, Chris.
 I'm pretty sure they have
 electricity there.

Chris heads to the Airport entrance.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Chris stands in the passenger line about to go through the metal detector. He doffs his jacket, removes his shoes and belt, and takes out his laptop. He places all his stuff in a plastic bin and slides the contents toward the X-ray machine. Chris glances down at his feet to discover to his embarrassment a big hole in his sock, exposing a toe in need of a nail-clipping. He looks around to see if anyone else notices.

CHRIS
 (Sotto voce)
 Fuckin' Taliban.

Chris advances to the entrance of the metal detector, holding up his drooping pants with his left hand while displaying his boarding pass to a TSA AGENT with his right.

TSA AGENT
 You don't need to show your
 boarding pass, sir.

Chris hesitates, worried that the act of stowing the boarding pass might cause his pants to fall down.

TSA AGENT (CONT'D)
 Step forward.

Chris waddles through the metal detector which sounds an ALARM. As the TSA Agent takes Chris off to the side by the arm XRAY AGENT #1 calls to XRAY AGENT #2 for assistance.

XRAY AGENT #1
 Take a look at this.

Chris stands before the TSA Agent with his arms outstretched like a common criminal as XRay Agents #1 and #2 study the contents of Chris's computer bag, pointing at amorphous shapes on the monitor.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Albert and his juvenile-delinquent buddy Declan each straddle a bicycle behind an abandoned Gas Station.

Skinny, fourteen-year-old Declan is dressed in filthy jeans and a wife-beater, and sports a home-made haircut. He has picket-fence teeth and smokes a cigarette.

DECLAN
Yer lyin', homo.

ALBERT
No I'm not.

DECLAN
You mean, like, you can, like, look
into the future and stuff?

Albert nods proudly.

DECLAN (CONT'D)
That's, like, y'know, pretty
amazing. Like, we could be like
that dude in Back to the Future,
y'know, the one that made all that
money cuz he had the sports book.

ALBERT
I guess so.

DECLAN
How does it work?

ALBERT
My dad says you put an object into
it and it comes out in a different
time.

DECLAN
Cool. Where is this thing? Can I
see it?

ALBERT
Uh, um, in my dad's lab.

DECLAN
Yeah? Where's that?

Albert hesitates, rocking back and forth on his bicycle.
Declan blows smoke in his face.

DECLAN (CONT'D)
C'mon, dick, just tell me where the
freakin' thing is.

ALBERT
Well, it's a big gray building down
a couple blocks from Red Lobster.

DECLAN

Yeah, I know where that is. The Red Hamster. My old man gets fish there sometimes, cheap. Y'know, stuff they're gonna throw out.

ALBERT

It's always locked, y'know. The lab, I mean.

DECLAN

Yeah. I bet that freakin' thing is worth a million bucks. Whadjoo call it? A Pentagram?

Albert clears his throat.

ALBERT

Pentachoron.

DECLAN

Cool. Hey, d'ya wanna, like, y'know, go down to the creek with me and pound a couple'a beers? I swiped a six-pack from my old man. I got 'em hid under a stump.

ALBERT

Nah. I better get going.

Declan flicks the cigarette butt over Albert's head.

DECLAN

Whatever. See ya around, bro.

Albert speeds away on his bicycle, zipping right in front of a mini-van, startling the driver.

DECLAN (CONT'D)

What a dick.

INT. LAB - DAY

Morty attends to the Pentachoron, preparing to run tests. The TV monitor is powered on and Morty wields the probe. He clicks some commands into the laptop, then inserts the probe into the Pentachoron. It produces the HUM as before. After a moment an image of Morty as a younger man sitting at his desk appears on the monitor. Morty giggles with excitement.

MORTY

Look at me! Wow. I'm ten years younger! And 50 pounds lighter!

The monitor displays the image of Morty walking off. Morty extracts the probe, and the monitor goes back to displaying noise. Morty types into the laptop and inserts the probe again. This time the monitor displays Chris sitting at the lab table while Arielle arranges items in a supply cabinet. Each appears several years younger.

ARIELLE

(On TV screen)

When I'm done here, I'll pick up those tools you ordered, Chris.

CHRIS

(On TV screen)

Thanks, Arielle. You're a peach. Having you around as business manager is a real treat.

Morty smiles appreciatively at the once-pleasant interaction between his two employees. The monitor displays Arielle walking toward Chris. Morty's laptop PINGS which draws his attention away from the monitor momentarily such that he misses seeing Arielle respond favorably to a pat on her ass from Chris as she walks by.

INT. JET - DAY

Chris sits in a middle seat reading a book on conversational Arabic. He glances up and spots two OBESE MEN lumbering down the aisle toward him. His face belies panic. Sure enough, they sit on either side of him, rubbing against him as they maneuver into place.

INT. JET - DAY (LATER)

Jammed, Chris struggles to reach down to his computer bag sitting on the floor. A TODDLER bouncing on the seat in front of Chris watches him work his arm between his legs in pursuit of something in the computer bag. The Toddler throws up.

EXT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

Chris oozes out of the Abu Dhabi Airport saddled with his luggage into the steaming hot Arabian sun. Sweating profusely, he stands online for a Taxi.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

The Taxi with Chris in the back seat arrives at a dilapidated Hotel located in an industrial section of Abu Dhabi across from a factory. The TAXI DRIVER, a middle-aged Arab man wearing a head cloth parks the Taxi and writes on a clipboard.

CHRIS

Uh, are you sure this is the right place?

TAXI DRIVER

Yes sir.

CHRIS

Where are we?

TAXI DRIVER

It is called the Mussafah Industrial Area.

CHRIS

Industrial Area?

The Taxi Driver points to the factory down the street.

TAXI DRIVER

Over there, that is for making styrene.

Chris shakes his head like he's been punked.

CHRIS

Arielle.

TAXI DRIVER

(In Arabic with subtitles)
Excuse me?

CHRIS

Nothing. How much, uh, I mean, let me think.

(In Arabic with subtitles)
How much do I owe you?

TAXI DRIVER

(In Arabic with subtitles)
Ah, sir, very good. Thank you.
(In English)
The price is seventy-five dirham.
I prefer American dollars. Twenty.

CHRIS
 I already changed money at the
 airport. Here's eighty.
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 Keep the change.

Chris hands the money to the disappointed Taxi Driver and
 steps out of the Taxi. The trunk pops open.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 Can you help me with my luggage?

TAXI DRIVER
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 Fuck you, cheap American dog-
 fucker.

Chris drags his luggage from the trunk. The moment he slams
 the trunk lid, the Taxi Driver speeds away leaving Chris in a
 cloud of dust.

INT. HOTEL/LOBBY - DAY

Chris checks in, and while he waits for the CLERK to run the
 paperwork he observes the drab surroundings. Chris locks
 eyes with an OLD MAN smoking from a hookah who returns a
 laconic gaze. Chris smiles back awkwardly. The Clerk hands
 Chris a room key and a note.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - NOTE

Which reads: "Call Morty ASAP"

BACK TO SCENE

Chris stuffs the note in his pocket, takes up his luggage and
 walks off.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM - DAY

Chris's Hotel Room is spare: a lumpy bed, chest of drawers,
 old model tube TV with bent rabbit-ears. Chris checks his
 cell phone for a signal, and seeing a low reading wanders
 toward the one small window. He makes a call, and as he
 waits for it to go through Chris looks out the window across
 an empty gravel lot at a factory belching smoke.

CHRIS
 Morty? Can you hear me? Yeah, I
 made it. Thank Arielle for me -
 the accommodations are great.

INTERCUT with the Lab.

MORTY

She thought you'd like it. How was the flight?

CHRIS

Don't ask. I had to sit between Moby and Dick for ten hours. And that was just the first half of the trip.

MORTY

Sorry about that Chris, but bumping you up to business would've cost an extra five k. Maybe next time. Anyway, I wanted to let you know that Sheik El-Khoury called me. He wants to come to the States in a couple weeks. Visit the lab.

CHRIS

Super.

MORTY

No, it's not. You gotta hold him off. I have a meeting coming up with some Japanese investors about next-round financing. Don't want the Ay-rabs around asking questions and getting paranoid.

CHRIS

I'll do what I can. When are the Japanese coming over?

MORTY

They're not. I'm going to Kobe next week.

Chris furrows his brow.

CHRIS

I thought you weren't allowed to fly.

MORTY

Uh, well, yeah, but I can't, y'know, suspend all business on account of some dicey veins, right?

CHRIS

I guess not.

MORTY

I mean, I'll just have to wear support stockings, that's all.

CHRIS

Put on some high heels and a muumuu and you might pass for Totie Fields.

MORTY

(Chuckling)

Shit, I remember her. A real chunk. Kinda sexy though.

(beat)

Anyway, good luck with El-Khoury and the other investors tomorrow, Chris. See you when you get back.

CHRIS

So, you're really going to Japan, huh?

MORTY

Got to. Bye bye.

Looking concerned, Chris hangs up the cell phone. He turns on a rusty air conditioner that spews out black soot into his face.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Chris stands at the head of a long conference table before two dozen Middle East INVESTORS, each dressed in a remarkably clean white dishdashah and a checkered shumagg. Regrettably, Chris wears an ill-fitting dark wool suit, more appropriate for a brisk winter day in the Northeast.

A projector on the table displays some graphs and charts on a screen. Sheik EL-KHOURY sits at the head of the table.

CHRIS

Gentlemen, that concludes the first part of my presentation. I sincerely hope you are satisfied that Morque Technologies has properly and thoughtfully allocated your investment in the development of our device.

El-Khoury, mid-forties, strong jaw, neatly trimmed beard, speaks flawless English with a slight British accent.

EL-KHOURY

You have made a compelling case, Dr. Hahn. I admire your company's efforts to contain costs. That is important to us, but not as important as to make progress. We must see evidence of progress.

CHRIS

Of course, Sheik. That is what I will report on next. Before I dive into the details, allow me to play a video of our very first successful bench test of the Pentachoron.

Chris presses a key on his laptop which initiates a playback of the test that Morty video-taped in the Lab. The Investors in the room lean forward in their chairs. C.U. on the action unfolding on the screen: Morty filming the probe insertion into the Pentachoron.

FADE OUT.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Chris closes his laptop. The Investors politely applaud.

CHRIS

We've demonstrated the ability to peer into the past. In the coming weeks, er, I mean years, we hope to glimpse the future. I meant to say years, not weeks. And with that comes awesome responsibility. Now I'll take any questions you have, gentlemen.

INVESTOR #1

Dr. Hahn, can you choose the exact time you wish to send objects to?

CHRIS

Eventually, I believe we'll get there, but for now it seems to be a completely random selection.

INVESTOR #2

I am confused on one point, Dr. Hahn. I understand that the Pentachoron allows one to peer into a different time. But what about location?

CHRIS

The Pentachoron is designed to look back into time in the precise place that the device sits. For example, if you wanted to view what was going on in ancient Cairo, you would have to take the Pentachoron to Cairo.

INVESTOR #3

What would happen if you passed a Pentachoron through another Pentachoron?

CHRIS

Gee, I never thought of--

El-Khoury stands.

EL-KHOURY

--Thank you very much, Dr. Hahn. The possibilities appear far beyond our imagination. It is even more imperative now that we visit your lab to study this Pentachoron device first hand.

CHRIS

Uh, well, that's something I need to--

EL-KHOURY

--Gentlemen, thank you for your attention. And thank you, Dr. Hahn for the stimulating presentation. My butler will escort you to my private library. I want to converse some more.

As the Investors prepare to depart, the BUTLER, an older man with a white goatee and similarly dressed as the Investors cordially leads Chris out of the Conference Room.

INT. EL-KHOURY'S LIBRARY - DAY

Chris stands alone in the spacious Library, puffing on a fat cigar and swirling a snifter of Cognac. He paces around, taking in the fine pieces of art and sculpture tastefully decorating the room, and then he walks to a bank of large, Moorish windows offering a staggering view of the Arabian Gulf. Chris marvels at the partially-constructed, architecturally dramatic Capital Gate skyscraper.

El-Khoury enters from a door framed by shelves of leather-bound books.

EL-KHOURY

Ah, Dr. Hahn. I am sorry to have kept you waiting. Are you enjoying your cigar and your Cognac?

CHRIS

Very much, sheik. You have a fine home. Thank you for inviting me in.

EL-KHOURY

The progress you have made on the Pentachoron is stunning. The possibilities seem limitless.

CHRIS

I agree. Of course there are the ethical--

EL-KHOURY

--Imagine intercepting Balfour's letter in 1917. How different our world would be today.

CHRIS

Balfour's letter?

EL-KHOURY

I understand you are a graduate of CalTech. Impressive. You have your PhD from there as well, yes?

Wishing to project humility, Chris nods just once.

EL-KHOURY (CONT'D)

Very impressive indeed. I myself attended UCLA before completing my studies at the London School of Economics. Did you know that? I have great affection for Southern California, and the pretty, pretty blonde girls. And of course the Pacific Ocean. To be content in life I must be near the waters. What do you think of the view of the Gulf, Dr. Hahn?

CHRIS

Extraordinary, sheik. This is my first time in the Middle East. It is most beautiful.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I hope to spend some time visiting your fine country.

EL-KHOURY

It is reassuring to know your company is diligent about saving money, but you really must scold your travel department for lodging you in the industrial area.

Chris chuckles. Good, old Arielle... a regular riot.

CHRIS

I'll have a talk with them when I return.

EL-KHOURY

I insist you stay in my guest house tonight. I will have your personal belongings transported here.

CHRIS

I don't know what to say. I'm not familiar with the customs of--

EL-KHOURY

--You must say yes.

CHRIS

Alright sheik, yes. Thank you so much.

EL-KHOURY

Think nothing of it. Tomorrow I will arrange for you to stay at the Hilton. I'll reserve a week - that will afford you time to discover our fair city.

CHRIS

You're too kind, sheik. Dr. Klein asked me to ask--

EL-KHOURY

--Tell me, are you married, Dr. Hahn?

CHRIS

Yes.

EL-KHOURY

Children? Many sons?

CHRIS
Just one. Albert. He's thirteen.

Chris takes a puff of the cigar.

EL-KHOURY
(Devilishly)
Do you have a mistress, Dr. Hahn?
More than one, perhaps?

Chris coughs out smoke.

CHRIS
Huh?

EXT. EL-KHOURY'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

El-Khoury's Butler escorts Chris along a tessellated tile pathway which is illuminated subtly by ornate lampposts. Chris weaves a bit as he walks along.

CHRIS
I'm not used to drinking Cognac and
smoking cigars. I guess I'm a
little dizzy.

The Butler smiles. Chris admires the design of the pathway.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
This pathway reminds me of M. C.
Hammer. Uh, I mean M. C. Escher.

BUTLER
The design was inspired by the
mosaics of the Alhambra.

The two men continue to walk, arriving at El-Khoury's Guest House. The Butler unlocks the door.

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

The Butler flips on the light. Chris steps in. The Guest House is decorated with furniture in the International Style, and the walls display colorful post-modern paintings. Chris's luggage sits on the floor.

BUTLER
Please, Dr. Hahn, do not hesitate
to ring for anything you desire.
(In Arabic with subtitles)
Good night and sweet dreams.

CHRIS
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 You're very kind.

The Butler is pleasantly surprised at Chris's Arabic response.

BUTLER
 Why thank you, Dr. Hahn. And may I
 add bettawfeeq. You may need it.

CHRIS
 I, uh--

BUTLER
 --Good night, Dr. Hahn.

The Butler leaves.

CHRIS
 Bettawfeeq?

Chris picks up his luggage.

EXT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE/PATIO - NIGHT

Wearing a terrycloth robe and sandals, Chris stretches out on a lounge on the Patio taking in the clear, starry sky. He looks up the word "bettawfeeq" in his Arabic book and discovers it means "good luck." A KNOCK at the door interrupts his serenity.

Chris steps through the sliding glass door.

INT/EXT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris ambles across the room and opens the door. Two women shrouded in black chadors, SCHEHERAZADE and DINAZADE stand before him. Only their beautiful faces are exposed.

CHRIS
 Yes?

DINAZADE
 We have been sent by Sheik El-Khouri to entertain you for the evening. May we come in, Dr. Hahn?

CHRIS
 Um, uh, wow. I... I'm not--

SCHEHERAZADE
 --Please relax, Dr. Hahn.
 Everything is all right.

CHRIS
 I see. Uh, OK. Come in. Please,
 I mean. Yes. Come in.

Scheherazade and Dinazade step in, giggling.

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

SCHEHERAZADE
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 Do you speak Arabic?

CHRIS
 Uh, let me think
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 A little.

The two women giggle.

SCHEHERAZADE
 Very good.

CHRIS
 I studied on the plane.

SCHEHERAZADE
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 What is your first name?

CHRIS
 (In Arabic with subtitles)
 My name is Chris.

SCHEHERAZADE
 Well, Chris, my name is
 Scheherazade and this is my twin
 sister Dinazade.

Chris's jaw drops. Twin sisters!?

DINAZADE
 Would you please dim the lights Dr.
 Hahn while I prepare some drinks
 for us?

Scheherazade and Dinazade step out of their chadors revealing the low-cut little black dresses and silver stiletto heels they have on underneath the shapeless garb.

Each wears her shimmering shoulder-length nut-brown hair parted in the middle.

Dinazade walks O.C. Scheherazade gets close to Chris and runs her fingers through his hair.

SCHEHERAZADE
You have sagacious eyes, Chris.
Your intelligence is evident.

CHRIS
(Nervously)
Hah, hah. Y'know, Schehe, uh
Scher, uh--

SCHEHERAZADE
Call me Sherry.

CHRIS
Sherry huh? OK. Y'know, Sherry,
I'm kinda married--

SCHEHERAZADE
--Yes. I can tell.

CHRIS
So, I--

SCHEHERAZADE
--Would it offend you if Dina and I
entertain each other for awhile.
You may watch of course.

Dinazade returns with a tray of drinks.

CHRIS
My god...

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

The Guest House is dimly lit. Chris sits mesmerized on the edge of a low-slung Mies van der Rohe daybed. He watches the gauzy outline of the two women making out. Chris wipes his lips with the back of his hand. After a moment he succumbs and walks toward the women.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAB - DAY

Morty walks to the door of the Lab and punches a code into the electronic security system.

A red light SWITCHES to green. Morty opens the door and walks inside. Because a twig falls to the threshold, the door doesn't quite close. The light on the security system remains green.

INT. LAB - DAY

Morty sits at the lab table typing into a laptop connected to the Pentachoron. The Pentachoron is operational as indicated by FLASHING lights. The TV screen displays noise. Morty inserts the probe into the Pentachoron which HUMS. The TV monitor displays Arielle sitting naked on the edge of the lab table. Morty sits forward, shocked.

MORTY
What the fuck?

The monitor displays Chris walking in from O.C. wearing only underwear which he drops after he gets between Arielle's legs. He proceeds to screw her on the lab table. Morty yanks the probe out of the Pentachoron and the monitor goes back to displaying noise. Distraught, Morty paces the lab floor, shaking his head. Finally, he makes phone call.

INTERCUT with Morty's House/Bedroom.

Arielle watches TV. A partially-packed open piece of luggage sits on a chair nearby. The phone RINGS and she answers.

ARIELLE
Hi. When are you coming home?

MORTY
Not sure. Y'know, I'm thinking about moving Chris off the project after all.

Arielle sits up and mutes the TV.

ARIELLE
How come?

MORTY
I think he's been screwing me.
(beat)
I know he's been screwing you.

ARIELLE
(Shocked)
Wha--

MORTY

--Was the lab table the best spot,
or was it better doing it on the
floor like a couple of animals?

ARIELLE

Oh my god. I can't believe he told
you.

MORTY

What happened? Did you two horny
lovebirds have a falling out? Is
that why Chris and you don't get
along anymore?

ARIELLE

I don't know what to say, Morty. I
broke it off with him a long time
ago.

MORTY

Long time ago? Really? I bet you
were screwing him even after we got
engaged. Am I right?

ARIELLE

Absolutely not.

(beat)

I'm so sorry, Morty. It's over.
It's been over for a long time.

(Silence)

Say something Morty.

MORTY

What can I say, Arielle? This
changes everything.

ARIELLE

No it doesn't, Morty. It's ancient
history.

MORTY

Doesn't seem ancient. Besides--

ARIELLE

--Chris and I are through.

MORTY

Did you fuck him when I was in
Seattle?

Arielle hesitates

MORTY (CONT'D)

Well?

ARIELLE

Absolutely not.

MORTY

How can I believe you?

ARIELLE

You have to believe me, Morty.
Please. Believe me. Forgive me.

MORTY

I don't know if I can.

ARIELLE

You have to. I beg you. We're
going to have a great future
together, Morty. I know it.

MORTY

I wish I shared your confidence,
but how can I? I can't predict
the...

(Looks at the Pentachoron)

... uh, future, Arielle.

ARIELLE

Have confid--

MORTY

--I gotta try something. I'll talk
to you later.

ARIELLE

I'm coming to the lab.

MORTY

No, don't. I want to be alone for
awhile. I'll see you later. Bye.

Morty hangs up.

ARIELLE

Are we still going to dinner?
Hello?

Arielle looks sadly at the telephone receiver.

INT. LAB - DAY (LATER)

Morty sits before the laptop, typing and mousing frantically.

MORTY'S P.O.V. - LAPTOP SCREEN

Which shows a list of Pentachoron functions, one of which is "FUTURE ACCESS (UNTESTED ALPHA CODE)"

BACK TO SCENE

MORTY

That sneaky bastard. Looking at the future is years away, huh?

Morty continues to type, then he sits up, his face contorted in discomfort. He rubs his lower abdomen, rises quickly, grabs a magazine and heads for the bathroom. Moments later, Declan appears from O.C. wearing a backpack. He wanders inside the cavernous lab, then spots the shiny Pentachoron perched on a stand beneath a spotlight. The prize! Declan heads directly for it and lifts a corner finding it surprisingly light.

A toilet FLUSHES O.S. alerting Declan to Morty's presence. Declan looks toward the bathroom just as Morty walks back into the lab. The two lock eyes. Declan freezes, hands in the cookie jar.

MORTY (CONT'D)

Who the fuck are you? What are you doing in here?

(beat)

Get away from that and get your ass over here now, you fucking punk. How did you get in here?

Morty SLAPS the rolled-up magazine loudly against the top of the lab table as though he were swatting a fly. Declan backs up a step. Morty starts toward Declan who quickly bolts for the exit. Morty cuts him off, forcing the boy to retreat to a corner.

As Morty closes in, Declan shatters the glass window of a fire station with a swift kick. Just as Morty gets within a few steps, Declan removes a fire-axe, hauls off and smashes Morty in the head with the butt end, dropping him to the floor. C.U. on Morty's face revealing a huge contusion on the side of his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

C.U. of Chris's orgasmic face as he lies back on the bed. He groans in ecstasy.

CHRIS
 Ohhh, fuck, yeah, god-damn, ungh,
 ungh.

Chris writhes and his eyes roll back. Sated, he rests the back of his hand across his face. He exhales long and loudly. From O.C., naked Scheherazade and Dinazade lie on either side of Chris, each caressing his bare chest.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 (Moaning in Arabic with
 subtitles)
 I need a doctor.

The two women look at each other with concern, then realizing Chris is exaggerating giggle like little girls.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Declan drops the fire-axe and holds his head in panic. His eyes dart around the lab. How can I get out of this? Declan grabs Morty's ankles and drags his dead body toward the bathroom which takes him past the Pentachoron. Declan stops and studies the glowing device pensively. An idea!

Declan struggles to hoist Morty's corpse onto the lab table and proceeds to feed it into the Pentachoron. The device accepts the portly body with a soothing HUM. After Morty is completely gone, Declan runs back to fetch the fire-axe which he also passes through the device.

With all evidence gone, Declan disconnects the laptop and stashes it in his backpack. Then he lifts the Pentachoron off its perch and hustles out the Lab.

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - DAY

Dialing his cell phone, Chris paces around the Guest House in the terrycloth robe, a towel twisted high around his head. He's in a good mood.

CHRIS
 Morty, Chris here. Meeting went
 great. Call me back.

EXT. HILTON HOTEL - DAY

A limo pulls to the entrance of the Hilton Hotel. The DRIVER opens the back door and Chris emerges. He heads for the door while a hotel BELL HOP schleps the luggage.

INT. HILTON HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Chris cradles his cell phone on his shoulder as he stashes clothing into the dresser drawer in his lush Hilton Hotel Room.

CHRIS

Me again. Where the hell are you?
I'll try the lab again. Later.

Disturbed, Chris shakes his head, hangs up the cell phone and sits at a desk in front of his laptop, typing.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - LAPTOP SCREEN

Which reads: "User MORTY - not logged on"

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Where is that bastard?

Chris reads emails, stopping suddenly at an email with the subject "Kobe Meeting".

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Kobe. Japan. No, he wouldn't. He
couldn't.

Chris bolts up, tosses his luggage onto the bed and frantically repacks.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Holding a bottle of wine, Arielle inserts a key in the door, unlocks it and goes inside.

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

ARIELLE

Morty? Can we talk? I got some
wine.

Arielle picks up some mail from the floor.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

Morty, are you here? Let's go to
that new bistro and talk things
over. How about it? I got us a
reservation for 7.

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Arielle quietly steps into the Bedroom.

ARIELLE

Morty? Are you in here? We need to talk.

Arielle notices Morty's partially packed luggage on the chair. She steps to the dresser and picks up Morty's passport. A ticket to Japan is inside.

INT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

Chris stands at an airline counter staffed by a male AIRLINE AGENT.

CHRIS

Can I upgrade this ticket to business class?

AIRLINE AGENT

Let me see what is available, sir.

The Airline Agent types into his terminal.

AIRLINE AGENT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry sir. Business Class is completely sold out.

CHRIS

Shit. Excuse me. I mean, I really don't think I can handle coach all the way back to San Francisco.

The Airline Agent types some more.

AIRLINE AGENT

We have one seat available in First Class. Would you like to take that, sir?

CHRIS

Yes. Perfect.

More typing by the Airline Agent.

AIRLINE AGENT

On which credit card will you be charging the upgrade fee, sir.

Chris reaches into his wallet and pulls out a credit card.

CHRIS
Here you go. How much is it to
upgrade?

AIRLINE AGENT
With taxes and fees... \$7,645.

CHRIS
(Stupefied)
Seven... thousand... and...

AIRLINE AGENT
Six hundred and forty five. US
dollars, sir.

Slumping slightly, Chris reaches into his wallet and takes
out another credit card.

CHRIS
Here. Max out the first one and
put the rest on the second.

Chris returns the wallet to his back pocket. The Airline
Agent swipes the two cards.

AIRLINE AGENT
Uh, sir, do you have a third card?

Chris pulls his wallet back out.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Pacing on the sidewalk outside the Airport, Chris makes a
cell phone call.

CHRIS
Arielle? Chris. Do you know where
Morty is?

ARIELLE (O.S.)
Chris, no, and I'm worried. I've
been trying to get hold of him for
two days. I haven't seen him since
he went to the lab, but his
passport--

CHRIS
--Morty was in the lab? Are you
sure? How do you know?

ARIELLE (O.S.)
 He told me he was going there to
 run a test. He wanted to check out
 some things before going to Japan.

CHRIS
 When did he go to Japan?

ARIELLE (O.S.)
 That's what I'm trying to tell you.
 He couldn't have gone. His
 passport and luggage are still in
 his bedroom. So is his ticket.

Chris paces around nervously, rubbing the back of his neck.

CHRIS
 Where do you think he might be,
 Arielle?

ARIELLE (O.S.)
 I honestly don't know. He's never
 done something like this before.

CHRIS
 Like what?

INTERCUT with Morty's House.

ARIELLE
 Like being out of touch for so
 long.
 (beat)
 What's going on, Chris? You sound
 agitated.

CHRIS
 I am agitated, Arielle. This might
 sound weird, but I think Morty
 stole the device and is planning to
 sell it.

ARIELLE
 What?

CHRIS
 Y'know, to a foreign government.
 Terrorists maybe. Something like
 that.

ARIELLE
 C'mon, Chris. Terrorists?

CHRIS
I'm serious. OK, not terrorists.
Maybe Zionists. He sends me to
Abu Dhabi--

ARIELLE
--That's right. You were in Abu
Dhabi. Maybe you're trying to sell
the device.

CHRIS
Me?
(beat)
Arielle, would I be talking to you
if I stole the Pentachoron?

ARIELLE
I'm sorry, Chris. I just don't
know what to do.
(beat)
He knows about us. Our little
past.

CHRIS
What? How? Jesus, you told him?
What the hell for?

ARIELLE
I didn't tell him. You must have.

CHRIS
I assure you I've never spoken to
him about that. I promised you
that.

ARIELLE
Well, he knows somehow.

CHRIS
Jesus. It's starting to make sense
now. Think about it, Arielle.
Morty wants to cash in on the
device now that it works, and he's
cutting us both out of it. He's
pissed at us for the affair. And
he's a major miser when it comes to
money - believe me, I've known him
longer than you have.

ARIELLE
I can't believe that.

CHRIS
I know it sounds crazy. I hope I'm wrong.

ARIELLE
God, what should we do?

CHRIS
Well, I'm heading to the lab right now. Why don't you meet me there and we'll check it out together.

ARIELLE
OK.

Chris hangs up and hails a cab.

INT. TAXI (TRAVELING) - DAY

Chris sits in the back seat of the taxi wringing his hands and staring out the window.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris drops his luggage on the front stoop, then jumps in his clunker Hyundai and backs out of the driveway just as Lori comes to the door to greet him.

EXT. LAB - DAY

Chris drives into the Lab parking lot and runs to the door. He enters the security passcode into the keypad and pushes open the door.

INT. LAB - DAY

Chris rushes in.

CHRIS
Morty! Are you in here? Mor--

Chris sees that the illuminated Pentachoron stand is empty. Stunned, he slowly approaches the lab table.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
--No. Please, god, no.

ARIELLE (O.C.)
God, no, what?

Chris turns to see Arielle in the doorway.

CHRIS
The Pentachoron. It's gone.

Chris goes to a large steel cabinet secured with a combination lock. Arielle accompanies him. He spins the dial, opens the cabinet and upon finding it empty slams the door shut. Then he proceeds to go apoplectic, throwing and kicking things around the lab.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
(Screaming)
That fucking cocksucker! I swear--

ARIELLE
--Chris, please--

CHRIS
(Screaming)
--I'll cut his balls off when I find him!

Tapped out from his rant, Chris sits on the steel stool and cradles his head. Arielle rubs his back.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER - DAY

Chris and Arielle sit across from each other, plates of food have been served. Chris's plate is untouched; Arielle picks at her meal.

CHRIS
He constantly told me it was worth millions. And the bastard was always traveling the world drumming up funding and meeting with companies. He must have a long list of potential buyers. Jesus.

ARIELLE
I'm stunned. This is a total shock.

CHRIS
Look, Arielle, you have to get your head around this. Forget what you think you know about wonderful Mr. Morty.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We have to come up with something fast before it's too late. I need your help. And vice versa.

ARIELLE

What do you suggest?

CHRIS

OK. Here's what I'm thinking. I'll hire a private investigator--

ARIELLE

--Why not go to the police?

CHRIS

We're dealing with international intrigue, Arielle. Sub-rosa shit. Way beyond the competence of the police. They'll just tell us to wait another week before they even start looking.

ARIELLE

I see.

CHRIS

OK. I'll get the PI, you go to the bank and find out if Morty pulled any big funds out. Maybe his credit card activity will reveal where the fuck he blew off to.

ARIELLE

His passport is still in the room. He has to be somewhere in the U.S.

CHRIS

Don't be naive, darling. A wad of hundreds can make a perfectly fine substitute for a passport.

Arielle shakes her head.

ARIELLE

Sad. I just can't believe it.

(beat)

Chris, why did you tell Morty about us?

CHRIS

I promise, I didn't.

ARIELLE

Well, neither did I.

CHRIS

I suppose he sensed it was a possibility. Maybe he posed the concept and you subconsciously confirmed it.

ARIELLE

Hmmm.

CHRIS

I know I've behaved like a dick around you, but it was all done to prove there could be nothing between us. I hope you can forgive me. I guess you can't camouflage true feelings.

ARIELLE

And what are those true feelings?

CHRIS

I'd like to show you if you'd let me.

Chris reaches across the table but is interrupted by a WAITRESS who refills their coffee cups.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Chris scans the screen of his laptop as Lori unloads dishes from the dishwasher. A glass of booze sits on the counter.

CHRIS

I can't believe in the entire Bay Region - a place of a million scorned souls - there aren't more PI's to choose from.

LORI

Do you honestly think Morty would just up and walk off with your invention? You've known him for a hundred years. It doesn't make any sense to me.

Chris steps away from the laptop and begins pacing the Kitchen.

CHRIS

What do you mean doesn't make any sense? It makes perfect sense. Think, Lori.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He was just waiting for me to get the fucking thing to work so he could take it for himself.

LORI

Don't use vulgar language, please. Albert might hear you.

CHRIS

Are you serious? My life is going down the shitter and you're worried that Albert might hear a vulgar word? Jesus Christ, Lori.

Lori cowers at Chris's agitated retort. Oblivious to the pain he inflicted, Chris swigs from the glass, turns away and presses on, lecturing himself.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's so obvious, I can't believe I didn't see it coming. Morty sends me half way around the world so he can get a head start on stealing the device and selling it to some fucking foreign billionaire.

LORI

I don't know, Chris. Seems--

CHRIS

--He's already in Japan, I know it. Probably eating sushi off some naked broad's torso.

LORI

What?

CHRIS

Langostinos, no doubt. Or maybe he's in China, capital of unscrupulous business practices. Bastard tells me he's not allowed to fly. Doctor's orders. What a fucking liar!

LORI

Chris, please!

Chris raises his index finger in dramatic fashion.

CHRIS

Quod Effing Demonstradum!

Albert slinks into the kitchen.

ALBERT
Hey Dad, what's the matter?

LORI
Nothing, dear. Go do your homework.

CHRIS
Nothing? Nothing? You call it nothing, Lori?

Chris directs his attention to his son, stooping slightly to address him eye to eye. He speaks in a cadence like that of Mr. Rogers' in his Neighborhood.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Guess what Albert. My boss, Dr. Morty Effing Klein stole the Pentachoron. How about that? My life's work for only the past dozen years or more. I guess some anencephalics might call it nothing.

ALBERT
Dr. Klein did that? Really?

LORI
Albert--

ALBERT
--You might be right, Dad. It does make sense Dr. Klein steal it. It must be worth a lot of money. I bet millions.

LORI
Albert, stop encourag--

ALBERT
--What are you gonna do about it, Dad?

Lori scowls and continues to remove plates vigorously from the dishwasher. Chris feels vindicated.

CHRIS
Well, Al, I'm going to hire a private investigator to ferret out Morty the rat. That's the first thing. Find out where that slug oozed off to.

LORI

Chris, you don't even know if Morty took the Pentachlorine. Why would you spend money we don't have on a private investigator?

CHRIS

Y'know, Lori, you really are a dimwit. First, it's not called a Pentachlorine. Haven't I violated my code of conduct and spoken the name of it too often around here?

Lori throws her apron to the floor and storms out of the kitchen. Chris steadily raises the volume of his voice to keep up with his wife's increasing distance from him.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And second, any idiot can see that Morty stole my Pentachoron!

Chris slaps his hand on the counter-top in frustration, then looks at Albert.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Any idiot, right? You see my point, don't you son?

Albert cracks a hesitant smile and nods in assent.

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

Declan drags a rusty oven away from the wall in the Kitchen of the run-down house. The dragging SOUND disturbs DECLAN'S FATHER who sleeps O.S. in an adjacent room.

DECLAN'S FATHER (O.S.)

(Groggy)

Wha... huh? Wha's going... who's there?

DECLAN

It's just me, Daddy. Go back to sleep.

After a moment in which Declan stands completely still, ready to push the oven back into place, SNORES reverberate O.S.

Declan quietly pulls the oven another couple feet from the wall, then he retrieves a bundle wrapped in a blanket from behind a door. He unwraps the bundle to reveal the Pentachoron which he plugs into the three-pronged electrical outlet behind the oven. Lights on the device illuminate.

Declan opens the laptop and connects it to the Pentachoron. The laptop requests a password. Declan types something, hits enter and receives a BOINK of rejection from the laptop. He tries twice more, then the laptop shuts off.

DECLAN (CONT'D)

C'mon.

He plays around with the laptop but fails to get it to boot up. Declan takes an empty beer bottle from the floor and attempts to pass it through the Pentachoron but is met with the SCREECH. He tries a couple more times.

DECLAN'S FATHER (O.S.)

What the fuck is that noise,
goddammit?

Declan hastily pushes the oven back against the wall, re-wraps the Pentachoron and bolts out of the house with it.

INT. PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Chris sits across a big desk from a PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. Seeking to appear respectable, Chris wears the same dark wool suit he had on in Abu Dhabi - his only suit, apparently.

CHRIS

So that's basically it.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

From what you've described, Mr. Hahn, it sounds like a cut and dried case of intellectual property theft. In your case the IP is a physical device which is a lot easier than dealing with intangibles like software or patents pending.

CHRIS

Okay. That's good.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

What does this device of yours do?
What's it used for?

CHRIS

Well, it's a trade secret, really.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
I need to know, Mr. Hahn, so I can apply my efforts to the most likely fences. For instance, if you told me it was diamonds, I'd go one way. Nuclear fuel rods, another way.

CHRIS
I see. Well, it's a device for... It's kind of like a TV, but much more powerful. Revolutionary, really.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
A TV?

CHRIS
A TV that can transport objects.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
What's it's approximate value?

CHRIS
Hundreds of millions.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
Hundreds of... Seriously? I don't want to sound rude, but I highly doubt that.

CHRIS
That's the book value Morque Technologies' carries on its balance sheet.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
OK. Whatever. For now, I'll assume it's worth more than your car.

CHRIS
Friend, your watch is worth more than my car.
(beat)
Listen, the device is valuable. Enough money for Morty to leave the country and go into hiding forever. Maybe not hundreds of millions, but tens of millions. Okay? Tens of millions, easily.

The Private Investigator nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
So what's next?

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
My retainer. I'll need \$2500 up front plus \$2000 insurance bond in case this Morty Klein person causes property damage or inflicts bodily harm on me or my associates.

CHRIS
So... \$4500, huh?

Chris rubs his hands together sheepishly.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR
Yes, to get started. Afterwards I get \$200 an hour plus expenses. Work my associates do is billed at \$100 an hour.

Chris fidgets some more.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)
I take major credit cards, Mr. Hahn.

CHRIS
Can you give me a moment? Just want to check, uh, with my broker, uh, financial planner... person. I'll be right back.

Chris exits.

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Chris stands before an ATM mounted on the exterior wall of the Drug Store. He swipes his ATM card.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - ATM SCREEN

Which displays: Current Balance - \$113.74

BACK TO SCENE

Incredulous, Chris shakes his head and swipes the card again.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - ATM SCREEN

Which displays: Current Balance - \$3.05

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS
Oh, for fuck's sake.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Lori stands at the check-out counter in the Grocery Store. A few packed bags of groceries sit on the counter. A CASHIER scans one final item, places it in the bag and pushes a key on the register.

CASHIER
Seventy sixty-nine. Cash back?

LORI
Um, forty, please

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

Chris morosely slides his ATM card back into his wallet and shuffles down the sidewalk.

INT. BANK - DAY

Holding a folder of papers, Arielle sits across a desk with a BANK VP.

BANK VP
How can I help you Mrs. Klein?

ARIELLE
My husband is out of the country and he asked me to check on our account activity. He's thinking of making some investments, that kind of thing.

BANK VP
Certainly.

The Bank VP types into his workstation

BANK VP (CONT'D)
Which account are you inquiring about?

ARIELLE
There's more than one?

BANK VP
Yes, well. Let me check your joint account with Mr. Klein.

ARIELLE
What other account is there?

BANK VP
It's in his name only so I can't
share the contents of it.

ARIELLE
I'm his wife, goddamn it. What is
this second account?

BANK VP
Mrs. Klein, I'm prohibited by bank
rules... and the law from
revealing the--

ARIELLE
--What type of account is it?

BANK VP
I really shouldn't--

Arielle stares daggers at the Bank VP.

BANK VP (CONT'D)
--OK, it's an account with one of
our partner firms in the Caymans.

ARIELLE
Oh my god. How much is in it?

BANK VP
I can't tell--

ARIELLE
--Is it more than a million?

BANK VP
Mrs. Klein--

ARIELLE
--If it's more than a million
scratch your nose.

The Bank VP hesitates, looks around, and scratches his nose.

BANK VP
Now, is there something else I can
help you with, Mrs. Klein?

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Albert, Declan and two other male KIDS hang out on their bicycles next to the Gas Station. Declan drags a joint and hands it to KID #1 who also drags and then passes to Albert who demurs.

DECLAN
Smoke it, you pussy.

The boys laugh. Albert takes a perfunctory puff then passes the joint on to KID #2.

KID #1
Hey, what does a pussy hair sound like right before it hits the ground?

The boys except Albert snicker and shrug. No one offers an answer. After a moment, Kid #1 makes a spitting SOUND.

KID #1 (CONT'D)
Get it? Thoof!

KID #2
How would you know? You never ate out a pussy.

Kid #2 tokes on the joint, holds his breath and passes it to Declan.

KID #1
Yes I did.

KID #2
(Coughing out smoke)
Who?

KID #1
Tiffany.

Declan takes a toke.

KID #2
Tiffany Lundgren? Bullshit.

DECLAN
I know you're lying, son. Tiffany Lundgren ain't got no pussy hairs yet.

Declan hands the joint to Kid #1.

ALBERT

Uh, hey Declan. Did you, uh, like, uh, borrow my Dad's invention?

DECLAN

What the hell're you talking about?

ALBERT

I don't know. Just--

DECLAN

--What would I want that fucking thing for? It doesn't work. Piece of shit.

Kid #1 hands the joint to Albert.

ALBERT

What do you mean?

DECLAN

Nothing. I mean, I wouldn't take it 'cuz I don't believe you and your stupid story, that's all.

Kid #1 presses the joint on Albert who once again demurs.

DECLAN (CONT'D)

You're a douche-bag, Hahn. Why don't you get your pussy ass out of my gas station?

Kid #1 and Kid #2 stare at Albert indicating their consensus with Declan's directive. As Albert peddles away Declan throws a rock at him.

INT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris sits on an uncomfortable chair facing his in-laws, Bernie and Marjorie who sit in a deep sofa.

BERNIE

Does Lori know about this?

CHRIS

Certainly, Bernie. I told her the whole story.

BERNIE

No, I mean about you coming to me for money.

CHRIS

Well, uh--

MARJORIE

--Lori told me she couldn't believe your boss would steal the invention. Why would he do that? Doesn't he own the company?

CHRIS

Well, the invention is the company, really, Marjorie--

BERNIE

--So, your wife doesn't know you're coming to her father for money. Am I right?

CHRIS

Technically, yes.

BERNIE

Technically?

MARJORIE

What do you need money for, Chris?

BERNIE

(To Marjorie)

I'll ask the questions, Marjorie.

(To Chris)

What do you need money for, Chris?
Funding a cure for baldness?

Bernie and Marjorie chuckle.

CHRIS

Look, you're the last person I would ask--

BERNIE

--How's that?

CHRIS

I mean, you have to understand. I am so completely positive that the device is worth millions and that Morty stole it that I'm willing to come to you - my biggest critic - for help. That's how serious I am.

BERNIE

I'm not sure if that's an insult or a compliment.

CHRIS
Please, take it as a compli--

BERNIE
--I don't know. I don't know.
Sounds fishy. Why don't you call
the police. Or the Attorney
General.

CHRIS
It's too complicated. Morty has
connections all over the world. He
could sell the device and go into
hiding for the rest of his life. I
need to hire a private
investigator. Someone who's an
expert in solving this kind of
crime.

Marjorie tugs on Bernie's sleeve and the two consult quietly for a moment. Bernie seems to capitulate. He reaches into his sport coat, takes out a checkbook and writes into it. He tears out a slip of paper and hands it to Chris. Enthusiastic, Chris looks at what he thinks is a check.

BERNIE
That's the number of Sal Randazzo.
He's in the AG's office. I've
known him since... Marjorie, when
did I meet Sal? Was that my
sophomore year?

MARJORIE
Wasn't it when you joined the
debate team?

BERNIE
No, it was before--

Chris stands and stuffs the paper in his back pocket.

CHRIS
--Thanks a bunch, Bernie, Marjorie.
I gotta get going now.

BERNIE
You're welcome, Chris. Take good
care of my babies.

CHRIS
Of course.
(beat)
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Do you think it would help if I
bring along a dish of lasagna when
I meet with Mr. Randazzo?

EXT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Chris shuffles toward his car when his cell phone rings. He
answers.

CHRIS

Yeah?

Intercut with Morty's House.

ARIELLE

(Crying)

Chris?

CHRIS

Arielle! What is it?

ARIELLE

Morty has an offshore account he
was hiding from me.

CHRIS

I kn... My god. Did he move a
bunch of money recently?

ARIELLE

I don't know. They wouldn't tell
me.

Arielle starts sobbing big time.

CHRIS

Darling, where are you?

ARIELLE

H-h-home.

CHRIS

I'm coming over.

ARIELLE

No, that's OK.

(beat)

Yes, please. Come.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris rings the doorbell. Arielle comes to the door and gives Chris a big hug. She takes his hand and leads him in.

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris and Arielle sit together on a sofa.

ARIELLE

I'm so depressed. I can't believe Morty would just up and leave.

CHRIS

Up and leave with a multi-million dollar invention. Don't forget that part.

ARIELLE

Yes, but still. I thought he cared about me. I almost fainted when that smug banker told me about Morty's million dollar account in the Cayman Islands.

CHRIS

A million... dollars? Jesus. What an operator. We have to stop that bastard, no matter what, Arielle. It ain't right what he's done to us.

ARIELLE

How did you make out with the private investigator?

CHRIS

Uh, um, still working on it. Y'know, maybe you should go to the police after all. Couldn't hurt to have some additional boots on the ground, so to speak.

ARIELLE

OK.
(beat)
Chris?

CHRIS

Yes, dear?

ARIELLE

I really admire you. You're the smartest person I've ever met. Honestly. I know it was you who made the Pentachoron a reality. And then Morty stole it. I'm so sorry.

CHRIS

Sorry for what?

ARIELLE

And ashamed. I married him because he had the business. The money. What a fool.

Chris inches closer to Arielle.

CHRIS

We had the real thing once, Arielle.

ARIELLE

Yeah, but you wouldn't commit.

CHRIS

I'm ready now.

ARIELLE

What about Lori? You'll never leave her. I won't be your mistress.

CHRIS

It's over with us. She and I haven't clicked in years. I want to be with you, can't you tell? I love you - ever since that day you ordered those tools for me. What a doll.

ARIELLE

I remember.

CHRIS

I've worked so hard and so long that I completely lost sight of what matters. In a strange way, now that the Pentachoron's gone I can see again. Not that I won't fight to get it back, but whatever happens, we have to be together, Arielle.

Arielle looks deeply into Chris's eyes and they embrace.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

The next day, Chris readies to leave Morty's House. Arielle stands behind him in a robe. They embrace romantically.

CHRIS
You're the top, you're a Bendel
bonnet, a Shakespeare's sonnet.

ARIELLE
(Giggling)
What are you talking about?

CHRIS
You're the purple light of a summer
night in Spain.

ARIELLE
OK. You better get going.

CHRIS
We'll find that miser and when we
do, we'll cruise the world. I
promise.

ARIELLE
I'm going to the police later
today.

CHRIS
Great. Make it sound dire,
otherwise they'll blow you off.

ARIELLE
Right.
(beat)
Chris, if you find Morty, what are
you going to do? You're not going
to--

CHRIS
--Kill him? Shit yeah. Or at
least hurt him a little. Something
involving sharp, pointy objects.
Feed him feet first to ravenous
boars after that, perhaps.

ARIELLE
Seriously. If we get the
Pentachoron back, what happens
next?

CHRIS

I don't know. I suppose we press charges, litigation, but right now I'm thinking something medieval. I wonder where I can buy an Iron Maiden.

ARIELLE

Iron Maiden? I'm pretty sure I saw them in a Martha Stewart catalog.

CHRIS

And the ravenous boars?

ARIELLE

Ravenous Boar Monthly.

CHRIS

You're so dialed in.

Chris and Arielle kiss once more. The phone rings O.S.

ARIELLE

I better get that.

Chris tightens his embrace of Arielle and kisses her passionately as the phone rings O.S.

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

The SOUND of the phone ringing. It goes to voicemail.

CALLER

(Over speakerphone)

Mrs. Klein. This is Steelhouse Security calling to let you know the access code for the Morque Technologies building has been reset. First of the quarter already. Where does time go? We've e-mailed you the new code. Thanks for your business.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Chris hunches over his laptop, the glow of the screen illuminating his dour face. Albert walks in.

ALBERT

What'cha doing Dad?

Chris spins around.

CHRIS
Geez, you startled me. Just thinking. Trying to figure a way to pay for a private investigator. I mean, I can afford it and all, but I just want to get the best price.

ALBERT
Why don't you do it yourself, Dad? You're way smarter than any private investigator.

CHRIS
Well, that's nice of you to say, Al, but I don't know too much about it. I wouldn't even know where to start.

ALBERT
On TV, they always scope out the criminal's hide-out. Y'know, look for clues, find a secret password or a coded notebook. Something like that.

CHRIS
A coded notebook? Maybe.

ALBERT
Do you think someone else could've stolen it, Dad? Y'know, maybe someone broke in or something. Maybe some kid?

CHRIS
No way. The building security is fool-proof. It had to be Morty.

Albert is relieved.

ALBERT
I bet Dr. Klein's back at the lab right now.

CHRIS
Why do you think that?

ALBERT
They say crooks always return to the scene of the crime.

CHRIS
Maybe on Adam 12 they do.

ALBERT

I bet Dr. Klein went back to get something he needs. Something he left behind.

CHRIS

There's nothing to-- Wait a minute. The laptop he stole doesn't have the latest code installed on it. Maybe--

ALBERT

--Maybe he'll come back to get--

CHRIS

--He might come back to download the new software. It's risky, but he just might do that, Al.

Albert smiles proudly.

ALBERT

I know you're going to get the Pentachoron back. You'll find it, you'll see.

Chris lovingly puts an arm around Albert.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

Smirking, Declan tosses the Pentachoron into the Creek. For a moment it floats on the surface, sparking and crackling. As he watches the Pentachoron founder Declan wipes some dirt off a can of beer, pops it open and takes a drink.

Seconds later the Pentachoron fizzles out unceremoniously and sinks beneath the murky surface.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/ANTEROOM - DAY

Arielle stands before a thick, bullet-proof glass window as she presses a button on the wall. A sign by the button reads "All Visitors Must Check in". She presses the button again. As she waits for attention, Arielle adjusts her hair in the reflection of the window.

A portly uniformed COP, appears in the window. His image replaces Arielle's reflected face, startling her. He speaks through a squawky INTERCOM.

COP

May I help you, ma'am?

ARIELLE

I want to report a missing person,
uh, file a missing person report.

The Cop BUZZES Arielle in.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Arielle sits on an uncomfortable wooden chair opposite the
Cop who takes notes at a worn wooden desk.

COP

What's your relationship to Mr.
Klein?

ARIELLE

He's my husband.

COP

How long you been married?

ARIELLE

Is that important?

(beat)

A little over two years.

The Cop speaks the words as he writes

COP

Two... years. OK. Now, where do
you think Mr. Klein is?

ARIELLE

If I knew... He's been missing
now for going on four days.

COP

What does Mr. Klein do for a
living?

ARIELLE

He's the CEO of a tech corporation.
He just invented a very valuable
product. I think he may have left
the country with it. To sell it.
Um, to some foreign government,
maybe.

The Cop takes copious notes

COP

Valuable product... Foreign
government. OK, then what?

ARIELLE

He was supposed to travel to Japan, but I'm not sure he ever got on the plane.

COP

How do you know that?

ARIELLE

His passport and luggage are still in his room. And his airline ticket.

COP

Maybe he has multiple passports.

ARIELLE

Is that even possible? I thought you could only get one at a time. Anyway, he has access to a lot of money, so who knows what he has.

COP

Y'know, Miss, uh, Mrs. uh... Maybe you should wait another day or two. In cases like--

ARIELLE

--Another day? Or two? My boyfriend-- No! Too much time has gone by already. We have to locate Morty as fast as possible.

COP

Is he in danger or something?

ARIELLE

I don't... He took something of great value that belongs to me and I'm worried he's trying to sell it and keep all the money for himself.

COP

So maybe you're saying this isn't a case of a missing person--

ARIELLE

--Who's your superior. I want to talk to your superior.

COP

Certainly, ma'am. Let me talk to my Sergeant. I'll be back shortly.
(MORE)

COP (CONT'D)

Make yourself comfortable, Miss,
uh...

The Cop scans his clipboard, smiles like a goof when he can't find her name, then steps out sheepishly.

EXT. LAB - DAY

Chris drives into the Lab parking lot, jumps from his car and runs to the entrance. He enters the security code but the keypad light remains red. He tries twice more and is rejected both times. Chris marches angrily around to the back of the Lab.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/GROVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Arielle sits across a nicer desk from the middle-aged SERGEANT who sports a military-like haircut.

SERGEANT

Perhaps, ma'am, Mr. Klein took a quiet vacation alone. It happens sometimes - actually more often than you might think. People just need to get away from the stresses of the job or the family or whatever. Perhaps he was working pretty hard on this invention of his.

ARIELLE

He did work hard. Then I think he left the country with the intention of selling it. And cutting his partners out of the profits, including me. I'm entitled to a big share and he's trying to cut me out.

SERGEANT

OK, OK. Do you have pictures of your husband we can post? I'll need physical descriptions, license number, type of car he drives, and so on.

ARIELLE

Certainly. I brought all that stuff with me.

SERGEANT

I hope you don't take this the wrong way, Ms. Klein, but I have to ask: do you suspect your husband of having a relationship with another woman.

ARIELLE

I can't see that happening, really.

SERGEANT

Alright. We'll work up a sheet to send out to our guys, state police boys, and the sheriff's office. How's that sound?

ARIELLE

Good.

SERGEANT

Okay, then. Make yourself comfortable. I'll be back with some paperwork and we'll get the ball rolling.

The Sergeant departs.

EXT. LAB/CELLAR - DAY

Chris smashes a cellar window with a rock. He slides in through the tight opening.

EXT. LAB - DAY

CLOSE-UP - SECURITY BOX FLASHING RED

INT. LAB/CELLAR - DAY

Chris completes his unauthorized entrance through the cellar window and in the process tears a hole in his pants on a shard of glass. He falls hard to the cellar floor, stands up and while brushing himself off feels the hole in his pants. He checks his hand and spots some blood.

CHRIS

Shit.

Chris slowly climbs the staircase leading to the main floor. His sliced ass cheek is visible. He opens the door to the Lab and hunkers down as though preparing for a confrontation.

INT. LAB - DAY

Although it's daytime the Lab is dark because the shades are drawn. Chris reaches the top step, gets down on his hands and knees and scurries along the wall like a cockroach toward the main part of the Lab. As he does this Chris crawls through broken glass scattered beneath the fire station, cutting his hands and knees. He lets out a HOWL and falls onto his side.

Chris MUMBLES curses as he pulls pieces of glass from his palms. Now that his cover is blown he stands and announces his presence.

CHRIS
Morty! Are you in here? Let's
work this out, man. No need to rip
each other off.

Chris scans the area. Nothing. He proceeds to Morty's desk where he rummages through a bunch of papers. He picks up a tiny Post-it upon which is written: AR0312ILY. Intrigued, Chris flips open a laptop and types in Morty's userid and what he hopes is his password.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - LAPTOP SCREEN

Which displays: USERID - MKLEIN; PASSWORD - *****

CHRIS (V.O.)
A-R-oh-3-1-2-I-L-Y. I-L-Y... I
love you. Effing dogbreath.

Laptop displays: LOGIN SUCCESSFUL

BACK TO SCENE

Gratified, Chris claps his hands together enthusiastically, and proceeds to type on the laptop.

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - LAPTOP SCREEN

Which displays an email addressed to Irving Slutsky, with the subject line "Chris Hahn." Chris clicks it open revealing the contents:

"Irving, When I get back from Japan I want to talk to you about granting Chris Hahn more shares. The last thing I want now is for the Japanese investment to dilute his holdings and give him a reason to leave."

BACK TO SCENE

Confused yet intrigued, Chris strokes his face.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/GROVE'S OFFICE

The Sergeant comes back with a handful of papers.

SERGEANT

OK, Mrs. Klein, give me the most recent photo you have of your husband.

Arielle leans forward in her chair and fumbles with the contents of her folder. The Sergeant sits back and taps a pen on his desktop, trying not to peer down her cleavage. Finally she comes up with a photo and hands it to him.

ARIELLE

This was taken just a few weeks ago. It was for an article in a Tokyo newspaper.

SERGEANT

Did he travel a lot?

ARIELLE

Fairly often.

SERGEANT

You said this invention of his was worth a lot of money. Who else knew about it? Did someone in his company have access to it?

ARIELLE

Well, there's only one other employee. Chris Hahn, but I don't think--

SERGEANT

--We may want to chat with Mr. Hahn. Can't rule out any suspects. Do you know Mr. Hahn?

Arielle shifts in her chair.

ARIELLE

Well, yes. Of course. I've known him since the company first started.

SERGEANT

Do you have any reason to suspect Mr. Hahn? Might he be capable of incapacitating Mr. Klein and stealing the invention for personal gain?

ARIELLE

I, uh, I never thought... Really,
I don't think... But...

Arielle shakes her head in confusion. Suddenly, a frantic KNOCK, then the Cop pokes his head in.

COP

Sorry to interrupt. Steelhouse
Security just reported a break-in
at the Morque Technologies
building.

INT. LAB - DAY

Chris sits at Morty's desk staring at the laptop. The sound of tire SCREECHES in the parking lot interrupts his confused and painful solitude. Chris looks out the window to see some police cars rolling into the lot. Unconcerned, he starts back toward the desk when a loud HUM stops him in his tracks.

Out of thin air a bloody fire-axe falls to the floor.

CHRIS

What the fuck?

Chris walks over to the fire-axe, picks it up and looks it over, confused. Some hairs are affixed to the sticky blood.

Another loud HUM again startles Chris. The contused head of Morty Klein appears to float in mid air, followed by the appearance of his neck, torso, legs and feet until his entire limp body crumples to the floor. Dumbfounded, Chris, still holding the fire-axe takes a step toward the corpse.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

My god.

He bends down to inspect the bizarre arrival of his dead business partner.

EXT. LAB - DAY

An EMPLOYEE of Steelhouse Security, accompanied by several COPS, punches numbers into the security keypad, then nods to indicate the door is now unlocked.

INT. LAB - DAY

The Cops storm in, guns drawn.

COP #1
Drop the weapon and put your hands
on your head! Do it now!

Nearly catatonic, Chris looks stupidly toward the Cops.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
Drop the fucking axe right fucking
now!

COP #1 and COP #2, guns trained on Chris, rush Swat-like behind him. The moment Chris belated drops the fire-axe, COP #2 grabs his arms and forces him to the ground. He presses a knee into Chris's back and handcuffs him roughly. As this goes on, COP #3 attends to Morty.

COP #3
He's dead.

Cop #2 hoists Chris to his feet by the handcuffs and as he marches Chris toward the exit, he recites the Miranda rights.

COP #2
You have the right to remain--

CHRIS
--It's not what you think.

COP #2
What do I think?

CHRIS
That I killed Morty. But I didn't.
Someone else killed him and sent
his body into the future.

COP #2
Listen to me carefully, Mr.
Scientist. You have the right to
remain silent. Anything you say
can and will be used against you--

EXT. LAB - DAY

Arielle speeds into the parking lot just as Cop #2 escorts Chris out of the Lab. Arielle calls out to him.

ARIELLE
What's going on Chris?

Chris yells over his shoulder.

CHRIS
 Arielle! Please believe me - I
 didn't kill Morty! The
 Pentachoron! It was the
 Pentachoron!

An Ambulance arrives and two PARAMEDICS rush a gurney toward the Lab entrance. Cop #2 shoves Chris into the backseat of a Police cruiser.

Arielle approaches the Police cruiser but Cop #1 blocks her.

ARIELLE
 What's happening?

COP #1
 Do you know the deceased, Ma'am?

ARIELLE
 Deceased?

COP #1
 I'm sorry.

Arielle's face crumples.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

With his LAWYER at his side, Chris stands emotionless before a JUDGE. It's his arraignment. Chris's wrists are cuffed in front of him.

JUDGE
 How do you plead?

LAWYER
 Dr. Hahn pleads not guilty, your
 honor.

INT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

El-Khoury accompanied by some of his Investors from the prior meeting walks toward a gate preparing to board his jet. One of the Investors answers a cell phone and after a beat, summons the attention of El-Khoury.

INVESTOR #1
 I just received word that Dr. Hahn
 has been indicted in the murder of
 Dr. Klein.

El-Khoury appears befuddled at first then shocked.

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Declan's Father paws around inside the refrigerator, removes a six-pack of beer and discovers three empty rings.

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clearly inebriated, Declan's Father stumbles into Declan's bedroom and slaps his sleeping son across the back of his head, waking him. He shows his son the half-empty six-pack.

DECLAN'S FATHER
Goddamn you, boy! Stealing my
beers again, huh?

Declan cowers as the old man looks around the bedroom. He spots the corner of the laptop protruding from Declan's backpack, and yanks it out.

DECLAN'S FATHER (CONT'D)
You're gonna pay me back with this
here computer.

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

Declan's Father receives a payment of \$20 from a computer store TECHNICIAN. The laptop sits on the counter.

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

The Technician fiddles with the laptop which suddenly comes to life. He scans a lengthy list of files and programs. The STORE OWNER, a blob of a man in a sweaty white shirt eating a sandwich, sits in the background reading the newspaper. The Technician clicks on a file and scrolls through very complicated programming code. He calls to the STORE OWNER.

TECHNICIAN
Check this out.

The Store Owner waddles over, adjusts his glasses and looks at the screen. He shakes his head in befuddlement.

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY (LATER)

The Store Owner makes a phone call.

INT. SCIENTIFIC LAB - DAY

An middle-aged SCIENTIST stands before a long bank of tall, black computer server cabinets.

SCIENTIST

(Into phone)

Don't touch it. Don't do anything.
I'll be over in an hour.

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

Seated, the Scientist examines the laptop files as the Store Owner looks over his shoulder.

SCIENTIST

Truly amazing. Where did you get
this?

STORE OWNER

Some bag-man brought it in. We
assume he found it. Or stole it.

SCIENTIST

I'll give you a thousand for it
right now. No questions asked.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A prosecution WITNESS sits in the chair next to the Judge. Wearing rubber gloves, the DA holds the fire-axe up to the Witness. The Witness points to the hairs stuck on it.

WITNESS

The hairs and blood match that of
the victim. And the defendant's
fingerprints were found on the
handle.

The DA proceeds to the jury box and shows the fire-axe to the JURY MEMBERS who strain for a better look. Chris's Lawyer doodles on a pad of paper.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (LATER)

Chris sits at the defendant's table next to his Lawyer and fidgets with a staple remover. The Jury Members return and Chris and the Lawyer stand.

JURY FOREMAN

Guilty, your honor.

Chris slumps in resignation.

Sitting in the gallery with Albert, Lori breaks out in tears. Bernie gets up and walks out. Arielle is there too; she also breaks down in tears. A COURT OFFICER clamps handcuffs on Chris.

EXT. LAB - DAY

On a rainy day a DEPUTY padlocks a chain across the Lab entrance. He posts a sign that reads "Sheriff's Sale October 10."

INT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sullen, Lori and Albert sit at the dinner table with Bernie and Marjorie. Albert picks at a pile of unappealing adult food.

MARJORIE

Don't you care for your pot roast,
Albert?

BERNIE

He'll eat what's put in front of
him, Marjorie.

INT. SCIENTIFIC LAB - NIGHT

The Scientist sits at a desk while a 30-something ENGINEER fusses with a device that resembles a partially constructed Pentachoron. The wall clock reads 1:00.

ENGINEER

(Agitated)
We'll never get this frickin' thing
to work. It's too damn
complicated.

SCIENTIST

We have to. It'll be worth
millions.

The Engineer struggles to turn a reluctant bolt with a wrench, breaking off the head.

ENGINEER

Fuck!

EXT. PRISON - DAY

Aerial view of a high-security prison yard. Prisoners walk about in the yard.

INT. PRISON/CELL - DAY

INSERT TITLE CARD: 2019

Looking 10 years older, hair thinner, gut a bit expanded, Chris lies in his bunk reading a book. A PRISON GUARD taps on the cell door.

PRISON GUARD
Hahn. Visitor.

INT. PRISON - DAY

The Prison Guard escorts Chris past a cell holding a grown-up Declan.

INT. PRISON/VISITOR ROOM - DAY

Chris sits across a table from the Engineer who worked on the remaking of the Pentachoron. He looks a decade older from the last time we saw him.

ENGINEER
Dr. Hahn? I'm Anthony Seminaro.
I'm a computer engineer.

CHRIS
Congratulations. What do you want?

ENGINEER
I've spent six months trying to locate you. I finally made contact with your wife--

CHRIS
--Ex-wife, please.

ENGINEER
Right. Your ex-wife. Anyway, Mrs. Kemp told me--

CHRIS
--Jesus, just refer to her as Lori.

ENGINEER
Sure. Lori--

CHRIS

--Charles fucking Kemp. I'm not in here nine months and she serves me papers. Marries this hedge fund pinhead. Stupidist rich guy I ever met. Conquering the world with arithmetic.

ENGINEER

I'm sorry to find you under these circumstances, Dr. Hahn.

CHRIS

Yeah, well. I didn't kill anyone, if that's what you came to find out.

(beat)

Of course, everyone in here is innocent. Just ask them.

ENGINEER

I came across your name in some code on a laptop we acquired a long time ago. You're quite a talented programmer, Dr. Hahn.

CHRIS

What code? What laptop?

ENGINEER

My colleague would kill me if he knew I was talking to you, but I feel obligated. Y'know, since all our work was based on yours.

CHRIS

What are you talking about?

The Engineer hunkers closer to Chris.

ENGINEER

(Whispers)

We re-built the Pentachoron. It works perfectly. So far, anyway.

Chris's mouth parts in stupefaction.

CHRIS

My god...

Chris rubs his eyes for a moment.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It works? Past and future?

ENGINEER

Yes. And we can pick the time and date too.

CHRIS

Amazing.

Chris stands and paces a moment in deep thought, then quickly sits back down.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Listen, do you have a pen and paper? I need you to do a very important favor for me.

INT. PRISON/VISITOR ROOM - DAY (LATER)

The Engineer folds a piece of paper and puts it in his blazer pocket.

CHRIS

You have the address, right? The building is still there, although I think a different company occupies it now.

The Engineer nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Just outside the conference room off the main hallway.

ENGINEER

Yeah. I got it.

The Prison Guard appears from O.C.

CHRIS

Thanks for looking me up, Tony. And for believing me. That means a lot. Maybe I'll wake up tomorrow and discover this--
(Gestures to his surroundings)
--was all just a terrible nightmare.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

It's back to 1997 and Chris and Morty appear young again. Like the opening scene, the two men stand in the Hallway just outside the Conference Room door. Chris glances at his watch.

CHRIS

We better get back in there.

Chris goes into the Conference Room, notes the bleakness overwhelming the audience, backs out and closes the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When do we start?

Morty takes Chris's hand and shakes it vigorously.

MORTY

Thank you thank you thank you!
This is gonna be great.

At that moment, a HUM. Then out of thin air an envelope CORKSCREWS to the floor, landing at Chris's feet. Taken aback, Chris and Morty look around, then at each other for an explanation that eludes them. Chris picks up the envelope and notes that it is addressed to him. He slits open the envelope and reads the contents of the letter to himself. C.U. on Chris.

CHRIS (V.O.)

To Chris Hahn of 1997. I implore you with all my heart - do not join Morty Klein in his business venture. I know it sounds juicy, but if you do you'll lose everything and end up in prison for murder. Yeah - for real. Go back into that shitty meeting right now. Although he'll never know it, Morty will appreciate your decision too, believe me. If things get too boring for you, look up a swell girl named Arielle Cowan. You can search for her next year after a company called Google starts up. And for God's sake, buy as much Google stock as you can possibly afford. Sincerely, Chris Hahn of 2019.

MORTY

What the hell is it, Chris?

CHRIS
I can't join your new company,
Morty.

MORTY
Why not? What's in that letter?
What about our future together?

Chris stuffs the letter into his pocket.

CHRIS
The future is a murky place, Morty.
I gotta get back in there.

Chris opens the door and steps back into the Conference Room, leaving Morty flummoxed in the Hallway behind the closing door.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END