

AIR MAN

A
RURAL
LEGEND

SCREENPLAY
by
SCOTT ROBERTSON



AIR MAN: A RURAL LEGEND

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL THEATER - NIGHT

OVER BLACK:

The sound of an audience: SCREAMING GIRLS.

SUPERIMPOSE: "The story that follows is 13% true. The other 88% has been added as camouflage."

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
...Nobel Prize for Revolutionary
Inventions: Robeeeeert
Jooooooooooooones!

On the curtain behind a lectern, big colored paper letters pinned up at skewed angles, "N - O - B - E - L" .

ROBERT JONES, 40s, manages to make it up to the lectern.

ROBERT
Ladies and... ladies...

The Screaming Young Girls are all STORE DUMMIES. They're climbing up onto the stage. He turns to run, but more Dummies are streaming out from the wings.

The SCREAMING morphs into a horrible SQUEALING of mechanical malfunction.

INT. ROBERT'S SMALL GARAGE WORKSHOP - NIGHT

Robert shakes his head. Turns a squealing machine off. Tightens a machine belt. Everything is second-hand. Major components clamped to a sheet of plywood for a table. Hoses tied down with shoestrings. A bare light bulb leaves shadows. A half-eaten pizza is on top of an old fridge.

An air compressing engine is comprised of a compressor, air motor, and tank. Two prominent gauges.

He turns the machine on. Tweaks valves. Takes pictures with a cell phone around his neck. Aims a sensor with each hand. Dictates readings into a recording device. Incense smoke enters the compressor. A candle heats a pipe going to the tank. An icicle has formed on the tailpipe.

A rabbit's foot hangs over Robert's third eye. A worn picture of the Buddha leans on the tank.

Robert looks from gauge to gauge. They both read the same.

ROBERT
 (into microphone)
 Can't beat the skeptics tonight.

He dumps sensors on the table. Tosses the rabbit's foot. Blows out the candle. The Buddha picture flops over, exposing a smiling photo of Robert with estranged wife Belushi Jones. They hold a big pipe wrench together, wearing matching coveralls bearing embroidered names and "All For Air" patches.

On a chalkboard: A) "Make Air Powered Car = Save World = Get Rich". B) A chart, "Robert" vs. "Discouragement Fraternity". He gives the Discouragement Fraternity another point.

He gets a couple beers out of a refrigerator. Turns back for a third beer, potato chips, ice cream. Turns off the light on his way inside.

Through a dirty window in the man door, CONNEY BALBOA, dressed in black, can be seen lighting a cigarette.

INT. ROBERT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Robert slumps at an old laptop in tattered boxers and open bathrobe. Cell phone around his neck. Clock: "2:00 a.m."

He starts a ViewTube video: a shirtless JAMES BOYETT CLERK looks to be in his 70s. Lectures in a RURAL ALABAMA ACCENT current to the 1850s, with a tinge of old world Scottish.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL

Unedited homemade video.

A) James' face.

JAMES
 (scratches himself)
 There was a rumor brought to these ancient hills by the Celtic immigrants who settled here long ago. Legends of simple farming implements that could run all by themselves. Water pipes wherein, once filled with moving water, the water would keep on pumping itself uphill.

Robert is asleep. SNORING. HARP MUSIC.

SUPERIMPOSE ON BLACK SCREEN

"One day, in Atlantis..."

INT. SMALL LABORATORY - NIGHT

All the space in the tiny room is nearly taken up by two BIGFOOT GUARDS in fancy uniforms and two ATLANTEAN SCIENTISTS in white lab coats. The Atlanteans are humanoid, but their heads are somewhat dolphinoid.

The SAVANT INVENTOR, 25, dressed as an Alabama farmer from 1865, is standing in the middle of the room. Hooked up to instruments. The others stumble over each other in the small space. A alien, the GRAY CONDUCTOR wearing a railroad conductor's cap keeps peeking in the Out Door.

RECORDING

Take me to your leader. Take me
to your leader. Take me to your
leader...

Robert wakes up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL (CONT'D)

B) Photo of a human brain photoshopped -- beating like a heart.

JAMES (O.S.)

...which project outward from
our brains to create the earth,
the universe, and all of human
reality, by virtue of an
inherently self-centering
holographic mechanism, the
Collective Average.

SNORING and then SNORTING awake.

C) Masaccio's painting "Expulsion from the Garden of Eden" photo-shopped -- a Gray alien instead of an angel.

JAMES (O.S.)

...in underground kennels while
performing genetic manipulation
on them in a vain attempt to
take away their self-destructive
impulse.

D) Michelangelo's painting "The Creation of Adam" photo-shopped -- Adam lies in a dog kennel, hand extending through the cage.

JAMES (O.S.)

This project can never hope to be complete, because as soon as the surface of the earth becomes livable again, the genetic manipulation accomplished up to that point is considered "good enough for government work".

E) Grant Wood's painting "American Gothic" photo-shopped -- behind the farm couple and pitchfork, a Tyrannosaurus Rex looms open-mouthed.

JAMES (O.S.)

Humans are re-seeded topside by the Grays, and the self-pumping pipes are given to them. The pipes give us a head start versus the whim of nature as we re-establish civilization and learn how to avoid being eaten. Without the seemingly magical pipes, our big brains and opposable thumbs would not have done us any good, because in many ways the human being has been genetically manipulated nearly to ruin, leaving us too soft, lacking in endurance.

F) James' face.

JAMES

Eventually, each new version of humanoid species conquers nature, forgets where it came from, and proceeds to destroy itself. This scenario has played itself out on earth several times. No one knows why the Grays keep helping us.

G) Progressively evolved ape men walk in a lineup from Australopithecus through Neanderthal, photo-shopped -- three-headed Moe/Larry/Curly for Homo Sapiens.

JAMES (O.S.)

The sciences of archaeology and evolution are not at all in their infancy. They haven't actually been born yet.

SNORING.

INT. UFO BOARDING GANGPLANK - NIGHT

Savant Inventor exits the lab. An Atlantean Scientist puts a gray confederate army cap on him. Closes the Out Door. The Savant Inventor's way is blocked by the Gray Conductor holding a magic valve in one hand and a Civil War musket in the other. The Savant Inventor takes the valve. The Gray Conductor leads him to the UFO.

Many adjacent gangplanks are seen leading from many lab doors to many small UFOs. Similarly dressed CLONES of the Savant Inventor choose between valve and musket. Those that choose the musket are pushed off the plank into the water below. Dolphins are swimming around.

A sign above the bank of parked UFOs: "To Parallel Worlds."

The entire installation, waterways and all, is underground. The UFOs, once boarded, disappear into tunnels. A big sign hanging from a high beamed ceiling says, "VBOP ACOUSTIC POWER DIVISION -- SEEDING THE FUTURE -- TRESPASSERS WILL BE FED TO THE CLONES."

Robert wakes up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL (CONT'D)

H) A large wicker man full of human sacrificees. Druids light a bonfire under it.

JAMES (O.S.)

When the early petroleum conglomerates took over the industrial revolution, putting the personal automobile center stage, backyard mechanics of the Appalachians were still sharing rumors of self-pumping pipes.

SNORING.

INT. UNDERGROUND CLONE FACILITY - NIGHT

Passing back through the laboratory, past the two Bigfoot Guards and the two Atlantean Scientists, out the In Door. Another clone is being unloaded from a glass tank. Past this, a supply chute delivers a package. Following the supply chute up, into a filthy alleyway...

EXT. ATLANTIS ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Extending high into the sky are towers with knobs at the top. Waves of some kind are being attracted to the towers, and the fabric of time-space appears to be bending for this to happen. Dark sky colors indicate extreme air pollution.

In the alleyway, scumridden ADDICTS of both the Bigfoot and Dolphinoid Atlantean species grovel on the pavement. They try half-heartedly to crawl away from a street cleaning machine which scoops them up casually. The GRUNTS they make as they're scooped up indicate mild annoyance.

The machine is labeled, "Recycling -- Humanoid Only".

Robert wakes up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL (CONT'D)

I) A dirty shirt dangles from the end of the magic valve. James flicks the shirt off. The magic valve is two feet long. A long skinny cone from big to small; a shorter cone points the same way; an air horn from small to big, several spaced discs around the horn. A basket of tropical fruits.

JAMES (O.S.)

It's said that their secret air compressing engines could almost effortlessly rearrange the molecules of the air in such a way that the air would compress itself into the tank by virtue of its own heat, the ordinary warmth of the sun.

SNORING.

INT. UFO - NIGHT

The Savant Inventor is running in place on a device strapped to his feet. He watches time lapse scenes of earth changes on a screen, such as glaciers melting and continental drift. GRAYS slap him on the butt to make him run faster. Scene of a Civil War battle.

EXT. ALABAMA ROAD PASSING FARM (1865) - DAY

Men are struggling home from war, many amputees, on crutches, holding each other up. The road is empty.

A small UFO beams the Savant Inventor down to the road. He carries the magic valve. He strides through a field toward a farm house.

SAVANT INVENTOR

Take me to your leader. Take me
to your leader.

Approaching an ELDERLY WOMAN, he falls to his knees.

SAVANT INVENTOR

Take me to your leader.

A HOMELY WOMAN, late 30s, helps the Elderly Woman out of the way and takes her place facing the Savant Inventor. She smiles at him. Helps him to his feet.

Robert wakes up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL (CONT'D)

J) The two stars of the movie Men In Black photoshopped -- erasing each other's memories.

JAMES (O.S.)

They dared not reveal their secrets. The ancient rumors nearly died, as inventors desperate for work during the Great Depression either gave up or went broke.

SNORING.

EXT. SIMPLE CHAPEL - DAY

WEDDING MUSIC - RUSTIC PIANO

The Homely Woman and the Savant Inventor leave the chapel wearing Sunday clothes. He clutches the magic valve.

EXT. ALABAMA FARM - DAY

The wedded couple cross an unkempt farm yard toward a small house. The Savant Inventor stops to tinker with a piece of farm machinery. The Homely Woman drags him toward the house.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) The couple renovates the small farm house.

- B) The couple renovate the farm machinery.
- C) The couple plow the ground.
- D) The couple harvest the crops.
- E) The Savant Inventor builds a tall workshop around a distinctively-shaped boulder.

BACK TO SCENE

Robert wakes up.

SERIES OF SHOTS - JAMES' VIDEO AUDIO/VISUAL (CONT'D)

- K) James' face.

JAMES

For more information about the search for the magic valve and the Free Range Air Car project, send lots of money to me, James Boyett Clerk, at PO Box AirTwoThreeFour, Old Desotoville Ruins, Choctaw County, Alabama.

- L) A ViewTube error screen -- white letters on black background, "This video removed by Executive Order #666."

BACK TO SCENE

Robert is asleep in his chair. Something in his lap rolls off onto the floor. It's a magic valve. He shuts off the computer and goes to bed. Conney lights a cigarette outside a window. Dictates into a recording device.

EXT. ALABAMA FARM (1870) - DAY

THEME MUSIC: period Celtic morphing into Appalachian.

BEGIN TITLES OVER:

Wheat fields ripple. Heat waves rise. A tall workshop in fields trampled by throngs of people. They fan themselves in clumps around the workshop door. Women outnumber men.

People leave the workshop and cluster outside. All are affected: shaking heads, gesticulating, embracing, grinning, slapping each other on the back. There's a fistfight. A woman swoons. A young man proposes to a girl. A group of amputees in Confederate caps pass a bottle.

INT. ALABAMA FARM/WORKSHOP - DAY

THEME MUSIC continues. A SAVANT INVENTOR, 25, who looks like James, demonstrates his air compressing engine. Families get their turn to enter. With an air-powered rock drill, men attack a distinctively-shaped boulder that the workshop is built around.

The air compressing engine dangles from the ceiling beams by big greasy ropes. Men blow smoke at it; the smoke is sucked in. They nod sagely and discuss. Reactions vary from disbelief to resentment to elation.

The Savant Inventor ignores the visitors. A small icicle has formed on the machine's exhaust pipe. He breaks the icicle off. Puts it over his third eye like a unicorn's horn. Stares distantly. Eyes close.

EXT. ALABAMA FARM - DAY

THEME MUSIC continues.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TIME LAPSE OF FARM

- A) Seasons come and go.
- B) The Workshop rots, leaving the boulder.
- C) A house is built by hand and collapses. Cars and trucks in the yard evolve from Model-T.
- D) A big oak tree sprouts from the ruins of the farmhouse and grows to maturity. It dies of old age. Crashes to the ground next to the boulder.
- E) A small house is built by men in yellow hardhats.
- F) Paints peels from the house. The oak tree rots where it fell. Theme Music ends, replaced by BIRD SONGS.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE (ALABAMA FARM - PRESENT) - DAY

BIRD SONGS indicate early morning.

The yard is strewn with the rubble of an unused farm. Robert peers around, hunched over, tiptoes. Hides behind the boulder. Watches the house. James brings a mop outside to the front porch, puts it in the sun. Goes in.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

James drops a realistic-looking black squirt gun into a shopping bag. Arranges mechanical drawings on a drafting table facing the living room picture window. Pretends not to see Robert.

James flings the screen door open against its spring. Steps out. Lets the spring SLAP the screen door shut. Takes a deep breath. Lets the sun bathe his face. Wanders toward a tree-lined lane leading away from the house. He's not visible from inside the house. Sings "While Strolling through the Park One Day" by Ed Haley, 1884.

JAMES (O.S.)
 (sings loudly)
 "While strollin' through the
 park one day/it was in the merry
 month of May..."

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE/FRONT PORCH - DAY

Robert sprints to the side door. SCREEN DOOR SLAPS SHUT.

JAMES (O.S.)
 (sings)
 "I was taken by surprise/by a
 pair of roguish eyes/in a moment
 my poor heart was stole away..."

From the house, James' voice sounds softer. But he pokes his head around the front. Turns out he was really just singing more and more softly, not going anywhere.

JAMES
 (sings softly)
 "A smile was all she gave to
 me/(whistle prior line)/of
 course we were as happy as can
 be..."

JAMES
 (sings, springing
 up onto the porch)
 "Ahhhhhhhhh..."

James leans back on section of wall next to the screen door.

JAMES
 (sings softly)
 "I immediately raised my hat/she
 responded with a shy remark..."

INT. JAMES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Robert is photographing the drawings on the drafting table with his cell phone.

JAMES (O.S.)
 (sings, barely
 audible)
 "...and I never shall
 forget/that lovely
 afternoon/when I met her..."

James pivots around to look through the screen door.

JAMES
 (sings louder)
 "...takin' pictures in the
 dark."

Robert's freezes, hand in mid-air. He turns to face the door. James enters. Robert's finger twitches. Photographs James pointing the black gun at him.

INT. LIVING ROOM

JAMES
 Why are you in my house?

ROBERT
 I'm here to help you with your
 air car.

JAMES
 Like "The Elves And The
 Shoemaker"? Or like James
 frickin' Bond, helpin' yourself
 to my invention?

ROBERT
 It's not your invention, it's
 your ancestor's. It's in the
 public domain.

JAMES
 My livin' room ain't in no
 public domain.

ROBERT
 (speechifying)
 "The inventor savant spoke only
 these words as the sinister
 (MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)
city-dwellers dressed in black
dragged his air compressing
engine toward the river: 'It
ain't devil magic. It's the
normal way to make air, just
ain't nobody caught on yet.'

JAMES
So you've read my website.

ROBERT
Memorized it.

JAMES
This is a smart gun,
pre-programmed to seek out
brown-nosin' smart-asses.

ROBERT
I'm here to help you.

JAMES
By sneakin' into my house?

ROBERT
I didn't know how to approach
you. I was just checking out
the scene --

JAMES
And makin' sure you had a copy
of my stuff in case I told you
to muck off, which I --

ROBERT
I -- I -- I -- I'm a -- an
engineer. I have my own firm.
I'm semi-retired. My wife
kicked me out of the house while
she remodels it --

JAMES
I never met an engineer I didn't
wanna kill --

ROBERT
And I'm very well off and the
only thing I want to do with my
life is to build an air car with
you, so we can both realize our
life's dreams.

(MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)
 And I was going to take pictures first, just in case you told me to -- muck off -- later. I was planning to... knock on your door... like a civilized...

Robert and James stare each other down.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
 I'm not an engineer. I'm a wanna-be, but I'm you're biggest fan. My wife gave me a credit card to live off of so I wouldn't come back.

JAMES
 Sounds like you're pretty easy to get rid of. Have you had breakfast?

James shoots himself in the mouth with the squirt gun.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 Lemonade. Dogs see it and run.

Robert sighs and collapses onto a chair.

JAMES (CONT'D)
 I can spot a desperado tryin' to waste my precious time, so don't lie to me again, Mr. Wanna-Be.

INT. LIVING ROOM (LATER)

Robert is inspecting the magic valve.

JAMES
 That thing's powerful. Keep it away from your face.

Robert puts the large end of the long cone to his lips and blows. Panics. It's stuck to his face. James jumps up. POPS it off with a twist of the wrist. Robert's lips are puffed up and red.

JAMES
 I forgot to say, "...and I really mean it."

ROBERT
 My lips!

JAMES

Wanna borrow my Chapstick?

ROBERT

What's the science behind --

JAMES

I guess stupidity's genetic --

ROBERT

No, compressed air science.

JAMES

The valve starts suckin' when
air flows through. If I hadn't
been here to twist it off ya...

(then)

Lungs don't grow back, son.

INT. LIVING ROOM (LATER)

Robert and James stand over James' drafting table.

ROBERT

All you've made is a valve that
sucks lips?

JAMES

I know it'll work. My ancestor
built it right here on this farm.
I am the last carrier pigeon for
a true urban legend.

(then)

Rural.

ROBERT

Are you the air man or not?

JAMES

I'm a secret agent from outer
space. I'm the prophet
unwelcome in his own land, the
ghost in your house, the smoke
in your mirror, the --

ROBERT

The inventor's helper.

JAMES

I've been the inventor's helper
for about a hundred and fifty
years.

ROBERT
Well, your pipe does suck lips.

JAMES
Yep.

ROBERT
Do you have any plans for finishing this thing? What did the old-time inventors know?

JAMES
We have to go back in time to find out.

ROBERT
Yeah, sure, let's go.

JAMES
No, I mean really.

ROBERT
Yeah, right on, I dig the scene.
Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

JAMES
No, in a time machine.

ROBERT
Oh, can I bring my shadow?

JAMES
You're not takin' me literally.

ROBERT
I'm not taking you at all, I'm leaving you here. Ommmmmmmmmmmm.

INT/EXT. SHILL-MART - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOZILLYA BECOMES A MOTHER

- A) MOZILLYA REVILLYA, 42, ogles a large doll in a box.
- B) Mozillya leaves the store with the doll.
- C) A SECURITY GUARD chases Mozillya across the parking lot.
- D) Mozillya is standing over the cringing Security Guard, beating him with the doll.

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - MOZILLYA GETS A HOME

- A) Mozillya and doll sneak into the Maternity Ward.
- B) Mozillya is in a bed with the doll.
- C) Mozillya and doll are being dragged down the hall by MEN IN WHITE COATS.
- D) Mozillya is dragged through double doors. They swing closed. On them is written, "Minimum Security Psychiatric Wing, Authorized Personnel Only."

INT. VBOP INC./OSCAR'S OFFICE/RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Logo on a wall behind a receptionist: a backwards baby blue swastika, and the words "VBOP Inc." The receptionist, BELUSHI JONES, 44, sits at a spotless desk, reading a novel.

OSCAR KLUTCH, 70s, enters from the hallway. Painted on the frosted glass window in the door, "Misinformation, Destabilization, and Manipulation Dept."

OSCAR

Bea, you look ravishing.

BELUSHI

You can call me by my name.

OSCAR

About that name...

BELUSHI

My parents named me "Belushi" and "Belushi" I am. And "Bea" doesn't turn me on.

OSCAR

Well, you're just my secretary, or I'd give you a number like everyone else.

BELUSHI

Just your secretary?

OSCAR

Sorry, that didn't sound right.

BELUSHI

Just a Freudian slip?

OSCAR
 Freudian schmoydian, I'll
 apologize later, Butterbutt.

BELUSHI
 Ooh, Oscar!

OSCAR
 I don't have a name in here,
 sweetheart --

BELUSHI
 Well I do, Number Nine. How's
 your day, Grouchy Bear?

They cuddle for a moment.

BELUSHI (CONT'D)
 When can I be a number?

OSCAR
 You can be any number you want.

BELUSHI
 Oh, Oscar, umm, -- Number Nine
 -- I should mention that --
 Number Two -- wants to see you.

(beat)

OSCAR
 Remind me to finish training you
 in the subtle art of how to
 pretend to be my secretary
 without ruining my day.

BELUSHI
 You know I love you.

OSCAR
 I often suspect it.

BELUSHI
 Take him a cup of coffee.

OSCAR
 He doesn't like brown-nosing.

BELUSHI
 Humor me?

Oscar pours a cup of coffee.

OSCAR

At least it's not Number One.

BELUSHI

What's he like?

OSCAR

Dunno. You only meet him once.

Oscar starts to leave. Belushi's cell phone rings with a TOILET FLUSHING SOUNDBYTE. Oscar pauses at the door.

BELUSHI

(into cell phone)

Why did you call me, you know
I'm at work, have you decided
you want a family, I didn't
think so, bye.

(then)

Go back to your stupid invention!

(then)

Goodbye!

BELUSHI

(to Oscar)

Sorry, I forgot to turn it off.

OSCAR

It's OK, just remember what
"VBOP" stands for: "Very Black
Ops". We generally don't bring
cell phones, dogs, babies,
ex-boyfriends --

BELUSHI

Estranged husbands.

OSCAR

You don't say.

BELUSHI

Don't worry. I'm totally single.

OSCAR

After last night, I hope so.
What'd he expect from marriage,
this ex of yours?

BELUSHI

He wanted a family after he
finishes his invention, when our
teeth start to fall out...

(then)

... sorry.

OSCAR

No offense taken. Your butt
cheek knows I still got choppers.

Oscar leaves with the coffee.

INT. VBOP INC./HALLWAY - DAY

Oscar hurries down an unadorned bureaucratic corridor. EMPLOYEE #1 is dragging a DEAD INVENTOR through a door marked "Janitor's Closet -- Stay Out". The Dead Inventor's glasses are smashed. There's a pocket protector in his shirt pocket, and a bullet hole in his forehead. Employee #1 straightens up. Oscar hands him the cup of coffee.

Oscar passes a door marked "Acquisitions". A humming Rube Goldberg device is levitating itself through the door followed by EMPLOYEE #2 with a hand-held remote control.

The next door is marked "Tunnel to Lake Erie Storage Facility for Revolutionary Inventions". Oscar takes a key from his pocket. Opens the door. Looks into a hand-carved, dank tunnel. It ramps down steeply, lit by torches. A sign says, "Unauthorized Personnel will be Vaporized." Oscar closes his eyes and inhales deeply.

Oscar closes the door. Hurries along down the hallway.

Oscar arrives at a fancy wooden double door marked "Number Two -- Human Resources" below a skull and crossbones. The other door is marked "VBOP Inc." below a backwards baby blue swastika.

Oscar opens the door. In the reception area, a guillotine in place of receptionist bears a sign: "Just head on in."

The inner door to Number Two's office is open. Smoke wafts out. Oscar is frozen in place, listening.

NUMBER TWO (O.S.)

My great grandfather's textbook
cleanup campaign buried this
compressed air infection a long
time ago, but Number Nine can't
seem to keep it down.

ROBOT VOICE (O.S.)

Have you explained to Number
Nine what we mean by "Human
Resources"?

Oscar CLEARS HIS THROAT. Enters the office.

INT. VBOP INC./NUMBER TWO'S OFFICE - DAY

Oscar enters and sits facing Number Two.

NUMBER TWO
Number Nine, I don't think
you've met my boss, Number One.

Oscar leaps to his feet. NUMBER ONE is sitting in a corner of the office. A nearby door is marked "Not a Way Out".

OSCAR
Number One --

Number One holds a battery-operated amplifier up to his adam's apple when he talks. Cigar in his other hand. Same actor as James, but the opposite of James' radiant health.

NUMBER ONE (ROBOT VOICE)
Name.

OSCAR
Nine, sir, Number Nine.

NUMBER ONE
Real name.

OSCAR
Oscar Klutch. Friends call me
"Scar". Well, friends are
against the rules, I mean --

NUMBER TWO
Let's ease right into your least
favorite topic.

OSCAR
"What My Job Means To Me."

NUMBER TWO
Tell Number One.

OSCAR
Over fifty years ago, I stabbed
my parents in the neck with a
drafting pencil. They recovered.
(then)
I escaped prosecution by joining
black ops. VBOP. I agreed to
do bad things to good people the
rest of my life.

NUMBER ONE
Were you angry with Mom and Dad?

OSCAR

Yes sir, you might say that.

(then)

I had an invention. Something great, good for the common man.

(then)

My parents wanted me to sell it to Detroit. Naturally, I told them to get lost. So they stole it from me, sold it themselves, and disappeared.

(then)

When I caught up with them, vacationing with their dirty money, I stabbed their necks where they slept.

NUMBER ONE

What invention?

OSCAR

A magic valve that could suck the lips right off your face.

NUMBER ONE

Why suck lips?

OSCAR

Mount it in a pressurized air tank, it sucks the air out of the compressor, right into the tank. Compressor never breaks a sweat.

(then)

It worked like a dream for twenty minutes, then I had to go to church. When I got back, it was gone, and so were my parents.

NUMBER ONE

So, you need this job.

OSCAR

Yes sir, I can't show my face, you're the first person that's heard me say my own name in fifty years, except my son --

NUMBER TWO

We don't have sons in this business.

NUMBER ONE

We have a new assignment for you. Kind of a promotion in a way.

Number Two hands Oscar a big yellow envelope.

NUMBER TWO

To finance your continued existence, we've sold your retirement package to a mom-and-pop real estate agency in Greece.

Oscar stands up.

OSCAR

I need this job like I need another hole in my face --

Number One puts his cigar up to a hole in his throat. Inhales.

Oscar sits down.

NUMBER ONE

You've been using company resources without permission, to further your personal interests.

(then)

Somewhere in Alabama, someone is trumpeting the details of your old invention. You are tracking this person on our time.

(then)

Our clients pay us obscenely well to bury this stuff in our tunnel museum under Lake Erie.

(then)

Since we bothered to put up with you all these years, we'll let you try and reclaim your squandered career.

(then)

You'll continue with what you started, but you'll take a moment, from time to time, to report in.

(then)

Your offspring will accompany you on your new adventure. You keep him quiet, or we do.

(then)

After fifty years, you're finally promoted to field agent.

OSCAR

I'm too old for this.

NUMBER ONE

We mustn't stab our parents.

Number Two gives Oscar an empty cardboard box.

Oscar shuffles out with the box. The outer door SLAMS.

Conney emerges from the closet.

CONNEY

So... sirs... When do I take
over his office?

NUMBER TWO

Soon as we honor our end of the
bargain.

Conney tries to smile on his way out.

CONNEY

Nice to meet you Number One. I
look forward to working with you.

Number One CHOKES on cigar smoke.

INT. VBOP INC./OSCAR'S OFFICE/RECEPTION AREA - DAY

The outer door flies open. Oscar strides in. DARRELL
KLUTCH, 45, is perched on the edge of Belushi's desk.
Belushi holds a baby, ERNIE.

OSCAR

Son. What are you doing here.
You know you don't exist.

DARRELL

I often suspect it.

BELUSHI

Belushi, Darrell. Darrell,
Belushi.

OSCAR

Awright, you're introduced. If
you've rescued another baby --

DARRELL

Father, meet Ernie.

Oscar collapses in a chair.

OSCAR

Let me guess. You quit the job
I got you. Fled the apartment I
got you. Escaped here where
kidnapping is no big deal.

DARRELL

It wasn't kidnapping. This
woman at Shill-Mart was
screaming at her baby. Can you
imagine anyone screaming at a
baby?

BELUSHI

Darrell just did what we at VBOP
do with inventions that threaten
the status quo. Took over.

OSCAR

(to Darrell)

Your timing couldn't be worse.
We're on assignment together,
you and me. I'll explain later.
C'mon, we're going to Alabama.

OSCAR

(to Belushi)

Your sister, Mozillya, sounds
like a great gal. Where'd you
say they're keeping her?

BELUSHI

County hospital, psychiatric --

OSCAR

You're coming too. Mozillya's
getting that baby she always
wanted. Page Conney. If he's
home in bed, he's fired.

Oscar exits through an inner door.

INT. VBOP INC./OSCAR'S OFFICE/CLERK AREA - DAY

Oscar enters a large, open area with a high ceiling. Lit
only by tiny reading lamps at deskettes arranged in widely
spaced rows and columns. At the deskettes are CLERKS,
typing at tiny keyboards, wearing tiny earphones, shackled
to their deskettes.

Above each deskette, a spy cam and dish microphone, aimed
down.

Oscar strides to the center of the room. A solid glass spiral staircase with no hand rail rises up to an all-glass office. He ascends. Sits at an all-glass desk.

OSCAR
 (mumbles, picked up
 by intercom)
 Good riddance, transparency.
 (into intercom)
 High Mileage Technology
 Destabilization Team. Report.

Shackles fall from the legs of several Clerks. They line up at the spiral staircase.

INT. VBOP INC./OSCAR'S OFFICE/CLERK AREA - DAY (LATER)

Conney enters the room.

CONNEY
 (to Clerk #1)
 How's it hangin'?

CLERK #1
 Don't talk to me! Voice
 activated sensors --

CONNEY
 Say again?

A trap door under Clerk #1's deskette opens and Clerk #1 disappears. SCREAM and a SPLASH. Conney heads up the stairs as CLERK #2 starts down. They meet on the staircase.

CONNEY
 Excuse me.

Conney elbows Clerk #2 off the staircase.

SCREAM and a THUMP.

INT. VBOP INC./OSCAR'S OFFICE/INNERMOST SANCTUM

Oscar sits at the glass desk. It's free of objects except the cardboard box and a pencil.

OSCAR
 Sit down, Conney.

CONNEY
 (standing)
 Number Forty-Two.

OSCAR
Screw that. Sit down.

Conney remains standing.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
This ain't gonna be quick 'n
easy.

CONNEY
We're partners on this.

OSCAR
Nobody has less power to get rid
of you than I do. Stop
struttin', you give me the
heebie-jeebies.

Conney slumps into a solid glass chair.

OSCAR
We've been made.

Conney yawns.

OSCAR
Worst case scenario comes true.
VBOP knows about our operation.

Conney starts playing with the pencil.

OSCAR
We gotta keep on what we're
doing, but on the clock.

CONNEY
So they wanna pay us to do what
we were doing for free already.

OSCAR
Not everything is about money,
Conney.

CONNEY
Number Forty-Two.

OSCAR
Screw that. I was trying to get
my invention out of the hands of
these amateurs. Now I have to
carry out that program, only to
give it to VBOP so they can bury
it in the Tunnel with the one I
(MORE)

OSCAR (cont'd)
invented when I was a kid.

(then)

To you, this is a promotion,
'cause you can go back to
sleeping at night.

(then)

Everything I ever did here, I
was blackmailed to do. Now
they've taken my retirement away
because of us getting caught.

Conney pretends to stab his throat with the pencil.

OSCAR

Your contempt doesn't faze me.

CONNEY

So what's next? Any changes?

OSCAR

Keep following Mr. Inventor.
Don't let him out of your sight.
Got his house bugged?

CONNEY

Cockroach nest. He watched
ViewTubes again last night after
he pansied out of the workshop.

OSCAR

You're wasting your time.

CONNEY

Maybe not. You are aware,
aren't you, that this top secret
valve of yours has been invented
over and over by many people?

OSCAR

Who told you that?

CONNEY

I did my homework. Alabamaman's
splashing it all over the net.

Oscar wheels his chair to a computer table. Bumps the
mouse, and the oversized screen flashes on.

INSERT - A HOME PAGE

James holds his magic valve. A banner headline, "Earth,
Air, Fire, Water... and Aliens! What you don't know."

BACK TO SCENE

CONNEY

Inventorman's headed for Alabama next. Shopping for air fare.

OSCAR

Air Man goes to Alabama, we go to Alabama. We get my invention back under my control.

Conney leaves.

OSCAR

That's Project Stillborn, you little weasel, and Plan A is none of your stinkin' business.

In the bottom of the cardboard box is only one item: an old photo of Oscar and Darrell.

EXT/INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - OSCAR FINDS ERNIE A NEW HOME

Oscar carries Ernie:

A) Into the county hospital.

B) In an elevator. The doors open. He hits the down button and exits. Blocks the door open with a wheelchair. Crosses the hallway.

C) Into a room across from the elevator. Scrawled in crayon on the inside of the open door, "Maternity Ward". A janitor is trying to clean the crayon off the door.

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL/PSYCHIATRIC WARD/HALLWAY - DAY

A card on the wall by the doorway shows the patient's name, "Mozillya Revillya".

OSCAR (O.S.)

Hi dear, listen, I'm in charge of screw-ups, and I have to apologize, but you had twins and nobody told you. Bye now.

Oscar strides out of the room. Yanks the wheelchair away. Enters the elevator. Mozillya runs into the hall, clutching Ernie to her chest. Dangles the doll by a leg. The elevator door closes.

Mozillya sniffs Ernie. Makes a face. Runs to a door marked "Stairs". The doll remains on the floor.

EXT. COUNTY HOSPITAL - DAY

Oscar rushes out of the hospital. Darrell and Belushi are waiting for him. They hurry across a parking lot where Conney waits, leaning against a shabby FreeUs Hybrid.

BELUSHI

Do you think your car will make it to Alabama? Mine's newer.

OSCAR

Alabama's just a decoy, one step farther from VBOP.

(then)

I went to the tunnel, about a year ago. The Curator let me take something out in exchange for a lifetime supply of beer and canned tuna.

DARRELL

Cool, what'd you get?

OSCAR

I put it in my garage, and it's been there ever since.

DARRELL

You got your magic thingamajig, the valve thingy you invented?

OSCAR

Couldn't find it. Had to get out quick with the next best thing.

(then)

A time machine.

DARRELL

What good's a time machine?

OSCAR

We can finally escape from VBOP. In the future, there's no more gas, no more VBOP. I'll just walk right into the Tunnel, and take what I want.

DARRELL

So you have a time machine in your garage. When can we take it for a test drive?

They get to the car. Conney is in the driver's seat.

CONNEY

I'm thinking about commandeering this vehicle.

OSCAR

Only an idiot says what he's thinking. Get in the trained monkey seat.

INT. FREEUS HYBRID - DAY - TRAVELING

Oscar drives around the edge of the parking lot past the hospital, toward the exit. Conney is in the passenger's seat. Darrell and Belushi are in the back seat. Conney smiles at Belushi. She looks away. He won't smile again.

DARRELL

I miss Ernie already.

OSCAR

Your crap hasn't been cute since you turned two.

DARRELL

Don't bother, Father, I've been taking care of myself since I was forty-two.

CONNEY

We're happy for you.

Conney runs his fingers over a row of large dashboard buttons labeled only with icons.

OSCAR

Don't touch anything. This isn't a normal car.

CONNEY

What's wrong with it?

OSCAR

Nothing. It's a time machine.

An ALARM sounds from the hospital. Mozillya runs out a side door with Ernie.

EXT. VBOP TIME MACHINE (FREEUS HYBRID) - DAY

Mozillya runs in front of the VBOP Time Machine. Oscar slams on the brakes.

Darrell and Belushi jump out of the car.

DARRELL
Ernie!

BELUSHI
Mozillya!

MOZILLYA
Mister! This baby couldn't possibly be mine.

DARRELL
We could share him.

The Men In White Coats run outside.

OSCAR
Get in the car, quick, or we're all behind bars for kidnapping.

Everyone piles into the back seat. The VBOP time machine dematerializes.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

James is using a hand tool to drill a hole in a coconut.

JAMES
Wait'll you try this. Fresh picked today.

Robert accepts a whole coconut with a straw in it.

ROBERT
Fresh coconuts in Alabama?

JAMES
Oklahoma.

Robert snorts.

James sits down on a stack of Popular Science magazines.

JAMES
Ever notice they like to give place names to girls?

Robert attends to his coconut.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Yeah, for example, I once knew
me a nice big gal with a flattop,
named Oklahoma. Real sweetheart,
but she used to throw furniture
from time to time.

(then)

Georgia. Beautiful name,
beautiful song. But don't
forget the worst of the '70s.

(sings)

"Okla-ho-wo-ma/hey won't ya go
my way..."

ROBERT

Bad song stuck in head! Change
channel quick!

(sings)

"Detroit, Detroit, gotta hell of
a hockey team..."

James picks up a photo of several brown children.

ROBERT

What do inventors do when
they're not inventing?

JAMES

When the hell's that?

ROBERT

How many of those kids are yours?

JAMES

Dozen or so. Pink, Green, Blue.
The rest.

ROBERT

Do you even live in this house?

JAMES

Well you gotta understand, see,
there's others of me. I'm his
dream double. Doppelganger.

ROBERT

Oh, there had to be an
explanation. Excuse me while I
go outside to hunt snipes.

JAMES

We live other lives in parallel
worlds while our body's asleep.

Robert sets his coconut aside. Looks at the door.

JAMES

He creates me, I create him.

ROBERT

You barely touched on your
spiritual beliefs in your
ViewTube movies.

JAMES

Ya can't nitpick paradox. Has
to be experienced.

ROBERT

The famed ViewTube scientist...

JAMES

I'm strictly an entertainer.
The human race is just my hobby.

ROBERT

OK, Oklahoma Coconut Man of
Alabama. I think I hear my
mother calling, it's been nice
to meet you.

AUTHENTIC APPALACHIAN MUSIC is heard outside.

JAMES

Hey, the aliens next door turned
on their record player. Wanna
sing-along with the Grays?

Robert heads for the front door.

JAMES

Ain't we gonna make a air car?

There comes a KNOCKING on the screen door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

That'll be your doppelganger.

Robert continues to the door. Arrives. Starts screaming.

JAMES

You guys really shouldn't meet.
It could create a paradox in the
fabric of space-time.

Robert is face to face with a copy of himself. The copy is
naked. They are screaming at each other through the screen.

James gets up and shuts the front door.

ROBERT

What was that? You snuck
outside and put a mirror on the
porch, didn't you?

JAMES

A naked mirror that screams,
yeah, I did that.

ROBERT

What is this place?

JAMES

I dunno. Sponge for lost souls?

Robert collapses into a chair.

ROBERT

Dizzy...

JAMES

Don't puke in the house.
Plumbin's broke.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Robert is at the drafting table. Looking at mechanical
drawings. James watches out the window behind Robert.

JAMES

You know that guy?

Robert shields his eyes.

Conney and Darrell are hiding behind junk in the yard.

JAMES

Look, there's two of them sneaky
little bastards.

ROBERT

What now, leprechauns?

JAMES

VBOP.

ROBERT

(sings)
"V-bop-a-Lula/she's my baby..."

JAMES

VBOP is the real men in black.
They steal inventions and stick
'em in a tunnel under Lake Erie.

Conney and Darrell are outside watching the house.

JAMES

Find my shotgun.

James throws open the front door. Runs outside.

JAMES (O.S.)

Who are you fellers, trampin'
around on my place?

Robert scurries around. Looks everywhere. Grabs the Magic Valve and runs out the side door.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

ROBERT hurries to join James, Conney, and Darrell.

ROBERT

I couldn't find a shotgun.

JAMES

I don't own a gun.

James is glaring at the two men.

Conney takes a drag on his cigarette.

ROBERT

Well, you could hit them with
this.

(to Conney and
Darrell)

Don't worry guys, this is just a
dream. You're just props with
no conscious awareness.

JAMES

Don't tell 'em that -- hey,
why'd ya bring my valve out here?

CONNEY

That's the invention?

JAMES

It will be if I ever invent it.

James takes the magic valve from Robert.

JAMES
 (to Robert)
 Someone'll be comin' to find the
 prisoners when they don't return.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Conney and Darrell are standing back-to-back with hands in the air. Their hands shake and droop with fatigue. James is feeding them tuna from a can. Mozillya is on the front porch looking in through the screen. Belushi is outside the side door, looking in through the screen.

DARRELL
 You got some on my shirt.

MOZILLYA
 How long is this spy business
 supposed to take?

CONNEY
 Just go to town and get me some
 beer and cigarettes. We'll
 still be here when you get back.

BELUSHI
 Mozillya, hush! Don't you know
 how to act on a stake-out?

James, Robert, Darrell and Conney watch this exchange with swiveling heads.

MOZILLYA
 I had to leave Ernie with that
 old man.

BELUSHI
 What's he gonna do, eat him?

MOZILLYA
 Or sell him, or give him away.

DARRELL
 We already got what we came for.
 We're just waiting for the right
 moment to make a run for it.

Mozillya enters the house. Belushi enters the house.

BELUSHI
 (to Robert)
 How did you get me mixed up in
 all this spy business?

ROBERT

I'm here on inventor business.
New and forgotten technology.

BELUSHI

Why don't you try something
old-fashioned, like living with
your wife for a whole year?

ROBERT

I dunno, Belushi, you kicked me
out after three weeks --

BELUSHI

Good time for me to get a clue.
(to James)
What's your name?

JAMES

James Boyett Clerk. At your
service, ma'am. Ever drink a
coconut? Tell your boys to put
their hands down, they're givin'
me a case of the pities, with
all that phony quiverin'.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mozillya stares out the window. Darrell sips on a coconut.
Watches Mozillya. James and Belushi sit on the sofa.

Robert stands next to James and Belushi, wearing an apron.
Holds a tray with two coconuts, straws inserted.

James holds Belushi's hand, strokes it soothingly.

BELUSHI

... and then, five minutes
before the hardware store closes,
he jumps in his car and burns
rubber. Buys one of everything,
because he plans on saving the
world between midnight and 4:00
a.m. I have to return most of
it on my way to work, so his
credit card doesn't go over its
limit.

JAMES

He couldn't possibly live very
long, and you can always remarry.

BELUSHI

Can I marry you?

JAMES

Certainly, Ma'am, I have an openin' for that sort of thing in my very next life.

BELUSHI

You're so sweet.

ROBERT

That's what she said about me, when I was bringing home a paycheck.

BELUSHI

Yeah, all two of them.

Robert takes the coconuts back to the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM (LATER)

Oscar peeks in a window. Then through the front screen.

ROBERT

I do want children, but maybe we should adopt.

BELUSHI

Something wrong with your genes? Anyhow, my new boyfriend already has a kid.

Darrell smiles and waves.

ROBERT

Does he call you "Mom"?

DARRELL

Just don't call her late for dinner.

ROBERT

No, actually, she makes dinner.

BELUSHI

So you can stay home and play with your -- your invention.

(then)

I come home from work, and you should cook for me. Give me a massage. A long one. Voluntarily.

(then)

You light some candles and put

(MORE)

BELUSHI (cont'd)
 on some soft music. Proceed to
 get me pregnant.
 (then)
 But you gotta be living with me
 -- not staying with me --

ROBERT
 Well, moving out wasn't my idea.

BELUSHI
 No, your ideas are all
 impossible. Kicking you out was
 easy.

ROBERT
 Does your new boyfriend cook,
 play soft music, massage you?

BELUSHI
 No, he has a job. But at least
 he's trying to get me pregnant.

Oscar raises his hand to knock on the screen door.

DARRELL
 Don't count on it. He got a
 vasectomy when I was eight.

BELUSHI
 What?

Oscar tries to sneak away.

MOZILLYA
 Look, that old man is trying to
 escape.

JAMES
 There's more of you?

CONNEY
 (to Oscar)
 Hey, Pardner, where you going?

Everybody runs outside.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE/FRONT - NIGHT

JAMES
 So you're the assistant manager
 down at McBlackOps who sent all
 (MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
 these clowns to steal the recipe
 for my secret sauce. When's
 Ronald MCHitman gonna show up?

OSCAR
 There's others above me who're a
 lot spookier than me. I'm
 relatively benign.

JAMES
 Benign or friendly?

OSCAR
 Potential ally. Neutral.

BELUSHI
 Neutered.

ROBERT
 Booshy...you'll embarrass him.

BELUSHI
 Why not? It's been the usual
 three weeks.

OSCAR
 (to James)
 We might have common interests.

JAMES
 You brought the whole State
 Loony Bin B-Team here because we
 might have something in common?

OSCAR
 I don't need your magic damn
 tube. I got my own.

BELUSHI
 Complete with vasectomy.

Mozillya and Darrell watch down the lane.

OSCAR
 Mine's in a climate-controlled
 tunnel under Lake Erie.
 (then)
 In my outfit, inventions are
 treated as infections.
 (then)
 First, my people try messing
 things up for a guy, anything to
 demotivate an inventor. Get
 their wives to throw them out --

ROBERT

Really?

CONNEY

You didn't need our help with that.

OSCAR

If I can't stop an inventor by ruining his life --

CONNEY

Pretty easy to do.

OSCAR

My assistant here seldom fails to spoil anything he touches. I keep him out of my personal affairs. Not that I have any.

DARRELL

Like me. I wasn't allowed to exist.

OSCAR

I apologize for my son. He's never known the nurturance of a female breast, and it interfered with his developing social skills as a child.

Darrell looks Mozillya in the eye, makes sucking motions with his mouth.

OSCAR

The car we came here in is really a time machine. I'm going to the Tunnel to get my invention back.

Oscar runs down the lane, but Conney, Mozillya, Ernie, and Darrell follow. Oscar stops to rest.

OSCAR

Why are you chasing me?

CONNEY

You lead, we follow.

DARRELL

You're our dad.

MOZILLYA

I wanna ride in the time machine.

OSCAR
You already did.

MOZILLYA
That was with gas.

OSCAR
It always run on gas.

JAMES
Oh, the old FreeUs Hybrid. I
thought that lemon got shelved.

OSCAR
It did. I borrowed it from the
VBOP Tunnel and never took it
back. Been driving it to work
for a year.

(then)
Anything some inventor could
dream up, we have a dozen
different versions of it in the
Tunnel somewhere.

JAMES
So ya have any number of time
machines, and the one ya rip off
for your personal use is the
only one that runs on gasoline.

OSCAR
I bought that time machine, fair
and square, but I could only pay
the guard so much for it.

(then)
I was sent here by VBOP to get
what you have. But I don't have
to serve them any more.

Oscar lights out for the lane. Everyone keeps up. He
stops to rest.

CONNAY
Why do you keep trying to get
away? An old geezer like you
can't hope to outrun us
studmuffins and supergirls.

Conney takes a drag on his cigarette.

OSCAR
Can't you hear Ernie crying?
You young folks are stuffed so
full of Hollywood, you wouldn't
(MORE)

OSCAR (cont'd)
 know if a monkey was sittin' on
 top of the TV lookin' up your
 knickers.

(then)
 Who's coming with me? Everyone's
 expected to pull their weight.

DARRELL
 (to Mozillya)
 You coming?

Mozillya nods yes.

Everyone except Robert, James, and Belushi follow Oscar
 down the lane. Then Belushi starts after them.

ROBERT
 He has a vasectomy.

BELUSHI
 That's not all he has.

Darrell waves goodbye as they disappear down the dark lane.

ROBERT
 What's all this about time
 machines?

JAMES
 I dunno. I'm just a simple
 hillbilly.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE/BACK - NIGHT

James and Robert are outside near a high stone wall covered
 with vines. APPALACHIAN MUSIC continues from next door.
 But the wall is just an artifact, only a thirty-foot-long
 section. There is nothing next door but trees and weeds.

ROBERT
 Sorry man, I know you weren't
 expecting so much company.

JAMES
 Don't be so sure.

ROBERT
 Where'd you hide the speakers?
 There's nothing here.

JAMES

Well, the aliens like to sing
along, you just can't hear 'em
because their voices don't
vibrate in air.

ROBERT

Stop with the alien bit, OK?

James gestures to the wall.

ROBERT

I see a wall with iron spikes in
the top. Mostly gone, just a
piece of old wall. Nothing on
the other side.

James gestures to a point further along the wall. Robert
squints his eyes a little and looks sideways.

ROBERT

This is retarded, I don't wanna
see your damn aliens.

James takes off along the wall. He's quickly swallowed by
darkness. Robert follows. Bumps into James in the dark.

JAMES

Down, boy.

They get down on their knees.

ROBERT

All I see's a black square.

JAMES

People door. The Grays used to
raise people over here. That
black square's like the flap on
a dog door, it doesn't keep you
out.

ROBERT

What does it do, domesticate you?

JAMES

Just stops leaks. You go first.
(then)
C'mon, I do this all the time.
(as Robert is
swallowed by the
black square)
Just don't get caught.

EXT. GRAYS' YARD - NIGHT

ROBERT

Why don't they turn on some
lights?

JAMES

Don't need 'em. Their eyes pick
up waves we can't see.

ROBERT

Where the heck are these
supposed Grays?

JAMES

Over there on the front porch,
where they always are this time
of night, soakin' up starlight.

ROBERT

Invisible singing aliens with no
voices, just what I needed to
round out my day.

JAMES

Not so loud, if they see you --
oh no.

ROBERT

What?

JAMES

Run in place. Now!

Robert starts jogging in place.

ROBERT

Why?

(then)

Hey! What are those lumps
moving in the dark?

JAMES

Faster. Faster.

Robert jogs faster.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Faster, or they'll see you.

ROBERT

Why aren't you jogging?

JAMES

They're bored with me, but if they see you...

(then)

... they'll take you inside for a checkup.

ROBERT

Hey, the humps are moving.

Robert runs in place twice as fast.

ROBERT

The humps are bobbing up and down.

JAMES

They're comin' this way. You've been spotted.

ROBERT

What're we gonna do?

JAMES

We have to steal their time machine and escape.

Robert stops running.

ROBERT

Huh?

JAMES

(out loud)

Run!

Robert runs in place. James lights out toward the house.

JAMES

This way! Run! They'll get you!

Robert runs after James.

INT. GRAYS' CELLAR - NIGHT

It's dark. An outdoor cellar hatch flies open, revealing the silhouette of two heads against a starry sky. An electric light goes on. James and Robert run down a rickety set of wooden stairs. Into a vast underground area, carved from stone, lit by a single bare light bulb hanging by its cord from a nail in a ceiling beam. Under the light bulb is a car made from bamboo, the bamboo time machine. It appears to have grown vs. having been built.

JAMES

To the temporal oscillator,
Little Buddy!

Robert raises his eyebrows.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Kinda time machine that's
steered by pure intent, or else
by mood swings, whichever you
happen to have.

Robert and James hurry across the room.

JAMES (CONT'D)

The temporal oscillator's
perfect for the Grays, 'cause
they're simple, of one mind.
They just think about where they
wanna go, and poof.

They get in. James in the driver's side. Robert doesn't
shut his door.

INT. BAMBOO TIME MACHINE - NIGHT

JAMES

This thing's not safe around
humans. Takes ya where ya wish
to go, 'stead of where ya should
go.

ROBERT

Wish-granting Dr. Suessmobile
from Gilligan's Island.

JAMES

More like three wishes and
you're dead. Comin' or stayin'?

Robert slams his rickety bamboo door. The bamboo door knob
falls off the outside.

INT. GRAYS' CELLAR - NIGHT

Robert jumps out to get the door handle. A new one is
growing back.

JAMES

That one was ripe. A seedling.

Robert gets in and closes his door gently.

JAMES

Don't say I never warned ya.
Remember, it's an oscillator.
If ya go to the past, ya gotta
go to the future next. Like
swingin' on time zones.

ROBERT

Well then, how do we ever get
back here?

JAMES

First law of time travel: you
can go back in time, but ya
can't go back. Can ya
apprehend the distinction?

ROBERT

How do you know all this?

JAMES

I borrow this thing all the time.

The time machine dematerializes.

INT. BAMBOO TIME MACHINE (1976) - NIGHT

Outside the time machine, a swirling vortex like old
black-and-white TV effects. The time machine rocks gently.

JAMES

They'll be expectin' us.

ROBERT

Is that good or bad?

JAMES

With these guys, it's the best
you can do.

The bamboo time machine thumps to a landing near a small
camp fire. A barn and cabin are visible in the distance,
unlit. The lower half of two men approach either side of
the bamboo time machine. Reach to open the two doors.
Their clothes are rotting off them.

JAMES

The one with the white beard's
Ed Nelson, other one's Cleo
McClintock. Mac's pa invented
four-wheel drive, also an air
compressing engine which these
two inherited. Welcome to 1976.

Robert opens his mouth, but nothing comes out.

Robert and James step out. The two men step back. Robert and James step away from the car. The two men step back. Robert and James slink sideways to the campfire and sit.

EXT. OREGON MOUNTAIN HOMESTEAD/CAMPFIRE (1976) - NIGHT

CLEO "MAC" MCCLINTOCK, 76, lies down near the fire. He starts chipping flakes of mud off his skin with a stick, wherever tattered clothing shows skin. ED NELSON, 69, paces, eyeballs the sky and surrounding mountains. Mac and Ed avoid eye contact except with each other.

ED

You're back. Looks like the temporal oscillator's seen some wear.

JAMES

Yeah, I've put some miles on 'er, tryin' to get Air Men signed up for the big convention.

ED

Yeah, we'll go, won't we Mac?

Mac shrugs.

JAMES

Well, our Air Man convention will take place in one of those parallel worlds, so gettin' there's no sweat for you fellas.

James hands two bamboo door knobs to Ed and Mac.

JAMES (CONT'D)

These are just little pieces of grow-your-own time machine, and as a matter of fact, these invitations are non-refusable --

MAC

Oh, I don't know about non-refusable, Ed, did ya hear what he just said?

Ed stares at something, his back to the others.

ROBERT

What James means, gentlemen --

Ed spins around. Bores a hole in Robert's skull with an all-seeing glare.

ROBERT

Robert Jones, wanna-be, twenty-first century. Where was I?

JAMES

"What James is tryin' to say..."

ROBERT

You guys, he's just so darn happy to get back here again --

MAC

He was only gone a coupla minutes.

ROBERT

... uh... so darn happy... uh...

ED

I can spot a chicken-headed BSer a couple of light years away, young feller. What the heck's a wanna-be, and make it good.

Robert bumbles and shuffles.

ED

Hey, do you two pig lickers wanna stick around to see Mac here go into one of his spells?

ROBERT

About that --

James sends frantic eye and hand signals.

ROBERT

... that, uh, time machine we came here in.

ED

She's a beauty. Don't look like much, but it's what's inside that counts.

(then)

Temporal Oscillator. Not so convenient for that simple trip to town for supplies, on account of the rubber band effect, but for big data-collecting excursions, she can really burn rubber.

James gestures encouragement.

ROBERT

So... "rubber band effect".
James tried to explain it to me,
but...

ED

Well, you heard about how waves
on the ocean come in alternating
peaks and valleys, and the water
for the peaks comes from the
valleys --

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (LATER)

ED

... so the best analogy for a
wave is another wave. Now --

MAC

I think he's hungry to know, Ed.
Maybe that's what a wanna-be is,
someone who wants to be like you.

JAMES

Yes, exactly. Robert wants to
know what you know, Ed.

ED

Now, son, how long you been a
wanna-be, anyhow?

ROBERT

Oh, longer than I can imagine!

Ed and Mac nod sagely. James wipes sweat off his forehead.

ED

You must think we're from a
different world. Truth is, we
all are. Take molecules, for
example. See any molecules
anywhere?

Robert opens his mouth but nothing comes out.

ED

Too slow. Bigfoot gotcha while
you're gettin' your thumb outta
your butt. Don't you know what
a rhetorical question is?

MAC

Easy now, Ed, he's just a
wanna-be.

James puts his finger to his lips.

ED

Let's stick to easy stuff that
anyone could imagine.

(then)

Molecules. Ya can't see 'em.
Well I can, but never mind.
This here's information you can
show off to all them other
wanna-bes back wherever you
think you're from.

Robert nods.

ED

We normally treat the world we
can see as sort of a Molecule
Deli. If you order up the right
tasty tidbit...

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (LATER)

ED

... the same set of goals and
ambitions as the sun anyway, if
only we knew what those goals
and ambitions was.

MAC

Because we depend upon the sun
for so much, everything from
chicken legs to frog legs, and
keeping the mud bath warm.

ED

-- so we just pick a nice easy
word like "heat" for nature's
bottom level waste dump energy.
In fact, the energy of the sun
exists in two major --

James applauds and stands.

JAMES

Thanks for the preview, Ed.

ED

OK, you got your molecular
(MORE)

ED (cont'd)
 motion within still air. Now,
 that's faster than the speed of
 sound. Just random hither-to-
 thither.

ROBERT
 Got it.

MAC
 Well, that's the easy part.

James sits down.

ED
 Then on top of that, you got
 your bouncin'. Now it don't
 hurt a molecule of air to bounce
 off another molecule...

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT (LATER)

ED
 ...and then, along comes James
 Clerk Maxwell, his fourth cousin
 twice removed from the bonny
 fens of Scotland --

Ed glances at James.

ED (CONT'D)
 -- who also happens to be the
 inventor of the electromagnetic
 spectrum --

MAC
 Not discoverer. Inventor.
 That's the hardest part for me
 to grasp.

ED
 -- and Maxwell says we need a
 cheap way to orderize the random
 molecular motion that people
 call "heat".

MAC
 We do it here all the time.

ED
 Free air compression, runnin' on
 the sun's energy.

ROBERT

Can we see your engine?

ED

Where'd you put your gun, Mac?

James stands. Heads for the time machine. Robert stands.

MAC

Ed here's just yankin' your anchor, sonny. Why, up until we was dang near 50 or so, we had jobs in town, almost never shot at folks.

Robert waves from the driver's side and James from the passenger's side of the time machine. It dematerializes.

EXT. DETROIT, MICHIGAN (POST-APOCALYPTIC FUTURE) - NIGHT

Not far from the VBOP time machine, Robert and James get out of the bamboo time machine. Jutting out of featureless wasteland nearby is a neon-lit karaoke bar, the "Detroit, Michigan -- Population 1". Someone is singing a sad country song.

Belushi stands with her back to both time machines. Robert and James sneak up to the VBOP time machine. Mozillya, Ernie, Oscar, Darrell, and Conney are sleeping in it with the doors open. Robert approaches Belushi. Looks up at the stars.

ROBERT

Booshy.

Belushi turns.

ROBERT

Sing with me?

BELUSHI

OK.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Belushi, Robert, and James enter. A sign says, "Sorry, out of beer ~~till Friday~~ forever." One person, the EMCEE, is inside. Robert approaches the Emcee and speaks to him.

The Emcee puts on a sad, slow, romantic song.

Robert and Belushi face each other at close range with separate microphones. Face the TV screen with the lyrics. Turn back and face each other, ignoring the song.

ROBERT

Just look at me.

BELUSHI

Familiar beginning.

ROBERT

I'm helpless without you.

BELUSHI

You can say that again.

ROBERT

I could just float away.

BELUSHI

Yep.

ROBERT

I don't understand.

BELUSHI

Let me try to explain.

(then)

I tried to be agreeable. I
financed your so-called career.
Your so-called invention. Your
life.

ROBERT

My so-called life?

BELUSHI

You said it.

ROBERT

So I did.

(then)

Be reasonable.

BELUSHI

I am being reasonable. You be
reasonable.

ROBERT

I always have to be reasonable,
it's your turn to be reasonable.

BELUSHI

I thought you said you already
were being reasonable.

ROBERT

No, that's what you said. When
did you ever hear anything I had
to say, anyway?

BELUSHI

When you repeated your
self-absorbed pronouncements
over and over like a robot.

(then)

When you woke me up at four in
the morning to tell me you had
to go to bed because your
invention wouldn't work.

(then)

When I got home from work and
you said to make you dinner
because you had to go out in the
garage again.

(then)

When you said you had to spend
more of my money on parts, and
always talking, talking, talking,
always you, you, you. You and
your stupid, broken invention.

ROBERT

I -- I -- I --

BELUSHI

Saving the world is all about
you, isn't it?

ROBERT

I wanted you to love me, but I
couldn't make you like me.

BELUSHI

You could invent better clichés.

ROBERT

I know it's my fault.

BELUSHI

So I should wanna be with an
apologetic whiner?

ROBERT

The relationship is beyond
repair.

BELUSHI

I know.

Robert and Belushi put the microphones down. Wordlessly, they say thanks and goodbye.

Belushi goes outside.

ROBERT

Stop trying to save my marriage.

EMCEE

I'm trying to save your life.

ROBERT

I was talking to myself.

(to James)

Why did you bring me here?

JAMES

You were drivin'.

The Emcee watches James and Robert go to the bamboo time machine. It dematerializes.

INT. BAR FULL OF SAILORS (PITTSBURGH, PA - 1948) - NIGHT

Robert and James are looking into a saloon through a window.

ROBERT

It's Willard E. Truitt!

JAMES

That's what his stationery says.

ROBERT

That's his name!

JAMES

It's "Bill". Say, who's that sailor he's talking to?

ROBERT

Oh my God in air car heaven,
that's George Lafayette Heaton
Junior!

JAMES

"George".

ROBERT

They both invented a version of
the magic valve --

JAMES

Same exact version.

Robert enters the bar. James follows.

GEORGE HEATON, 23, a slim sailor, stands at the bar. To his left sits BILL TRUITT, 45, portly. Robert stands to George's right. James to Bill's left.

BILL

(sloshed)

Now before my dad ever helped me build my first air car in 1920, he made me promise to keep it quiet, 'cause, see, we had a gas station.

George is transfixed by the topic, and drunk. A soft song starts. Girls caught up in the arms of sailors.

BILL (CONT'D)

These oil boys catch you steppin' over the line, they'll break you before you cross the street.

GEORGE

Those are some very bad oil boys. Anyway, as I was saying, all you have to do is put low pressure air into a high pressure tank --

BILL

Yeah, but once you got a magical valve that will actually do that, all the time, without bein' babysat, then the hard part is not blabbin' about it.

A GIRL squeals behind George.

GIRL

Georgie! Come dance with me!

GEORGE

You'll have to excuse me, Mr....

BILL

Willard E. "Bill" Truitt, Inventor, at your service.

GEORGE

Bill, this young lady requires the pleasure of my company.

The Girl drags George onto the dance floor.

BILL
(to Robert)
My valve works just like a heart.

Robert opens his mouth. James signals for silence.

GIRL (O.S.)
George, yecchhh, you're drunk!

George stumbles to the bar. Wipes lipstick off his mouth with his uniform sleeve. Robert props him up.

BILL
(to George)
In fact, I'm working on a way to make it leakproof. Now, back in the days of steam engines, a series of check valves at the boiler --

JAMES
George!

GEORGE
Sir?

JAMES
Your girl is dancin' with another fella.

GEORGE
'Sawright, mister, I don't own her.

George turns. Looks out onto the dance floor.

GEORGE
This is how a gentleman handles his affairs.

George lurches out to the dancing couple.

GEORGE
Hey, Sarge! This one's for you!

George tries to grab the Girl by the shoulders. She flinches away. He slumps, his face in her chest. She pushes him back to SARGE. Sarge spins George around. Knees him in the tailbone. George flies to the bar.

GEORGE

(to Sarge)

You can borrow her, but you
can't keep her!

(to James)

Brotherly love, Navy style.

JAMES

You're gonna let that frat boy
Greek-mount you, right in front
of your girl?

GEORGE

He did what?

JAMES

Don't you feel it, you know,
back there?

George feels his tailbone with his hand. He strides to
Sarge. Knocks him across the room.

GIRL

George, you're horrible.

A brawl erupts. James runs to George, who is swaying in
place. Sarge is getting up.

JAMES

(to Robert and Bill)

You two wanna build an air car,
or go to a funeral?

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Bill, Robert, and James drag George outside. Bill's car is
next to the bamboo time machine. Bill's car is a junker
with a Rolls Royce hood ornament attached to the hood.

James and Robert fold George up into Bill's back seat.
Robert runs to the time machine. James takes two bamboo
door knobs out of his back pockets. Tosses them in a
window of Bill's car while Bill burns rubber.

The bamboo time machine dematerializes.

INT. VBOP TIME MACHINE - DAY - TRAVELING

Oscar and Conney sit in front. Oscar drives. Mozillya,
Darrell, Belushi, and Ernie in back.

Oscar weaves among all lanes of what's left of Interstate
275, to avoid holes, rusted-out abandoned cars, and trees.

A sign says "Lake Erie - ~~5 Miles~~ ~~6 Miles~~ 10 Miles"

OSCAR

This is Uncle Oscar's day.

CONNEY

Which button takes us there in a split second?

DARRELL

Yeah, I'm hungry.

MOZILLYA

This baby has no milk.

CONNEY

This grownup has no beer.

OSCAR

Fifty years I waited for this.

Belushi hugs Oscar.

DARRELL

Who farted?

MOZILLYA

(to Darrell)

Here, hold the baby.

Darrell accepts Ernie.

MOZILLYA

Aren't you gonna change his diapers?

Darrell changes Ernie's disposable diaper.

DARRELL

Where's the trash can?

CONNEY

Throw it out the window, and I mean yesterday. Jesus!

OSCAR

No way. Don't wanna alter anything that might reverberate down through the ages and change the past.

CONNEY

The past can be made worse?

OSCAR

The trash can's right here.

Oscar points to a small receptacle between the front seats. The lid says, "Smart Trash Can".

OSCAR

Anything you put in there gets vaporized, so you don't create a paradox in time-space by littering.

DARRELL

I saw that movie.

Darrell squeezes the diaper into the undersized trash can. He squashes it down the rest of the way by pushing down with the lid. Liquid squirts out onto Conney's jeans.

CONNEY

That's why I said throw it out the window! Damn it!

Conney breathes through his mouth loudly. Searches with poised bird finger along the Dashboard Buttons.

CONNEY

Where's the vaporize button?

OSCAR

Want me to stop?

Conney swallows a gagging reflex. Stabs a button labeled with a trash can icon.

TOILET-FLUSHING SOUNDBYTE. A prominent dashboard speaker.

CONNEY

That's better.

DARRELL

No it isn't.

Darrell removes the lid from the trash can. The diaper expands back out the top.

Darrell smashes the lid down. More liquid squirts.

CONNEY

Damn it dude, are you brain dead?

DARRELL

It's just baby shit-arrhea.

Conney breathes hard through his mouth.

OSCAR

A little wee-wee on your leg
makes you wanna vomit?

Conney stifles a gagging episode.

CONNEY

"Smart" trash can, my lily white
ass, this vaporizer invention
didn't quite work out, did it?

Oscar gives Conney a sidelong look.

Conney punches the button three more times. Each time,
another TOILET-FLUSHING SOUNDBYTE.

Oscar flutters the accelerator pedal. The time machine
sputters to a halt.

Oscar slaps the speaker on the dashboard.

OSCAR

Did you hear that flushing sound
coming from this speaker, or
from the gas tank?

BELUSHI

Why are we stopping?

MOZILLYA

We're already there, stupid.

Conney jumps out of the car. Another gagging episode.

Oscar bangs the steering wheel. Darrell lifts the lid on
the trash can. The diaper expands out the top.

OSCAR

He dumped our gas out.

BELUSHI

Oh great, now I'm stuck in this
nightmare with a bunch of
vasectomized James Bond
wannabes. How are we gonna
find any gas?

OSCAR

To find gas, we'd need a time
machine.

DARRELL
 (to Mozillya)
 I'm not vasectomized.

Conney gets back in.

CONNEY
 What's wrong with the car?

MOZILLYA
 It's out of gas, stupid. You
 dumped the gas, not the trash.

EXT. NEAL HOME (ARCADELPHIA, ARKANSAS - 1939) - NIGHT

SCARY MUSIC.

A panel truck sits parked under a street light. Windows closed. In the cab, TWO VBOP AGENTS, dressed in black. They are smoking. Passing a nearly empty bottle back and forth. Eyes barely open. Sweat drips. They have backwards baby blue swastika patches on their jackets.

In the back of the truck, ELLIE NEAL, 4, is asleep. Wrapped up in a blanket with a price tag still on it. Cuddles a doll with a price tag still on it.

Across the street is Neal Shoe Sales & Repair. The shoe shop and all shops and houses are dark. The Neal home in the back half of the shop is lit up.

INT/EXT. NEAL HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SCARY MUSIC continues.

RUBY NEAL, 30, is on the phone, gesticulating and shouting. Her husband, BOB NEAL, 48, tall with dark hair and pale skin, is trying to hear both sides of the conversation. FLOYD NEAL, 8, clings to Ruby's dress.

Ruby slams down the phone. Buries her head in Bob's chest.

BOB NEAL
 What's there to discuss, Ruby?
 Just tell that Sheriff to get
 his purposeless rear end over
 here and bring the frickin'
 Marines --

RUBY
 He says there's an extry charge
 for kidnapped children over the
 age of three after midnight.

BOB NEAL

Extry what?

RUBY

I tried to tell him she was barely four, but he said if he makes an exception, he has to make it for everybody.

There's a knock on the outside door. Bob jumps to his feet.

BOB NEAL

I'll give him somethin' extry, that dirty bastard --

RUBY

That's not the Sheriff, honey. I wouldn't pay the extry charge.

BOB NEAL

Wouldn't pay?

RUBY

Well, what are we gonna eat, Bob honey?

BOB NEAL

Why don't we get these Kraut bastards to kidnap Floyd, too? We could save plenty, he eats like a horse.

FLOYD

No, Mama.

RUBY

Just sell your stinkin' machine to them Nazis. They acted nice till you started playin' tough.

BOB NEAL

I don't do business with any foreign powers.

RUBY

We're not to war with Germany.

BOB NEAL

Not yet.

A louder knock on the door.

BOB NEAL

Who is it, for Crikey sakes!

ROBERT/JAMES (O.S.)
 (inaudible)
 Census guys.

RUBY
 If not for that stupid invention
 of yours --

BOB NEAL
 My engine could change the
 course of history.

RUBY
 After it gets us all killed.

Loud knock.

BOB NEAL
 Honey, please see who that is.

Ruby wrings her hands. Bob flings the door open.

ROBERT/JAMES
 Census guys!

BOB NEAL
 More Nazis, ain't ya!

Robert and James try to smile.

BOB NEAL
 Census is next year, and it's
 after midnight. Try again.

JAMES
 Mr. Bob Neal, I presume.

BOB NEAL
 You're not talkin' fast enough.

JAMES
 We were sent by your little
 girl's Sunday School teacher to
 pay the extortion fee suggested
 by the Sheriff --

BOB NEAL
 How do you know about that?

ROBERT
 We heard you through the door.

BOB NEAL
 Tryin' to steal my invention?

RUBY

Just listen to him, Bob, little
Miss Darby sent him from church
school.

BOB NEAL

Whoever's pullin' on my last
little nerve, better stop before
it's too late for all of us!

Robert drops a small bundle of twenty dollar bills at Bob
Neal's feet. Ruby dives for it.

JAMES

Your guardian angels send their
regards.

James and Robert run like hell into the dark. A bamboo
door knob rolls to a stop on the floor behind Bob and Ruby.

BOB NEAL

Is that real money, Ruby?

RUBY

Yes, call the Sheriff back!

Bob and Ruby step outside, look around.

The SHERIFF steps forward, holding his hat in his hand.

EXT. NEAL HOME - NIGHT

SHERIFF

I came as quick as I could.

The Sheriff grabs the bundle of twenty dollar bills.
Simultaneously, Bob's left hand shoots out. Grabs a
handful of shirt behind the Sheriff's right shoulder. Bob
plows straight into the Sheriff, throwing him off balance.
With his right, he grabs the Sheriff's right wrist. With
his left, he yanks up hard on the Sheriff's shoulder, and
turns right. Pushes forward and down on the shoulder while
pulling up and back on the wrist, he walks the Sheriff
helplessly down the driveway and across the street. The
VBOP Agents are passed out in the panel truck.

Bob SLAMS the Sheriff up against the outside mirror. The
Sheriff pushes off against the vehicle. Bob grabs him by
the back of the shirt with two hands. Spins him all the
way around with his own momentum. Smashes the driver's
side window with the Sheriff's head. The money falls from
the Sheriff's grasp onto the street. It gets trampled.

The DEPUTY sheriff runs up, carrying a rifle.

Bob yanks the Sheriff back out of the way with his left hand. Reaches through the broken window with his right. Unlocks the driver's door. Ruby knocks the Sheriff down. Starts kicking him. Bob flings the door open.

Bob grabs the driver, VBOP AGENT #1, by the armpits. Hauls him out of the truck and lets go. VBOP Agent #1 sprawls on the road. The Deputy gets Ruby off the Sheriff. She starts in on VBOP Agent #1. Bob yanks the keys out of the ignition. Strides to the back of the panel truck. Uses one of the keys to open it up.

Ellie is asleep. Bob picks her up. He's shaking.

BOB NEAL

Ruby! Getcher girl and go
inside!

RUBY

I'm busy!

Ruby has VBOP AGENT #2's head tangled in the steering wheel, and is adjusting his neck by cranking on the wheel.

DEPUTY

Mrs. Neal, let's try to be calm.

RUBY

You're next, you worm, I'm ready
to squish you right now!

A SINGLE GUNSHOT. Everyone stops. People in the street run inside and turn out their lights.

The Sheriff is pointing the rifle into the air. His head and face are covered with blood.

SHERIFF

Why don't we all go inside for a
sit-down talk, before someone
gets hurt.

The Sheriff says something to the Deputy. Hands him the rifle. The Deputy trots back to the squad car a few doors down, where a group of men has gathered. One of them takes the rifle. The Deputy trots back to the scene.

Bob and Ruby hurry into the house with Ellie. VBOP Agent #2 extricates himself from the truck. Helps VBOP Agent #1 to his feet. They stumble to the house, holding each other up. The Sheriff and Deputy follow.

INT. NEAL HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bob Neal, Ruby, Floyd, Ellie, and the Two VBOP Agents are sitting. The Sheriff and the Deputy are standing. The Sheriff wipes blood and sweat from his head and face.

SHERIFF

Bob, we all know about your special enthusiasm. Down at the parts store, you pretty near keep buyin' the place out. Twenty-eight of this...

DEPUTY

Fifty-six of that...

SHERIFF

A hunderd 'n twelve t'other...

DEPUTY

Even multiples of twenty-eight, in any case.

SHERIFF

How can you feed your family?

The Deputy glares.

BOB NEAL

Well this is a fine how-do-we-do-ya. While you sit in here counting on your fingers and toes, them war-mongerin' weasels relax in my soft chairs sippin' tea...

The Two VBOP Agents look around for their tea.

BOB NEAL (CONT'D)

... after they held my little girl hostage out front of my own place, thumbin' their noses at me...

SHERIFF

Well now, Bob, you don't know what steps we already took while you waited safe inside. Me an' my deputy here already quibbled with the Germanic gents...

The Two VBOP Agents give each other a quizzical look.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

... and they assured me that no injury would come to your little girl if you take 'em up on their fine extry special offer.

RUBY

Oh, honey, the Sheriff's runnin' a special on givin' back stolen babies today. If only they'd of taken Floyd too, we could save twice as much money.

BOB NEAL

Ruby, you can't keep fallin' for all these special deals --

RUBY

(to the Sheriff)

I want to hang them two, not feed 'em cupcakes!

The Two VBOP Agents look around for their cupcakes.

BOB NEAL

OK, Sheriff, what's the deal?

SHERIFF

Well Bob, it's real simple really, they told me, since you won't sell 'em your invention...

The Two VBOP Agents look at each other and shrug.

SHERIFF (CONT'D)

... their boss might be happy if you just let 'em smash it up a little and throw all the pieces in the pond out back.

BOB NEAL

What on earth for?

SHERIFF

Well, Bob, I just wanna see your family an' this whole county safe from fellers like these fellers's boss.

The Two VBOP Agents nod affirmatively.

Bob beckons for Ruby and the Sheriff to follow him to another room. Ruby carries Ellie. Floyd stays put, directly across the room from the VBOP Agents. Fondles a fist-sized rock.

VBOP AGENT #1
 (strong Scottish
 accent)
 Where'd ya find this Sheriff
 fella?

VBOP AGENT #2
 (stronger Scottish
 accent)
 That particular bit o'
 serendipity is not to ma own
 credit. Woulda hired him on,
 though, if only I'd o'
 previously kent the tone o' his
 song.

VBOP AGENT #1
 He's good.

VBOP AGENT #2
 Awfu' canny.

VBOP AGENT #1
 Thinks on his feet.

VBOP AGENT #2
 That he do.

VBOP AGENT #1
 Niver expected it to go this
 smooth. Ver' near wi'oot a
 hitch.

VBOP AGENT #2
 That's no what I expected
 neither.

The Sheriff returns.

SHERIFF
 Awright, fellas, let's get this
 engine destroyin' business
 underway.

EXT. NEAL HOME/POND - DAY (DAWN)

Robert is wet and muddy, covered with green slime. The
 magic valve is in his hand. He shakes mud out of it.

James inspects the magic valve briefly.

JAMES
 Yep, same as mine.

James throws the magic valve back in the pond. Robert spins around in time to see it splash.

ROBERT

It's not like you helped me dive for it.

JAMES

No can do. Me 'n kelpies don't get along.

Robert stares at him.

JAMES

Ma Scottish granny aye threatened me wi' kelpies if I wouldna eat ma spinach.

James shudders with revulsion. Turns for the time machine.

Robert stares at the pond, dripping. Turns, jogs to the time machine and gets into the passenger's side.

ROBERT

Now where?

JAMES

Right here, over ten years ago.

EXT. NEAL HOME/BACK YARD (1927) - DAY

The time machine materializes in the back yard of Bob Neal's next door neighbor, obscured by some bushes.

Bob Neal, 36, rushes into his back yard.

BOB NEAL

Ruby, they're here.

Ruby, 18, waddles outside to join him, nine months pregnant.

ROBERT (O.S.)

They're expecting us?

JAMES (O.S.)

We're just lookin'.

Sound of a TRUCK GRINDING ITS GEARS. Bob goes around the side of the house on his left. Waves his arms. Walks backward into the yard, guiding a flatbed truck backing into the yard. The truck is hauling engines, compressors, tanks, and crates full of valves, pipes, hoses.

DRIVER

Mr. Neal?

Bob goes to the driver's window.

BOB NEAL

Bob Neal. This must be Mr. Kiser.

LEWIS KISER, 78, is barely alive, nestled between his two middle-aged sons in the seat.

DRIVER

Pops can't get out of the truck,
but me and my brother'll unload
his stuff for you.

BOB NEAL

I can't tell you how much this
means to us.

KISER BRO. #1 (DRIVER)

What, the Kiser curse? Tell
Pops how grateful you are. Me
'n my brothers 'n sisters 'n ma,
we got tired of hearing about it
when I was still little.

KISER BRO. #2

But he's a good pop, and no one
ever said any different.

KISER BRO. #1

No one.

The Kiser Bros. gently re-arrange Lewis Kiser's pillows.
They get out of the cab.

LEWIS KISER

Get in here, Neal, I ain't got
much time.

Bob gets in the passenger side. The Kiser Bros. go
back-and-forth on the passenger's side of the truck,
carrying the equipment.

BOB NEAL

Bob Neal, sir. I'm happy to
finally meet you.

LEWIS KISER

First things first, Neal. This
here invention's your problem
now, but that don't mean you'll
still want it on down the road.

BOB NEAL

Mr. Kiser, this dream of a free running air car is all I've thought about for years.

Lewis contracts in a spasm of pain, wheezing.

LEWIS KISER

That kind of talk could finish me off.

BOB NEAL

Sorry sir. What's this "Kiser curse?"

LEWIS KISER

My family's idea of a joke. Never mind, they're entitled to make sport. First things first, Neal. Never tell your wife it's almost finished.

Bob is all ears.

LEWIS KISER (CONT'D)

Twenty-eight pistons. If only I'd have thought of it fifty years ago...

Kiser dozes off.

EXT/INT. NEAL HOME/BACK YARD - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS - KISER'S TRUCK

- A) James and Robert crouch under the truck's driver's side window, listening.
- B) James and Robert run for the time machine.
- C) Robert jumps into the driver's seat.
- D) Lewis Kiser holds a bamboo door knob in his hands, turns it over and over, inspecting it.
- E) Kiser watches the time machine dematerialize.

EXT. DUNES OF FORMER LAKE ERIE - DAY

Darrell, Mozillya, Belushi, and Oscar are sitting in the dirt, leaning against the shady side of the VBOP time machine. Darrell holds Ernie.

The former Lake Erie is a sand dune desert dotted with ancient, colorful non-biodegradable trash, no water in sight.

CONNEY

Could've warned me about the buttons on the dashboard.

OSCAR

Could've left the driving to me.

CONNEY

Why didn't you steal a time machine that runs off of good vibes or whatever that stinkin' bamboo piece of crap runs off of?

OSCAR

If it ran on good vibes and I died, you'd be stranded.

MOZILLYA

Darrell'd drive if you both died.

Belushi looks at Darrell and Mozillya.

BELUSHI

Give me that doll.

Belushi takes Ernie, pushes his face into her chest and closes her eyes, rocking back and forth.

BELUSHI

Robert, Robert, Robert...

CONNEY

You talk to him that way when he's around, you'd have twins by now.

MOZILLYA

Shut up, prick!

CONNEY

I'll show you how to shut someone up, girlie.

The Bamboo Time Machine plops down right in front of them, blowing a cloud of dust in their face. They jump to their feet coughing. Ernie cries. Conney stares at the bamboo time machine.

Robert jumps out of the driver's seat.

ROBERT

Brought you some cases of water.

James gets out of the passenger's side. Breaks the knobs off the outside of both doors. Puts them in his back pockets. New ones grow back. Robert hands Mozillya a bottle of water.

ROBERT

Sorry, rough landing.

Mozillya grabs Ernie. Dumps water on his head. Wipes mud off his face with the hem of her blouse.

Conney inches toward the bamboo time machine. James watches him surreptitiously.

Conney jumps into the driver's seat. Slams the door. Slaps the Go button. The button stays in.

James saunters over to Conney. The others watch. The button pops out with a click. James pulls it out. Turns it over. It's a cigarette lighter. Hands it to Conney.

James takes a fresh pack of cigarettes out of each back pocket and hands them to Conney. Conney grabs at the packs with both hands, dropping the hot lighter in his lap. Jumps out of the time machine quick.

EXT. BAMBOO TIME MACHINE - NIGHT

The bamboo time machine dematerializes.

EXT. BRITTS CABIN (NEODOSHA, KANSAS - 1900) - DAY

James and Robert get out of the bamboo time machine outside an unpainted board shack. Three filthy white children play silently, making a big mud man: OLIVE BRITTS, 11, CHESTER BRITTS, 6, and LULA BRITTS, 3.

JAMES

Ask 'em where their mama is.

ROBERT

(to Olive)

Hey, where yo' mama be?

Olive points to a wooden cross nearby.

ROBERT

Oh no, I'm so sorry, when did your mama pass away?

CHESTER

She can't pass no way, she's
dead already.

ROBERT

You poor little things. When
did she die?

OLIVE

Jus' before our papa run away.

LULA

You our new papa?

ROBERT

Shore!

James gestures in the negative.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I mean, gee whiz, sugah dumplin',
I sho' wish I could be yo new
pappy --

James grimaces violently.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

-- but shucks, I gots to be
goin' on after ma own bidness.

James puts his finger down his throat.

OLIVE

Mister, I think your friend's
gonna sick up. Don't ya wanna
lay down inside a spell? It's
too hot to go someplace.

James nods.

INT. BRITTS CABIN - DAY

Inside the cabin is nothing but a packed dirt floor.

James and Robert sit against one wall, the three children
against the opposite wall.

OLIVE

Granny says liddle chillen don'
need no fancy chairs to set on.
Got work to do.

ROBERT

I thought I saw you playin' in
the mud when we arrived, not
workin'.

CHESTER

Day off, stupid. Sunday. God's
frickin' day. Nothin' to do.

LULA

Granny whip us if we work on
God's frickin' day.

ROBERT

So, little bundles of ecstasy,
what's the story on your papa?

LULA

No good, low-life slumper.

OLIVE

Never take care of Mama.

CHESTER

Good for nothin',
beans-for-brains inventor.

OLIVE

Took off like a loony bug when
Mama stopped screamin'.

LULA

Baby never come out.

CHESTER

Never seen the light of day.

OLIVE

Better off where it is, Granny
says.

ROBERT

Why, that rotten, no good --

JAMES

You kids wanna go find your papa?

OLIVE

Tear him limb from limb.

LULA

Build him a new birdcage.

CHESTER

Crack a coupla ribs for starters.

JAMES

Well awright. Let's get goin'.
But you gotta promise me you
won't bang him up too good till
he gets his chance to straighten
up, OK?

The children look at their feet.

CHESTER

We wants ta rip him a new hole
right where Granny said.

They arrive at the bamboo time machine.

CHESTER

What's this here contraption?

ROBERT

This is a time machine.

OLIVE

You a machine inventor too?

Robert opens his mouth to speak.

JAMES

No, he's just a regular person
like your granny.

James breaks off the driver's side door knob. Hands it to
Olive. Another knob grows back.

JAMES

You give that to your Daddy for
me, when we get there, OK?

Olive nods.

James gets in on the driver's side. Chester and Lula sit
on Robert's lap, Olive on James'. James lets Olive push
the Go Button. The time machine dematerializes.

EXT. PUBLIC PLAZA (DENVER, COLORADO - 1900) - DAY

A GROUP OF BOYS on benches playing their limberjacks:
jointed wooden men that TAP DANCE MUSICALLY while swinging
their arms and legs. One boy sings.

A PREACHER, his bible, a SMALL CROWD.

PREACHER

(reads)

"And he shall turn the heart of
the fathers to the children, and
the heart of the children to
their fathers, lest I come and
smite the earth with a curse."

Next to a man on a soapbox, a gaudily-painted sign on a wagon: "Barzillai Bancroft Britts, A.K.A. Professor Perpetual Motion."

BARNEY BRITTS, 37, partially visible from the back, lectures from the soapbox. His laundry hangs from a rope strung from the back of the wagon to a tree. Several giggling women and a few sneering men watch his lecture.

Barney is the same actor as Robert, but with long hair, large sideburns and moustache. Unkempt, worn-out clothes. He is hoarse and fatigued.

BARNEY BRITTS

Get your husband here! Yes
ma'am, it could be you, or you
or you, even you, Miss.
Professor Perpetual Motion
doesn't care how others see you,
a woman and her money are the
perfect match for this fine gent.

(then)

What a catch, ladies! Have a
look at the merchandise! This
could be your new husband!
Genius, inventor, widower, his
poor young wife was struck down
in her youth.

(then)

I have the youthful virility
required, and to top that off,
my invention will make you an
instant millionairess. Young
lady, old lady, pretty or putrid,
I only ask a small dowry, a
simple matter of one thousand
dollars, so I can build my
earth-shattering, industrially
revolutionizing, almost magic
air compressing machine.

(then)

Yes, ladies, I can save us all
from the black goo that fouls
air and musses hair. With a
simple machine, I will change a
little wind into a big one.

Barney takes a paper out of his pocket.

BARNEY BRITTS

Every gal wants to marry a poet.

(reads)

"Verily verily I say unto
you/This homely poetry Is
gospelly true/If saint or sinner,
Christian or Jew"

(reads)

"Will risk five hundred dollars
with me/In very short order you
will see/that I will do as I
agree"

(reads)

"Make a machine very stout/that
will make power and no doubt
/turn the mechanical world
about."

(reads)

"Should I not built it, I might
have fits/For I am champing on
my bits/To work up the plans of
B. B. Britts"

(reads)

"For as sure as there's an
ocean/He has the only right
notion/That will accomplish
perpetual motion"

(reads)

"But to you it may seem/quite
foolish I ween/To propose to
make power without any steam"

(reads)

"But the wisdom of man/Would be
quite a sham/Without inspiration
from the great 'I am'"

(reads)

"Inspiration from above/Like the
Savior's dove/To minds of men
that's ruled by love"

(reads)

"Now to the maid of princely
air/That has a few hundred
dollars to spare/Hurry up and
I'll make you a
multi-millionaire"

Behind the wagon, the bamboo time machine materializes.

Robert, James, Olive, Chester, and Lula pile out.

CHESTER

I'll bust him wide open.

OLIVE

Squeeze him till he pops.

LULA

Papa?

The Children see Barney from the side and back.

OLIVE/CHESTER/LULA

Papa, Papa!

Olive, Chester, and Lula run to Barney. Still from a distance, Barney glances over his shoulder. He recognizes his children. Collapses to his knees, meets air, rolls off the soapbox. The Children dive on top of him.

Robert sees Barney's face for the first time.

ROBERT

Aaaarrrrghhhh!

JAMES

That's not your double. Our doppelganger inhabits our same time zone, much like our shadow.

ROBERT

So what is it?

JAMES

You've heard of reincarnation?

ROBERT

I don't believe what I hear.

James shrugs.

JAMES

We better skedaddle.

(then)

Oh no, he's coming this way!

(then)

Don't look him in the eye.

ROBERT

Why?

JAMES

Empathetic resonance. You might both get sucked into the pity-pot whirlpool and drown.

(then)

Run!

ROBERT

Run in place or just run?

JAMES

Just run! Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!

Robert gets in the driver's seat, James gets in the passenger side. The time machine dematerializes.

EXT. NEAR LAKE ERIE/INTERSTATE 275 - DAY

The trunk of the bamboo time machine contains cases of canned tuna. Belushi reads the date on a can.

BELUSHI

You got supplies in 1984?

ROBERT

Yeah, the day after Thanksgiving, Shill-Mart was a madhouse. Just grabbed what we could.

DARRELL

Coulda brought some mayo.

Conney slaps the side of Darrell's head.

DARRELL

Ouch!

OSCAR

(to Conney)

You're walking on thin ice.

CONNEY

Bite me.

Mozillya slaps Conney on the back of the head.

CONNEY

Hey, Jesus!

Mozillya rears back for another shot at Conney. He leaves.

EXT. INTERSTATE 275 - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Mozillya and Belushi are pushing the VBOP time machine up over a small rise. Darrell carries Ernie. Oscar is asleep in the back seat. When the car nears the crest, Conney runs up, puts his cigarette in his mouth, and helps push for a second. Drops back, gives Darrell and Ernie a dirty look. Behind them, James and Robert walk next to the bamboo time machine, which drives itself.

JAMES

It might be endin' for me. Not for you, but I feel certain that I am not long for this dream.

ROBERT

So, I really am dreaming.

JAMES

Not just you. We got stuck in a dream together, it gelled.

(then)

While most folks are just store dummies and clothes horses, there are literally thousands of sentient humans on earth.

(then)

By the sheer mass of our agglomerated stupidity, we've created what we mistake for modern times. It's really just a long nightmare.

ROBERT

Thousands of stupid sentient beings.

JAMES

Well, a few thousand anyway.

ROBERT

Out of the billions of apparent humans on earth...

JAMES

Mere thousands are not props.

ROBERT

How do you know all this?

JAMES

Everyone my age knows this stuff. Unless they're props.

ROBERT

Where are we going next? How about your ancestor who built the valve and the engine to go with it, in... 1870 was it?

JAMES

Maxwell's better. My ancestor's distant relative, 1865, Scotland. The first scientist to discuss the magic valve in print.

ROBERT

James Clerk Maxwell? But your ancestor actually built the whole air compressing engine. What was his name? The one in Alabama.

JAMES

I'm named after him, James Boyett Clerk.
(then)
Ever been to Scotland?

ROBERT

No time like the present.

They get in the bamboo time machine, James driving. It dematerializes.

INT. U. OF EDINBURGH/CLASSROOM (SCOTLAND - 1865) - DAY

PROF. JAMES CLERK MAXWELL, 34, sits on a stool at the front of a gathering of well-dressed young male scholars. James is in a desk near the exit. Robert is in the front row. Maxwell sings and strums a guitar. His poem "Rigid Body Sings" is sung to the tune of "Comin' Through the Rye".

MAXWELL

(sings - rural
Scottish accent)

"If a body meet a body/Flyin'
through the air/If a body hit a
body/Will it fly? And
where?/Every impact has its
measure/Ne'er a one have I/Yet
all the lads they measure me/Or,
at least, they try."

(sings)

"If a body meet a
body/Altogether free/How they
travel afterwards/We do not
always see/Every problem has its
method/By analytics high/For me,
I know not one of them/But what
the worse am I?"

The students applaud politely. Maxwell sets down his guitar.

Robert waves his hand in the air. Maxwell stares at him. He finally prompts Robert to speak.

ROBERT
(bad Scottish
accent)

Presume a wee elf's inside a
compressed air tank, sortin' hot
molecules from cold, into
separate compartments at no cost.

STUDENT
Ah, the perpetual jerking of wee
minds.

Students laugh.

MAXWELL
Presume instead that ma good
fellas'd rather hear bad poetry
than bad science?

Maxwell picks up a large book from a big desk at the front
of the room and opens it randomly.

MAXWELL
(pretends to read)
"'Twas nonetheless their quest
to see/my neck suspended from a
tree/ere 'twixt the tangled gams
of dames/my knotted member ever
came."

The students snicker, whistle, cheer, and call for more.
Robert walks out. James starts to follow. Is almost
knocked down when Robert barges back in. Robert strides to
the front of the class. Grabs the big book. Opens it to a
random page.

ROBERT
(pretends to read)
"Those nifty notions that pose
as intuition/generate the joy of
superstition/same as discovering
the truth of perpetual motion/
gives birth to a simple
'forsooth'."
(then)
It sucks, but it rhymes.

MAXWELL
It's awright laddie, Americans
ha'e no the gift of the poem.

Maxwell pats Robert on the head. Robert thinks Maxwell
wanted to shake hands and gets embarrassed with his hand
out, dangling. Embraces Maxwell. Bumbles to the exit.
James and Robert leave.

INT. U. OF EDINBURGH/HALLWAY - DAY

Robert slaps his head with both hands.

ROBERT

Why did you bring me here? He never heard about his own idea.

JAMES

Wonder what year he'll publish your wee-elf-in-a-tank?

Robert is brought up short.

JAMES (CONT'D)

One of life's little paradoxes.

ROBERT

He can use my idea. I got it from his book anyway.

They go outside and head toward the bamboo time machine, which the STUDENTS MILLING ABOUT are ignoring.

JAMES

They don't know what it is, so they can't see it.

INT. BAMBOO TIME MACHINE (U. OF EDINBURGH) - DAY

Robert is in the driver's seat, James in the passenger's.

Robert's hand is already approaching the Go Button. Maxwell barges out of the nearest building and jostles his way past non-lookers ignoring the time machine. His face glows with excitement. His eyes lock on Robert's. He raises his arms high in the air and opens his mouth. Robert's hand contacts the Go button.

The time machine dematerializes. Maxwell is left with two thumbs up and open mouth. He looks around. Notices that no one else saw the time machine at all.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE ERIE - NIGHT

The bamboo time machine materializes near the VBOP time machine and the tunnel hatch. Lake Erie is a shallow puddle, clogged with colorful bits of non-biodegradable trash from past decades. About the size of a football field.

The tunnel entrance is a horizontally disposed double-door hatch in the bottom of a short concrete-lined gully. The outer door has mostly rusted away. Inner door is mostly intact.

The entrance to the ramp down into the gully bears a sign, "VBOP Inc. Museum Entrance. Visitors will be skewered at no charge." Outside the hatch is a skeleton wearing scuba gear, a spear in its ribs.

Darrell, Conney, Mozillya, Belushi, Ernie, and Oscar are asleep in the VBOP Time Machine.

JAMES

Walk around Lake Erie with me.

They stroll a bit.

ROBERT

What good are inventors, anyway?

JAMES

What does the world need?

(then)

Sweeter candy?

ROBERT

No.

JAMES

Bigger TVs?

ROBERT

Hell no.

JAMES

Faster food?

ROBERT

Of course not.

JAMES

Cars that go anywhere for free?

Robert stares.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Shackled by ever-stiffenin' hope, his life became a prison of mechanical desire. Enslaved to a revolutionary idea.

ROBERT

What about your projects?

JAMES

Everyone needs a hobby.

ROBERT

When the world needs saving?

JAMES

One giant lurch forward for you;
one small sideways stumble for
some out-of-the-way corner of
some backwater universe...

James shakes his head. They continue in silence.

EXT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

Oscar puts his jacket in the driver's seat of the VBOP time machine. Conney is squatting next to a small fire, stirring something. Oscar spots something on the ground. Picks it up. It's marked, "VBOP".

OSCAR

Conney, get over here.

There's no response.

Oscar squeezes the "Play" button on the side of the device. Conney's voice is heard from the device as Oscar saunters toward where Conney stirs opened cans of tuna on a tiny fire between some rocks.

CONNEY

(recorder)

"Tried to escape in the bamboo car, but it was booby-trapped. Haven't been allowed to eat or drink since capture in Alabama. Planning to execute the enemy agents one at a time, starting with the old man's bloodthirsty, psychotic son. Might hang on to his secretary, in case she's the last female on earth."

Oscar stops behind Conney.

CONNEY (CONT'D)

(recorder)

"End of Chapter Three."

Conney freezes.

OSCAR

Consider yourself my prey.

Oscar places the device into the fire. It vaporizes.

INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

The massive inner door looks like it was made to keep Lake Erie out. It's rusted shut. A sign says "VBOP Permanent Storage Facility. Visitors Will Be Kept."

Robert and Darrell squeeze oil on the hinges from tuna cans. Bang and pry on the door. It budges with a harsh SCRAPE.

ROBERT

How'd you get that time machine out through this door?

OSCAR

Paris, 1889.

(then)

I disabled all the booby traps last time I was here. Nothing inside now but maybe a skeleton, and a bunch of believe-it-or-not inventions.

JAMES

There's somethin' in there I can't face.

ROBERT

What's that, your doppelganger?

JAMES

No, it's not me. It's my opposite.

ROBERT

Is there no end to the things that seem to threaten our very existence?

JAMES

Our fleetin', ephemeral existence. In there, I am not. If we look into each others' eyes, we'll both implode.

DARRELL

I imploded once, and I felt a lot better afterwards.

JAMES

I already know what you're gonna find. More of the same. Magic valve's a magic valve.

ROBERT

Why don't you just wait out here.

DARRELL

Yeah, cool your jets. We need you to drive us home in your wooden jalopy.

ROBERT

I can drive it.

DARRELL

I prefer him.

The door budes with a SCRAPE. Darrell and Robert pull it out another foot on SQUEALING hinges. Harsh electric light floods out. James shields his eyes. Gets out of the light.

DARRELL

(to Oscar)

Coming?

OSCAR

I already came.

ROBERT

(to Conney)

You coming or staying?

OSCAR

He's staying.

Darrell and Robert go inside.

EXT/INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

Belushi, Mozillya and Ernie are asleep in the reclining seats of the VBOP Time Machine. Conney, James, and Oscar sit in the shade of the hatch.

CONNEY

Everything that ever needed to be invented, has already been invented. We've entered the Golden Age of So What.

OSCAR

What's your beef with inventors? Everyone has to invent, just to survive their own BS.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Inside the door is the tunnel's CURATOR, same actor as James. An extremely old man, laying on an ancient canvas cot, surrounded by empty beer bottles and tuna cans.

CURATOR

Don't kill me.

ROBERT

OK.

DARRELL

You look like you're gonna die
in about five minutes anyway.

INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

OSCAR

(to Conney)

Mozillya invents her own family.
Belushi invents a tragic life
that's someone else's fault.
You invent new ways to be
despicable.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

The museum is well lit, large and tubular in shape. Robert snoops around. Checks out the machines on display. Piles of empty beer bottles and tuna cans everywhere.

CURATOR

Time don't count for nothin' in
here. I must be over a hunnerd
'n seventy-five years old.

DARRELL

You can say that again.

CURATOR

I must be over a hunnerd 'n
seventy-six years old.

DARRELL

A moment ago you said a hundred
and seventy-five.

CURATOR

Time don't count for beans in
here.

DARRELL

All you need is a little
remedial math, and you'll be all
set for a few more decades.

INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

OSCAR

Real inventors love beautiful
ideas, not blowing stuff up.
That's why the inventor of
dynamite used his wealth to
establish the Nobel Prize.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

ROBERT

Help me find the valve.

CURATOR

Ya here to put me outta my
misery?

ROBERT

Why the misery, old timer?

CURATOR

Run outta beer. Musta been over
a week ago. Longest year of my
life.

ROBERT

Help us find something, old
timer. We'll get you up.

CURATOR

OK, but don't break me.

Robert and Darrell help the Curator to his feet. Large pieces of canvas stick to his back from the rotten cot. Through holes in the canvas, surrounded by cans and bottles, Darrell glimpses the magic valve under the cot. Raises his eyebrows, keeps moving.

INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

CONNEY

What about your whacko son?

OSCAR

He re-invents the world with
each passing moment.

CONNEY

What about you, Alabama? Has being an inventor done anything for you? Your ViewTubes are as interesting as Auntie's knitting lessons set to rap music.

JAMES

Thanks for your opinion.

(then)

Scorpion just run up your pants leg. Might wanna take 'em off and shake 'em out.

CONNEY

You're so full of --

Conney's eyes pop open wide.

CONNEY

Damn!

Conney jumps to his feet and runs behind the VBOP Time Machine, unbuckling his belt as he runs.

OSCAR

I was trying to have a heart-to-heart with my hired thug. I felt we were almost connecting.

JAMES

You can't bond with somethin' that ain't there.

CONNEY

(shouting)

There's nothing in my pants!

Belushi and Mozillya laugh.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

ROBERT

Pretty good lighting.

CURATOR

The best dirty money can buy.

ROBERT

Why are you still here?

CURATOR

No place to go, nothing to do if
I got there.

DARRELL

You could go look for beer.

CURATOR

I'd have to walk.

DARRELL

We brought some gas, but some
guy spilled it.

CURATOR

Who's we? The Company?

DARRELL

Yeah, my father's VBOP. Don't
worry, they don't kill people in
his department, he just messes
up their lives.

CURATOR

Well, I'd like to see him try
and mess up my life.

INT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

OSCAR

Oh, I don't know, this is a hell
of a time for a barbecue.

JAMES

No better time than a hell of a
time's what we say in Alabamy.

Conney returns to the hatch. Getting dressed. James
doesn't meet his evil eye. Conney stands in the entrance
of the hatch, back to the others. Gazes at Lake Erie.

Conney freezes at attention. Points to the lake.

CONNEY

No! God no, Lord save us!

Conney spins around to face James.

CONNEY

Run for the hills! It's kelpies!

James screams and jumps to his feet. He runs into the edge
of the door. Squeezes past the door. Runs inside.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

ROBERT

I found the magic valve!

CURATOR

No, that's mine!

Robert heads for the door. The Curator chases. Can't run any faster than he can walk. Robert laterals to Darrell.

James rushes in.

JAMES

Kelpies are comin'! Don't let 'em corner you in here.

Robert is between James and the Curator. Robert steps to James' side. The Curator and James are face-to-face.

JAMES

Who's that -- arrggghhhh!

JAMES/CURATOR

We're implodin'!

James and the Curator become two-dimensional. Fold up like paper dolls. Turn into teeny black holes. Orbit around each other. Merge into one. Blaze into a ball of light. Fly away through the open door.

Oscar enters, hair standing on end.

OSCAR

What the hell's going on?

DARRELL

Here, Father, it's your valve.

ROBERT

I found that. My friend sacrificed his life.

OSCAR

Don't we all. Let me see it.

Darrell gives Oscar the magic valve.

ROBERT

We have to share this technology with the world. It's all I've lived for.

OSCAR

Share? Me share? That's all I
ever wanted to do with this
stinkin' pipe.

Oscar gives the magic valve to Robert.

OSCAR

Pretty sure you can handle the
responsibility...

Robert gives the valve to Darrell. They pass it around
like a hot potato. Conney arrives.

CONNEY

What the --

Conney dives for the magic valve.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Conney's hands are tied behind his back. Conney and Oscar
are exploring the tunnel museum.

CONNEY

Hey Pardner, get over here, you
gotta see this!

Oscar wanders over to join Conney in front of a large
machine the size of a big vertical propane tank. It has
faucets at the bottom labeled Regular and High Octane. A
big hatch near the top. A stainless steel ram rod extends
into the top of the tank from a framework above fitted with
hydraulic hoses.

CONNEY

(reads)

"Abra-ka-Davera Instant Gasoline
Press. Suitable for converting
human flesh only. Feed a dead
person into this press, and push
a button. In minutes, the
cadaver is compressed into a
post-fossilized state. Crude
petroleum is then processed into
gasoline while you wait."

OSCAR

How clever. Now where was I?

CONNEY

Don't you get it? We can use
this puppy to get us home.

OSCAR
 Except for the unfortunate lack
 of dead people.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE ERIE - DAY

Darrell is washing tuna cans and plastic spoons in the lake.

Mozillya and Belushi are playing with Ernie near the VBOP
 time machine. Robert is sitting on a rock, head in hands.

Conney has almost got his hands worked free. Makes a
 beeline for Darrell.

Oscar is farther away, cradling the magic valve in his arms.

OSCAR
 (sings)
 "Hush little baby, don't say a
 word..."

CONNEY
 (behind Darrell)
 You ruined my life.

DARRELL
 I didn't know you had one. Are
 you angry with me?

Oscar is a ways behind Conney and Darrell. He sees the
 cord pull free from Conney's wrists. He starts to hurry,
 then starts to run. Mozillya sees this. Hands Ernie to
 Belushi and starts to run.

CONNEY
 Your old man was the key to my
 career.

DARRELL
 He is the kindest and gentlest
 father I ever had.

CONNEY
 Are you too stupid to know when
 you're babbling like a girl?

DARRELL
 Let's just kiss and make up.

Darrell sticks his butt out for a kiss.

Conney kicks Darrell. Darrell tips over into the water.
 Spins around onto his back. Back wheels into deeper water.

Conney leaps on top of him. Conney pins Darrell down in the water with his hands around his throat.

Oscar runs up behind Conney. Rears back with the magic valve.

MOZILLYA

You don't want to do that.

Oscar barely notices her. He's frozen. His cheeks are vibrating.

Mozillya tries to get the magic valve away from Oscar while Conney tries to choke and drown Darrell. Mozillya manages to get the magic valve. Oscar falls down in the water panting. Mozillya rears back. Smacks Conney on the head.

MOZILLYA

Bad spy. Bad, bad spy.

Conney falls face first into the shallow water.

Mozillya helps Darrell to his feet, looking him straight in the eye. Dabs at the blood on his lip. Darrell coughs up dirty water on her and she smiles.

DARRELL

Where's Ernie?

Mozillya and Darrell help Oscar stand up. Everyone's back is turned to Conney when bubbles come up.

EXT. TUNNEL HATCH - DAY

Oscar, Darrell, Mozillya, Belushi, and Ernie are gathered around Robert, who is in the bamboo time machine.

DARRELL

Your time machine is too small.

OSCAR

Gotta get outta here the way we came, running on gas.

(then)

Where's the body?

BELUSHI

Barking at the gates of hell.
Who cares?

OSCAR

We may have a long time to find out who cares about what.

BELUSHI

What're we gonna do, send the body back with Robert for a proper burial, and sit here in the future and starve?

ROBERT

I can take you back one at a time. Belushi first.

BELUSHI

Take the body.

OSCAR

We have options, son. This tunnel's full of technology that does the impossible. I bet we could even make fertilizer out of trash.

(then)

Maybe you should go on and do what you need to do. You can always come check on us later.

DARRELL

You could bring us some pizza.

BELUSHI

Now that's something he knows how to do.

Mozillya punches her on the shoulder. Heads back to the tunnel. The others follow one by one, except Belushi. Robert is smiling at her when the bamboo time machine dematerializes. She watches the spot where it had been.

INT. TUNNEL/ABRA-KA-DAVERA PRESS - DAY

Oscar stands on a ladder built onto the tank, trying to pull rigor-mortised Conney by the armpits up to the open hatch. Conney's ankles are supported by Darrell's shoulders. Oscar finally gets Conney's head inside. To assist, Darrell should lift the ankles up, but instead lets them droop.

OSCAR

Hold still, will ya!

DARRELL

But Father --

OSCAR

Don't worry, Sonny, he won't feel a thing.

DARRELL

Yeah, but Father, it says "human remains only".

OSCAR

He's not human?

DARRELL

His clothes aren't.

Oscar drops Conney on the floor with a THUD.

Oscar, Mozillya, and Belushi look at Darrell.

Darrell turns his head to the side as he peels Conney's wet trousers off. Conney's wearing sexy underwear. Darrell yanks again. Reflexively looks down. Looks away.

DARRELL

Anyone want a souvenir?

Mozillya looks horrified.

DARRELL

I mean his shoes, or his belt or something.

Mozillya appears to have her doubts about Darrell.

DARRELL

Just yanking your chain.

MOZILLYA

Don't yank it.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Oscar and the others are gathered around the Abra-ka-Davera Press. The ram inches into the tank making OOZY GURGLING sounds. Oscar tries to open the faucet further. Gasoline barely dribbles out into a couple of empty tuna cans.

Mozillya and Darrell hold Ernie. Mozillya points to the dribbling gasoline. Darrell covers Ernie's eyes with his hand.

INT. BAMBOO TIME MACHINE - DAY

Robert is watching the swirling vortex of the time tunnel. Eases off the accelerator pedal. Moves a control lever to "Idle". Takes a big deep breath. Rests his head back. HARP STRUMS.

INT. NETWORK TV STUDIO/LENO SHOW - NIGHT

ELTON JOHN and PAUL MCCARTNEY, wearing cherub wings, are finishing up a duet. Respectful applause. They return to JAY LENO's couch. Robert stands to greet them.

Paul and Robert practice a secret handshake. Elton pats Robert on the butt. Says something privately to Robert. Robert chuckles.

Elton and Paul sit down.

LENO

You obviously know each other.

ELTON

Naturally.

PAUL

How'd ya like our song, Robert?

ROBERT

Well...

LENO

Go ahead, they can take it.

ROBERT

It's like this, fellas. If you can't hit the high notes anymore, it's time to retire.

PAUL/ELTON

We are retired.

ROBERT

Well, when I retire, I plan to turn into a ball of light and fly away.

PAUL

You don't say.

ROBERT

I've had it with modern civilization.

LENO

Which, as we all know, would no longer exist if not for your marvelous free range air car.

Wild cheering from the audience.

ELTON

Do you think we could impose?

ROBERT

How's that?

Elton flaps his little wings.

ROBERT

Oh, turn into... Well I'd love to, but I can only turn into a ball of light and fly away...

(then)

... once.

ELTON

Oh, in that case, never mind.

ROBERT

Like this!

WHITE SCREEN

JAMES (O.S.)

Snap out of it.

Roberts eyes open, staring ahead into the vortex.

JAMES (O.S.)

Another Nobel Prize ceremony?

ROBERT

Leno Show. Elton. Paul.

JAMES (O.S.)

You were my last hope.

Robert whirls to the right. The passenger seat is empty. He sinks back into the driver's seat.

Robert grabs a bamboo knob in a long slot labeled "Past" on the left, "Future" on the right. Takes a deep breath. Grabs a bamboo strut for support and slams the knob all the way to the left. The time machine hits turbulence. Pieces of bamboo fly into the vortex. The handle tries to pull itself back. Robert holds it to the left with both hands. Grits his teeth. Puts his back into it. Sweat breaks out. The vortex turns into a lava lamp. The car spins, bucks, strains, CREAKS.

The screen goes black and silent.

EXT. TUNNEL HATCH - NIGHT

Belushi is in the driver's seat of the VBOP time machine. Darrel, Mozillya, and Ernie stand around. Oscar pours the last drops of gas from tuna cans through a funnel made of trash into the car's gas tank.

BELUSHI

Who's coming back to witness the fall of civilization with me?

OSCAR

This museum needs a new curator.

DARRELL

Yeah, Father, you stay and take care of us.

OSCAR

It's kinda my dream job.

(then)

The museum.

(then)

And Ernie needs his grampaw.

BELUSHI

Ernie can take care of himself. His parents...

DARRELL

You can say that again.

BELUSHI

You two can be Adam and Eve.

DARRELL

I get to be Adam.

MOZILLYA

Oscar can be the snake.

BELUSHI

He might get you tossed out of the garden.

Oscar and Belushi look into each others eyes.

BELUSHI

Will you miss me?

OSCAR

Get outta here.

Oscar kisses the top of Belushi's head. The time machine dematerializes. The others leave.

A deep THRUMMING sound fades in.

EXT. RUINS OF ATLANTIS — NIGHT

There's nothing but the THRUMMING sound. Then, indefinable shapes. Ruins of something carved from the side of a mountain that dwarfs nearby hills. The "ruins" are inexplicable appendages, growths. Seemingly non-functional odd shapes, unfamiliar from any known tradition, time period, animal, or machine. The growths appear to be carved out of one block of stone the size of a small moon. Vast stone arcs are particularly prominent, one unlike the next. They end in mid-air with knobby shapes. Dreamlike epic magnificence inconceivable by jaded adults.

THRUMMING DRONE grows louder as Robert wanders in awe, up and around and down and through places that are not places, without roads or pathways.

The sound is finally traced to a huge wooden pipe, ten feet in diameter, that goes straight up the steep slope. The pipe is made of heavy redwood planks bound together with ancient iron bands and rivets with heads the size of a man's palm. Pipeline sections are cradled in massive beam frameworks rooted in stonework. The pipeline vibrates, its walls expanding and contracting visibly. It leads down to a large reservoir far below.

Robert climbs a ladder up the side of the pipe. Wooden steps continue up along the spine of the pipeline. Robert climbs. The throbbing makes his head vibrate.

Finally the pipe takes a turn at the top of a slope, down a short draw and up the other side to a flat terrace running around near the top of a peak. Robert drops to the ground. Scurries down and up the draw, to the terrace. The THRUMMING is replaced by a deep BOOMING. The BOOMING gets louder as he approaches an aqueduct.

The aqueduct feeds water through iron grates into the top end of the pipe. Big iron valves are controlled with large iron spoked wheels. The aqueduct is the size of a small river, lined with stones, built next to the terrace, which is a flat dirt road. Robert runs along the road, which curves around the peak, gradually climbing. The water in the aqueduct is not still, but smooth and full.

Robert sees robed figures. Darts across a plank bridge over the aqueduct. Scrambles up the last bit of slope. He pokes his head up over a short stone wall that rings the top of the embankment, and is brought up short.

The deep bass booming sound is now at top volume. It sounds like an impossibly large drum, beaten by a giant.

In the flat round plain below is a circle of standing stones like Stonehenge, but the stones are smooth. In the center of the stone circle is a bronze drum, thirty feet in diameter, polished with use, tarnished with age. Patched in many places by brazing. Circling the drum, a framework made of wood beams pegged and iron-strapped together. From high above the drum's center, a big shaft rises upward, supported by the framework. From a hub on the shaft radiate wooden spokes. Beyond the periphery of the drum, the spokes support a wooden wheel.

Many robed CRANKERS, faces shadowed by hoods, slowly walk in a circle around the drum, turning the wheel. A system of wooden rack-and-pinion gears turns the circular motion of the wheel into the up-and-down motion of a tree-sized counter-weighted drumstick.

Extending horizontally from the bowl-shaped body of the drum, close to the ground, radiate large pipes. Each pipe contacts one of the stones in the circle. The CRANKERS step over the pipes as they go around.

Robert slips and slides down the embankment to the back of one standing stone. Hides behind it. The stone emits a BUZZING. When he puts his hands and cheek against it, the vibration chatters his teeth.

Robert steps away from the stone. Shakes his head. He is no longer hidden behind the stone. One Cranker spots him. Robert back wheels. Falls back onto the embankment. The Cranker runs to him. Robert tries to scramble to his feet, but the Cranker bends down and extends a hand.

The Cranker grasps Robert's hand and pulls him to his feet. The Cranker straightens up. His oversized hood falls back off his face. It's James.

JAMES

Time for my break. Where ya wanna go? We can't talk here.

ROBERT

Kinda loud.
(then)
Religious thing?

JAMES

Nah, just a pump. Bangs water up from an underground river. They don't have religion here. The gods live in their heads and tell 'em exactly what do.

ROBERT

I read that book.

Black screen. BOOMING fades, morphs into a MURMURING CROWD.

INT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER - NIGHT

MURMURING CROWD. Lights come on. Robert stands on stage in his bathrobe, tattered boxer shorts, and cell phone around his neck. The audience is full of snooty people in thousand dollar suits, buzzing with their sense of decorum offended. Behind Robert on stage, milling about, all the INVENTORS: Mac and Ed, Bob Neal, Lewis Kiser, Barney Britts, Bill Truitt, George Heaton, others.

The Inventors look around, mumbling, except for George Heaton, who checks himself for bad breath, sniffs his armpits.

On the wall behind everybody, the familiar skewed letters made of colored paper, "N-O-B-E-L".

Robert steps up to the microphone as the grumbling from the audience builds.

ROBERT

Ladies and gentlemen, apparently I overslept and didn't bring my notes, so the acceptance speech will be delivered by those who came before me. Some of the greatest inventors who ever lived, starting with the father of the free range air car, Lewis Cass Kiser, who lived from 1848 to 1927. Please sit down and shut up and listen to what he has to say. Mr. Kiser was sixteen years old when Lincoln was assassinated. Lewis? Step up here, Lewis, let's hear what you have to say.

Lewis Kiser refuses to go to the lectern. Barney Britts steps up.

BARNEY BRITTS

One moment I was standing on a soapbox, happy to sell my soul for some bit of hardware. Then my babes walked back into my life, and I couldn't speak.

HECKLER #1 (O.S.)

Get a life!

People get up and leave.

INT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER - LATER

MAC

If not for my brother, Ed, I would have starved to death with no one to talk to.

ED

Hell's bells, Mac, I woulda gave up that mountain a lot sooner if I'd known I was gonna be taken away from you. Who needs stardust, anyway?

HECKLER #2 (O.S.)

Call the police!

People get up and leave.

INT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER - LATER

BOB NEAL

When our children first appear, we tend to give 'em a name, sooner or later. I noticed when they were poppin' spare parts off my magic air tank, and tossin' 'em in the pond, all's I could think about was havin' my baby girl back. I gave every one of them parts the same name: "Good Effin' Riddance".

HECKLER #3 (O.S.)

Go back to Arkansas!

People get up and leave.

INT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER - LATER

BILL

Sooner or later, anyone who's really human has to sit back and wonder what it is that really matters, out of all the things we encounter in life. It always
(MORE)

BILL (cont'd)
 boils down to this. We're all
 the same on the inside. What we
 do to others, well that's what
 we do to ourselves, and we'll
 feel it too, sooner or later.

HECKLER #4 (O.S.)
 Spare me the details!

People get up and leave.

INT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER - LATER

GEORGE
 Being an inventor is the easiest
 thing in the world. We're like
 professional complainers. Most
 people wouldn't want anything to
 do with our line of work,
 because they look out and see
 the world and wonder, why would
 anyone want to change that?

The Inventors push Lewis Kiser to the lectern.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
 No one's listening, Mr. Kiser.

KISER
 I can see that with my own
 peepers.

BOB NEAL
 Let's go home.

BARNEY BRITTS
 I'm real tired.

BILL
 I miss my wife and daughter.

ED/MAC
 We got a mountain to haunt.

KISER
 Let's get on with it then.

The Inventors step off the stage. Float down to the floor,
 down the aisle, through the lobby, and out the front doors,
 holding doors open for each other. Outside, they turn to
 their left.

EXT. SMALL COMMUNITY THEATER/PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Robert emerges from the theater's front door. Turns to his left. He is half a parking lot behind the Inventors when they all turn into mist and float away.

In place of the Inventors is a new Ford Air Car. Robert approaches it.

The parking lot is full of Nobel ceremony audience members who can't get their limousines started. The sound of engines CRANKING. Rich people COMPLAINING in various languages to immaculately-dressed chauffeurs who stare helplessly under raised hoods. Cell phones aren't working.

When Robert reaches the Ford Air Car, he takes the cell phone from around his neck and photographs all around, inside, and under the hood. He crawls underneath and photographs it from below. He stands on the roof and photographs it from above.

INT. FORD AIR CAR - NIGHT

Robert sits in the driver's seat. Closes the door. The dashboard is polished wood. The front seat is a leather-upholstered bench.

Robert turns the key. A valve handle in a recess is exposed by a small door that opens in the dashboard with a HISS. The recess is lit by a small light bulb. "On" and "Off" are inscribed. Robert puts his foot on the brake. Turns the valve in the "On" direction.

Nothing happens when he takes his foot off the brake. He places his foot on the accelerator and pushes gently. The car glides away with a hushed PUFF-PUFF-PUFF. It has frightening acceleration. The fuel gauge jumps up when he steps on the brakes.

Robert drives the car around the parking lot. The Nobel Audience doesn't see him. He stops. Shuts the valve off, turns the key off. The little door in the dashboard shuts the valve in with a HISS.

He sits there for a moment.

Robert leaves the keys and gets out. Walks away at a relaxed pace from the Ford Air Car which remains in f.g.

Robert reaches the edge of the parking lot. Passes between a couple of buildings. Gets to a street. Steps off the curb without looking or breaking stride. As he crosses the median strip, a city bus coming from his right has to slam on its brakes. He steps up onto the sidewalk, turns to the

right, disappears behind the bus.

The bus starts up again with a HISS of air brakes. Robert can be seen making his way down the aisle of the bus. The Ford Air Car disappears in a puff of smoke and all the limousines start up simultaneously. Their owners cheer.

EXT. JAMES' HOUSE - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: "107 hours and 24 minutes later."

Robert shakes his head. Kicks coconut shells. Leans up against the distinctively-shaped boulder. Looks at the house. There hasn't been any paint on the house in decades. Part of the roof has collapsed. A tree grows up through the roof.

ROBERT
Flippin' paradoxes. Can't live
with 'em, can't live without 'em.

Robert starts to trudge toward the lane.

JAMES (V.O.)
(sings)
"Arizo-wo-na/hey won't ya go my
way..."

ROBERT
Worst of the seventies strikes
again.

Robert slaps his hands over his ears. He tries to walk, but trips over one of the coconut shells. He picks it up.

ROBERT
(sings)
"Okla-ho-wo-ma, hey won't ya go
my way..."

Something dawns on him, bringing him up short.

ROBERT
Oh my grimy, green
googly-mooglies, it's not over!

He runs down the lane.

INT. AIRPORT/ENTRANCE - DAY

Robert passes the guard at the door of the airport. Runs.

GUARD
 (into walkie-talkie)
 Man running in airport.
 Citizen's Airlines...

INT. AIRPORT/SWAT TEAM BREAK ROOM DOOR - DAY

A door is open inward a crack. Scrawled on it in magic marker, "Airport Security, Trespassers will be Violated".

LOUDSPEAKER
 (muffled, from
 inside room)
 Man running in airport. Door 2A
 West. Citizen's Airlines ticket
 counter. Repeat...

INT. AIRPORT/TICKET COUNTER - DAY

Robert runs up to the ticket counter.

ROBERT
 I wanna buy a one-way ticket on
 your time machine.

TICKET LADY
 Destination?

ROBERT
 Philippines.

TICKET LADY
 Arrival date?

ROBERT
 Yesterday.

TICKET LADY
 That'll cost you extra.

ROBERT
 I have a magic credit card.

TICKET LADY
 Well, lucky you. Which island
 are you headed for?

ROBERT
 One of the smaller ones, it's
 called Oklahoma.

TICKET LADY

You don't say. Oklahoma, the
Philippines.

INT. AIRPORT/SWAT TEAM BREAK ROOM - DAY

Several fleshy, tattooed SKINHEADS, half out of paramilitary gear. They lounge around eating donuts. Dip coffee out of a bucket with crusty mugs. Shovel down hot dogs and potato chips. One lifts weights with a cigarette in his mouth. One is on Facebook.

A loudspeaker dangles from a strand of taped-up cord wrapped around a nail in the wall.

GUARD

(from loudspeaker)

Repeat: Man running in airport.
Runner alert, all hands on deck.
Orange alert. Man running in
airport. Door 2A West.
Citizen's Airlines ticket
counter.

None of the Skinheads notice the warning.

GUARD (CONT'D)

(loudspeaker)

Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!

The Skinheads jump to their feet. Make a rudimentary attempt to tuck in their shirts, tie their boots, etc. They give up on getting into uniform.

HEAD SKINHEAD

Go! Go! Go!

They grab Plexiglas shields and helmets. Have to put helmets down to grab pepper spray cans, which they shove into the elastic waist bands of black naugahyde pajamas.

The first one to the door tries to push it open outward without slowing down. This slams it shut. They crash into the closed door together. The doorframe pops out of the wall. The Skinheads fall in a pile, helmets and plexiglas shields all over the place.

They scramble to their feet. Can't get through the door at top speed with the big shields stopping them. Finally get their shields held at the correct angle. Run out into the public area carrying their helmets under their arms. The Head Skinhead brings up the rear.

SKINHEADS

Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!

INT. AIRPORT/BOARDING GATE - DAY

The door from the Swat Team Break Room slides across the floor near Robert at the ticket counter.

SKINHEADS

Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!

Robert completes his transaction. Turns. Thrusts his palm out.

ROBERT

Stay!

A nearly transparent spherical force field pops up around Robert. The Skinheads crash into it one at a time and keep coming, helmets and Plexiglas shields squirting out of their hands. Pepper spray containers roll across the floor. The Skinheads land in a pile.

SLOW MOTION:

The Head Skinhead on top of the pile rears back. Shouts. Aims pepper spray at Robert's face. Shoots. It hits the spherical force field and bounces off. The deflected spray flies back, hitting the Head Skinhead in the eyes and face.

END SLOW MOTION

The Head Skinhead screams, blinded. Keeps spraying. Keeps screaming. The Skinheads jump up. Each gets a dose of deflected spray. All scream and writhe. The airport crowd laughs hysterically. A LITTLE GIRL goes over to the Skinheads writhing on the floor. Kicks one of them.

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy, I think the nice
policemen are all brain dead.

Robert lowers his hand and darts toward the gate after the other passengers. Just before heading out the boarding gate, he turns back to the pile of Skinheads. Opens his mouth to speak. Shuts it.

Robert runs out the gate.

EXT. RURAL PHILIPPINES - DAY

A borrowed U.S. Highway sign in f.g. reads, "You are now entering the State of Oklahoma."

Robert is picking his way across a junkyard similar to the one at James' farm in Alabama.

He pats the distinctively-shaped boulder as he passes it.

CHILDREN'S VOICES (O.S.)
Pagdaliiii!!! Na-ay Amerikano!
Amerikano! Pasaluuuuubong!

A large grassy area around the living structure is dotted with livestock tied to coconut trees with nose rings: a water buffalo, a cow of a variety not seen in the U.S. Some goats tied around the neck.

Robert wipes sweat off his face with a handkerchief. Ogles the house as he passes quickly. The house is made of many improvised lean-tos growing off of each other, each roof at a different level. Made of unpainted boards, found objects. Roofs patched together from sheets of rusty corrugated metal and old pieces of plywood.

A huge mango tree grows up through the center of the structure, shading all. The largest branches of the tree are secured to each other with steel cables. There are some rope ladders and small tree houses.

Some of the shacks are two- or three-story. The tallest has a balcony equipped with old plastic chairs. Lots of potted plants, ornamental bushes in the ground, and clothes hanging in the sun on plastic strings tied between trees.

People smile at him from doorways as he passes. An ancient hump-backed, bow-legged Homely Woman ignores him as he passes her and tries to nod pleasantly.

Some TEENAGE BOYS play at a dilapidated billiard table under a four-post structure shaded by a thatched roof.

TEENAGE BOY #1
Hey Joe!

TEENAGE BOY #2
Where you going, Joe?

TEENAGE BOY #3
What's yours, Joe?

TEENAGE BOY #4

Are you OK, Joe?

A group of attractive young FILIPINAS, dressed in old T-shirts and shorts, ogle him as he passes, as if he is the most handsome stud they have ever seen. He slows to a crawl, ogles them back. They try to act sexy, giggling. They laugh at him without malice.

FILIPINA #1

Hey Joe, what's yours, Joe?

FILIPINA #2

Joe, I love you, marry me Joe!

FILIPINA #3

Joe, I need you, Joe!

FILIPINA #4

Joe. You complete me.

Robert stumbles over a coconut. The Filipinas shriek with laughter, covering their mouths with their hands.

ROBERT

I'll be right back, I promise.

Behind the house, in a garden near some trees, Robert encounters a more white-haired James than before. James wears a towel on his head, a sleeveless T-shirt, and striped shorts, all drenched in sweat. He pumps water into an old plastic bucket with a long-handled manual pump. There are several small brown children around. One tyke tries to help him pump. James keeps pumping when Robert arrives, though the plastic bucket is overflowing.

JAMES

What's yours, Joe?

ROBERT

You're the guy with the website and the ViewTube videos.

JAMES

And you're the fella that's been puttin' up wanted posters online, offerin' a five dollar reward for my email address. If not for your semi-unwanted attention, I could have saved twenty bucks a month and burned that damn website to the ground some years ago.

(MORE)

JAMES (cont'd)
 It's good you posted your
 picture. I usually shoot white
 people on sight.

ROBERT
 You don't have a gun.

JAMES
 How would you know that? And
 how did you know where I live?

ROBERT
 You wouldn't believe me if I
 told you. Now listen, I know
 you're busy, but I've got some
 ideas how you could finish your
 free range air car.

James stops pumping and steps away from the pump. The
 handle keeps on going up and down by itself, lifting the
 tyke off his feet on its way up.

JAMES
 What's wrong with the air car I
 already have?

ROBERT
 Uh...

JAMES
 C'mon kids, let's go for a ride.

ROBERT
 OK...

The children run down a foot path into an orchard of mixed
 fruit trees. James follows them. Robert follows James.

JAMES
 It could be kinda deflatin' to
 have your life's dream realized
 without much effort on your part.
 (then)
 Prepare yourself.
 (then)
 What you see is what you get.
 (then)
 You'll get over it.
 (then)
 Loosen up. You'd be amazed what
 a twelve-month growin' season
 can do for a fella's interest in
 fixin' the world. Try to enjoy
 yourself.

ROBERT

OK.

JAMES

Now, you aren't gonna tell anybody about this place, are you? 'Cause if'n ya do, I won't be your buddy-pal anymore.

ROBERT

OK.

JAMES

C'mon, you might like it.
 (calling ahead to
 the children)
 Green. Pink. Blue. Etcetera.
 Get your crank arms ready.

They disappear into the orchard. The pump is still working by itself, shooting water into the full bucket.

EXT. RURAL PHILIPPINES/ORCHARD - DAY

As they walk.

ROBERT

What do you grow here?

JAMES

Anything that bears fruit.

JAMES

Durian. Tastes like used motor oil mixed with honey. Say hi to the white guy, kids.

CHILD #1

Hey Joe!

CHILD #2

Where are you going, Joe?

CHILD #3

Joe, are you OK, Joe?

CHILD #4

What's yours, Joe?

CHILD #5

Where did you come from, Joe?

JAMES

Where's your manners? Bless
Uncle.

The children trot back to Robert. One-by-one, each child grabs Robert's hand, touches it to his own forehead, and returns to the front of the procession.

JAMES

Mangosteen, the queen of fruits.
Doesn't bear fruit for the first
fifteen years, but if you eat it,
you never get sick.

(then)

Papaya, great for the digestion.

(then)

Saging, also known as banana.
We grow the tiny ones. The big
ones are mainly fed to pigs and
exported to advanced industrial
nations.

(then)

Labana, also known as soursop.
Makes you live forever.

They go over a small rise. In a shallow gully below them, a bamboo tractor with three long bench seats. The bamboo air tractor has treads, not wheels, all made from bamboo and log rounds. Big cartoon character stickers adorn the backs of the seats. Air compressing engine and tank, also made from bamboo, are in front.

ROBERT

That's not a time machine is it?

JAMES

Do I look like Buck Rogers?

James extends his hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)

James Boyett Clerk, at your
service.

ROBERT

(shakes hands)

Joe -- uh -- Robert Jones.

(then)

You figured out how to keep the
tank full?

JAMES

Had to add one thing: an
Energizer Bubba.

They get in the bamboo air tractor. A key process is facilitated by hand cranking an ENERGIZER BUBBA from the front seat, a task shared by two small children between Robert and James. It is done with a crank from a hydraulic bumper jack. The Energizer Bubba is a doll, with Robert's photo pinned to its head through the third eye.

The doll appears to wield a toy jack hammer against the end of the tank, making a CHATTERING SOUND while it vibrates violently, to and from the tank. The jack hammer is solidly fixed to a vibrating rod that extends into the tank.

The tractor lurches away through the fruit trees very slowly. Children emerge from the orchard. Run behind and jump onto the back bumper.

JAMES

Careful, kids, this thing might be slow, but she can't be stopped. She'll roll right over ya, and smash ya flatter than a cockroach.

(then, to Robert)

Did ya know that cockroaches are incapable of dyin' after just one swat? Gotta kill 'em twice, or they'll never reach them peaceful shores.

As children pile into the tractor, it doesn't slow down.

The bamboo air tractor crawls steadily up the steep bank of a distant dike, then off along the top of the dike with a sunset in the b.g.

ROBERT (V.O.)

So... What was Alabama like in 1870?

JAMES (V.O.)

Hell's bells, fella, I can't remember back that far. C'mon, I'll show you my passion fruit vines.

FADE OUT.

THE END