

MISERIA EX MACHINA

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

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

MORTY

(Whispers)

Had enough of this?

CHRIS

(Whispers)

I had enough ninety minutes ago.

MORTY

(Whispers)

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

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

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

CHRIS

What's up?

MORTY

I got the funding.

CHRIS

Seriously?

MORTY

Did you ever doubt me?

CHRIS

Well--

MORTY

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

(MORE)

MORTY (CONT'D)

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

CHRIS

That's fantastic, Morty.

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Of course.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Sure.

Chris glances at his watch.

CHRIS

We better get back in there.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When do we start?

Morty takes Chris's hand and shakes it vigorously.

MORTY

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

EXT. LAB - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE CARD: Eight Years Later

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

INT. LAB - NIGHT

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

CHRIS

Where the hell you are going,  
Morty?

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

MORTY

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

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Right. Have a nice time.

MORTY

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

Chris spins around, startled.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Yeah. Why? Does that surprise you?

CHRIS

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

MORTY

It's been a year.

CHRIS

A year? Jesus, I never knew that. It's only been a year since Hannah died.

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Kineahora. I can't entertain that possibility.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

What do you mean?

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Whoa. Irving the Slut, huh?

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Lyrical. Let me know if you need anything.

MORTY

Will do. Thanks.

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

CHRIS

Selfish bastard. Has to have everything for himself.

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

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

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

CHRIS

Goddammit!

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

INT. DINER - DAY

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

CHRIS

(Sardonically)

Congratulations, Arielle.

Chris raises his coffee cup.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

To the future Mrs. Morty F. Klein.

ARIELLE

I don't have a drink to toast with you.

Chris calls across the Diner to a WAITRESS.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

(Chuckling)

Oh Chris, don't be so dramatic.

CHRIS

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



ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

--Convenient.

ARIELLE

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

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

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

Oh, and he swears he loves me.

CHRIS

Ah, but you have more fun with me.

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

C'mon, Darling.

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

You'll change your mind.

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

Um, does Morty know about us?

ARIELLE

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

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

I thought it was three.

Arielle smiles deviously.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

ARIELLE

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

Arielle reads a menu.

CHRIS

Yeah right.

(beat)

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

ARIELLE

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

Chris absentmindedly turns his coffee cup.

CHRIS

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

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

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

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

INSERT TITLE CARD: 2009 - Two Years Later

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

The four diners are just about finished with their meals.

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

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

CHRIS  
I don't eat food that looks like  
cockroaches, Morty. I wish I  
could. I'd exterminate the lab  
once and for all. Y'know, fry up a  
coupla hunnert roaches every day  
for lunch. I'd wipe out those  
goddamned roaches in a month.

Chris mimics the shaking of a skillet.

LORI  
Oh, Chris--

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

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

ARIELLE

That's right.

(Raises her wine glass)

To Morque Technologies - another ten years.

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Yeah, right.

MORTY

That's what I told the Ay-rabs in Abu Dhabi. We gotta deliver. No choice.

CHRIS

Shit.

LORI

Who's Aboo Dobby?

Chris rolls his eyes.

MORTY

Abu--

CHRIS

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

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

LORI

I'm sorry I asked.

CHRIS

I think he pokes Dorothy's ass just as Cora the Wicked Witch disappears in a ball of flames with a can of Maxwell House.

(beat)

Or maybe they edited that part out. I can't remember.

Arielle ignores Chris.

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

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

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

MORTY

Check please.

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

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

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Yeah, well...

MORTY

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

Chris kicks a pebble on the sidewalk.

MORTY (CONT'D)

You two used to get along so well.

CHRIS

Yeah, you're right. We did.

EXT. WOODS - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

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

Arielle caresses a Sequoia tree.

ARIELLE

How old are these trees?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

That kind of makes me sad.

CHRIS

Why's that?

Chris moves closer to Arielle.

ARIELLE

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

Arielle reaches for Chris's arm.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

That's sweet.

CHRIS

Someday soon, I promise--

Arielle places her finger on Chris's lips.

ARIELLE

--Don't.

She kisses him.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

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

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

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

Really? No one?

(beat)

These pine needles look soft enough to lie in.

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

END FLASHBACK.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

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

CHRIS

Are you serious? I quit there a decade ago, for god's sake. The company doesn't even exist anymore.  
(beat)  
Morty's right: I can't quit.

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

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

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

LORI

What game was that?

CHRIS (O.S.)

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



LORI  
Why would they do that?

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

LORI  
I don't get it.

Chris comes back and climbs into bed.

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

Chris rolls away from Lori sullenly.

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

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

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

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

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

Chris sits up, his face contorted.

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

INT. LAB - NIGHT

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

CHRIS  
This fucking thing simply will not work.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Goddammit! This machine is nothing but misery. Fucking misery.

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

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

MORTY  
See you tomorrow, Chris.

CHRIS  
Is today Friday or Saturday?

Morty hesitates.

MORTY  
Uh, I think Friday.

CHRIS  
OK. See you tomorrow.

Morty leaves.

INT. LAB - NIGHT (LATER)

Chris is hard at work on the computer. The time-clock clicks to 3:00 AM but Chris doesn't notice. He finishes typing, stands up, stretches his back, then connects the computer to the Pentachoron using a thick black cable.

While the computer downloads to the Pentachoron, Chris walks around the Lab, absentmindedly picking up things until a PING comes from the computer, indicating "all done." He shuffles back to the lab table. Chris tries again to insert the rod through the greenish surface, this time succeeding. Instead of producing a screech the Pentachoron emits a soothing, electronic HUM. It's the same sound Chris heard before while looking at the Time Magazine cover in 2007.

CHRIS

Oh my god! Please be true.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

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

(beat)

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

(beat)

Just now.

(beat)

OK. See ya.

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

ARIELLE

Where are you going?

MORTY

Sorry. Did I wake you up?

Arielle groans.

MORTY (CONT'D)

Going back to the lab. Chris says he thinks he got the device to work.

Arielle rolls away from Morty.

ARIELLE

Where are you really going?

MORTY

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

ARIELLE

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

MORTY

Patience my dear.

ARIELLE

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

MORTY

You sound like a gold-digger, Arielle.

ARIELLE

Well, what do you expect?

MORTY

I gotta go.

ARIELLE

Don't wake me up when you come back.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

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

MORTY

Y'know, if this works we're going to be multi-millionaires. Being able to transport objects into the past will be transformational. Imagine, being able to send a letter warning JFK not to drive by the Book Depository Building with the top down. Or telling Neville Chamberlain not to cut a deal with Hitler.

Chris continues to fiddle with the device.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Yeah. You might be right.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

(Smiling)

Wow, I never thought of that.

(beat)

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

CHRIS

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

C.U. of Chris's face which exhibits a sense that he's lying. Concerned that Morty may read something into his tone, Chris becomes emphatic.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Assuming it still exists.

Morty shrugs.

MORTY

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

CHRIS

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

MORTY

Who?

CHRIS

Scarlett-- Nevermind.

(beat)

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

MORTY

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

CHRIS

Of course. You have an offshore  
account?

Morty shakes his head at his offhand revelation of a secret.

MORTY

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

Chris smirks as he hooks up a final cable.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

Morty massages his lower abdomen.

CHRIS

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

MORTY

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

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

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

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

CHRIS

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

OK, Morty. Here we go.

MORTY

Geez, I'm nervous.

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

Video is rolling.

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

CHRIS

Kinda like a colonoscopy, huh?

MORTY

Shhh.

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

CHRIS

(On TV)

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

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

FADE OUT.

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

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

CHRIS

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

ALBERT

Sure thing, dad.

CHRIS

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

ALBERT

I won't.

CHRIS

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

ALBERT

I get it, Dad. Don't worry.

CHRIS

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



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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

CHRIS

Drop the towel and hop into bed.

Chris starts to strip off his clothes.

LORI

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

Well, whose fault is that?

CHRIS

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

(beat)

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

Chris drops his trousers.

LORI

There's not enough time.

CHRIS

Look, I'll probably last a minute.

LORI

That sounds romantic. A whole minute. Besides, Albert will hear us.

CHRIS

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

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - DAY

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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

LORI

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

(beat)

You know what I want.

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

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

From behind the closed bedroom door:

LORI (O.S.)

Ow! When's the last time you shaved?

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BACK YARD - DAY

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

Lori calls out to the crowd.

LORI

Time to eat everyone. Find a seat.

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

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

LORI  
 Everyone, everyone. Can I have  
 your attention?

Some guests reluctantly suspend eating, others press on.

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

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

CHRIS  
 Thanks for coming by everyone.

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

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

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

BERNIE  
 Yes, Chris, tell us what you did.

LORI  
 Now, Dad--

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

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

BERNIE

--Oh, c'mon Chris. You've been saying that for years.

(To Marjorie)

He's been saying that for years, Marjorie.

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

CHRIS

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

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

After a moment, Bernie pipes up.

BERNIE

What? What the hell are you talking about?

CHRIS

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

BERNIE

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

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

Please--

BERNIE

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

CHRIS

Invested?

Chris rubs his temples. Bernie drinks his martini.

LORI

Now Dad. Mom--

ALBERT

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

LORI

Eat your hamburger, Albert.

CHRIS

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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

CHRIS

The last cretin finally left.  
Jesus Christ.

LORI

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

What's my brother got to do with anything?

CHRIS

Charles Kemp? Really? That poindexter buddy of your brother's?  
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I gotta be compared to him? That hedge fund rapist?

LORI

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

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

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

CHRIS

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

LORI

(Aghast)

What are you talking about?

CHRIS

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

(beat)

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

(Imitating Bernie's voice)

Too risky. Inadequate business plan. Blah blah.

(Normal voice)

Any excuse to keep his money tucked inside his tight ass.

LORI

Chris--

CHRIS

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

Chris grabs a beer from the refrigerator and skulks off.

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

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

CHRIS  
You awake, Al?

Albert rolls over.

ALBERT  
Hi Dad.

CHRIS  
You have a nice time today?

ALBERT  
Sure.

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

Chris burps.

ALBERT  
Thanks, Dad.

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

Albert looks like a sad puppy dog.

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

Chris hesitates.

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

ALBERT  
Will you, Dad?

Chris hesitates some more.

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

ALBERT  
How come?

CHRIS  
Well, just call it leverage.

ALBERT  
What's that?

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

ALBERT  
That would be good.

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

ALBERT  
Pentachoron?

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

CHRIS  
Go to sleep now, Al.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

CHRIS  
Hey! You miss me, darling?



ARIELLE

Are you nuts? What are you doing here?

She looks at an expensive watch on her wrist.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

It's after 2.

CHRIS

Can I come in?

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

Yeah, I know.

ARIELLE

Jesus Christ.

CHRIS

Good guess, but no, I can't walk on water. Yet.

(beat)

C'mon, Arielle. I'm a master of the universe now. I finally got that fucking thing to work. Aren't you just a little bit impressed?

ARIELLE

Congratulations. What do you want?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

You're drunk.

CHRIS

Affirmative.

ARIELLE

And deluded.

CHRIS

Wrong. I'm completely luded.

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

--I've worked so hard. Morty, not so much.

ARIELLE

Yeah, well, he's the owner. And that counts for about 90 percent, wouldn't you agree.

CHRIS

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

(beat)

And my big--

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

Okay. Let me in.

ARIELLE

I can't.

Chris backs off.

CHRIS

I know.

(beat)

I still love you, Arielle.

ARIELLE

Chris, please.

CHRIS

Don't make me cry, Arielle.

ARIELLE

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

Chris stumbles backward and falls into a hedge.

ARIELLE (CONT'D)

Shit. Are you OK?

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

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

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

Arielle leads Chris into Morty's House.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

CHRIS  
(Into phone, hoarsely)  
Hello?

INTERCUT with a Hotel Room.

MORTY  
(Into phone)  
Chris? You sound awful. Celebrate a bit too hard yesterday?

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
Yeah. Too much beans, beer and ball-busting.

MORTY  
(Into phone)  
Arielle said you came over last night.

Uh oh. Chris straightens up.

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

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
Uh, yeah. Totally.  
(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I just came by to drop off some leftovers from the barbecue. Too bad you couldn't be there.

MORTY

(Into phone)

Are they kosher?

CHRIS

(Into phone)

Oh yeah. Don't worry, no bacon.

(beat)

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

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

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

That's great.

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

I, uh, um, what about you?

MORTY

(Into phone)

I can't go. Doctor says I shouldn't fly for awhile. Bad for the veins in my legs. Blood clots and such. Anyway, you deserve a nice vacation.

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

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

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

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

MORTY

(Into phone)

Tomorrow.

CHRIS

(Into phone)

Tomorrow?

Chris rubs his eyes. Fuckin' A.

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

Chris hangs up the phone and falls back into bed.

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/ATTIC - DAY

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

CHRIS

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

ALBERT (O.S.)

In a minute, Dad.

CHRIS

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

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

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

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

Which shows a text message to Declan - "Kewl story 2 tell u"

BACK TO SCENE

Albert sends the message, stows the cell phone in his pocket and walks out of his bedroom.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

CHRIS

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

LORI (O.S.)

What's that, Chris?

Chris quickly secrets the porno DVD into his drawer under a pile of socks.

CHRIS

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

LORI (O.S.)

For the third time, yes.

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

MORTY (O.S.)  
 (Over speakerphone)  
 You leaving soon?

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

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

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

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

Chris hangs up.

CHRIS  
 (Mutters)  
 Fucking miser.

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

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

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

MORTY

Okay, okay.

ARIELLE

Who just called?

MORTY

Chris. He wanted to upgrade his ticket to Abu Dhabi. I had to nix it - too expensive.

ARIELLE

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

MORTY

Nah, that's just the way he is.

ARIELLE

Still though--

Morty gets out of bed.

MORTY

--Let's go to Napa.

ARIELLE

Maybe you should have a contingency plan.

MORTY

Like what?

Arielle paws through a dresser drawer.

ARIELLE

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

MORTY

--To what?

ARIELLE

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

Arielle pulls a flowery shirt from the drawer.

MORTY

What does he want?



Arielle looks at herself in the mirror.

ARIELLE  
I don't know. I--

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

ARIELLE  
Well--

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

Arielle foists the shirt on Morty.

ARIELLE  
Here. Put this on.

Morty checks his watch.

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

ARIELLE  
Jesus, Morty.

EXT. SFO AIRPORT - DAY

Lori drives to the curb outside the departure gate and puts the car in park. She and Chris hop out. Chris pulls his luggage from the trunk.

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

LORI  
Try? You better call.

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

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

Chris heads to the SFO Airport entrance.

INT. SFO AIRPORT - DAY

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

CHRIS  
(Sotto voce)  
Fuckin' Taliban.

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

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

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

TSA AGENT (CONT'D)  
Step forward.

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

XRAY AGENT #1  
Take a look at this.

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

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

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

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

DECLAN  
Yer lyin', homo.

ALBERT  
No I'm not.

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

Albert nods proudly.

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

ALBERT  
I guess so.

DECLAN  
How does it work?

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

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

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

DECLAN  
Yeah? Where's that?

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

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

ALBERT

Well, it's a big gray building on the corner of Peach and Craig Streets, y'know, down a few blocks from the Red Lobster.

DECLAN

Shit yeah - the Red Hamster. My old man gets fish there sometimes, cheap. Y'know, stuff they're gonna throw out.

ALBERT

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

DECLAN

Yeah. I'm sure the freakin' thing is worth a lot. Whadjoo call it? A Pentagram?

Albert clears his throat.

ALBERT

Pentachoron.

DECLAN

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

ALBERT

Nah. I better get going.

Declan flicks the cigarette butt over Albert's head.

DECLAN

Whatever. See ya around, bro.

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

DECLAN (CONT'D)

What a dick.

INT. LAB - DAY

Morty attends to the Pentachoron, prepared to run tests. The TV monitor is powered on and Morty wields the probe.

He clicks some commands into the laptop, then inserts the probe into the Pentachoron. It produces the HUM as before. After a moment an image of Morty as a younger man sitting at his desk appears on the monitor.

Morty giggles with excitement.

MORTY

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

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

ARIELLE

(On TV screen)

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

CHRIS

(On TV screen)

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

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

INT. JET - DAY

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

INT. JET - DAY (LATER)

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

EXT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

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

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

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

CHRIS

Uh, are you sure this is the right place?

TAXI DRIVER

Yes sir.

CHRIS

Where are we?

TAXI DRIVER

It is called the Mussafah Industrial Area.

CHRIS

Industrial Area?

The Taxi Driver points to the factory down the street.

TAXI DRIVER

Over there, that is for making styrene.

Chris shakes his head like he's been punked.

CHRIS

Arielle.

TAXI DRIVER

(In Arabic with subtitles)  
Excuse me?

CHRIS

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

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

TAXI DRIVER

Ah, sir, very good. Thank you.  
The price is seventy-five dirham.  
I prefer American dollars. Twenty.

CHRIS

I already changed money at the  
airport. Here's eighty dirham.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Can you help me with my luggage?

TAXI DRIVER

I cannot sir. Please hurry.

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

INT. HOTEL/LOBBY - DAY

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

CHRIS'S P.O.V. - NOTE

Which reads: "Call Morty ASAP"

BACK TO SCENE

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

INT. HOTEL/ROOM - DAY

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

Morty? Can you hear me?

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Yeah, I made it. Thank Arielle for me - the accommodations are great.

INTERCUT with the Lab.

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

Don't ask. I had to sit between two massive slabs of fat for ten hours. And that was just the first half of the trip.

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

Super.

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

CHRIS

(Into phone)

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

MORTY

(Into phone)

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

Chris furrows his brow.



CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
I thought you weren't allowed to fly.

MORTY  
(Into phone)  
Uh, well, yeah, but I can't, y'know, suspend all business on account of some veins. Right?

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
I guess not.

MORTY  
(Into phone)  
I mean, I'll just have to wear stockings, that's all.

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
Put on some high heels and a muumuu and you might pass for Totie Fields.

MORTY  
(Into phone, chuckling)  
Shit, I remember her. A real chunk. Kinda sexy though.  
(beat)  
Anyway, good luck with El-Khoury and his gang tomorrow, Chris. See you when you get back.

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
So, you're really going to Japan, huh?

MORTY  
(Into phone)  
Got to. Bye bye.

Looking concerned, Chris hangs up the cell phone. He turns on a tiny air conditioner which spews out black soot.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Chris stands at the head of a long conference table before two dozen Middle East INVESTORS, each dressed in a remarkably clean white dishdashah and a checkered shumagg.

Regretfully, Chris wears an ill-fitting dark wool suit, more appropriate for a brisk winter day in the Northeast.

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

CHRIS

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

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

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

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

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

FADE OUT.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

Chris closes his laptop. The Investors politely applaud.

CHRIS

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

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Now I'll take any questions you have, gentlemen.

INVESTOR #1

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

CHRIS

Eventually, yes, but for now it seems to be a completely random selection.

INVESTOR #2

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

CHRIS

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

INVESTOR #3

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

CHRIS

Gee, I never thought of--

El-Khoury stands.

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

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

EL-KHOURY

--Gentlemen, thank you for your attention. And thank you, Dr. Hahn for the stimulating presentation.

(MORE)

EL-KHOURY (CONT'D)

My assistant will escort you to my private library. I want to converse some more.

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

INT. EL-KHOURY'S LIBRARY - DAY

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

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

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

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

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

Of course there are the ethical--

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

Balfour's letter?

EL-KHOURY

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

Wishing to project humility, Chris nods just once.

EL-KHOURY (CONT'D)

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

CHRIS

Extraordinary, sheik. This is my first time in the Middle-East. It is most beautiful. I hope to spend some time visiting your fine country.

EL-KHOURY

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

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

CHRIS

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

EL-KHOURY

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

CHRIS

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

EL-KHOURY

--You must say yes.

CHRIS

Alright sheik, yes. Thank you so much.

EL-KHOURY

Think nothing of it. Tomorrow I will arrange for you to stay at the Hilton.

(MORE)

EL-KHOURY (CONT'D)

I'll reserve a week - that will afford you time to discover our fair city.

CHRIS

You're too kind, sheik.

EL-KHOURY

Not at all. Tell me, are you married, Dr. Hahn?

CHRIS

Yes.

EL-KHOURY

Children? Many sons?

CHRIS

Just one. Albert. He's thirteen.

Chris takes a puff of the cigar.

EL-KHOURY

(Devilishly)

Do you have a mistress, Dr. Hahn?  
More than one, perhaps?

Chris coughs out smoke.

CHRIS

Huh?

EXT. EL-KHOURY'S COMPOUND - NIGHT

El-Khoury's BUTLER, a dark-skinned man with a meticulously trimmed goatee dyed jet-black escorts Chris along a tessellated tile pathway which is illuminated subtly by ornate lampposts. Chris weaves a bit as he walks along.

CHRIS

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

This pathway reminds me of M. C. Hammer. Uh, I mean M. C. Escher.

BUTLER

The design was inspired by the mosaics of the Alhambra.

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

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

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

BUTLER

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

CHRIS

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

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

BUTLER

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

CHRIS

I, uh--

BUTLER

--Good night, Dr. Hahn.

The Butler leaves.

CHRIS

Bettawfeeq?

Chris picks up his luggage.

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

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

Chris steps through the sliding glass door.

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

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

CHRIS

Yes?

DINAZADE

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

CHRIS

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

SCHEHERAZADE

--Please relax, Dr. Hahn. Everything is alright.

CHRIS

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

Scheherazade and Dinazade step in, giggling.

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

SCHEHERAZADE

(In Arabic with subtitles)  
Do you speak Arabic?

CHRIS

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

The two women giggle.

SCHEHERAZADE

Very good.

CHRIS

I studied on the plane.

SCHEHERAZADE

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

CHRIS

(In Arabic with subtitles)  
My name is Chris.



SCHEHERAZADE

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

Chris's jaw drops. Twin sisters!?

DINAZADE

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

Scheherazade and Dinazade step out of their chadors revealing the low-cut little black dresses and silver stiletto heels they have on underneath the shapeless garb. Each wears her shimmering shoulder-length nut-brown hair parted in the middle.

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

SCHEHERAZADE

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

CHRIS

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

SCHEHERAZADE

Call me Sherry.

CHRIS

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

SCHEHERAZADE

--Yes. I can tell.

CHRIS

So, I--

SCHEHERAZADE

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

Dinazade returns with a tray of drinks.

CHRIS

My god...

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

The Guest House is dimly lit. Chris sits mesmerized on the edge of a low-slung Mies van der Rohe daybed. He watches the gauzy outline of the two women engaged in the 69 position. C.U. of Chris wiping his lips with the back of his hand. After a moment he stands and walks toward the women.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

INT. LAB - DAY

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

MORTY

What the fuck?

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

INTERCUT with Morty's House/Bedroom.

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

ARIELLE

(Into phone)

Hi. When are you coming home?

MORTY

(Into phone)

Pretty soon. Y'know, I'm thinking about moving Chris off the project after all.

Arielle sits up and mutes the TV.

                  ARIELLE  
                  (Into phone)  
How come?

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

                  ARIELLE  
                  (Into phone, shocked)  
Wha--

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

                  ARIELLE  
                  (Into phone)  
Oh my god. I can't believe he told  
you.

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

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

                  MORTY  
                  (Into phone)  
Long time ago? Really? I bet you  
were screwing him even after we got  
engaged. Am I right?

                  ARIELLE  
                  (Into phone)  
Absolutely not.  
                  (beat)  
I'm so sorry, Morty. It's over.  
It's been over for a long time.  
                  (Silence)  
Say something Morty.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 What can I say, Arielle? This  
 changes everything.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 No it doesn't, Morty. It's ancient  
 history.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 Doesn't seem ancient. Besides--

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 --Chris and I are through.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 Did you fuck him when I was in  
 Seattle?

Arielle hesitates

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 Absolutely not.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 How can I believe you?

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 You have to believe me, Morty.  
 Please. Believe me. Forgive me.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 I don't know if I can.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 You have to. I beg you. We're  
 going to have a great life  
 together, Morty. I know it.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 I wish I shared your confidence,  
 but how can I? I can't predict  
 the...

(MORE)

MORTY (CONT'D)  
 (Looks at the Pentachoron)  
 ... uh, future, Arielle.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 Have confid--

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 --I gotta try something. I'll talk  
 to you later.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 I'm coming to the lab.

MORTY  
 (Into phone)  
 No, don't. I want to be alone for  
 awhile. I'll see you later. Bye.

Morty hangs up.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 Are we still going to dinner?  
 Hello?

Arielle looks sadly at the telephone receiver.

INT. LAB - DAY (LATER)

Morty sits before the laptop, typing and mousing frantically.

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

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

BACK TO SCENE

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

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

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

MORTY (CONT'D)

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

(beat)

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

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

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

CHRIS

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(Moaning in Arabic with subtitles)

I need a doctor.

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

INT. LAB - NIGHT

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

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

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

INT. EL-KHOURY'S GUEST HOUSE - DAY

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Morty, Chris here. Meeting went great. Call me back.

EXT. HILTON HOTEL - DAY

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

INT. HILTON HOTEL ROOM - DAY

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Me again. Where the hell are you?  
 I'll try the lab again. Later.

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

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

Which reads: "User MORTY - not logged on"

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Where is that bastard?

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Kobe. Japan. No, he wouldn't. He  
couldn't.

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

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

ARIELLE  
Morty? Can we talk? I got some  
wine.

Arielle picks up some mail from the floor.

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

Arielle quietly steps into the Bedroom.

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

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



INT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

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

CHRIS

Can I upgrade this ticket to  
business class?

AIRLINE AGENT

Let me see what is available, sir.

The Airline Agent types into his terminal.

AIRLINE AGENT (CONT'D)

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

CHRIS

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

The Airline Agent types some more.

AIRLINE AGENT

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

CHRIS

Yes. Perfect.

More typing by the Airline Agent.

AIRLINE AGENT

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

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

CHRIS

Here you go. How much is it to  
upgrade?

AIRLINE AGENT

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

CHRIS

(Stupefied)  
Seven... thousand... and...?

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

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

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

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

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

Chris pulls his wallet back out.

INT. JET - DAY

Chris sits in First Class, drinking a stylish cocktail and chatting up a B-List CELEBRITY.

EXT. SFO AIRPORT - DAY

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

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
Arielle? Chris. Do you know where  
Morty is?

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

CHRIS  
(Into phone)  
--Morty was in the lab? Are you  
sure? How do you know?

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 When did he go to Japan?

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

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Where do you think he might be,  
 Arielle?

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Like what?

INTERCUT with Morty's House.

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 I am agitated, Arielle. This might  
 sound weird, but I think Morty is  
 planning to sell the device.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 What?

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Y'know, to a foreign government.  
 Terrorists maybe. Something like  
 that.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 C'mon, Chris. Morty? Terrorists?

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

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

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

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 What? How? Jesus, you told him?  
 What the hell for?

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 I didn't tell him. You must have.

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 I assure you I've never spoken to  
 him about that. I promised you  
 that.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 Well, he knows. Somehow.

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Jesus. It's starting to make sense  
 now. Think about it, Arielle.  
 Morty wants to cash in on the  
 device now that it works, and he's  
 cutting us both out of it. He's  
 pissed at us for the affair.  
 (MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And he's a major miser when it comes to money - believe me, I've known him longer than you have.

ARIELLE

(Into phone)

I can't believe that.

CHRIS

(Into phone)

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

ARIELLE

(Into phone)

God, what should we do?

CHRIS

(Into phone)

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

ARIELLE

(Into phone)

OK.

Chris hangs up and hails a cab.

INT. TAXI (TRAVELING) - DAY

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

EXT. CHRIS'S HOUSE - DAY

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

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

INT. LAB - DAY

Chris rushes in.

CHRIS  
Morty! Are you in here? Mor--

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

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

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

Chris turns to see Arielle in the doorway.

CHRIS  
The Pentachoron. It's gone.

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

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

ARIELLE  
--Chris, please--

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

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

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER - DAY

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

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

ARIELLE

I'm stunned. This is a total shock.

CHRIS

Look, Arielle, you have to get your head around this. Forget what you think you know about wonderful Mr. Morty. We have to come up with something fast before it's too late. I need your help. And vice versa.

ARIELLE

What do you suggest?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

--Why not go to the police?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

I see.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

Don't be naive, darling. A wad of hundreds makes a perfect substitute for a passport.

Arielle shakes her head.

ARIELLE

Sad. I just can't believe it.

(beat)

Chris, why did you tell Morty about us?

CHRIS

I promise, I didn't.

ARIELLE

Well, neither did I.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

Hmmm.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

And what are those true feelings?

CHRIS

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

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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

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

CHRIS

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



LORI

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

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

CHRIS

What do you mean doesn't make any sense? It makes perfect sense. He was just waiting for me to get the fucking thing to work so he could take it for himself.

LORI

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

CHRIS

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

LORI

I don't know, Chris. Seems--

CHRIS

--He's already in Japan, I know it. Or maybe China, capital of unscrupulous business practices.

(beat)

Bastard tells me he's not allowed to fly. Doctor's orders. What a fucking liar!

LORI

Chris, please.

Chris raises his index finger in dramatic fashion.

CHRIS  
Quod Effing Demonstradum!

Albert slinks into the kitchen.

ALBERT  
Hey Dad, what's the matter?

LORI  
Nothing, dear. Go do your homework.

CHRIS  
Nothing? Nothing? You call it nothing?

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
My boss, Dr. Morty Effing Klein stole the Pentachoron, Albert. How about that? My life's work for the past dozen years. I guess you could call it nothing.

ALBERT  
Dr. Klein did that? Really?

LORI  
Albert--

ALBERT  
--You're right, Dad. It does make sense he would take it. It must be worth a lot of money. What are you gonna do about it, Dad?

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

CHRIS  
Well, Al, I'm going to hire a private investigator to ferret out Morty. That's the first thing.

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

CHRIS

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You see my point, don't you son?

Albert cracks a hesitant smile and nods in assent.

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - DAY

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

DECLAN'S FATHER (O.S.)

(Groggy)

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

DECLAN

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

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

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

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

DECLAN (CONT'D)

C'mon.

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

DECLAN'S FATHER (O.S.)

What the fuck is that noise,  
goddammit?

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

INT. PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

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

CHRIS

So that's basically it.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

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

CHRIS

Okay. That's good.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

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

CHRIS

Well, it's a trade secret, really.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

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

CHRIS

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

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

A TV?

CHRIS

A TV that can transport objects.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

What's it's approximate value?

CHRIS

Hundreds of millions.

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

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

CHRIS

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

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

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

CHRIS

Friend, your watch is worth more  
than my car.

(beat)

Listen, the device is valuable.  
Enough money for Morty to leave the  
country and go into hiding forever.  
Maybe not hundreds of millions, but  
tens of millions. Okay? Tens of  
millions, easily.

The Private Investigator nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So what's next?

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

CHRIS  
 So... \$4500, huh?

Chris rubs his hands together sheepishly.

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

Chris fidgets some more.

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

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

Chris exits.

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

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

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

Which displays: Current Balance - \$113.74

BACK TO SCENE

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

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

Which displays: Current Balance - \$3.05

BACK TO SCENE

CHRIS  
 Oh, for fuck's sake.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

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

CASHIER  
Seventy sixty-nine. Cash back?

LORI  
Um, forty, please

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

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

INT. BANK - DAY

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

BANK VP  
How can I help you Mrs. Klein?

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

BANK VP  
Certainly.

The Bank VP types into his workstation

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

ARIELLE  
There's more than one?

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

ARIELLE  
What other account is there?

BANK VP

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

ARIELLE

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

BANK VP

Mrs. Klein, I am prohibited by bank rules... and the law from revealing the--

ARIELLE

--What type of account is it?

BANK VP

I really shouldn't... OK, it's an account with our partner firm in the Caymans.

ARIELLE

Oh my god. How much is in it?

BANK VP

I can't tell--

ARIELLE

--Is it more than a million?

BANK VP

Mrs. Klein--

ARIELLE

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

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

BANK VP

OK? Is there something else I can help you with, Mrs. Klein?

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Albert, Declan and teenagers JASON and NICK hang out on their bicycles next to the Gas Station. Declan drags a joint and hands it to Jason who also drags and then passes to Albert who demurs.

DECLAN

Smoke it, you pussy.



The boys laugh. Albert takes a perfunctory puff then passes the joint on to Nick.

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

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

JASON (CONT'D)  
Get it? Thoof!

NICK  
How would you know? You never ate out a pussy.

Nick takes on the joint, holds his breath and passes it to Declan.

JASON  
Yes I did.

NICK  
(Coughing out smoke)  
Who?

JASON  
Tiffany.

Declan takes a toke.

NICK  
Tiffany Lundgren? Bullshit.

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

Declan hands the joint to Jason.

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

DECLAN  
What the hell're you talking about?

ALBERT  
I don't know. Just--

DECLAN

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

Jason hands the joint to Albert.

ALBERT

What do you mean?

DECLAN

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

Jason presses the joint on Albert who once again demurs.

DECLAN (CONT'D)

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

Jason and Nick stare at Albert indicating their consensus with Declan's directive. As Albert peddles away Declan throws a rock at him.

INT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

BERNIE

Does Lori know about this?

CHRIS

Certainly, Bernie. I told her the whole story.

BERNIE

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

CHRIS

Well, uh--

MARJORIE

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

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

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

CHRIS  
Technically, yes.

BERNIE  
Technically?

MARJORIE  
What do you need money for, Chris?

BERNIE  
I'll ask the questions, Marjorie.  
So what do you need money for,  
Chris? Funding a cure for  
baldness?

Bernie and Marjorie chuckle.

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

BERNIE  
--How's that?

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

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

CHRIS  
Please, take it as a compli--

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

CHRIS

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

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

BERNIE

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

MARJORIE

Wasn't it when you joined the debate team?

BERNIE

No, it was before--

Chris stands and stuffs the paper in his back pocket.

CHRIS

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

BERNIE

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

CHRIS

Of course.

(beat)

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

EXT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Yeah?

Intercut with Morty's House.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone, crying)  
 Chris?

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Arielle! What is it?

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 Morty has an offshore account he  
 was hiding from me.

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 I kn... My god. Did he move a  
 bunch of money recently?

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 I don't know. They wouldn't tell  
 me.

Arielle starts sobbing big time.

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 Darling, where are you?

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 H-h-home.

CHRIS  
 (Into phone)  
 I'm coming over.

ARIELLE  
 (Into phone)  
 No, that's OK.  
 (beat)  
 Yes, please. Come.

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Chris and Arielle sit together on a sofa.

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

How did you make out with the  
private investigator?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

OK.  
(beat)  
Chris?

CHRIS

Yes, dear?

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS  
Sorry for what?

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

Chris inches closer to Arielle.

CHRIS  
We had the real thing once,  
Arielle.

ARIELLE  
Yeah, but you wouldn't commit.

CHRIS  
I'm ready now.

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

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

ARIELLE  
I remember.

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

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

EXT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

(Giggling)

What are you talking about?

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

OK. You better get going.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

I'm going to the police later  
today.

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

Right.

(beat)

Chris, if you find Morty, what are  
you going to do? You're not going  
to--

CHRIS

--Kill him? Shit yeah. Or at  
least hurt him a little.

ARIELLE

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

CHRIS

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

ARIELLE

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



CHRIS  
You're so dialed in.

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

ARIELLE  
I better get that.

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

INT. MORTY'S HOUSE - DAY

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

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

INT. CHRIS'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - DAY

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

ALBERT  
What'cha doing Dad?

Chris spins around.

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

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

CHRIS

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

ALBERT

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

CHRIS

A coded notebook? Maybe.

ALBERT

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

CHRIS

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

Albert is relieved.

ALBERT

I bet he's back at the lab right now.

CHRIS

Why do you think so?

ALBERT

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

CHRIS

Seems unlikely.

ALBERT

Maybe he went back to get something.

CHRIS

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

ALBERT

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

CHRIS

--He might come back looking to download the new software. He just might.

Albert smiles proudly.

ALBERT

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

Chris lovingly puts an arm around Albert.

EXT. CREEK - DAY

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

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

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/ANTEROOM - DAY

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

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

NIEDZIELSKI

(Over intercom)

May I help you, ma'am?

ARIELLE

(Into intercom)

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

Niedzielski BUZZES Arielle in.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

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

NIEDZIELSKI

What's your relationship to Mr. Klein?

ARIELLE

He's my husband.

NIEDZIELSKI

How long you been married?

ARIELLE

Is that important?

(beat)

A little over two years.

Niedzielski speaks the words as he writes

NIEDZIELSKI

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

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

What does Mr. Klein do for a living?

ARIELLE

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

Niedzielski takes copious notes

NIEDZIELSKI

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

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

How do you know that?

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

Maybe he has multiple passports.

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

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

ARIELLE

--Another day? Or two? Why? Too  
much time has gone by already. We  
have to locate Morty as fast as  
possible.

NIEDZIELSKI

Is he in danger or something?

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

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

ARIELLE

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

NIEDZIELSKI

Certainly, ma'am. Let me talk to  
Sergeant Grove. I'll be back  
shortly. Make yourself  
comfortable, Miss, uh...

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

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/GROVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Arielle sits across a nicer desk from Sergeant GROVE. Sporting a military-like haircut, Grove is about 40 and wears a police uniform.

GROVE

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

ARIELLE

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

GROVE

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

ARIELLE

Certainly. I brought all that stuff with me.

GROVE

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

ARIELLE

I can't see that happening, really.

GROVE

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

ARIELLE

Good.

GROVE

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

Grove departs.

EXT. LAB/CELLAR - DAY

Chris picks up a chunk of asphalt broken off from the parking lot and uses it to smash a cellar window. He slides through the opening, but it's a tight fit.

EXT. LAB - DAY

CLOSE-UP - SECURITY BOX FLASHING RED

INT. LAB/CELLAR - DAY

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

CHRIS

Shit.

Chris climbs the staircase leading to the main floor. His sliced ass cheek is visible. He opens the door to the Lab.

INT. LAB - DAY

Although it's daytime the Lab is dark because the shades are drawn.

CHRIS

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

As Chris walks toward the center of the lab he steps in broken pieces of glass beneath the fire station, making a CRUNCH. He stops to flip on a light and quizzically inspects the bottom of his shoe.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Morty?

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

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

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

CHRIS (V.O.)

A-R-oh-3-1-2-I-L-Y. I-L-Y... I  
love you. Effing dogbreath.

Laptop displays: LOGIN SUCCESSFUL

BACK TO SCENE

Gratified, Chris claps his hands together enthusiastically.

CHRIS

Yes!

Chris works the laptop.

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

Which displays an email addressed to Irving Slutsky.

Chris clicks it open revealing the contents:

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

BACK TO SCENE

Confused, Chris strokes his face.



CHRIS (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT/GROVE'S OFFICE

Grove comes back with a handful of papers.

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

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

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

GROVE  
Did he travel a lot?

ARIELLE  
Fairly often.

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

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

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

Arielle shifts in her chair.

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

GROVE

This might sound strange, and I don't want you to take it the wrong way, but do you have any reason to suspect Mr. Hahn? Might he be capable of incapacitating Mr. Klein and stealing the invention for personal gain?

ARIELLE

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

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

NIEDZIELSKI

Sergeant Grove. Sorry to interrupt. Steelhouse Security just reported a break-in at Morque Technologies.

INT. LAB - DAY

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

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

CHRIS

What the fuck?

Chris walks over to the fire-axe, picks it up and looks it over, confused. Some hairs are embedded where the handle and the head meet.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

My god.

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

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

INT. LAB - DAY

The Cops storm in, guns drawn.

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

Nearly catatonic, Chris looks stupidly toward the Cops.

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

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

COP #3  
He's dead.

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

COP #2  
You have the right to remain--

CHRIS  
--It's not what you think.

COP #2  
What do I think?

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

COP #2  
Listen to me carefully, Mr.  
Scientist. Anything you say can  
and will be used against you--

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

ARIELLE  
What's going on Chris?

Chris yells over his shoulder.

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

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

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

ARIELLE  
What's happening?

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

ARIELLE  
Deceased?

COP #1  
I'm sorry.

Arielle's face crumples.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

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

JUDGE  
How do you plead?

LAWYER  
Dr. Hahn pleads not guilty, your  
honor.

INT. ABU DHABI AIRPORT - DAY

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

INVESTOR #1

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

El-Khoury appears befuddled at first then shocked.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A CORONER examines Morty's corpse lying atop a slab.

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

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

INT. DECLAN'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

DECLAN'S FATHER

Goddamn you, boy! Stealing my  
beers again, huh?

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

DECLAN'S FATHER (CONT'D)

You're gonna pay me back with this  
here computer.

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

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

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

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

TECHNICIAN'S P.O.V. - COMPLICATED PROGRAMMING CODE

BACK TO SCENE

TECHNICIAN

Check this out.

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

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY (LATER)

The Store Owner makes a phone call.

INT. SCIENTIFIC LAB - DAY

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

SCIENTIST

(Into phone)

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

INT. COMPUTER REPAIR STORE - DAY

Seated, the Scientist examines the laptop files as the STORE OWNER looks over his shoulder.

SCIENTIST

Truly amazing. Where did you get  
this?

STORE OWNER

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

SCIENTIST

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

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

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

WITNESS

The hairs and blood match that of the victim.

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

INT. COURTROOM - DAY (LATER)

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

JURY FOREMAN

Guilty, your honor.

Chris slumps in resignation.

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

EXT. LAB - DAY

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

INT. BERNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

MARJORIE

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

BERNIE

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

INT. SCIENTIFIC LAB - NIGHT

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

ENGINEER

(Agitated)

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

SCIENTIST

We have to. It'll be worth millions.

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

ENGINEER

Fuck!

EXT. PRISON - DAY

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

INT. PRISON/CELL - DAY

INSERT TITLE CARD: 2019

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

PRISON GUARD

Hahn. Visitor.

INT. PRISON - DAY

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

INT. PRISON/VISITOR ROOM - DAY

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



ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

Congratulations. What do you want?

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

--Ex-wife, please.

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

--Jesus, just refer to her as Lori.

ENGINEER

Sure. Lori--

CHRIS

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

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

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

(beat)

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

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

What code? What laptop?

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

What are you talking about?

The Engineer hunkers closer to Chris.

ENGINEER

(Whispers)

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

Chris's mouth parts in stupefaction.

CHRIS

My god...

Chris rubs his eyes for a moment.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It works? Past and future?

ENGINEER

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

CHRIS

Amazing.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)

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

INT. PRISON/VISITOR ROOM - DAY (LATER)

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

CHRIS

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

The Engineer nods.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 Just outside the conference room  
 off the main hallway.

ENGINEER  
 Yeah. I got it.

The Prison Guard appears from O.C.

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

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

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

CHRIS  
 We better get back in there.

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

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
 When do we start?

Morty takes Chris's hand and shakes it vigorously.

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

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

CHRIS (V.O.)

To Chris Hahn of 1997. I implore you with all my heart - do not join Morty Klein in his business venture. If you do, you'll lose everything and end up in prison for murder. Go back into the meeting right now. Although he'll never know it, Morty will appreciate your decision too, believe me. If things get too boring for you, look up a swell girl named Arielle Cowan. You can search for her next year after a company called Google starts up. And for God's sake, buy as much Google stock as you can possibly afford. Sincerely, Chris Hahn of 2019.

MORTY

What the hell is it, Chris?

Chris stuffs the letter into his pocket.

CHRIS

I gotta get back in there.

Chris opens the door and steps back into the Conference Room, leaving Morty flummoxed in the Hallway behind the closing door.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END