

A TIME TO TRAVEL
(SHOOTING SCRIPT)

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EXT. THE ATROPO FAMILY ESTATE (DATE: 1976) - DAY

SUPER 8 CAMERA P.O.V.

YOUNG ARNOLD runs through a summer scene fleeing the camera in his underwear. He trips on a lawn sprinkler. He cries.

CUT TO:

SUPER 8 CAMERA P.O.V.

A father and son sit on the front porch. BENJAMIN ATROPO, overweight and greying, bounces Young Arnold on his lap.

ARNOLD'S MOTHER (O.S.)
You're alright, Arnie. It's okay.

He presents his son with a silver pocket watch.

BENJAMIN
Ever hear time heals all wounds?
Its true. In fact, I bet you'll
feel *all* better in about Five...
Four... Three... Two... ONE!

With a bounce and a tickle, Young Arnold giggles.

Young Arnold's father smiles, then winces and rubs his chest.

BENJAMIN
(to camera)
Can you take him? Please? Think the
beans are coming back to haunt me.

CUT TO:

SUPER 8 CAMERA P.O.V.

Young Arnold shows off a double-stacked ice cream cone.

ARNOLD'S MOTHER (O.S.)
(distraught)
Oh God! ...BEN!!!

The camera whips around to reveal Arnold's father sprawled out and lying limp across the porch steps.

YOUNG ARNOLD (O.S.)
Daddy?

The camera drops to the ground. Cries of panic and distress are over-taken by the sound of a running film projector.

INT. ARNOLD'S PRIVATE STUDY (DATE: UNKNOWN) - NIGHT

A Super-8 projector screen reviews past events. The camera is on its side. Young Arnold races toward his father as the film runs out. The screen burns white, illuminating the foreground. An adult version of ARNOLD sleeps at his worktable. Countless pages of equations litter the space.

A strip of celluloid flicks loose in the projector's gears and flaps in time with the ticking of a watch. Held loosely in Arnold's open palm is his father's timepiece. The second hand moves forward in time, then jumps back.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD: **A TIME TO TRAVEL**

FADE IN:

EXT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - NIGHT

FUTURE ARNOLD sits in a ragged lawn chair, his shoulders hunched. The wind whips around him. A mug is in his lap.

Fading crimson streaks criss-cross a sky of falling stars. The land below is barren and dying.

The weathered man looks up. Streaming tears slice through the dirt on his cheeks. The coffee steam distorts his image.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

Steam evaporates. A single bean floats in a cup of coffee.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)

Just imagine that space is like the coffee in this cup...

PAST ARNOLD is seated squarely in front of a video camera.

PAST ARNOLD

When I stir the coffee, we must realize that the bean is not moving through the coffee, but rather the coffee is moving around the bean.

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - Arnold looks at the camera expectantly.

PAST ARNOLD

...We are the bean.

The coffee bean dances on swirling brown ripples.

INT. TIME TUNNEL (DATE: UNKNOWN) - DAY

Beams of green laser-light swirl.

INT. ARNOLD'S PRIVATE STUDY (DATE: UNKNOWN) - NIGHT

A blinding film projector light flares.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - DAY

Future Arnold opens the door of a storage closet, revealing his tired features. Time hasn't been kind to him. He is clearly disappointed by a lack of edibles. He coughs hard.

A pile of crushed soup cans and empty containers tumble out.

Future Arnold closes the door and wanders toward a nearby computer terminal. His thick fingers type with purpose. There is a flash of green static. He shuffles back to the closet.

The closet re-opens. It is packed with sweets and snacks. Future Arnold blows years of dust off of a chocolate bar.

Stuffed behind rolls of neatly stacked toilet paper there is an old camcorder. Future Arnold picks it up and looks it over. Hesitant, he takes a moment before turning it on.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - *Past Arnold* records himself.

PAST ARNOLD

Dealing with immensely high-powered lasers and a lot of energy, there is always some level of danger. But for my dear colleagues at the LHC-- The Large Hadron Collider, in Switzerland-- and France. Well, comparably, this has only a fraction of the potential danger.

Past Arnold sets the camera on a work table and steps back to reveal a towering machine. It resembles a fourteen-foot pile of glossy black Jenga-blocks.

The man is giddy. He disappears behind the gigantic machine and flashes of green light emanate from the various lines and breaks in its dark, reflective surface. It is dazzling.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)

Unlike our concerns surrounding the LHC, there is zero possibility that a micro black hole could form. So really, it's pretty safe--

A terrifying sound rises from the machine and a blast of smoke fills the frame. Arnold coughs. The screen glitches.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - DAY

Future Arnold sets the glitching camera down. He ponders. Scanning his messages, he pulls up a series of schematics.

A photo of his father, nearly the same age *Future Arnold* is now, rests on the computer desk. *Future Arnold* grabs his tools and sets to work.

Wires are soldered. Milky smoke rises. The machine's insides flare. A beam of laser-light ignites.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - Multiple green lasers fire.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)

If we want to travel through time, then, like the bean in the coffee, we need to bend space-- with light. Light, it seems, is most effective at twisting space and time. Which means we can use circulating light beams to close time into a loop.

Past Arnold turns the camera on himself.

PAST ARNOLD

The key technical challenge is generating enough power to twist space and time, or *Space-Time*, and have it remain constant over time.

He holds up a postcard of a massive rural wind-farm.

PAST ARNOLD

It has been a bit busy lately, but-- well, uh-- this-- is for you. Heh.

The postcard reads: PINCHER CREEK, ALBERTA

PAST ARNOLD

So, uh- for a time-machine to work,
it must never lose power once it's
first turned on; if one hopes to
receive information from the
future, or send things to the past.

He places the camera with a wide view of the Time Tunnel and his workstation, then races over to a computer.

PAST ARNOLD

Of course, I would rather be on
site with you, friends, at the LHC,
but wind power was the best option
for a reliable energy supply.

Arnold types a command and stands proudly.

PAST ARNOLD

Ready for a demonstration?

He checks his father's pocket watch.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - DAY

Future Arnold's fingers adjust the time on the pocket watch. He steps inside the Time Tunnel to make final adjustments, observed by the video camera in the background.

FUTURE ARNOLD

I've always been fascinated with
the inner clockworks of design. No
surprise, having a watch-maker for
a father. For him it was an art. He
opening people up in conversation,
seeing what made them tick; then
he'd design timepieces to suit. A
charmer and a ladies' man. I've
never had that way with people.
But... there are no people left. We
all become our fathers in some way.
I just wish I could have been more
than a shadow of his memory. I've
learned too late... Living inside a
box will give you tunnel vision.

The Time-Tunnel pulses.

INT. ARNOLD'S PRIVATE STUDY (DATE: UNKNOWN) - NIGHT

A blinding film projector light flares.

Arnold sits square in the center of the projection screen. The moving images of past memories play on the back of his pale and wrinkled dress shirt. His proud father smiles.

ARNOLD (O.S.)
(to self)
Time heals all wounds.

An open deck of playing cards lies among scattered papers.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - *Past Arnold* opens a deck of cards.

PAST ARNOLD
...It's Twenty-two minutes past five o'clock. I've scheduled a packet of coded information to be sent at exactly Five-Thirty, to be received five minutes in the past. So, in approximately three minutes, at precisely Five-Twenty-Five, I should receive a message from my near future self. As a control, I've written fifty-two words on this standard deck of playing cards, one of which I'll draw only *after* I've received the message. Then I'll have to *send* that word back to myself in binary code, carried on light-- instead of coffee. Upon success, I'll be sure to forward my latest calculations to Geneva-- for the next LHC test!

Past Arnold looks thoughtful for a moment.

PAST ARNOLD
Wondering what would happen if I do *not* send the message back to myself? In such an event a tangent time-line would likely emerge-- an alternate reality-- where I never received the message in the first place. That would be disappointing.

He chuckles to himself and walks behind the camera.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)
Now, if you would please turn your attention to the display monitor...

He re-positions the camcorder to see his computer screen.

PAST ARNOLD

I've linked the receiving platform to an e-mail software package, to make delivery and receipt of past and future information accessible to the everyday user. I call it the *Time-Information-Texting-Server*. And Uh-- Pardon the acronym. I named it in honor of my father.
 (uncomfortable)
 Considered himself a *boob-man*. Heh.
 (recovers)
 But just imagine all the lives we could save-- or thoughts we could share-- with our lost loved ones by sending *messages through time!*

Past Arnold tears up.

PAST ARNOLD

Or, even the speed at which technology might develop! If we knew what our future selves know... Well, it's simply... incalculable.

Past Arnold checks his Father's watch. The pre-destined time is approaching. He plops himself in front of his computer.

PAST ARNOLD

Okay! Here we go! We should have a message in Five... Four... Three...

At the count of ONE, an e-mail alert sounds. Stephen Hawking's robotic voice says: *Time to check your messages.*

Past Arnold wriggles in his seat, excited. He leans in.

The message opens. It reads: **01100101-01101001-01101110-01010011-01110100-01100101-01101001-01101110**

2012 ARNOLD

...Great Scott...

Stunned, Past Arnold draws a single card from the deck and show it to the camera. He flips it over. The card is a JOKER and it reads: **EINSTEIN**. Past Arnold smiles. A framed photo of Benjamin, Arnold's father, sits smiling on the computer desk.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - NIGHT

Future Arnold picks up the photograph. He stares at the image longingly. Bright green flashes reflect off the frame glass.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - *Past Arnold's* face fills the screen.

PAST ARNOLD

It's happening!!! It works!!!

The man is ecstatic. Volumes of code decompresses on screen.

PAST ARNOLD

Someone from the future-- someone brilliant! They sent back T.I.T.S. specs to help me improve it! Don't know who... but they are a genius!

Stephen Hawking's robotic voice: ***Time to check your messages!***
Past Arnold pauses to decrypt a new short message. He laughs.

PAST ARNOLD

Ha! Our future friend really loves snack bars. Perhaps with the leaps made in nutrition in the future, they become obsolete. Can't fault him. I too love my sweet snacks!

Past Arnold carries box of energy supplements to the storage closet. He adds them to an already massive pile.

PAST ARNOLD

Imagine their world... What it must be like with advanced technological sophistication. Must be beautiful!

EXT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2044) - NIGHT

Future Arnold sits in a ragged lawn chair, his shoulders hunched. The wind whips around him. A gun is in his lap.

Fading crimson streaks criss-cross a sky of falling stars. The land below is barren and dying.

The weathered man looks up. Tears slice through the dirt on his cheeks. He puts the gun to his chin. Arnold's view of the heavens is vast. A huge, broken moon hangs in the darkened sky. It absolutely overwhelms the horizon. Several gigantic asteroids drift through a cloud of rocky debris and bright meteors litter the atmosphere. It is the end of all things.

Arnold drops his gun in a barrage of deadly coughs. Wind turbines turn slowly. The savage moon gradually sets.

EXT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

Wind turbines turn slowly. The sun peeks above the horizon.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - *Past Arnold*, beside himself with glee.

PAST ARNOLD

Unbelievable! My future friend sent us another upgrade! This one's a doosie! Every small change I make on this end of time seems to bring advancements only seconds later! Development rate is exponential! At this rate it may even be possible to send a living *person* through time-- in about thirty years or so. By then I'll be about the same age as my father was when-- Well. Heh.

He smiles at his father's photograph.

PAST ARNOLD

Stepping through time would be like stepping through a doorway...

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (2044) - DAY

FUTURE ARNOLD (O.S.)

...into Hell.

The photo of Arnold's father smiles back at *Future Arnold's* grim reflection. He centers himself in the camcorder's LCD.

FUTURE ARNOLD

(to camera)

By all calculations the risk was minimal. A one in a point-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-zero-one percent chance that a black hole could form, under usual LHC conditions. But-- it did. Thanks to my Time-Tunnel equations.

(to self)

Douglas Adams once said: A common mistake people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools. It's so obvious now. I *am* the fool.

Future Arnold approaches the obelisk-like machine, coughing hard. His breathing is labored. He kisses his pocket watch.

FUTURE ARNOLD
I'm sorry, dad. I broke the world.

INT. TIME TUNNEL (DATE: UNKNOWN) - DAY

Beams of green laser-light swirl.

The innards of the Time Tunnel re-arrange themselves in an accelerated time-lapse of adding complexity. It becomes ever more bright and ominous as green flashes fill the lab space.

INT. TIME TUNNEL (DATE: ALL TIME & SPACE)

Beams of circulating light spiral down through an energetic vortex of twisting time. A faint and echoed voice is heard.

PAST ARNOLD (V.O.)
...Three...Two...ONE!

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (DATE: 2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - *Past Arnold* wriggles in his seat.

Nothing happens. Moments pass.

PAST ARNOLD
I must have-- done something wrong.

The e-mail finally sounds: *Time to check your messages!* There is a bright green flash off camera.

Confused, Past Arnold turns his attention to the receiving terminal. A mass of ones and zeros, followed by a dense wall of complex numerical data, fills the screen.

PAST ARNOLD
This... This is-- impossible. I'm receiving immense amounts of data. It's an image-- Or, Oh! A video! A video-- from someone in the future!

Past Arnold sets to decoding the digital video information. The file begins to play broken and jagged digital artifacts.

COMPUTER SCREEN - *Future Arnold's* image is heavily distorted.

FUTURE ARNOLD
...foolpro-- is t- underestim--e
the ingenuity of complete fools.

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - Past Arnold watches intently.

Huge blasts of green light fill the room. The camcorder's LCD screen takes in the entire Time-Tunnel laboratory. The dull, digital image flashes and dissolves into the real life space. A worn and weathered man now stands in the room, his back to the Time Machine. He approaches a wide nearby window.

Past Arnold does not notice him.

The man stares outside. Countless rows of huge wind turbines spin. The moon is small, round and pale, just as it should be. The stranger coughs.

Past Arnold is startled by the sound. He finally sees the older man, Future Arnold, silhouetted by the window.

FUTURE ARNOLD
Nice day out there, hey Arnie?

Past Arnold stands, slowly. He is rendered numb. Awestruck.

PAST ARNOLD
...Dad?...

Future Arnold turns from the window to face his younger self.

FUTURE ARNOLD
No. But don't worry...

A gun fires. Past Arnold stumbles back in shock. He feels for the hole in his chest and raises bloody fingers into view.

Child-like and confused, he falls.

FUTURE ARNOLD
Time heals all wounds, remember?

Past Arnold writhes on the floor. Future Arnold's tall shadow draws over him. Past Arnold fights to take his last breath and the shadow fades. The weathered looking man is gone.

A cold coffee cup sits on the desk by a computer terminal next to a silver pocket watch. The second hand moves forward in time, then jumps back.

INT. TIME TUNNEL LABORATORY (2012) - DAY

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - A bean swirls in a cup of coffee.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)
When I stir the coffee, we must
realize that the bean is not moving
through the coffee, but rather the
coffee is moving around the bean.

VIDEO CAMERA P.O.V. - Arnold looks at the camera expectantly.

PAST ARNOLD
(to self)
Bean. Been there... Has been. The
bean is past tense... Interesting.
(back to camera)
Uh, yes! Turn out time travel *is*
possible. But there's a problem.
There's a catch. You can only go
back as far as the moment that the
machine is first turned on. Before
that, the past is the past, I'm
afraid. So, I guess we best try and
make the future one worth living.

The coffee bean dances on brown ripples.

PAST ARNOLD (O.S.)
(to self)
...We are the bean.

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END.