

TIME AFTER TIME

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DUSK

A plain, pearl white 4-door sedan zips along a lonely country highway, illuminated by the faintest of remaining sunlight and a rising full moon, approaching an overpass.

It zooms by an intersection with another county road, its headlamps shining briefly on a saw horse-style "Road Closed Bridge Out" sign.

INT. SEDAN

An attractive woman, late 20s, has her focus on the road interrupted by the beep of her cell phone. She glances down and smiles, seeing a text message from her husband:

"BE HOME SOON?"

She picks up the phone and prepares to text an answer. She returns her gaze to the highway, just as...

...a HUGE BUCK DARTS directly in front of her.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY

As the car ascends the overpass, it SWEARS to miss the buck and PLOWS into the guard rail, CRASHING through it.

SHOT of the mangled guard rail as sounds of the vehicle OVERTURNING and SMASHING on the rocks below are heard.

Then an explosion and a plume of smoke rises up from the crash site INTO VIEW.

INT. SCIENTIST'S LAB - DAY

A rustic, warehouse-looking room filled with scientific equipment.

A scraggly, disheveled scientist in his mid-50s - Wolfgang Adler - sits at a computer, typing away at the keyboard, and then studying the screen, which reads:

"4.23.16 Expmt. #3. Wave setting 251m; Oscillation 0.34Hz. 3rd attempt at sending an inanimate object back in time."

While continuing to stare at the screen, Adler reaches for his cup of coffee but as he prepares to grasp its handle...

...a can of soda suddenly materializes next to it and Adler grabs it instead.

Surprised, Adler drops it and quickly turns to face the object, which tips over and rolls toward the desk's edge.

Adler snatches it and spies the note attached to it, which reads:

"Teleported soda can from machine on 5.23.16".

Adler raises his arms triumphantly as he shouts with glee.

ADLER

Oh my God! It worked! I did it!

He suddenly cuts his celebration short and sobers.

ADLER (CONT'D)

Wait...I haven't done it yet...
(smiles wryly)
...but I will.

EXT. COUNTY ROAD - DAY [DREAM SEQUENCE]

FROM MIKE'S POV: The previously seen sedan cruises down the highway toward Mike. He LEAPS out onto the highway, FRANTICALLY waving his arms, his screams indiscernible.

The car swerves to miss Mike and SLAMS into the guard rail, SMASHING through it, disappearing from sight.

Mike rushes to the broken guard rail and peers over the edge, spying the vehicle, overturned, at the river's bank.

AGHAST at the sight, Mike WAILS in despair.

MIKE

No....no....no-o-o-o!

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Mike bellows his last words, he sits straight up in bed, WIDE-EYED, PANTING, sweat dripping from his face. His hands cover his face as he droops his head and begins to sob.

INT. SCIENTIST'S LAB - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: Four months later

A turtle is viewed in a small cage, appearing very normal, gnawing on a lettuce leaf.

Adler finishes scribbling some notes on a pad as he concludes his observations of the small reptile.

Adler then slides over to the rabbit pen nearby and gently removes a white rabbit, stroking it as he walks over to his time machine.

He places it into the box-shaped device and shuts the door. Adler returns to his computer and types in the appropriate settings.

Finally, he strides back to the machine and throws a switch.

The box glows as energy surges through it. After five seconds, he returns the switch to its "off" setting and slowly opens the door.

CLOSE-UP on Adler as he peers into the box. His expression of HORROR indicates the experiment's failure. As he shakes his head disappointingly...

...he glimpses the rabbit pen with his peripheral vision and briefly discerns a brown bunny. Startled, he turns toward it and its image VANISHES!

Astounded, he scurries to the pen, looking around for where the rabbit might have hopped off to. Not finding it, he turns around but, again, spots the hazel hare out of the corner of one eye.

Again he spins around...again, the image DISAPPEARS when looked upon directly.

Adler, suddenly realizing what may have happened, grabs a device resembling a Geiger counter, turns it on, and "wands" the area where he spied the furry creature.

The device emits a rapid beeping noise as it gathers data. Adler then returns to his computer and inputs the figures.

Seconds later, the stats are analyzed. Adler slumps into his chair, smirking, as he reads the computer screen:

"Analysis complete. Subject: Lepus sylvaticus. Age: unknown. Metabolic rate: unknown. Molecular analysis: Incomplete."

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mike stares at his TV, tears streaming down his face.

VIDEO FOOTAGE of Mike's honeymoon in some tropical venue reveals the same woman from the fatal accident!

He pours himself another shot of whiskey and downs it.

MONTAGE

...of still photos of the woman, interspersed with...

...more images of Mike drowning his sorrows via shots of JD, as he pours over a photo album.

END MONTAGE.

LIVING ROOM

Mike shuts the photo album and wipes the tears from his face. The cover reads "Mike and Laura".

He attempts to pour himself another glass of bourbon but the bottle is empty. In frustration, he SLINGS it at the fireplace - it SHATTERS on the stone and brick.

Mike drops his head in despair, feeling around beside him on the couch for something. Not finding it, he raises his head and looks around, finally spying the object of his desire.

KITCHEN

On the kitchen table rests a revolver. Next to it lies an open envelope and a partially unfolded letter. The words "FORECLOSURE NOTICE" can be discerned at the top.

LIVING ROOM

Mike stands up but is wobbly. He starts toward the kitchen but, in his inebriated state...

...TRIPS on a coffee table leg and FALLS flat on his face, SMACKING his head on a wooden chair arm on the way down.

He slowly turns over, staring at the ceiling, blood OOZING from his temple. Too drunk and dizzy to get up...

...he PASSESS OUT.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (THE NEXT MORNING)

Mike awakens on the floor from his drunken stupor, looking like hell. He struggles to sit upright, WINCING in discomfort from his hangover and the gash on his head.

With great difficulty, he manages to stand, then makes his way to...

KITCHEN

...the kitchen table. As he gazes at the revolver, a peaceful expression pervades his face.

Plopping down on a chair, Mike grasps the pistol and places the barrel under his chin. He begins to squeeze the trigger but is interrupted by...

...the CHIMING of the door bell.

Startled, Mike hesitates, glancing at the door and then at the gun, which he has lowered somewhat. He puts it back under his chin and, just as before...

...the door bell RINGS, followed by KNOCKING.

Mike sighs, lowers the gun, and gets up. He places the gun in a cabinet drawer and then trudges to the door.

ENTRYWAY

Mike opens the door, revealing a briefcase-toting Adler, dressed in a suit instead of his lab attire. He addresses Mike cordially.

ADLER
Mr. Michael Bevins?

Mike pauses, then answers with apprehension.

MIKE
Who wants to know?

ADLER
Someone who can give you what you
want most...if you are willing to
take a risk.

Growing more suspicious, Mike raises an eyebrow and curls his lip.

MIKE
And how would you know what I want?

Adler relaxes his body language, replying apologetically.

ADLER
Forgive me, Mr. Bevins. I am Dr.
Wolfgang Adler. If you will but
give me ten minutes of your
precious time, I will explain all.

Mike stands silently at the doorway, eyeing Adler warily.

ADLER (CONT'D)
Please, Mr. Bevins. You will want
to hear what I have to say, I
assure you.

Mike moves to the side and gestures Adler to enter, which he does. Adler nods politely and the two make their way...

KITCHEN

...to the kitchen table. Adler sits. The foreclosure notice catches his eye.

Mike searches for something to offer his guest, first in the cupboard, and then the refrigerator, as he speaks.

MIKE
I'd offer you something to drink
but anything I have is, well...
better suited for a little later in
the day.

ADLER
I'm fine, thank-you.
(beat)
I'll get right to the point.

Adler opens his briefcase and takes out some photos and documents, including charts and hand-scribbled notes.

ADLER (CONT'D)

For many years now, I have been researching the concept that time is not linear and can be...bent. Just as Einstein's theories require time to slow down as one approaches the speed of light, I have discovered a way to fold time back on itself, allowing one to revisit the past...well, theoretically.

Mike skeptically interjects, having been listening intently.

MIKE

Time travel? You can't be serious.

ADLER

I have already successfully teleported first a can of soda, and then two living creatures: a turtle and a rabbit. I have data and photos to prove it.

Adler hands them to Mike, who views them with cynicism, then tosses them onto the table, covering the foreclosure letter.

MIKE

So what do you want with me?

ADLER

I know about your wife's accident.

INT. SCIENTIST'S LAB [FLASHBACK]

Adler sits at his desk, reading newspapers and then at his computer, searching websites, writing down useful data.

ADLER (V.O.)

I scoured obituaries, in print and online, searching for just the right person. Someone who lost a loved one tragically and whose life has been in a downward spiral ever since.

END FLASHBACK.

KITCHEN

Mike stares at Adler incredulously.

MIKE

And you think that person is me?

ADLER

You've never remarried, or even dated from what I've observed. You lost your job at Solex Industries.

(MORE)

ADLER (cont'd)

You seldom leave your about-to-be-foreclosed-on house, and you have no non-alcoholic beverages in your kitchen.

(beat)

Tell me I'm wrong.

Mike, frustrated by Adler's assessment, reacts derisively.

MIKE

This is ridiculous!

Adler notices the gash and comments on it.

ADLER

That gash to your temple...?

MIKE

...is none of your business! I think it's time for you to leave!

Adler pauses, nods, gathers his papers, stuffs them into his briefcase, stands and extends his hand, then retracts it when Mike doesn't shake it.

ADLER

Thank-you for your time, Mr. Bevins. Apparently, I misjudged how badly you wanted to see your wife again. I'll see myself out.

Adler makes his way to the entryway, then stops when Mike pipes up.

MIKE

Wait.

Mike meets Adler at the front door, his curiosity piqued, but still skeptical.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Not that I'm likely to change my mind...but, if I do...

Adler pulls a business card from his front shirt pocket and hands it Mike before he can finish.

ADLER

Be at this address at 2 pm tomorrow. Good day.

Adler opens the door and exits, leaving Mike staring first at the card, and then at Adler as he walks down the sidewalk.

INT. MONTAGE - DAY

- ADLER'S LAB: Adler sits at his computer, pouring over on-line documents and articles related to Mike and his wife.

- MIKE'S LIVING ROOM: Mike wanders around, seemingly in a daze. He takes pictures from the fireplace mantle of he and his wife and stares longingly at them.

- ADLER'S LAB: Adler, still at his computer, examines data on the monitor, verifying his teleportation calculations.

- MIKE'S LIVING ROOM: Mike carefully takes the urn containing Laura's ashes, cradles it like a baby, then returns it to its resting place. He turns and eyes the kitchen.

CLOSE-UP on the cabinet drawer containing the gun.

- ADLER'S LAB: Adler adjusts one of many electronic gizmos attached to his new teleportation device - a metallic body suit. Afterwards, he gazes proudly at his creation, nodding with satisfaction.

- MIKE'S KITCHEN: Mike opens the drawer and retrieves the gun, holding it by the handle, finger on the trigger. He stares at it momentarily, then, with a flick of the wrist...

...opens the chamber and dumps the bullets onto the kitchen table. He sets down the gun and picks up Adler's business card, glaring at it with a resolute expression.

END MONTAGE.

INT. SCIENTIST'S LAB - DAY

CLOSE-UP of the clock in the lab showing 2 pm.

Adler, snoozing at his computer, is aroused by a buzzing sound. He checks the monitor and discovers, via the camera outside, Mike standing at his front door.

EXT. WAREHOUSE FRONT DOOR - DAY

Mike stands in front of the door, fidgeting impatiently.

A beeping noise indicates the door is unlocking. It opens, revealing Adler, who is obviously happy to see Mike and motions for him to enter.

ADLER

Ah...Mr. Bevins. Do come in.

Mike enters the warehouse cautiously and looks around in wonder at all the equipment as Adler ushers him toward his equipment.

ADLER (CONT'D)

I'm delighted you're here. Does
this mean...?

Mike interrupts, his expression and tone of voice hiding his interest.

MIKE

It means you got me curious.
Nothin' more.

Adler stops and, with a look of disappointment, eyes Mike, who also brings his amble to a halt.

ADLER

I see. Fair enough. Come.

Adler resumes leading Mike to his computer. Once they arrive...

ADLER (CONT'D)

I control everything from here.

Adler then steps over to an adjoining table and picks up the adult body-sized metallic garment, then turns to Mike.

ADLER (CONT'D)

This is what you will wear.

Mike stares at it, seemingly unimpressed.

MIKE

Huh...

ADLER

(smirking)

You were expecting something like a
time tunnel...or perhaps an H. G.
Wells-like machine?

MIKE

(scratching his head)

I guess...I don't know.

Adler sets down the garment and pauses, sighs, and motions for Mike to sit, which he does.

ADLER

My earlier teleportations were
attained via a small, box-shaped
machine. However, building one
large enough to house a human
turned out to be fraught with...
cost overruns...and flaws.

Adler paces back to the garment.

ADLER (CONT'D)

I conceived of the idea of wearing something that would achieve the desired result, and, through much trial and error...perfected this device.

Adler points to the garment. Mike gets up and walks over to the adjacent table, giving it closer scrutiny, stroking it with one hand. He then turns to Adler.

MIKE

So this thing is gonna reunite me with my wife, huh?

ADLER

(nodding)

If all goes according to plan, yes.

Mike pans the room again, then eyes Adler warily.

MIKE

Tell me again how many times you've done this...successfully?

ADLER

(pauses)

Three...the can of soda, the turtle, and the rabbit. I showed you the data...

MIKE

I know. I know. So why not send a dog...or a chimp next? Why a human?

(beat)

And another thing...why are you the only one here? I would think the entire scientific community would want in on this.

ADLER

The "scientific community" has shunned me for my controversial theories...and for being critical of them on issues like global warming and human cloning. I am a heretic...blackballed by my colleagues.

MIKE

Then who funds your research?

ADLER

Fortunately, I have friends...well, a friend...in high places. Let's just say there is a well-funded organization that has a vested interest in my success, but wishes to keep things hush-hush for now.

MIKE

Ok, but that doesn't answer my question about why you want to send me back instead of Fido.

ADLER

Mr. Bevins, patient is not a word I would use to describe the members of this group. They expect results yesterday and are not to be trifled with.

(beat)

This is their call, not mine.

As a glassy-eyed Mike sits silently, digesting what he has heard...

ADLER (CONT'D)

I realize how difficult this decision must be for you. But consider this: had I achieved success multiple times and, thus, lessened the risk factor...you would not have been chosen. I needed someone desperate - someone ...with nothing to lose.

Mike nods as he continues to "process", then looks up at Adler steadfastly.

MIKE

What else do I need to know?

Adler briefly smiles, then continues.

ADLER

Using exact latitude and longitude coordinates, I should be able to teleport you to within a few yards of your desired location. Time, however, is less precise. I can accommodate a date and we can shoot for a specific hour but I make no promises.

Mike again nods and exhales deeply.

MIKE

Anything else?

ADLER

Yes. There is a high probability you will be...phase-shifted. In such an altered state of being, you would not be able to interact with any warm-blooded creature, including your wife, so you should plan accordingly.

MIKE

Will I at least be able to see her?

ADLER

I believe so. But it is highly likely that she will not be able to see you.

Mike pauses. It is obvious "the wheels are turning".

MIKE

Suppose I succeed. Then what? How do I get back to the present?

Adler hesitates, eying Mike sternly.

ADLER

You don't...at least not by any process I can initiate. That may happen on its own...or your new life may pick up from that point, as if the events of the last eleven months never happened.

(beat)

I'm afraid I don't have all the answers.

Mike sits, dumbfounded, contemplating for a moment, then stands and faces Adler.

MIKE

You said you were familiar with my wife's accident. I assume you know the time and place?

Adler grins devilishly, then heads for his computer as he speaks.

ADLER

I do. The necessary data is ready to be entered.

Adler, staring at his screen, brings up said data with a few keyboard strokes, then turns to Mike.

ADLER (CONT'D)

I figured that would be your choice...well, if you consented to go.

Mike sighs, then eyes Adler resolutely.

MIKE

Alright...let's do this...before I chicken out.

Adler nods and helps Mike don the garment, then shuffles back to his computer, entering one last bit of data.

ADLER

Press the button on the belt. It will allow the suit to receive my signal.

Mike nods, looks down at the button, and moves his hand in position, but hesitates. He looks back at Adler.

MIKE

Aren't you going to say something reassuring? At least wish me luck?

ADLER

My skill - not luck - is what will help you save your wife. But if it makes you feel better...good luck.

Mike exhales deeply, then presses the button. The suit begins to glow and seems to hum softly.

Adler presses "enter" on his keyboard.

The shine of the energy generated by the experiment illuminates Adler's face as he watches with trepidation.

As an ever-growing loud hum culminates in a crash of thunder, the room exponentially brightens briefly, then becomes dark.

Adler smiles as he views a smoldering suit, lying on the floor - empty!

EXT. COUNTY HIGHWAY - DUSK

PAN the sky - rain clouds forming - then the previously seen county highway:

The overpass skirting the river, the fork in the highway leading up to it, the intersection with the side road. As the "Road Closed Bridge Out" sign comes into view...

...Mike MATERIALIZES a few feet from it, appearing ghost-like! He surveys his surroundings...

MIKE

Holy crap - it worked!

...and then himself, holding his hands in front of him, which seem almost translucent, taking him aback.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Whoa!

Mike notices the sun is setting and, realizing he doesn't have much time, searches anxiously for something - anything - that can help him.

He spies the "Road Closed Bridge Out" sign and hustles to it, muttering under his breath to himself.

MIKE

This will have to do.

Mike picks up the heavy, trestle-style sign and lugs it on to the highway, positioning it just beyond...

...a fork in the road, so as to block the lanes ahead and detour any oncoming vehicle to the road splitting off to the left, which bypasses the overpass.

As he finishes, the shine of approaching headlamps cause him to turn around quickly and head for the highway's shoulder.

The oncoming vehicle slows when its headlights illuminate the sign.

Mike crouches nearby, squinting to discover the vehicle's make and model. He stands and walks dejectedly toward it as a silver 2-door sedan speeds off to the left.

MIKE

Dammit. That wasn't her.

Another pair of approaching headlights cause Mike to SCURRY back to his place of waiting along the highway's shoulder.

This vehicle also slows when the shine of its headlamps reveal the sign. Mike slinks ever closer and recognizes his wife's vehicle.

It turns left at the fork. As it motors down the road in the background, Mike JUMPS for JOY and FIST-PUMPS into the air.

MIKE

Yes! Yes!!

Mike returns to the sign. He bends over, reaches down, and picks it up, but, after taking only a step, suddenly disappears! The sign drops to the pavement.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 11 months later

Mike and Laura work in their front lawn, she weeding a flower garden, he trimming a bush with hand shears.

As they pause to ogle each other, a vehicle pulls along the curb across the street in front of the neighbor's house.

A mysterious-looking man exits his car. He turns and glances back across the street - it is Adler! As Mike turns to view him and their eyes meet, Laura takes notice.

Mike's expression is one of curious recognition. Adler turns and walks toward the house's front door. Laura intervenes.

LAURA

You know him, honey?

Mike shakes his head as he eyes the stranger suspiciously.

MIKE

Not sure. He seems oddly familiar
...in a deja vu sort of way.

As the two watch inquisitively...

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD

...the briefcase-toting, suit-wearing Adler arrives at the front door and rings the doorbell.

Shortly a man about Mike's age answers. His hair is mussed, his clothes appear not to have been laundered in quite some time. Grief is etched on his face.

ADLER

Mr. Gavin Michaels?

Michaels stares at Adler, scowling as he responds.

MICHAELS

Who wants to know?

ADLER

Someone who can give you what you
want most...if you are willing to
take a risk.

Michaels eyes Adler suspiciously.

MICHAELS

And how would you know what I want?

Adler relaxes his body language, replying apologetically.

ADLER

Forgive me, Mr. Michaels. I am Dr.
Wolfgang Adler. If you will but
give me ten minutes of your
precious time, I will explain all.

Michaels continues to eye Adler warily but says nothing.

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD

Mike and Laura observe the goings-on across the street. They see their neighbor usher in the visitor, then look at each, perplexed as to what is happening.

EXT. COUNTY HIGHWAY - DUSK

SUPERIMPOSE: 11 months earlier

Rain begins to fall as another vehicle approaches the "Road Closed Bridge Out" sign on the highway.

It, too, slows down but, instead of veering left, eases to a stop.

AS VIEWED THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD...

A female, 30ish, grips the steering wheel, white knuckled. A wedding ring can be seen on her left ring finger. She appears confused, looking first left and then right.

The car is then seen backing up. It reaches an intersection and turns right onto the county road from whence the sign was taken.

The rain intensifies. The car's wipers attempt in vain to create a clear vision of what lies ahead for the unsuspecting driver.

EXT. SIDE ROAD BRIDGE

PANNING ahead, beyond an upcoming hill, reveals the reason for the sign: a dilapidated suspension-style bridge in disrepair, spanning a deep, rocky gorge, a rushing river cutting through it.

EXT. SIDE ROAD

The car disappears over the hill. Soon thereafter, the eerie sound of the bridge giving way can be heard, followed by the tragic jangle of the vehicle crashing on the rocks below.

FADE OUT.