

Time University
Part One: Cause and Effect

by

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A few notes that will be clear when viewing the film.

Sluglines that have no formatting are scenes representing the physical world. They are shot in color and in standard 1.85 aspect ratio.

Sluglines that are **bold** take place outside of time and space. These scenes are predominately black and white (with occasional hints of color), and have a soft focus, dreamy feel to them. They are shot in an academy aspect ratio, pillar boxing the sides of the frame.

The times of day are not superimposed on the screen, but many scenes feature clocks prominently positioned in view or highlighted.

Sunset on March 17th, 2017 in central Florida occurs at 7:35 PM.

EXT. FLORIDA - HISTORIC DOWNTOWN STREET - MARCH 17TH, 2017
AD - 11:15AM

Light traffic drives by on a two lane thoroughfare, through tall buildings. The buildings that were constructed a hundred years ago for banks, department stores and elite downtown offices are now trendy cafes, boutiques, and upscale apartments.

CHURCH BELLS in an old stone church strike the Westminster Quarters.

It's calm, sunny and cool. Palm trees sway in the light breeze. Pedestrians walk up and down the sidewalks.

In a golden FLASH, three guys in their early 20s appear in midair, one of them holding a box made of brass and dark wood. The box has frosted glass panels that hold flickering lights.

They fall several feet onto the hard pavement below.

The HORATIO (tall, glasses, pseudo-intellectual with a tuft of facial hair on his chin) lands on his left ankle. BONES CRACK. He yelps in pain.

HORATIO
Son of a wormhole!

DAG (scruffy, shorter than the other two) falls on his side, dropping the box.

The box rolls out of reach into another lane of traffic.

ELIAN (chubby, unkempt) fell onto his stomach. He pushes himself up to see a

MOVING VAN

headed towards them.

ELIAN
Truck!

He springs up out of the way, grabbing the tall one with the broken ankle and pulling him over to the side of the road.

The van BLASTS its HORN, swerving to avoid them.

ELIAN
Dag!

Dag rolls towards the curb in the nick of time, as the truck rolls over the box, crushing it like an accordion.

Dag scrambles up. He exchanges glances with the other two.

DAG
Guys...Um...

He points down at the box. They see what happened and quickly gather around it.

They exchange worried glances.

The lights on the box's top panel swirl dimly, as if gasping for breath, and then fade. CAMERA DOLLIES into the panel's blackness. The flickering lights turn into the:

OPENING TITLES

FADE INTO:

BEGIN FLASHBACK

BLACKNESS

Soft colors begin to swirl across the screen. They illustrate the abstract concepts the narrator describes.

NARRATOR (V/O)
People on earth usually think of Time as a linear series of events. Like dominoes, each a cause and each an effect, one knocking the next over. But it's not like that at all. From our perspective, time is a simultaneous eruption of action, and sometimes the thing a person thought was the cause is actually the effect, and the apparent effect was the cause, and most of the time it's all serving a greater purpose that you're not even aware of.

THE EARTH

emerges from the cloudy blackness. It tilts as if it were a flat disk towards the CAMERA. As it does so, the stars around it give way to a Ptolemaic model of the universe, with the Earth firmly at its center, and the seven planets revolving on their orbits around her.

NARRATOR (V/O)
This explosion of activity is necessarily contained, housed in what we call the Empyrian Vault.

CAMERA DOLLIES BACK from the black void, to reveal a small metal box with a series of blinking lights on it. The box sits on a pedestal in the center of a:

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - EMPYRIAN ROOM

The Empyrian Vault sits in its fully functional, operating, pre-squished state on a pedestal, in the center of the room.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

It's here. All of history. Height
and Width and Depth and Time in
this box in front of you.

We see the narrator, PROF. PAPILLIO, who is giving a tour to the class of a dozen or so incoming first cycles, including Dag, Elian, and Horatio.

PAPILLIO (NARRATOR)

This is the Empyrian Room; well,
obviously because here's the
Empyrian Vault; All of our cadets
enter and exit the time stream
from this very spot. And you too
will join them.

Dag stands on his tip toes to see exactly what the professor is talking about. He's the prodigy of the class, and the other professors know it already.

In sharp contrast, next to him stands Elian, not really paying attention, but mentally calculating some bit of trivia about the room they're in.

Horatio's furiously taking notes.

There as well is a very classically beautiful female student named VESPER. Long blond hair. Heavy eyeliner. Bit of a flirt. She knows all of this already.

Papillio leads the group out of the room.

PAPILLIO

When your training is complete, we
test your aptitudes and you will
be placed accordingly.

EXT. TIME UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Professor Papillio is continuing his tour across the campus, with the students trailing behind him.

Vesper is trying to keep up with the Professor. Horatio, obviously interested in her, tries to start up a conversation with her.

HORATIO

Hi.

Vesper looks at him, and sighs. She can't avoid this conversation.

VESPER

Hi.

HORATIO

I'm Horatio.

He shuffles his notebook and pen around to awkwardly extend his hand.

HORATIO

I'm in the Potential History Program. You're a first cycle too, I guess. I mean you're on the tour, so obviously...

She ignores him, listening to Papillio continue to lead the group.

HORATIO

So what's your name? I mean...

He sees she's wearing a name tag, like all of them.

VESPER

Vesper.

HORATIO

Really? Vesper. That's fascinating.

VESPER

Is it, though?

She quickens her pace to catch up to the front of the group.

HORATIO

Um, it was nice meeting you.

Horatio is caught in his tracks. The straggler, Elian, catches up with him.

ELIAN

Hey, tough break. Don't worry about it. She's in the Chrononaut program.

HORATIO

I didn't know. Horatio, by the way.

They shake hands.

ELIAN

Elian. Temporal Mechanics.

HORATIO

Oh, really. You know, I thought about doing...

ELIAN

Oh, watch this. It feels better when it happens to someone else..

ANGLE ON DAG

trying the same tactic as Horatio. Vesper stops, writes down something on a piece of paper. She hands it to Dag. The group has moved on. She see this, and quickens her pace to catch up.

Dag stands still for a minute. Elian and Horatio catch up to him, in jealousy. Dag holds up the paper with Vesper's number on it.

DAG

Gentlemen.

Elian and Horatio exchange a look.

DAG

What? She only dates Chrononauts.

ELIAN

You're a Chrononaut?

DAG

Well, not yet.

He steps forward.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MCFLY'S - MARCH 17TH, 2017 AD - 12:10PM

Dag, Elian, and Horatio sit around a table at a pizza place / Irish pub.

On the table, the Vault sits with several large dents in it. Elian is poking at it with his fork, and then hurriedly taking notes on his napkin.

Dag is staring out the window at the traffic.

Horatio's nose is in a guide book.

HORATIO

Ok, so this is what they call a fast causal restaurant.

DAG

Sorry? Fast causal?

HORATIO

That means we order the food at the counter and then, as a result, they bring it to our table. Elian is poking at a crevice of the Vault with a fork.

ELIAN

Dag.

DAG

What?

ELIAN

Hold this for a second.

DAG holds the Vault securely. Elian jams a fork into it.

Behind Elian, time suddenly jumps, as a bar patron instantaneously moves from just entering the door to sitting at the bar.

DAG

Stop it! You're making it worse!

Silence. Then:

ELIAN

(muttered)

You're the one who dropped it.

HORATIO

So whenever you guys are ready, we walk up to the counter...

(MORE)

HORATIO

So whenever you guys are ready, we walk up to the counter...

DAG

We were four feet up in the air.

Elian starts frantically scribbling on a napkin.

ELIAN

Something's wrong.

DAG

Of course something is wrong, just look at it.

ELIAN

No, I mean, this is the wrong time. We arrived at the wrong time. We were supposed to get here at four-thirty. It's...

He looks around for a clock.

HORATIO

They call it Daylight Savings. They take one hour and they...

ELIAN

(too loud, cutting him off)
We were also four and a half feet up in the air, roughly, and two, maybe two and a half feet southwest.

HORATIO

Maybe they have some sort of spatial adjustment as well.

DAG

(through gritted teeth)
Guys, really.

A WAITER (ZACH) walks up.

ZACH

Hey, I'm Zach. You guys ready to order?

DAG

Give us a minute, Zach?

The waiter walks off.

HORATIO

If we're not going to order, give me those pretzels. I'm starving. We were supposed to be eating...well, four hours from now.

ELIAN

(pick up his napkin to show the others)

Look!

The the middle of complex equations, there's a crudely drawn cube, with a 3x3 grid pattern on each side.

DAG

What is it?

ELIAN

I don't know. It's why we're here instead of later.

DAG

What?

ELIAN

This is the temporal disruption. It's why we appeared early and a bit too high in the air.

HORATIO

(with pretzels in his mouth)

It's a cube.

ELIAN

It's a cube that shouldn't be here but is.

DAG

Look, cubes aside, what are we going to do? That thing you attached to the Vault.

HORATIO

(jumping in)

The Paradox Sustination Apparatus.

ELIAN

ParaBox for short. Trademark.

DAG

I mean, can we just take that off?

Dag reaches for it. Elian stops him.

ELIAN

No!

DAG

What? Why not?

ELIAN

Hold out your fist.

Dag does so.

ELIAN

Now put that fist inside the fist.

DAG

That's impossible.

ELIAN

Exactly. The Vault and us are in here somewhere. Remove the ParaBox, trademark, and suddenly the Vault realizes it's inside itself, which could be...awkward for it.

HORATIO

How awkward?

ELIAN

End of the fourth dimension awkward.

They are silent for a moment.

DAG

Elian, can you fix this?

Elian's face flashes several emotions in succession.

ELIAN

Yes? I need a few things.

DAG

For example?

Elian looks at the screwheads on the Vault. He holds up the fork he's been fiddling with. The prongs are bent.

ELIAN

To start with, a hexagonal
screwdriver.

Zach approached them again.

ZACH

So have you guys...

DAG cuts him off by holding up the *just a moment* finger. Zach retreats.

DAG

(pointing at Elian)

Where do we get one of these?

Elian looks at Horatio.

ELIAN

We could ask the waiter?

Dag gives him a look.

HORATIO

Would a curator have one?

ELIAN

I'm trying to think of a really
good story that might explain this
to a curator.

DAG

Who is the curator here & now?

Horatio flips through his book.

ELIAN

You do realize this means we can't
just slip back to the University,
right?

DAG

Maybe if the curator is really
really cool about it?

ELIAN

Anyone that cool got promoted to
curator of the Ice Age. I'm not
even that cool. Are you kidding
me? I would totally bust our asses
over this.

HORATIO

Um...you're not going to believe
this.

Dag and Elian peer over.

DAG

Oh, sweet superluminals!

Horatio stuffs another handful of pretzels into his mouth.
He's stress eating.

ELIAN

Um, are pretzels free in a fast
causal restaurant?

They look from one to another.

ELIAN

Does anyone have any money?

Dag makes a motion with his hands asking if they should go.
They nod and slip out of the booth.

INT. CENTRAL FLORIDA UNIVERSITY - PARTICLE LAB - MARCH 17TH
- 10:30AM

A boxy room full of junk mostly. It exists in one of the parts
of the university built during the era which believed in
straight lines, clean design, and minimal frills. It's an
active workspace, and more than cluttered. It used to be
storage.

Now it belongs to KALLIE. Her experiments are scattered around
it. In the center stands her project. In contrast to the
Octachoron, it's a mess of tubes, wires, and raw metal.

Kallie's a bit more punk than you'd expect a female physicist
to be, bubblegum pink hair, nose ring, and geek t-shirt under
her lab coat.

Currently, she's asleep on the desk, having worked through the
night when her faculty mentor, DR. ANN PHILLIPS, comes in.
Kallie's too tired to be startled.

PHILLIPS

Kallie.

Kallie murmurs.

PHILLIPS

Kallie, you're running out of time.

KALLIE

Hmm?

Kallie wipes the imprint of her keyboard off her face.

PHILLIPS

I'm sorry. I know you're under pressure. I didn't mean that.

Dr. Phillips sets down one of the two cups of coffee in her hand. Kallie takes it and drinks. Sweet life juice.

KALLIE

No, I know. We're halfway through the semester.

PHILLIPS

Halfway through your *last* semester, right?

KALLIE

Dr. Phillips...

PHILLIPS

I'm not sure I can get you lab space over the summer. Not without some justification you can write up.

KALLIE

I'm close. I think.

PHILLIPS

How many hours a day are you in here, Kallie? Honestly.

KALLIE

(sheepishly)

I don't keep a log.

PHILLIPS

Slow deaths by sleep deprivation don't advance the cause.

She goes to the door and punches some numbers on the keypad.

PHILLIPS

I'm shutting this lab down at 9PM every night and I expect you to be out of here. It will open again at 9AM. In between, you must sleep and eat at least two meals. Is this understood?

Dr. Phillips walks over to a white board containing Kallie's work from the last night.

KALLIE

Look, if I can just get the settings right on this hunk of scrap metal I think I can finally have some evidence of these stupid tachyonic particles. I mean, that's important?

Dr. Phillips isn't paying attention. She staring at the white board.

KALLIE

There could be real four dimensional particles, and this is what could prove it.

(half jokingly)

I mean, that's got to get me a tenure track somewhere, right?

(beat)

Right?

Dr. Phillips is staring at the board. She picks up a blue marker. With one deliberate stroke, she changes a negative sign to a plus.

Kallie looks in wonder. She spring into action. Frantically typing the new values into the desktop computer.

The atomic accelerator starts to hum a satisfying hum. The florescent lights flicker under the strain of the new power load.

Kallie's eyes widen. It's working.

PHILLIPS

How long before it's ready? Do you know?

Kallie flips through her notes.

KALLIE

The particles need, um, about eight hours to reach maximum velocity. We can't start the quark collisions before then.

Dr. Phillips checks her watch.

PHILLIPS

6:30. Well, we'll find out then.

EXT. ORPHEUS' ANTIQUE SHOP - FRONT DOOR - 12:58PM

Dag, Elian, and Horatio arrive at the door.

HORATIO

Who's going to knock?

DAG

Just don't show him the Vault.

ELIAN

I'm not knocking.

HORATIO

He never liked me.

DAG

I'll do it.

Two little old ladies, GLENDA and CATHY wander past them and walk through the door.

GLENDA

Excuse us.

The WELCOME BELL CHIMES from inside the shop.

DAG

Apparently you can just...

He waves his hand as if to say "...walk right in." Elian nods. They do.

INT. ORPHEUS' ANTIQUE SHOP - FRONT DOOR - 12:59PM

Antique store is a charitable description. It's a junk shop. Floor to ceiling of worthless nostalgic bric-a-brac.

Glenda and Cathy are huddled around an antique sewing machine.

CATHY

Orpheus, did you just get this in?
I haven't seen it before.

ORPHEUS

(from the other room)
Cathy? Glenda? Is that you?

Orpheus walks into the room. He's older. Tall. Tufts of white hair on the sides of his head. Dressed like a retiree in Florida should be.

ORPHEUS

You two are early. I don't usually see you...

He sees Dag, Elian, and Horatio.

DAG

Hi, professor.

Glenda mouths "professor" to Cathy. They are impressed.

Orpheus is trying to register an emotion, but it's mostly coming up as confusion. Then he sees the Vault. His face drops.

ORPHEUS

(braving a face, to Cathy and Glenda)
I need to have a conversation with these young men for a minute. Do you two mind?

Cathy waves him off.

If it's possible to grab someone by the scruff of the neck using only your eyes, Orpheus manages to do so.

Dag, Elian, and Horatio follow him to the next room.

INT. BACKROOM - 1:02PM

It's a kitchen/office/storage room, with a large table in the middle.

Orpheus crosses into the room, and rummages in a cupboard.

The boys sit on the side of the table closest to the door.

Orpheus returns with a rocks glass and a bottle of scotch. He pours himself a drink, then downs it.

He sighs and rubs his eyes.

ORPHEUS

Do you know what I like about Florida now? It's quiet. There's no war, no earthquakes, no tidal waves. It's not even an election year. But the best part, oh, the best part: no students with their problems.

The boys shift in their seats and exchange glances.

ORPHEUS

And as glad as I am to see my former pupils, why in multiverse are you carrying that and what did you do to it?

DAG

You're probably going to need another one of those.

Orpheus pours a shot.

ELIAN

Little more.

ORPHEUS

Oh please, just tell me what happened.

DAG

Well...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY

A long corridor.

It's exam day. Student bustle. Dag darts around the corner, and down the the hallway towards the CAMERA. He's very very late.

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - CLASSROOM

CLOSE ON PROFESSOR CROGAL

a middle-aged man, balding, with a long thin beard. He's looking at his pocket watch. He is counting down to himself.

CROGAL
And that is time.

The sound of PENCILS being PUT DOWN and STUDENTS GATHERING their things.

CROGAL
Thank you all for taking the exam; we will announce the results at the commissioning ceremony later in the week. I'm sure most of you performed to the absolute best of your abilities and have nothing to worry about.

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - HALLWAY

Dag is running. Papers are flying out of his book bag. He reaches a classroom door. Students are already filing out.

DAG
Professor Crogal!

Crogal comes to the door of the classroom.

CROGAL
Dag! You're late.

DAG
Yes, Professor, I...

CROGAL
Dag, I don't know what to tell you. The exam is over.

DAG
Would there be anyway that I could...

CROGAL
Dag, stop. I told you something on the first day of class. I said that if you did not learn anything else in the Chrononautics program, you should learn this. Do you remember what that was?

DAG
Time waits for no Man.

CROGAL
That's right. I'm sorry. You just weren't meant to be a Chrononaut.

Crogal walks away. Dag's face falls.

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - DAG'S DORM ROOM

It looks similar to every other place in Time University, except a little more personalized. There are flashes of color, for example, a poster for the film *Metropolis* hanging on the wall.

Dag is manic, pacing the room.

HORATIO

You do realize this is nuts,
right?

ELIAN

I'm just saying, it's possible.

DAG

See, it's possible.

HORATIO

How do you know?

ELIAN

I wrote a paper on it. I call it
the ParaBox. I should trademark
that. Trademark!

DAG

Where can we go?

HORATIO

I wrote a paper on what would
happen if elephants had wings,
that doesn't mean it's a real
thing.

ELIAN

(to Dag)

Well, anywhere I guess. It holds
all of time and space.

(to Horatio)

What happens?

DAG

Like we could spend years and
never come back?

HORATIO

What?

ELIAN

(to Horatio)

If elephants had wings.

(to Dag)

No, the battery won't last that long. Besides, we'd get like one night before someone notices.

HORATIO

Hannibal makes it over the Alps and the Disney company folds in 1943.

ELIAN

Really?

HORATIO

Yeah, Dumbo flops at the box office.

ELIAN

Oh.

DAG

So I get one day?

HORATIO

Dag, this isn't going to change anything. We have to come back.

DAG

I know. I just, I don't know what'll happen. Look, at this point, best case scenario: I picked up enough Historical Curation to get some crappy assignment somewhere without indoor plumbing.

HORATIO

Didn't you take the Potential History exam?

DAG

Yes.

HORATIO

How'd you do?

Dag shrugs.

DAG (CONT'D)

Eh...

(MORE)

DAG (CONT'D)

(beat)

I was going to be a Chrononaut. I was going to see Time. I was going to live it all. I can't have that. I want one day.

ELIAN

I think it'll work.

They look at Horatio, as if they're looking at Dad asking for ice cream.

HORATIO

Fine. Okay, how do we do this?

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - EMPYRIAN ROOM

Candidates are lining up for their commencement. The Vault projects portals onto the columns, through which the graduates disappear. An operator sits to one side, running a control board.

ELIAN (V/O)

Okay, normally, the Vaults stays in the Empyrian room, right.

It's grand central station. Portals opening, people coming and going.

DAG (V/O)

Right.

ELIAN (V/O)

And someone operates the portals and they open, and people come and go. Well, I was thinking that's a problem. What if I want to go somewhere without some sort of official, actual, legal, technically allowed by the university approval? How do I get back?

HORATIO (V/O)

You leave someone behind to operate the control panel.

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - DAG'S DORM ROOM

ELIAN

What if you could take it with you.

DAG

And you can do that.

ELIAN

I think. It's a paradox. A box inside itself.

HORATIO

That's the problem.

ELIAN

That, in a traditional manner of thought, has been the problem.

HORATIO

You said it's a paradox.

ELIAN

We take care of little paradoxes all the time.

DAG

This is a big paradox. Like a...
(words fail)
...really, really big paradox.

ELIAN

And that's why no one's done it before.

HORATIO

We'll be like the brothers Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Etienne Montgolfier.

Dag and Elian look at him as if to say, "Who?"

HORATIO

The first two people in a manned hot air ballon. Didn't you learn about them in...oh, you weren't in that class.

DAG

You couldn't have gone with like Orville and Wilber Wright?

HORATIO

(offended)
Sorry.

ELIAN

We can't go into the front door,
but I think I know another way in.

FADE TO:

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - EMPYRIAN ROOM

The lights are out. It's silent.

CRANE DOWN TO:

INT. TIME ENGINE ROOM

A mess of industrial equipment. Dimly lit, but humming away.

Elian, Dag, and Horatio are looking at several pieces of equipment around them. Horatio drops a wrench he's holding. IT CLANKS on the floor. Elian shushes them.

He produces an electric drill and looks up meaningfully at the ceiling.

INT. TIME UNIVERSITY - EMPYRIAN ROOM

A floor panel is lifted up, and pushed to the side. From it emerges Elian and Dag. They awkwardly help up Horatio.

Elian cautiously approaches the Empyrian Vault. He unhooks the Vault from it's pedestal. It clicks out of place.

He signals to Dag and Horatio. They take either side of the Vault.

Elian lines up the bottom to the Vault with the ParaBox. Elian connects a handheld controller into a port on the side.

ELIAN

(whispered)

When do you want to go first?

At the press of a button, the Vault projects half a dozen tall triangular portals around them, each looking out into a different time and space in human history.

Dag and Horatio marvel in wonder.

HORATIO

Medieval Japan!

(a bit too earnest)

I could be a samurai. Come on!

He grabs Dag and almost pulls him in.

Elian follow them in. The portal extinguishes itself behind them.

Silence.