

TIME AND AGAIN

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BARTLEY HOME - DAY

DR. WILLIAM BARTLEY, 45, the Director of the Panamerican Institute of Temporal Research, sits on the sofa in his home's media room. JEREMY BARTLEY, 11, sits next to his dad. Bartley wears a blue work shirt, jeans and a ponytail; Jeremy wears a Dallas Cowboys jersey.

The media room is a comfortable living room, seemingly without walls. It currently sits in the middle of a football field. A football game is in progress all around the media room: the Cowboys have the ball on the San Francisco Forty-Niners' thirty yard line.

BARTLEY

They'll go for the field goal.

JEREMY

They'll go for the fourth down conversion.

BARTLEY

Field goal for the tie, with forty-five seconds left.

JEREMY

Fourth down conversion, and forty-five seconds to make it into the end zone.

The Cowboys line up for the field goal attempt.

BARTLEY

See? The sure thing. Best chance of success.

The snap, the hold, the kick -- as the ball soars through the air, the media room slides downfield along with it.

It's good.

JEREMY

Is that what you'd have done, Dad?

BARTLEY

You kidding? I'd have gone for it. No guts, no glory.

JEREMY

I knew it!

ANDREA BARTLEY, 38, in a house dress, enters.

ANDREA

I hate to break this up, but Dad's going to be late.

Bartley gets up. He crosses to Andrea and kisses her on the cheek.

JEREMY

Hey! Where're you going? They're gonna have to play overtime!

BARTLEY

I gotta go to work, Jeremy. Tape it for me.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - DAY

The laboratory is a room set up like an operating theater. A work area and observation gallery runs above and around the central work area, behind glass windows.

The room is semi-dark except for the platform in the center, which consists of a large square light panel topped by a glass cube ten feet on a side. Immediately around the platform ("ringside," in a manner of speaking) are workstations and computer consoles.

The central platform is for imaging, and fragments of other times and places will appear there.

Bartley is in charge of this operation.

BARTLEY

Stephen, how's the power?

From the gallery, DR. STEPHEN WILDER, the project's 30-year-old *Wunderkind* chief engineer, replies. Wilder sports a loud aloha shirt that billows over his small frame.

WILDER

The Panamerican grid is directly on-line, Bill.

BARTLEY

Just the Panamerican?

WILDER

They're tapping secondary power from all the other grids.

BARTLEY

And the field generator is active?

This question is directed at TOMAS MENDEZ, 35, one of the project senior engineers, who is ringside at a console. Tomas is tall, thin, dark and wears a beige short-sleeved dress shirt.

TOMAS

Si, Doctor Bartley. We're looking at Tee-minus-zero.

BARTLEY

Okay, I'll be back in a minute.

Bartley leaves the lab through a side door. Tomas looks to Wilder, who flashes a wide grin.

In about 45 seconds, Bartley re-enters the lab and walks up behind Tomas. They look at the cube.

BARTLEY

Now, Tomas, let's look in the other room.

TOMAS

Si, Doctor.

Tomas works the keyboard and joystick on his console. The cube begins to shimmer. The scene in the cube slides sideways, through the lab and then through the wall of the lab. It settles on a table in another room. On the table is a martini in a cocktail glass.

BARTLEY

Take us to Tee-minus-thirty seconds, Tomas.

As the scene in the cube begins to run in reverse, the lab team gasps in awe and then begins to cheer. In the cube, Bartley walks to the table backward and turns to the table, the olive in the martini jumps into his hand, the cocktail unpours into a cocktail shaker, Bartley unpours a touch of vermouth and a pour of gin from the shaker. Bartley walks backward out of the cube, leaving an empty martini glass on the table. The lab team erupts in hoots of triumph.

BARTLEY

Well, gentlemen, I believe this calls for a drink. Martinis, anyone?

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

A cocktail party in Washington, D.C. -- a gathering of some of the most powerful people in the government of the USNSA (United States of North and South America). Glittering gowns sparkle against the backdrop of black tuxedos, with a peppering of military dress uniforms in the crowd.

Congresswoman LINDA THOMPkins, 45, jet black hair set in a conservative style, enters the room on the arm of her husband, WALTER, 52, balding and not particularly dashing in his evening wear. With them is Bartley, also in a tux.

SENATOR BOB PARKER, 55, ruggedly handsome, strides toward them.

PARKER

How's my favorite Congresswoman?
Walter.

LINDA

Bob, good to see you.

PARKER

And this is?

LINDA

Doctor Bill Bartley. He's
testifying to the committee tomorrow.

PARKER

A pleasure, sir. Linda, I never
see you. Seems like you're always
too busy to come over to our side
of the Capitol.

LINDA

Well, the Science and Technology
Committee is working on some really
interesting --

A WAITER brings a tray of champagne cocktails. Parker deftly
snags three of them.

PARKER

A little champagne? Walter? Linda?

WALTER

Actually, Linda has to keep fresh
for an early committee meeting in
the morning.

Walter tries to take two of the glasses.

LINDA

Nonsense. One glass of wine can't
hurt.

She intercepts a glass from Walter and takes a sip.

PARKER

I'm sorry, I interrupted. You said
you're working on some interesting...
what?

LINDA

Oh, nothing much. A time machine.

PARKER

A time machine? Time travel?

BARTLEY

Oh, no, not travel. Just a kind of viewing window: look into the past, solve history's mysteries --

PARKER

And this requires your committee's direct oversight?

LINDA

Apparently the research requires a vast amount of electrical power.

WALTER

For what?

LINDA

For the time portal, Walter, dear. Now be a good boy and go mingle.

WALTER

No, I'd like to hear --

LINDA

This is all way over your head, Walter. Go show the flag for me.

She pushes him away.

PARKER

You can see into the past, Doctor?

LINDA

Literally.

BARTLEY

It's related to the phenomenon of spooky action at a distance. We've known for decades that particles can communicate information instantly over vast distances. Only recently, we've shown that this relates to the...

Walter wanders into the crowd. He sees a GENERAL conversing with CONGRESSMAN MUNIZ.

MUNIZ

Walter, how are you? Do you know
General Chapman?

WALTER

General, pleased to meet you.

The General extends his hand in a perfunctory way.

MUNIZ

Walter is Linda Thompkins's husband.

The General suddenly becomes much more attentive.

GENERAL

Oh, Congresswoman Thompkins. You
must be very proud, sir.

Walter glances at Linda, who's taking a second glass of wine
from a passing tray.

WALTER

Very proud indeed.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Bartley walks into the media room, which at the moment
appears to be in the middle of the African veldt. Andrea
sits on the couch. Jeremy sits on an ottoman, watching
intently as a pride of lions tears apart a zebra's carcass.
Vultures circle overhead.

BARTLEY

Watching something interesting?

Bartley leans over to kiss Andrea on the cheek. Jeremy turns.

JEREMY

Hi, Dad. Just a nature show. It's
pretty cool.

Bartley crosses to stand by his son. He looks at the
feasting lions with mild distaste.

ANDREA

A little gross, though.

JEREMY

Hey, it's nature. It's supposed to
be gross. Video off.

The veldt disappears and the walls of the room materialize.

BARTLEY

Hey, we did it.

ANDREA

You did? How far?

BARTLEY

Just a few seconds, this time.
We're going to run tests this week
and see if we can go back as far as
a century.

JEREMY

Cool! It'd be great if you could
go back really far. I'd love to
see a dinosaur!

Bartley tousles his son's hair.

BARTLEY

Let me see if it can go back a
hundred years. Then we can try for
a hundred million. Hey, you got
that tape of the game?

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door lock rattles. The door swings open, revealing Linda
and Walter.

WALTER

Please, just be quiet two more
seconds! Get inside!

Linda is drunk -- a mean, loud, belligerent kind of drunk.

LINDA

Don't you dare speak to me that way!

Walter pulls her into the apartment and slams the door.
Linda jerks away from him and slaps him.

LINDA

And don't you DARE jerk me around!

WALTER

You're drunk, Linda. Drunk.

LINDA

And whose fault is that? I told
you, keep that stuff away from me
tonight. Could you do that one
little thing?

WALTER

I tried.

LINDA

"I tried." You're pathetic. You're
a weak, pathetic excuse for a man.
Can't even stand up to a woman.

She slaps him again.

WALTER

Linda, don't.

LINDA

What are you going to do, little man?

She slaps him again.

LINDA

Come on, stand up to me.

And again.

LINDA

Come on, you weakling! Come on!

And again. Walter looks over her shoulder. Linda turns to see her daughter CLAIRE, 10, staring at her. Linda turns to Claire.

Walter turns and walks to the door.

LINDA

I'm sorry, honey. I'm sorry. Mommy
and Daddy are having a little
disagreement. Tell her, Walter.

But the door clicks shut as she turns to where he was. She lunges for the door, but trips on her own feet and falls to the floor.

LINDA

Walter! WALTER!

Claire worms her way past her, toward the door. Linda tries to grab her, but Claire is too quick -- she makes the hallway just out of the reach of Linda's grasping hands.

CLAIRE (O.S.)

Daddy! Daddy, wait!

LINDA

Claire, no! Walter!

Linda, stretched out prone on the floor, sobs.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Walter tries to hail a cab as Claire watches from the curb. Cabs whiz by, hovering just off the roadway.

WALTER

Why don't I ask Thomas to do this?
It's his job.

CLAIRE

Because he'll ask where we're going,
and then Mommy will find out.

Walter stops trying for a cab and turns to Claire.

WALTER

This is serious, huh? You really
want to do this?

CLAIRE

If you hadn't walked out, I would
have anyway.

WALTER

She's sick, Claire.

CLAIRE

That's no excuse to make us sick
with her.

Walter turns back to the street and hails with vigor, stepping into the street.

WALTER

Taxi!

A cab glides up to the curb and settles to the ground.

INT. THOMPkins APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

Linda sleeps on the couch in the clothes she wore to the party.

CONTROL VOICE (O.S.)

Telephone call, Congresswoman.

Linda stirs. She looks around. Her face is horrific: tear-streaked makeup over bloodshot, puffy eyes, a mouth rimmed with a dried crust.

LINDA

What?

CONTROL VOICE (O.S.)
Telephone call, Congresswoman.
Tyler Hart.

LINDA
Oh. Tyler?

The voice of TYLER HART, 26, responds.

TYLER (O.S.)
Linda. I heard about last night.

LINDA
You did? Where are they?

TYLER (O.S.)
Where are who? Linda, I'm having
trouble with the damage control on
this one. You coming in soon?

LINDA
What time is it?

TYLER (O.S.)
Quarter to seven.

LINDA
Shit. I have a committee meeting
at eight.

TYLER (O.S.)
You can't be late for that. What
building?

LINDA
Rayburn.

TYLER (O.S.)
I'll meet you in the lobby at a
quarter to eight. Be there. We
have to get a story straight.

LINDA
Tyler? Walter didn't call, did he?

TYLER (O.S.)
Walter's gone? Shit, Linda.
Quarter to. Don't be late.

CONTROL VOICE (O.S.)
Disconnected, madam.

LINDA
Run a shower and prepare toast and
coffee. No eggs today.

CONTROL VOICE (O.S.)

Very good, madam.

Linda sits up. She leans forward, then a bit more until her head is almost on her knees. She shudders, sobbing.

INT. RAYBURN OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Linda, wearing dark glasses that clash with her conservative suit, enters the lobby. Across the room, Tyler hails her.

TYLER

Linda!

He makes his way to her.

TYLER

Let me see.

She removes the glasses. Her eyes are bloodshot, with heavy bags underneath.

LINDA

Bad?

TYLER

If you feel like you look --

LINDA

Worse.

TYLER

-- well, then, good luck. You had coffee?

She nods. He thrusts a paper into her hands as he starts to walk her to the committee room.

TYLER

Keep to this list of questions.
Don't nod off. Stay focused. Drink plenty of water, but don't guzzle it.

INT. HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY

Bartley sits at the witness table. He wears an administrator's suit that clashes a bit with his ponytail.

On the panel with Linda are two dozen CONGRESS MEMBERS, including Committee Chairman REP. RAMIREZ, 60, a Guatemalan, and REP. KELLY, 52, a Boston Irishman.

LINDA

Dr. Bartley, you're applying to have up to ten percent of the total output of the fusion ring routed to your facility?

BARTLEY

That's correct, Congresswoman.

Linda consults her notes.

LINDA

Ten percent... Uh, Doctor, that's ten percent of all of the energy generated worldwide for human consumption. Why such a vast amount of energy?

Next to Bartley, a viewscreen appears in mid-air. He refers to a CGI presentation of a cube sliding across the screen, leaving visual "echoes" as it moves.

BARTLEY

The apparatus uses that energy to project a field backward in time. It detects the echoes of matter and anti-matter from past moments in time and builds a detailed three-dimensional model of each moment.

LINDA

Echoes?

BARTLEY

We can follow the trajectory of both matter and anti-matter particles on a detailed level. Just as matter moves forward in time, anti-matter moves backward in time from the future. We analyze the patterns at each moment to reconstruct the past state of existence at that instant.

Bartley and the committee wait for a few seconds for Linda to come out of her reverie.

RAMIREZ

Does my distinguished colleague have anything further?

LINDA

Oh, I'm sorry. Yes. Doctor, that doesn't answer my question. Why so much power?

The presentation shows a ring of satellites around the Earth, with beams connecting them and one beam reaching to the Earth's surface. This image merges into the animation of the cube to suggest that the movement of the cube is tied to the beam.

BARTLEY

Well, as we push the field further back moment by moment, we have to feed in more energy. The field stores the energy like a battery, so as we end each experiment, we can recover a large proportion of that power and feed it back into the fusion ring.

LINDA

Thank you, Doctor. I reserve the rest of my time.

RAMIREZ

Thank you, Congresswoman Thompkins. The chair recognizes Congressman Kelly.

KELLY

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Bartley, how big is your apparatus?

The presentation shows a photo of a building that morphs into a wire-frame diagram of that building.

BARTLEY

It occupies a building of about fifty thousand square meters.

KELLY

Wow, you must be able to see whole villages.

BARTLEY

I'm sorry, Congressman. The apparatus takes up that much space, but the viewing field is a cube of about three meters on a side.

The wire-frame shifts and zooms to reach a small white cube at its center.

KELLY

I see. That's not very big, is it?

BARTLEY

I think you have to --

KELLY

And you want us to appropriate several tens of billions of dollars for this project, as well as turn over to you ten percent of the world's energy production.

BARTLEY

That's correct, sir.

LINDA

Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield for a question?

KELLY

I will yield, if it comes from my distinguished colleague's remaining time.

LINDA

Dr. Bartley, what would you expect to see in your machine, given its limited field of view?

BARTLEY

We expect to see examples of flora and fauna from prehistory. We expect to see artifacts and even behaviors from ancient civilizations. We can observe environmental conditions from the formation of the Earth's crust, its atmosphere, its oceans.

LINDA

You expect all of this to pass through a random area in space and time?

BARTLEY

No, madam, we actually can control the position in space where we take our observations. That was necessary to ensure that we can control for the movement of the Earth and the solar system as we move through time.

LINDA

You could view the Declaration of Independence on the desk in Philadelphia as it is signed? Or watch a dinosaur as it moves and feeds and interacts with its environment?

BARTLEY

Easily.

LINDA

I think my distinguished colleague
put it exactly right: "Wow!"

The committee members laugh -- all except Kelly, who scowls.

INT. RAYBURN OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Kelly hails Linda as she emerges from the committee room.

KELLY

Linda? A word?

LINDA

Sure, Jack.

KELLY

You were pretty smooth in there
today. Getting Bartley his funding
and his energy requisition, that's
impressive.

LINDA

Thanks.

KELLY

Of course, you had a few rough spots.

LINDA

Well --

KELLY

Not too many, considering the night
you had.

LINDA

Oh, that.

KELLY

Linda, I'm running the party's House
campaign committee. I've got to
think about where the party's
resources will do the most good.
You understand that.

LINDA

Of course, Jack.

KELLY

I'm thinking right now that there
are a lot of other candidates who
need the help more than you.

LINDA

Jack, that's not fair! I've got a tough race coming up!

KELLY

Well, then, you really should get your fundraising machine into high gear. See you tomorrow.

He walks off, leaving her speechless.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Tyler sits behind Linda's desk. Sitting behind a similar desk, facing him, is Kelly.

TYLER

Congressman, Linda really needs the campaign committee's support.

KELLY

After last night --

TYLER

I understand that. I've been working damage control on the phone all day.

KELLY

Then you better tell Linda that getting support from the campaign committee will be tough.

TYLER

Tough doable, or tough no-way-in-hell?

KELLY

Not the doable one. Tyler, you're a smart kid. You ought to look at what other star you might hitch your wagon to.

TYLER

Thanks, Congressman. I appreciate the advice. Have a good evening.

Kelly and his desk vanish, leaving behind the two chairs normally in front of Linda's desk.

Linda comes out from her hiding place in the bathroom. Tyler starts to rise.

LINDA

No, sit. The way things are going, maybe you should get used to that seat.

TYLER

The way I see it, Linda, the fastest way for me to take over this seat is for you to move up to the Senate. You leaving office in disgrace does nothing to help my career.

LINDA

So it's disgrace now?

TYLER

You tried drying out once. Your constituents saw that as brave. Your enemies now know that it didn't take. Another incident like last night and your constituents will see you as lacking in judgment, weak-willed --

LINDA

It's not me, it's the sharks here in town --

TYLER

They're only sharks because they smell your blood in the water, Linda. They're circling.

LINDA

So what are you suggesting?

TYLER

Get out of the lagoon. You've just won a big victory in getting funding for the Pan-American Institute. Go there, do some fact-finding and some in-person oversight. You'll be out of the jaws of the sharks. And Costa Rica's beautiful, the trip'll do you good.

LINDA

How long?

TYLER

It's the recess coming up. Stay the whole two weeks.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - DAY

In the kitchen, Andrea and Jeremy sit at a small breakfast table.

JEREMY

Where's Dad? He's gonna be late.

ANDREA

Why don't you finish your breakfast,
and let Dad take care of himself?

Bartley enters, struggling with a tie.

JEREMY

Whoa, Dad. Halloween already?

Andrea gets up to help her husband with his tie. He only resists for a moment before standing still like a little boy.

ANDREA

Yeah, what's the occasion?

Andrea finishes the knot and tightens the tie smartly.

BARTLEY

Thanks. You remember. Congresswoman
Thompkins.

Bartley and Andrea sit down to eat.

JEREMY

The one who's giving you the money
to build a bigger machine?

BARTLEY

One and the same.

JEREMY

Why did she come all the way down
here?

BARTLEY

She wants to make sure her twenty
billion dollars isn't being wasted.

ANDREA

Twenty billion dollars? Can she
really make it happen?

BARTLEY

If everything goes right in the
next few days, you're going to be
married to one of the wealthiest
men in the world.

ANDREA

You only get to spend it at work --
doesn't count.

Bartley takes a last slurp of his coffee.

BARTLEY

C'mon, sport. We gotta go.

Bartley and Jeremy get up. They each kiss Andrea on the
cheek, then start to walk toward the front door.

JEREMY

You gonna show Miss Thompkins
something cool, Dad?

BARTLEY

Don't worry, Jeremy. I've got
something very special planned for
her.

EXT. PAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE - DAY

In the green canopy of the Costa Rican rain forest, an
opening reveals a campus of glass and concrete buildings.

Linda's car pulls up to the campus gate at a guard shack
with a sign in English and Spanish: PAN AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR TEMPORAL RESEARCH. Linda's driver exchanges a few words
with the guard, who waves him through.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Bartley rises to greet Linda as she's escorted in by
MANOLO, 24, an administrative assistant.

BARTLEY

Congresswoman Thompkins. What a
pleasure! What an honor! Can I
get you anything?

LINDA

Manolo's bringing coffee, thanks.

BARTLEY

And we have you for two whole weeks?

LINDA

That's right. I want a top to
bottom inspection of this operation
so I can honestly say to my
constituents that their tax dollars
aren't being wasted on some
boondoggle.

BARTLEY

I think we can prove to you that
this research is for real.

Manolo brings in a tray with a coffeepot and cups.

BARTLEY

Thanks, Manolo. While you drink
your coffee, Congresswoman, I'll
describe what you're going to see.
How do you take it?

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - DAY

Bartley and Linda enter the work area & observation gallery.
Wilder and Tomas are at their operating stations.

BARTLEY

Stephen, is the fusion grid on-line?

WILDER

Panamerican grid on-line directly,
tapping the other grids.

BARTLEY

Tomas, the field generator?

TOMAS

Active, and at Tee-minus-zero.

BARTLEY

That's the present, Congresswoman.
We refer to each observation by a
Tee-minus designation for how far
back in the past we've gone.

LINDA

Always a minus number?

BARTLEY

We adhere to strict ethical
guidelines. Definitely no looking
into the future. And no looking at
the past of people still living.

LINDA

So for this demonstration?

BARTLEY

About Tee-minus-two-hundred years.
The year 1865. Tomas.

TOMAS

Sì, Doctor.

The cube begins to shimmer.

TOMAS

We start by going back in time at
this location.

The cube begins to show fragments of motion -- then a burst
of green vegetation.

BARTLEY

That's before the Institute was built.

WILDER

Tee-minus-two-hundred.

BARTLEY

Okay, now we swing the field around
to a different spot on the globe.

The cube becomes a mad rush of light and darkness, objects
and shapes and voids.

Suddenly the cube focuses to absolute clarity: a man and
woman sit in a theater box.

LINDA

Who are these people?

BARTLEY

The most famous theater patrons of
1865. And the unluckiest.

Another figure enters the cube as though emerging from one
of its sides. He raises a hand and points to the seated man.

A SHOT rings out. The seated man falls and the woman screams
in horror. The gunman -- JOHN WILKES BOOTH -- leaps up onto
the railing of the box.

BOOTH

Sic semper tyrannis!

He leaps, disappearing through the floor of the cube.

Linda is stunned.

LINDA

You can see that? That one
particular moment in time and space?

WILDER

Ain't it cool?

Linda nods slowly.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The beach, at the edge of a luxury resort, is a curve of pearl-white powder curled around a turquoise bay. Along its length are hundreds of sunbathers and dozens of beach cabanas, and waiters in white jackets pass through the crowd, delivering drinks and towels.

Linda, sunglasses shading her eyes, lies on her stomach on a beach chaise longue, the straps of her bikini top undone to let her tan without lines. A shadow falls across her back.

A WAITER stands over her.

LINDA

Yes?

WAITER

Phone call for you, *señora*.

Linda sits up, reaching to tie her bikini straps. The waiter snaps into action and discreetly ties them for her.

LINDA

Where?

WAITER

This *cabaña*, *señora*.

He points to the next beach cabana.

INT. CABANA - DAY

Linda, in a cover-up over her bikini, steps into the cabana and closes the flap.

LINDA

Please connect the call for Linda Thompkins.

Most of the interior of the cabana transforms into Linda's office, where Tyler sits at Linda's desk.

TYLER

Linda! You look great.

LINDA

Thanks, Tyler. Lots of sun here. Great for drying out.

TYLER

Good. Keep drying out. You're going to need to be sharp for this campaign.

LINDA

Why? What's happened?

TYLER

New polling data. Your negatives are getting up there. Wilton is benefiting, in a weird way, because he's perceived as squeaky clean. Little stories keep coming out about Cartwright, and they're keeping him from getting traction against Wilton.

LINDA

What does it look like?

TYLER

Like Wilton rolls right over Cartwright, giving him momentum into the general election against you. He'll be the reform candidate.

LINDA

Why do you think this is happening?

TYLER

Wilton's opposition research. His guys aren't good so much as they're determined. They're digging up a steady stream of little things on you and Cartwright.

LINDA

Yeah, it's the little things that do the most damage. They accumulate, like straws on the camel's back. The big stuff sometimes has too much blowback.

TYLER

Lucky for Wilton that his guys aren't bright enough to dig up the big stuff.

LINDA

Yes, very lucky.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Manolo shows Linda into the office.

MANOLO

Doctor, Congresswoman Thompkins would like to see you.

BARTLEY

Thank you, Manolo. It's late --
you should be heading home.

MANOLO

Thank you, Doctor. Good night,
Congresswoman Thompkins.

LINDA

Good night, Manolo.

BARTLEY

So, Linda, how have you enjoyed
your stay?

LINDA

It's been marvelous, Bill. Not
just the lab, but the beaches, the
jungle.

BARTLEY

I really couldn't think of anywhere
I'd rather be.

LINDA

Well, that's kind of what I'd like
to talk with you about.

BARTLEY

How so?

LINDA

I'm a little troubled by the
potential for security breaches here.

BARTLEY

I don't think --

LINDA

You don't? There's no way someone
could violate the restrictions on
the use of the portal? Dig up dirt
on me, for example?

BARTLEY

No, not really.

LINDA

"Not really?" That doesn't reassure
me.

BARTLEY

Well, it's possible to do it, but it would be detected immediately. The portal logs each voyage and archives every time and place it sees.

LINDA

There are no exceptions?

BARTLEY

None.

LINDA

No overrides?

BARTLEY

Well, maintenance overrides, sure. But those would be logged, too.

LINDA

I see. So using the portal illicitly for short periods could be covered up as maintenance activity?

BARTLEY

Yes. Yes, but only with my authorization.

Linda leans forward. She speaks sotto voce to force Bartley to lean toward her.

LINDA

I see. So if I wanted to use the portal for a short time tonight for some... intelligence gathering, you could ensure that no one ever found out?

Bartley is stunned, speechless for a moment.

BARTLEY

What do you want me to say, Congresswoman?

LINDA

I'm still Linda, Bill. And I want you to say, "For you, Linda, I would gladly do that, because I know how hard you'll fight to expand our funding and keep everyone else out of our hair."

Bartley nods slowly.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

In the media room, Bartley and Jeremy are watching a football game -- San Francisco versus Miami. A Forty-Niners running play is broken up at the line of scrimmage, and huge men pile on top of each other.

REFEREE

Time out, defense.

JEREMY

Time out? Are they nuts?

BARTLEY

It's a critical play coming up, sport. Miami's down by six, and San Francisco is just out of field goal range. If the Dolphins can hold 'em on this third down, they'll have to punt.

JEREMY

Yeah, but if they get the ball, they're only gonna have about a minute left to get a touchdown. They're gonna need that time out.

BARTLEY

Well, sometimes it's important to take some time to think things through before making a critical play. They can't afford a mistake.

The teams start to line up again.

JEREMY

Now we'll see.

The whistle blows. The Niners' quarterback calls signals.

The ball is snapped.

Four Dolphins rush forward to blitz. The quarterback tries to read the coverage -- something's different. He pump fakes to his left, then turns right -- but he hasn't seen a Dolphin defenseman who's broken through the line and blocked the Niners' running back. The quarterback moves to hand the ball off to the running back just in time to have the ball stripped by the Dolphin. The ball falls to the ground and the Dolphin falls right on it -- Miami ball.

BARTLEY

See? They took the time to make a plan, and their gamble paid off.

JEREMY

Big chance they took, blitzing like that.

BARTLEY

Sometimes you have to take big chances, Jeremy. That's the only way to get big wins.

Jeremy turns to watch the next play. Bartley sits back and loses himself in his own thoughts.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

In the darkened lab, only a few workstations are lit. Bartley moves from one workstation to another, activating the portal.

BARTLEY

Can we be crystal clear on this, Linda? Once I press this key, we're both on the hook for misuse of Federally-funded research.

LINDA

I understand. Either one of us gets found out, both of us go to prison.

BARTLEY

And this is a one-time only deal.

LINDA

Right.

BARTLEY

Right. So, what do you want to look at?

LINDA

I've got a tough re-election campaign coming up. Wilton looks like he can beat me easy, if he gets past Cartwright in the primary.

BARTLEY

So you want to look at this Wilton.

LINDA

No. Let's take a look at Cartwright.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Tyler sits at Linda's desk. In front of the desk, Linda sits at a small table, facing Tyler.

LINDA

Who can we give this to?

TYLER

Wilton has an aide, always gets pushed aside during campaigns. He'll bite -- he'll think it's his big chance to shine.

LINDA

Prove he's a big enough fish to jump out of the pond and into the sea.

TYLER

You got it. And where did you get this, exactly?

LINDA

You don't need to know. Just remember I don't rely on your sources for all my opposition research. I want this over with by this time next week.

TYLER

I'll make the call tomorr--

LINDA

Tonight.

TYLER

Tonight.

Linda and her table vanish.

TYLER

Dial five-oh-four....

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Linda and Tyler watch the television in Linda's office along with her other STAFFERS. Wilton is giving a press conference.

WILTON

... although I had no prior knowledge of the dirty tricks employed by members of my staff against Assemblyman Cartwright, I learned in the service that a commander is responsible for what happens on his watch. It is with a heavy heart, therefore, that I must announce that I am withdrawing --

Linda's office erupts in cheers. On the screen, Wilton's supporters erupt in boos (O.S.).

WILTON

-- withdrawing from the race for my party's nomination to Congress. I pledge my full and wholehearted support to Assemblyman Cartwright, and I will work to help him defeat Linda Thompkins in November, and send him to Washington to fight for the people of this district.

TYLER

Like that could ever happen!

Linda's staffers cheer again and erupt into a chant of "TWO MORE YEARS! TWO MORE YEARS!" Linda and Tyler beam at them.

INT. HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY

The committee is again in session. Linda is making a speech to her fellow members on the committee.

LINDA

On the heels of our historic decision earlier this year to move forward with the temporal research program at the Pan-American Institute, Dr. Bartley and his team have made remarkable advances. I've been there. I've seen them. Now is not the time to retrench -- now is the time to press ahead and expand the program.

RAMIREZ

Will my distinguished colleague yield for a question?

LINDA

I will yield to the chair for a question.

RAMIREZ

Several other avenues of research are open to us in areas that have much more practical application in the here and now. Does my distinguished colleague truly believe that historical research should have a higher priority than the Rapid Pathogen Analysis program, which aims to counter emerging disease threats?

(MORE)

RAMIREZ (CONT'D)

Or the establishment of the universal commerce net, which promises to enable everyone, everywhere to participate in productive work?

LINDA

I don't dispute the value of those programs, Mr. Chairman, but I don't believe I overestimate the value of the temporal research program. So many lingering questions and recriminations from history still impact on our lives today, and we have a chance to give definitive answers.

RAMIREZ

Given the choice between those answers and a chance to live free from disease, or to earn a decent living, I know a lot of people whom we represent would choose differently than you, Congresswoman.

Linda's tone barely hides her annoyance with Ramirez.

LINDA

I'll remember that, Mr. Chairman.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bartley is behind his desk. Linda sits on her sofa, facing him. She's in a nightgown and bathrobe: comfortable, not seductive.

BARTLEY

What does that mean, "it didn't go so well in committee?"

LINDA

The chairman, Ramirez. He's dead-set against diverting any more resources to your project.

BARTLEY

But we could see so much more!

LINDA

I know. It's shameful, really. Billions of years of history, and you're only able to peer into the last few centuries. It's an affront to the spirit of exploration.

BARTLEY

Is there any appeal?

LINDA

No, if it doesn't make it out of the committee, the appropriation will just die. But I think I know of something we can do.

BARTLEY

Really?

LINDA

Really. That is, if you're willing to go the distance for our project.

BARTLEY

Our project.

LINDA

We've crossed one line together, Bill. If you're willing to make this a partnership, a long-term partnership, I can make it all happen.

BARTLEY

What do you want me to do?

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Bartley is operating the machine alone.

In the cube, he sees a much younger Kelly having sex, doggy-style, with a young girl. Kelly is holding the end of a leather belt looped around the girl's throat.

Kelly climaxes, arching his back, then leans heavily onto the doubled-over girl.

Kelly gets up and the girl rolls onto her side, her knees drawn up.

Kelly pulls on his pants, and takes out his wallet. He peels off a couple of bills and holds them out to her. She doesn't move.

Kelly approaches her, waving the money angrily. Then he drops the bills onto the bed and pushes the girl onto her back -- her tongue is black and protruding, her eyes bloodshot and bulging. Kelly panics and struggles to remove the belt from her throat.

Bartley looks away, sickened.

BARTLEY
Computer. Security access code
Pegasus.

COMPUTER
Secure access granted.

BARTLEY
Record event history of last five
minutes to maintenance journal file.

COMPUTER
Event history recorded.

BARTLEY
Add note.

COMPUTER
Recording.

BARTLEY
Linda, I have your package ready.
It should be satisfactory. End note.

COMPUTER
Recorded.

BARTLEY
Copy journal entry to message, full
encryption.

COMPUTER
Message ready. Specify address.

BARTLEY
Linda Thompkins, private account.
Send message.

COMPUTER
Message sent.

BARTLEY
Delete last journal entry.

COMPUTER
Deleted.

BARTLEY
Purge trash bin. Security access
code Pegasus.

COMPUTER
Purge complete.

BARTLEY

Close journal.

COMPUTER

Closed.

Bartley adjusts some controls, and the cube becomes awash in movement, color and light. Bartley sits back, staring at the cube as the image fades and the cube becomes empty.

Bartley leans his elbows onto his knees and drops his head into his hands.

INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

An assembled throng of reporters hang on Kelly's every word as he speaks into a bank of microphones at a podium. Ten Congress members stand at his side. Linda is one of them.

KELLY

It's my pleasure to announce that the Party, through its House Campaign Committee, will be targeting ten districts with tight races this fall and putting extra resources behind our candidates. I'd like to introduce those candidates today. First is Linda Thompkins. Linda, please step up.

Linda is beaming.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Tyler watches Linda at Kelly's press conference. Tyler is beaming.

KELLY (ON VIDEO)

Now, as you know. Linda is facing a strong challenge from a dark horse candidate, someone who won his primary race against all expectations.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Linda's supporters are celebrating as election returns come in. A NEWSCASTER looms on a huge video screen, his announcement punctuated by cheers from the crowd.

NEWSCASTER (ON VIDEO)

In the Eighth Congressional District, with thirty percent of precincts reporting, incumbent Linda Thompkins appears to be coasting to re-election. Assemblyman Carl Cartwright had hoped for a re-run of his primary upset over Leonard Wilton, but last-minute ads by the Thompkins campaign effectively cast doubt on his experience.

TYLER

You all heard that, didn't you?

The crowd roars.

TYLER

It sounds to me like he said, "Two more years! Two more years!"

The crowd takes up the chant: "Two more years! Two more years!"

Tyler signals for quiet.

TYLER

So let's get a head start on those two glorious years and give a big welcome to Representative Linda Thompkins!

The crowd goes wild as Linda takes the stage. She strides to the podium.

LINDA

Thank you, Tyler, and thank you all! And thanks to the voters of this district for their continued faith in me!

The crowd erupts again.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

In the media room, Bartley and Andrea sit on the sofa and watch Linda's speech.

The crowd quiets. Linda pauses for laughter at the right moments as she continues.

LINDA

Now, it's a little early for an acceptance speech... and I don't expect a concession speech from my worthy opponent for quite a while... but it's never too early to thank you all for the wonderful support and effort....

Andrea puts her arm around Bartley.

ANDREA

I'm so happy for you, honey. Now you're sure to get the funding you need.

BARTLEY

Yeah, isn't it great?

As Andrea rests her head onto his chest, Bartley's face shows his worry and confusion. He's going to get his funding -- but with Linda's strings attached.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Linda pours a glass of champagne.

TYLER

Linda, I think one glass is enough.

LINDA

Oh, not nearly enough.

She guzzles the glass and starts to pour another. Tyler tries to grab the bottle. She pushes him away roughly.

He grabs her arm and twists it to force her to drop the bottle.

She slaps him across the face.

He slaps her back.

TYLER

You're not going to fuck this up, not now.

Linda starts to sob and crumples to the floor.

TYLER

Linda, look, I'm sorry --

LINDA

Don't be sorry. If Walter had half the balls you've got, my life this past six months wouldn't have been such hell. And I'd have Claire with me. He took my baby.

TYLER

Linda.

She looks up with anger.

LINDA

They should have been here tonight. Damn him!

TYLER

I am sorry.

LINDA

Don't be sorry for me. Be sorry for Walter. I am going to nail his sorry ass. I am going to crucify him!

She breaks down in sobs again.

INT. HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY

Linda occupies the chair formerly occupied by Ramirez.

LINDA

As Chairperson, I call this meeting of the House Committee on Science and Technology to order.

Another committee member, REP. HARDER, a heavy-set 44-year-old man, speaks.

HARDER

Madam Chairperson?

LINDA

Representative Harder?

HARDER

I move we dispense with reading of the minutes.

LINDA

A second? All in favor? So ordered. Before we take up the new business of this new Congress, I would like to revisit an item of old business. The Pan-American Institute...

Several members of the committee groan audibly. Linda raises her voice.

LINDA

... the Pan-American Institute has renewed its request for a supplemental appropriation. Unlike my predecessor, I think the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is part of the mission of this committee, and doubly so when that knowledge will shed light on the eternal questions of our origins.

Several other members voice their approval. Linda smiles like Mona Lisa at the evident shift in her favor.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - DAY

Bartley escorts Linda into the lab as two WORKMEN roll a computer rack into the control area of the lab.

BARTLEY

That's a new memory unit. It's going to extend the reach of the temporal field by a billion years.

Linda stops short.

LINDA

What?

BARTLEY

One billion. With a 'B.' The entire history of life on land.

LINDA

Just with that one box?

Bartley points to WORKMEN in teams around the lab, installing boxes and wiring.

BARTLEY

That, and two hundred fifty more like it. Plus the processor bank, the additional power conduits. Everything we got with the appropriation. Thank you.

LINDA

It was a team effort, remember? Was it worth it?

BARTLEY

We'll know when we power up the new configuration later this week. How long are you here for?

LINDA

The rest of the month. I'm looking forward to seeing these new toys in action.

Linda's already started to walk around the lab, running her fingers over the newly-installed equipment. She doesn't see the look of revulsion on Bartley's face.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Linda and Bartley are alone in the lab, staring into the cube. The cube glows, showing Claire chasing after Walter in the hallway outside Linda's apartment, the night they left Linda.

BARTLEY

Your daughter?

LINDA

And my husband.

BARTLEY

You want to find them?

LINDA

I want her back. That means I have to find him.

BARTLEY

You sure?

LINDA

What do you mean? Of course I'm sure.

Bartley turns to Linda.

BARTLEY

You know about Schrödinger's cat?

LINDA

Something about quantum physics.

BARTLEY

A thought experiment. Schrödinger talked about putting a cat into a sealed box. No light, no sound, no air gets in or out. Then he asks, if you don't open the box, can you tell me if the cat's alive or dead?

LINDA

Well, it depends --

BARTLEY

No, not literally. The cat's a metaphor for a subatomic particle. Schrödinger said the cat was in an indeterminate state. Only when you open the box to take a look does the cat become either alive or dead.

LINDA

This has what to do with Walter and Claire?

BARTLEY

They're in an indeterminate state, Linda. When you look, they'll take on a definite state -- happy or hurt, alive or dead. You sure you want that?

LINDA

I just can't stand not knowing.

Bartley pauses, then turns back to his console.

BARTLEY

Then look at this.

The action in the cube begins to speed up incredibly, but at the center of it all is Walter, changing positions and clothing but always in the same spot in the field.

BARTLEY

I can tag an object -- or person -- and have the field follow him through time and space. No guesswork, no hunting.

LINDA

How close to the present?

BARTLEY

I set it to stop at yesterday. Almost there.

The action slows. Walter is wearing a deliveryman's uniform and driving a van.

LINDA

Geez, is that what he's doing now?

BARTLEY

What's he normally do?

LINDA

He was an attorney. No wonder I haven't been able to trace him through the state bar associations.

Walter parks the van and enters a building. He stops to talk with his boss, JACK CLARK, 30. The Boss gives Walter some directions with hand gestures.

LINDA

Tag that guy. I want to find out who he is.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Linda sits at her desk with Tyler on a cell phone in a chair at her desk. Linda waits as Tyler completes the call.

LINDA

Well?

TYLER

Done. That didn't feel good at all, Linda.

LINDA

That's funny, I thought it felt fantastic.

TYLER

Who the fuck is Jimmy Buford, and what does he have to do with Jack Clark?

LINDA

What do you care? It only matters that Jack cares, and cares enough to fire Walter.

TYLER

You think you can get Claire back this way?

Linda leans into him and locks her stare onto his eyes.

LINDA

Tyler, I can get anything I want this way. I got re-elected this way. I could get to the White House this way.

Tyler nods and gets up.

LINDA

And if you're smart, you'll take my
table scraps and make yourself a
nice career.

INT. WALTER'S COMPANY - DAY

Clark is giving direction to an ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
when his cell phone rings. He answers, trying to keep
showing the Admin what he wants.

CLARK

Jack Clark.

The voice on the other end belongs to YOST. Yost speaks
with a confidence and ease that carry an edge of menace.

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

Hello, Jack.

CLARK

Who's calling?

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

Friend of a friend.

CLARK

Friend of a --

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

Any friend of Jimmy Buford is a
friend of yours, right, Jack?

Clark shoos his Admin away, pointing to the phone.

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

Still with me, Jack?

CLARK

Yeah. I wasn't alone.

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

But you are now. Good man.

CLARK

Look, what do you want? I don't
have a lot of money --

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

Won't cost you a thing, Jack. I
just want you to fire that driver,
Walter.

CLARK

Walter? Does he know --

YOST (O.S. FILTER)

No one knows, Jack, except Jimmy,
and he's not telling. Just do me
this one favor, and all of that
stays in the past.

INT. WALTER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Walter piles his and Claire's possessions into moving boxes.

Claire, now 13, enters through the front door, her knapsack
on her shoulder.

CLAIRE

Hey, Dad, you know Lisa --

She freezes as she sees what Walter's doing.

CLAIRE

What happened?

WALTER

Lost my job. That asshole Clark
says he doesn't like getting
anonymous phone calls.

CLAIRE

She found us.

WALTER

Yeah. We gotta get a move on.

Claire stays frozen.

WALTER

Didn't you hear me? Let's get this
stuff packed up and get the hell gone.

CLAIRE

I'm going back.

Walter is in shock.

WALTER

What? To her?

CLAIRE

Yeah.

WALTER

Am I such a bastard? Have I been
that cruel?

Claire breaks down and rushes to her father, wrapping her arms around him.

CLAIRE
No, Daddy. You've been perfect.
That's why I have to go.

WALTER
No.

CLAIRE
But she'll never leave us alone.
If I go back, she'll stop chasing
after you.

WALTER
I won't let you.

CLAIRE
It's just for a few years, then I
can come find you again.

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT - DAY

Linda, Tyler and a few staffers wait by a sign that says "WELCOME HOME, CLAIRE." The doorbell rings.

Linda opens it and stares at Claire.

LINDA
Welcome home, honey.

Claire, wearing her knapsack and dragging a duffel bag, brushes past her mother.

TYLER
Welcome back. Remember me?

CLAIRE
Yeah. My mother's lackey.

LINDA
Claire!

CLAIRE
Let's get this straight, mother.
I'm here so you'll stop harassing
my father and blackmailing his
employers.

LINDA
Claire! You shut --

CLAIRE

And if I find out you haven't
stopped, I'm gone. You got that?

Linda slaps Claire across her mouth.

LINDA

You never talk to me that way, ever.
You got that?

Claire touches her fingertip to her lip and looks at the blood.

CLAIRE

Loud and clear. I think we
understand each other. Well, good
night, folks. I'm going to turn in.
Lovely party. Thanks for coming.

Claire disappears down the hall and into her old room.

Tyler approaches Linda, but she stops him with a wave of her
hand.

LINDA

I apologize for my daughter's lack
of manners. She's been away from a
woman's influence too long. So,
let's not let this cake go to waste.

Linda starts to cut the "WELCOME HOME, CLAIRE" cake. Out of
shock and fear, the guests line up to get a piece.

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT - DAY

Later that day, after the guests have left the party, Tyler
lingers as Linda straightens up the kitchen.

TYLER

You know they're going to talk.

Linda picks up the remaining half of the cake.

LINDA

Let them. They saw for themselves
I wasn't drinking. You want this?

Tyler shakes his head.

TYLER

Aren't you saving any for Claire?

Linda scrapes the cake in a sticky mass into the trash.

LINDA
Fuck her. Claire shot off her
mouth and shot herself in the foot.

TYLER
You don't think anyone heard the
word "blackmail"?

LINDA
Spoiled thirteen-year-old brats
throw words like that around all
the time. No one takes them
seriously.

TYLER
Except in this case, it's true.

LINDA
And you and I are the only ones who
know that. And...

TYLER
And who?

LINDA
Your friend who called Walter's
boss. You trust him, right?

TYLER
Sure. And you trust the people who
dug up the dirt I gave to Yost, right?

LINDA
Sure.

As Linda busies herself picking up cups and dishes, Tyler
watches her, thinking.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Very late, and Tyler is all alone at Linda's desk. The
office is dark, except for a desk lamp, set so that Tyler's
face is in darkness.

TYLER
Phone Dr. Bartley at home.

Bartley appears in his bathrobe.

BARTLEY
Linda?

Tyler leans forward into the light. Bartley jumps, startled.

TYLER

No, Dr. Bartley. I'm her assistant, Tyler Hart.

BARTLEY

I see. You have a message for me from Congresswoman Thompkins?

TYLER

Yes, sir. Linda wants to thank you for all of your hard work.

BARTLEY

Nothing to thank me for. I love my job.

TYLER

Your research, yes. I was referring to the other work you do for Linda. Those odd jobs.

BARTLEY

Odd jobs? Look, Mister -- Hart, is it? -- Linda's worked pretty hard herself to fund my work. Of course I'm grateful. Of course I'm going to help her any way I can, with endorsements and contributions --

TYLER

Contributions in the area of applied research. Opposition research.

BARTLEY

Well, there's only so much a science bureaucrat can do. We operate under strict rules here, Mr. Hart.

TYLER

Strict, inflexible rules, I'm sure.

BARTLEY

That's right.

TYLER

That's fine, Dr. Bartley. We all want to help Linda any way we can. She's going places, you see, Dr. Bartley. You and I will help her move up to the Senate, and she'll get you lots more money for your work, and I'll take over her House seat.

Tyler leans forward and lowers his voice.

TYLER

I just want you to know that having me as a friend in the House will be just as important as having Linda in the Senate.

BARTLEY

I can appreciate that.

TYLER

I know I can count on your help, Dr. Bartley. The same kind of help you've given Linda.

Bartley studies Tyler's face for a moment. Then he speaks confidently, as a father might when giving advice to his son.

BARTLEY

Mr. Hart, let me be frank. You don't impress me as being as... needy... as Linda. I'd be very disappointed if you ever had to resort to my help. And I'll bet you'd be even more disappointed in yourself. Good night.

Bartley disappears. Tyler sits silently for a moment, absorbing Bartley's advice.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Linda has dinner with Senator Parker. The sommelier finishes pouring wine for Linda.

LINDA

Thank you.

When the sommelier is safely away, Parker speaks quietly but matter-of-factly.

PARKER

So. Linda, where is all this Senate talk coming from?

LINDA

Lots of folks back home are hoping I'll move up, Bob.

PARKER

Not a bad idea, in principle.

LINDA

And in practice?

PARKER

You're most closely associated with one big thing, Linda. That time machine.

LINDA

Practically the most important research project ever undertaken.

PARKER

Not everyone thinks so. Some people just can't relate to the kind of historical research your people are doing.

LINDA

And what would win them over, in your opinion?

PARKER

Some great big hard science breakthrough. Origin of the species, the missing link, that kind of thing. Capture their imagination, you'll get their support.

Two waiters arrive with their meals on covered dishes. They place the dishes before Linda and Parker, and with a flourish they simultaneously remove the covers.

LINDA

Lovely! Thank you.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - DAY

Jeremy, now 14, is watching another nature show in the media room. This one is a re-creation of the age of dinosaurs. A *Tyrannosaurus rex* chases down a smaller dinosaur.

Bartley enters the room.

BARTLEY

You know, some scientists think --

JEREMY

-- that *Tyrannosaurus* was a scavenger that used its tail as a counterweight while bending over carrion, rather than for balance while running. They just talked about that.

BARTLEY

Oh, well, that'll teach me to walk in after the show starts.

JEREMY

Hey, what you doing home so early?

BARTLEY

I have some planning to do on a special project.

JEREMY

So don't waste your time on some old three-dee show.

BARTLEY

Oh, I can spare a few minutes.

Bartley sits down next to Jeremy.

JEREMY

How are they ever going to figure out how the *Tyrannosaurus* really behaved?

BARTLEY

Good question, sport.

As Jeremy gets more engrossed in the show, Bartley realizes something that makes him smile broadly.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Bartley sits at his desk. Linda sits on her sofa, facing him.

LINDA

Is this the best you can do?

BARTLEY

You're kidding, right? This is exactly what you said you needed.

LINDA

It's just... your schedule...

BARTLEY

I understand. It's going to require four months of uninterrupted time on the portal.

LINDA

We're coming into an election cycle. Will I be able to just, you know, sneak in for a quick peek?

BARTLEY

No, uninterrupted means just that. We're going a lot further this time, and it will take the entire four months just to get to the region of interest. Linda, it will be worth it.

LINDA

All right. Go ahead. Just don't let me down.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - DAY

All of the temporal portal project staff (besides Bartley) are assembled in the lab. Every chair is occupied, and many more people are standing. There's a murmur of curiosity in the crowd.

Bartley enters, causing the murmur to increase in intensity. He takes his place in front of the cube.

BARTLEY

Okay, everyone. You're waiting for a big announcement. It's a big thing, all right, but the announcement is just one word. Dinosaurs.

TOMAS

¿Sin embargo? For real?

BARTLEY

For real, Tomas. We've got Congressional approval. We're going back sixty-five million years... and more.

The crowd erupts into cheers and self-congratulations.

INT. HOUSE COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM - DAY

The cube sits in the middle of the committee room. In the cube, various prehistoric creatures appear as 3-D freeze-frame images while Bartley narrates. First is a saber-toothed cat, frozen mid-stride.

BARTLEY (V.O.)

This is about one hundred thousand years ago. It's a *Smilodon*, a saber-toothed cat that wandered into the field.

LINDA

You only caught this glimpse?

BARTLEY (V.O.)

That's right. We moved the view back over a hundred million years, and we couldn't stop at any point in time along the way. Occasionally, as with this cat, we caught something in the field, and we were able record it for later study.

The image changes to a bizarre animal's head, a cross between a rhinoceros and a wart-hog, but the size of an elephant's head.

KELLY

What the hell is that?

BARTLEY (V.O.)

It's the head of a *Uintatherium*. A face only a mother could love. We're back about a million years here.

LINDA

How far back have you gotten so far?

BARTLEY (V.O.)

We're at eighty million years.

LINDA

You're way ahead of schedule, then.

BARTLEY (V.O.)

By about a month. It's going much faster than we'd hoped. Here's the payoff.

The cube now contains a half-dozen small dinosaurs in a nesting area. They're about four feet tall, thin, with odd bony crests over their parrot-like beaks.

Several tend the eggs with their snouts, while the others keep a sharp-eyed watch for predators.

KELLY

Are those dinosaurs?

BARTLEY (V.O.)

The inaccurately-named *Oviraptors*. "Oviraptor" means "egg-thief," but you can see that they're actually quite devoted parents. Once we got into the late Cretaceous period, we decided to stop along the way whenever we saw anything of interest. These little guys certainly qualify.

LINDA

Ladies and gentlemen, you should feel quite privileged. You're among the very first humans to observe living dinosaurs.

INT. BIGGER HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

Another victory party, but this time the crowd is bigger and the national media have cameras and reporters on site.

As before, the crowd is watching news coverage of the election returns, but this time on a video wall thirty feet high. The screen shows a national news ANCHORMAN checking with a field reporter in that very hall.

ANCHORMAN (ON VIDEO)

... and with forty-five percent of the precincts reporting, with a comfortable lead of eight points holding steady through the evening, it looks like Linda Thompkins will be making the step up from the House to the Senate. Gina Danieli is with the Thompkins campaign. Gina, what's the mood out there?

GINA, 32, gives her report from the edge of the crowd, appearing in the background on the video wall.

GINA

Well, David, it's very upbeat here --

The crowd erupts in a cheer as Gina comes up on the screen.

GINA

-- as I think you just heard for yourself. The supporters here have two reasons to celebrate tonight. Linda Thompkins appears to be set to become the junior Senator from this state, and in addition, her long-time Chief of Staff, Tyler Hart, looks like he's won election to fill her House seat.

The crowd roars.

GINA

The crowd is now anxious to see Thompkins and Hart come out and make their victory speeches, which I assume will happen as soon as their opponents call to concede and congratulate them. Back to you, David.

ANCHORMAN (ON VIDEO)
Thank you, Gina. And on the other
side of the nation...

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT - DAY

Claire, now 18, comes out of her room with her knapsack and her duffel bag.

She makes her way to the front door.

LINDA (O.S.)
What's that?

Claire freezes, hand halfway to the doorknob.

CLAIRE
My stuff.

Linda walks up to her.

LINDA
Stuff? Where are you going?

Claire turns to face her mother.

CLAIRE
Away. Elsewhere. Out of your life.

LINDA
Just like that?

CLAIRE
Just like what? I've been planning
this moment for five years! I came
back to get you to leave Dad alone.
Now I'm eighteen, and I choose where
I go and who I want in my life.

LINDA
You choose? You're my daughter.
You'll always be my daughter, and
you can't change that.

CLAIRE
You're right. I can't change it.

She turns and opens the door. Linda grabs her arm, but Claire forcefully shakes her off.

CLAIRE
But I can sure as hell try to forget
it.

She's gone, leaving a stunned Linda.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Linda's sofa faces Bartley's desk.

BARTLEY
Can't you come down here?

LINDA
No, I can't get away. You have to do this for me.

BARTLEY
It's a big interruption. The staff is going to be pissed.

LINDA
Not if you tell them you have to prepare for the expansion phase.

BARTLEY
Really? We got it?

LINDA
Not yet. But I tell you what, Bill, you do this for me, I guarantee you'll get it.

BARTLEY
That's not something you can guarantee, Linda.

LINDA
I'll stake my career on it. That good enough for you?

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Walter carries a basket as he walks through a glade.

He stops at the base of a tree. In the leaf litter, he spots and picks a bunch of chanterelle mushrooms. He brushes off the dirt and puts them into his basket.

His mobile phone rings.

WALTER
Hello?

Linda is on the small video screen.

LINDA
Hello, Walter.

WALTER

How the hell --

LINDA

Walter, you ought to know that you can't hide from me.

WALTER

What do you want? Claire?

LINDA

Claire.

WALTER

Even if I wanted to, I can't help you. She's eighteen. She makes her own choices.

LINDA

She's staying with you. Tell her to come home.

WALTER

I told you --

LINDA

Then tell her to talk to me.

WALTER

I'm sure if she wanted to, she would.

LINDA

Make her want to.

WALTER

Or what? You'll get me fired, again? You'll destroy my credit, again?

LINDA

Oh, right. You're immune. An independent businessman running a cash business. How long will you stay in business, do you think, after one of your customers dies from a poisoned mushroom?

WALTER

You'd do that?

LINDA

Kill to get my baby back? Of course.

WALTER

Of course. Why would I even ask?

LINDA

So she'll take my call?

WALTER

I'll take care of it. You won't
have to kill anyone.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Bartley is in the kitchen, stirring cream into a cup of coffee.

CONTROL VOICE

Incoming call, Dr. Bartley.

BARTLEY

Put it through.

Walter materializes in the kitchen. He's sitting at a desk.
Bartley tries to maintain his composure.

WALTER

Hello, Doctor.

BARTLEY

I'm sorry, do I know you?

WALTER

I think you know all about me, Doctor.

BARTLEY

I'm sorry, sir, but I don't --

WALTER

I thought and I thought, and it hit
me.

BARTLEY

What hit you?

WALTER

Linda knows where to find me. She
knows how to hurt me, just like she
hurts anyone who gets in her way.
And all since she met you, Doctor.

BARTLEY

What do you want. Mr. Thompkins?

WALTER

I want you to know.

BARTLEY

Know what?

WALTER

I want you to know that I know.

BARTLEY

Know what?!?

As Bartley shouts, Walter disappears. Bartley looks around in a panic, then sits down. He sips his coffee, trying to calm down.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bartley meets with Tomas and Wilder.

BARTLEY

I just got the word from Washington.

TOMAS

And?

BARTLEY

Green light. We can expand the field anytime now.

WILDER

Let me guess. Our lady fair came through.

BARTLEY

Linda's a very good friend to have.

WILDER

I'd sure as hell hate to have her for an enemy.

Wilder and Tomas laugh. Bartley doesn't even smile.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Andrea, Jeremy (now 19) and Bartley are finishing dinner.

BARTLEY

Ready to go, sport?

ANDREA

Where are you taking him?

BARTLEY

Didn't I tell you? We're doing some special work tonight in the lab. I thought Jeremy would like to see it.

JEREMY

They're looking at dinosaurs! It's going to be so cool!

ANDREA

But I only have him home from school for a few days!

The father and son look pleadingly at Andrea. She sighs.

ANDREA

Can you at least have him home before midnight?

Bartley and Jeremy high-five each other.

BARTLEY & JEREMY

(simultaneously)

Yes!

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Bartley has Jeremy at his side to observe the current experiment. The team is assembled around a much larger cube, 30 feet on a side. Within this larger cube is the smaller cube as before, and in the smaller cube is a *Triceratops* nest.

The head of a full-sized adult *Triceratops* nudges one of the eggs.

Bartley notices Jeremy's wide-eyed fascination.

BARTLEY

Wow. This is going to be great. We should be able to see all of her in the expanded field.

WILDER

Two minutes, Bill.

BARTLEY

Good. We'll start a countdown at 30 seconds.

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda sits in the same place on a similar couch (upholstered differently), wearing a flannel nightgown and robe. The chair faces open granite floor in front of the fireplace.

She's holding a glass of Jack Daniel's on the rocks. She takes a pull on her drink, then addresses the air.

LINDA

Call Claire.

Seated before Thompkins in a very different style of chair is CLAIRE THOMPCKINS, 19, dressed in a stylish sweatsuit.

As Thompkins starts to speak, Claire interrupts.

LINDA

Claire, honey, how --

CLAIRE

Hi, you've reached Claire. I'm not really here, though. Leave me a message when I say go. Go!

LINDA

Claire, honey, please call me. I need to talk to you.

(beat)

End.

Thompkins takes another pull on her drink.

LINDA

Call Tyler Hart.

After a few seconds, Tyler materializes, wearing a robe over pajamas.

TYLER

Jeez, Linda, what the hell do you want?

LINDA

That guy. What's his name?

TYLER

What guy, Linda?

LINDA

The one who does things for you. For me. What's his name?

TYLER

You're drunk, Linda. Go to sleep.

LINDA

Tell me his fucking name!

TYLER

His name's Yost. Tell you what, I'll transfer you. And Linda?

LINDA

What?

TYLER

Whatever sick, twisted thing you're plotting, keep me the hell out of it.

Tyler disappears. In a few seconds, Yost speaks.

YOST (V.O.)

Who's speaking?

LINDA

Mr. Yost?

YOST (V.O.)

Who's speaking?

LINDA

Senator Thompkins.

YOST (V.O.)

Secure line?

LINDA

Yeah, yeah. Let's have a look.

YOST (V.O.)

I don't think so. For your own protection.

LINDA

Fine, be invisible. Look, I have work for you.

YOST (V.O.)

What?

LINDA

Has to do with my ex-husband. You know about him, right?

YOST (V.O.)

Yeah, I --

LINDA

So the bastard was supposed to do something for me, and he didn't. I told him if he didn't, someone would die.

YOST (V.O.)

Someone else?

LINDA

Else? I don't --

YOST (V.O.)

Someone besides your ex.

LINDA

Right, I don't want you to kill my
ex --

YOST (V.O.)

Of course not. He did a pretty
good job of that already.

LINDA

What?

There's an awkward pause.

YOST (V.O.)

You hadn't heard. Sorry. He killed
himself two days ago. Thought you
knew.

LINDA

No. Sorry. I'm... sorry to have
bothered you. End.

Linda buries her head in her hands.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Bartley completes the countdown.

BARTLEY

Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Go!

Tomas and Wilder work their keyboards.

There's a blinding FLASH.

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda lowers the glass and hurls it into the fireplace, and
the alcohol makes the flames flare up for a moment.

Suddenly the room goes completely black, except for the
firelight.

LINDA

What the --? News!

Nothing happens. Linda gets up.

LINDA

News!

(beat)

Maintenance!

(beat)

POLICE!

Now truly terrified, Linda runs to the window.

The city is in total darkness, except for some emergency flashers on the street far below.

She returns to her chair and draws her knees up, hugging them.

The lights come back on -- all the lights in the apartment.

CONTROL VOICE

Power interruption recovery cycle initiated.

(beat)

Are you all right, Congresswoman Thompkins? Do you require assistance?

LINDA

No, I'm fine. I'm fine. What happened?

CONTROL VOICE

I will turn on the news.

A video panel in the wall flashes on. An anchorman reads into the camera.

ANCHOR

We on? Yeah? Ladies and gentlemen, what you've just experienced is a power blackout. This is not only the first power outage recorded anywhere in the world in the last twenty years, it appears to be the largest ever recorded. We're getting reports from all over the world. Jim Guerra is standing by here in Washington. Jim?

The image shifts to a live outside shot of a reporter on a balcony.

GUERRA

That's right, David. The power is only now beginning to come back on in the city, and some areas remain in total darkness.

The camera pans over the cityscape, with lights on in scattered blocks and buildings.

ANCHOR (O.S.)

I'm told this same scene is being played out in every major city all over the planet. The global power grid was completely disabled for almost twenty seconds, and we're only now getting back partial power. What can you see out there, Jim?

GUERRA

David, it looks like the blackout has shut down all transportation. Everything on the street has stopped, except self-powered emergency vehicles. The police will have a major battle on their hands trying to maintain order and prevent panic.

LINDA

Call Tyler!

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

The aftermath of an overload. Smoke drifts through the room. Sparks tumble from equipment racks and broken cables.

BARTLEY

Jeremy!

JEREMY

I'm right here, Dad. I'm okay.

BARTLEY

Tomas! Steve!

TOMAS

¡Dios mio!

WILDER

What was that?

BARTLEY

Everyone okay?

TOMAS

I think Maria's hurt.

MARIA, 42, holds a hand to the side of her head, a trickle of blood through her fingers.

MARIA

It's nothing, a little cut.

BARTLEY

You get over to the dispensary.
Tomas, go with her.

MARIA

No, no, I'm okay. Tomas should
stay here to check out the equipment.

She pushes Tomas away as she walks out of the lab.

BARTLEY

Everyone else?

WILDER

We're okay. The machine's shot,
though.

The smoke clears. In the cube is a massive dark object.

JEREMY

What's that?

BARTLEY

What?

Jeremy points to the cube. In it, a large female *Triceratops*
lies sprawled over its nest.

Jeremy walks over to the cube. The *Triceratops* appears dead.

BARTLEY

Jeremy! Stay back!

JEREMY

It's okay.

Jeremy reaches in and picks up an object. It's a *Triceratops*
egg.

JEREMY

Look at this!

Jeremy scrambles back to his dad and holds out the egg.

As Bartley peers at the egg, he jumps -- the egg is alive.

INT. THOMPSONS APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tyler stands in front of the fireplace, highly agitated.

TYLER

Linda! Are you okay?

LINDA

What the fuck happened, Tyler?

TYLER

No one knows. I just called Commerce, but they don't know anything. My guy at Energy called a minute ago -- he says this is impossible.

LINDA

It happened, so it's not impossible.

TYLER

He says that there must have been a simultaneous shutdown of all of the fusion stations. The entire ring.

LINDA

The entire ring? Okay, that's impossible.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Andrea sits in the media room. One wall displays the news, with images of the chaos caused by the blackout in cities across the world.

ANCHOR (O.S.)

The chaos was more pronounced in the Western Hemisphere. Rioting broke out in New York, Miami and Rio de Janeiro, while cities like Boston, Mexico City and Buenos Aires remained relatively calm.

JEREMY (O.S.)

Mom!

ANDREA

Mute.

The news video continues M.O.S. Jeremy rushes into the media room and into his mother's arms. She hugs him tightly. Bartley walks in and joins in the hug.

ANDREA

I was so worried.

The hug breaks up.

BARTLEY

We're okay. The lab's a mess.

ANDREA

The power outage caused damage?

BARTLEY

Uhh... the damage caused the power outage.

ANDREA

You did this?

(to Jeremy)

Are you all right?

JEREMY

Yeah, I'm fine. Mom, you should have seen it! We got a dinosaur! Well, part of one. And a real, live dinosaur egg!

ANDREA

A dinosaur?

She looks at Bartley, puzzled. He shrugs, unsure of how to start his explanation.

INT. SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM - DAY

This committee room is similar to the House committee room, but larger. Television crews are set up to capture the proceedings. Bartley, in the flesh, sits at the witness table, microphones before him.

The audience is agitated. Parker, the committee chair, bangs the gavel.

PARKER

Order!

The audience noise abates.

BARTLEY

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, Senator Thompkins, the energy surge was caused by a combination of factors. We were expanding the size of the field while observing a time period in the distant past.

LINDA

How did those factors interact?

BARTLEY

The field acts like a capacitor, storing energy for each past moment we push it through. We were 65 million years into the past when the overload occurred, so a very large amount of energy was stored in the field. At the same time, we were trying to expand the size of the field, and we didn't anticipate the amount of energy it would require.

LINDA

Didn't you calculate that in advance?

BARTLEY

Yes, but we didn't factor in what was occurring in the past time we were observing.

LINDA

And what was that?

BARTLEY

It was a very powerful burst of energy, We believe it was the asteroid strike that caused the global extinction of the dinosaurs.

LINDA

And how would that affect the field, Dr. Bartley?

BARTLEY

We had no way of knowing beforehand. Judging by the result, it caused the collapse of the field and the loss of a massive amount of energy.

LINDA

Did you observe any other unusual effects, Doctor?

BARTLEY

Yes, Senator, one profoundly unusual effect. The field generator condensed the energy into the form of matter.

PARKER

What?

LINDA

Mr. Chairman?

PARKER

Madame Senator, will you yield for a question?

LINDA

Reserving my time, I yield to the chair.

PARKER

Doctor, you said the machine turned energy into matter?

BARTLEY

Yes. A great deal of energy was converted into an appreciable amount of matter. We know the field generator did this, because the matter took the form of the last area that we had observed in the field.

PARKER

And that was?

BARTLEY

A nest. The nest of a *Triceratops* dinosaur.

PARKER

You mean your machine made a dinosaur nest?

BARTLEY

A real dinosaur nest, complete with a mother dinosaur and a real dinosaur egg. As my son says, "A real, live dinosaur egg." See for yourself.

Bartley turns and lifts a box onto the witness table. The audience gasps as he removes the box cover to reveal a clear plastic cage containing a live baby *Triceratops*. Then the audience erupts from its seats as they strain to get a look at the creature.

PARKER

Order! Order!

LINDA

Mr. Chairman?

PARKER

Chair recognizes Senator Thompkins.

LINDA

Mr. Chairman, given this incredible development, I think it is imperative that we move ahead with this area of scientific exploration, but with extreme caution. I move that the committee approve the restart of the temporal research project, but only with direct oversight. I would like to volunteer to act as a direct liaison between the project and Congress.

INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY

Linda sits at her desk.

LINDA

Call Claire.

Linda waits impatiently for a few seconds.

CONTROL VOICE (V.O.)

That number has been disconnected and there is no forwarding number.

LINDA

What?

CONTROL VOICE (V.O.)

That number --

LINDA

I heard you the first time. Shit. Shit!

INT. BARTLEY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bartley sits on the bed in underwear and a robe and flips channels on the television. A knock sounds on the door.

BARTLEY

Just a minute.

Bartley turns off the video. He goes to the door, checks the peepscreen and opens it.

BARTLEY

Linda!

Linda pushes her way in.

LINDA

So, Bill, you want me to fix this fuck-up?

BARTLEY

What fuck-up? I got you a dinosaur!

LINDA

And you plunged half the planet into total darkness to do it. If that's not bad enough, I can make this sound like the most dangerous potential weapon the world has ever seen. Go anywhere, steal anything. Even steal the heart out of an enemy leader's chest.

BARTLEY

Why would you do that?

LINDA

Claire's gone. That bastard Walter killed himself, and now I can't find her.

BARTLEY

Wait -- killed himself?

LINDA

The fucking coward. Now Claire's gone, and I've got nothing I can use to get her back.

BARTLEY

I'm sorry.

LINDA

Don't be. You're going to fix this.

BARTLEY

I see.

LINDA

Exactly. You're going to see Claire, and help me see her, too. We're going to see where she is before she gets there.

BARTLEY

Oh, no. Not the future.

LINDA

All right, then, the present. Look, Bill, you fix this, I'll fix your fuck-up. Tomorrow the committee votes on my motion, and I'll see to it that I personally come down to oversee your work.

(MORE)

LINDA (CONT'D)

I'll get the access I want, and you'll get everything you need to rebuild the field generator, bigger and better. Deal?

Linda extends her hand. Bartley pushes it away.

BARTLEY

No deal, Linda. We killed a man. I killed a man.

LINDA

He killed himself, Bill. He was a weak little bastard and he took the easy way out.

BARTLEY

Out of what? Out of your vendetta against him. And I gave you everything you needed to hound him to death.

LINDA

Well, I'm not asking you to kill anyone else. I just want to see my baby. And trust me, Bill, I'm the only one who can get your favorite toy back for you. So, is it a deal?

Linda extends her hand again. Bartley hesitates, then reaches out to shake her hand.

BARTLEY

Deal.

LINDA

You won't regret it, Bill. Have a good night.

Linda leaves. Bartley sits still on the edge of the bed.

BARTLEY

Phone call. Andrea Bartley, San Jose, Costa Rica.

HOTEL COMPUTER

Connecting.

Andrea, in a nightgown, sits on a bed at the foot of Bartley's bed.

ANDREA

Honey? Why are you calling so late?

BARTLEY
Is it late? I'm sorry.

ANDREA
Yes, it's late. Go to sleep.

BARTLEY
I will. Is... is Jeremy up?

ANDREA
No, honey. What's wrong?

BARTLEY
Nothing. I just... I miss you both.

ANDREA
We miss you, too.

BARTLEY
If I never could see you again --
or Jeremy --

ANDREA
What's this about? Sweetie?

BARTLEY
It's nothing. Really. I'm just --
I can't get to sleep. I'll be okay.

ANDREA
You sure?

BARTLEY
Yeah. I'll be home in a couple of
days. Give Jeremy a hug for me.

ANDREA
Sure. Love you.

Bartley blows her a kiss.

BARTLEY
Love you. End.

Andrea and her bed disappear. Bartley lies back onto the bed, staring at the ceiling.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

The machine is rebuilt and now has the much larger field: a cube thirty feet on a side. Bartley operates the controls as Linda watches intently.

In the cube is a section of Claire's apartment building, with Claire's bedroom in the front of the viewing area.

Linda looks at Claire sleeping. She watches in silence, a tear forming in the corner of her eye and rolling down her cheek. Bartley catches a glimpse of the tear, then looks back to his controls.

Claire rolls over. Linda sees that Claire's boyfriend -- JIMMY JAMESON, 38, balding like Walter -- is with her.

BARTLEY

Tomorrow I'll set you up to run the console yourself.

LINDA

I won't do anything...

BARTLEY

Anything bad, I know. I trust you, Linda. You just want to see Claire.

Linda nods, slowly, not taking her eyes off Claire.

INT. SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM - DAY

Parker presides over a committee meeting. Bartley and Linda sit at consoles from the Temporal Lab. Behind them, the cube is visible.

LINDA

So far, the new lab configuration has worked perfectly. We've run tests within the last millennium only.

BARTLEY

That's a safety precaution. It limits the power needs of the portal.

PARKER

All right. And what have you been able to see?

BARTLEY

This sequence is from Roanoke, Virginia, in 1588. A year earlier, an English colony was established there to replace the original failed settlement. In 1590, English ships returned but found no trace of the colonists.

In the cube, several Native Americans in buckskin escort a group of haggard, ill-clothed English men and women out of an area near a cabin. One Englishman carves the word CROATAN onto a wooden post.

BARTLEY

We learned that "Croatan" is the name of a village that was about fifty miles from Roanoke. The inhabitants of that village took in the colonists. However, the villagers were susceptible to European diseases, and within a year, both they and the colonists were all dead.

PARKER

That's interesting, Doctor.

LINDA

More than interesting, Mr. Chairman. It's the solution to one of the great mysteries of history. We now know what happened to the Lost Colony of Roanoke.

PARKER

Fascinating. I'm sure I speak for everyone on this committee when I say I'm looking forward to further findings that will justify the continued expense of operating the portal.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Tyler sits at the desk. Linda sits across from him at her console in the Temporal Lab.

TYLER

This is a really tight race, Linda. Cartwright's got a lot more money behind him.

LINDA

I know. I can sympathize.

TYLER

I was wondering... that material you dug up on Cartwright back during the campaign against Wilton. Any chance I could get more?

LINDA

Oh, Tyler, I wish I could help you.
I just can't.

TYLER

I'm sure you can.

LINDA

Look, you just have to run a hard
campaign.

TYLER

I ran hard campaigns for you, Linda!
I deserve a little help here!

LINDA

I'm sorry. End.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Linda turns away from her just-ended holophone conversation with Tyler and toward the console to look at the cube.

In the cube, Claire and Jimmy -- now her fiancé -- are at the altar for their wedding. There are a maid of honor, a best man, and some guests -- almost all on the groom's side of the aisle, with just a few of Claire's friends on her side. One is an OLDER WOMAN about Linda's age.

Linda uses the fast-forward feature to move through the ceremony, to the couple's first married kiss.

She fast-forwards to follow Claire to her wedding reception. The Older Woman sits at the head table with the wedding party.

Fast-forward: Claire drinks too much. Jimmy tries to slow her down, but she pushes him away.

Fast-forwards: Claire and Jimmy cut the cake and smash it into each other's faces.

Fast-forward: Claire and Jimmy run into the limo. They close the door and begin to make out, tearing at each others' clothes.

Linda takes the controls and the scene in the cube blurs, until it becomes just an empty cube in the lab. The portal is shut down.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - DAY

In the media room, a young Triceratops grazes in an zoo enclosure. Bartley and Jeremy sit on the sofa.

BARTLEY

You never get tired of watching her,
do you?

JEREMY

Never. I wish we could have kept her.

Bartley laughs.

BARTLEY

You have enough trouble cleaning
the stable, Jeremy, and that's just
one horse.

Jeremy chuckles.

JEREMY

Yeah, I guess that would be a
problem. Speaking of which, how
did they know what to feed her?

BARTLEY

Ferns, horsetails, the sorts of
plants that haven't changed much in
the last sixty-five million years.

JEREMY

Oh. Cool.

They watch in silence for a few moments.

JEREMY

Dad?

BARTLEY

Yes?

JEREMY

Was it worth it?

BARTLEY

Was what worth what?

JEREMY

Getting Trixie. I know the blackout
caused billions of dollars of damage.
And you almost got fired.

BARTLEY

I don't know, Jeremy. All that
trouble, sure, but look at her!
She's helping answer some of the
greatest mysteries of evolutionary
biology. She's the fulfillment of
dreams most people never dared to
dream.

JEREMY

Then it was worth everything that happened?

BARTLEY

Yeah. Yeah, I guess it was.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Linda operates the console.

In the cube, Claire is drinking whiskey on the rocks at the kitchen table.

Jimmy comes into the kitchen.

JIMMY

Claire, what the fuck?

CLAIRE

Just an after-dinner drink, Jimmy.

JIMMY

You said that was over!

Jimmy grabs the glass from Claire's hand and the bottle from the table.

CLAIRE

Hey!

Jimmy heads to the sink. Claire gets up to follow. She's heavily pregnant.

CLAIRE

Hey! C'mon!

Jimmy dumps the drink and starts to pour out the bottle. Claire tries to reach around him for the bottle.

JIMMY

No more, Claire! Not until the baby comes!

CLAIRE

You think I can go that long without a drink? Fuck you!

She lunges in again, and Jimmy pushes back with an elbow -- not hard, but with enough pressure to knock Claire off balance. She falls backward onto the floor, landing on her butt.

Linda screams and jumps out of her chair, forgetting for a moment that the scene before her is only an image.

Jimmy wheels around, terror-stricken.

JIMMY

Oh, Jesus! Oh, honey!

He drops to his knees to see if she's hurt. She's crying, but mostly from surprise and embarrassment.

CLAIRE

God, Jimmy! I'm sorry, sorry!

JIMMY

No, honey, I'm sorry. Are you okay?

CLAIRE

What the hell is wrong with me?

Jimmy sits on the floor, hugs her and rocks her in his arms.

Linda bites one of her knuckles, tears streaming down her face.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Tyler, at his desk, confers with ANNETTE, 23, an aide.

CONTROL VOICE

Congressman, a call for you from
Senator Thompkins.

TYLER

Excuse me, Annette. This will only
be a minute.

ANNETTE

Sure thing.

Annette leaves the room.

TYLER

I'll take the call now.

Linda, sitting on her hotel bed, materializes across from him.

TYLER

Linda. You thought about what we
discussed last night?

LINDA

Yes, but that's not why I called.

TYLER

Oh?

LINDA

Tyler, Claire's gotten married.

TYLER

Really? I didn't get an invitation.
How was the wedding?

LINDA

It was a year ago. I want you to
help me find her.

TYLER

I've got a tough campaign coming up,
remember? I don't have time for
your domestic issues.

LINDA

Make time, damn it. I can't trace
her from here. Get in touch with
your friend Yost.

TYLER

Oh, Linda, I wish I could help you.
I just can't.

LINDA

You bastard!

TYLER

I'm sorry. End.

Linda vanishes.

TYLER

Annette!

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bartley and Manolo are going over some papers. Linda barges
in.

LINDA

I need to talk to you.

BARTLEY

Manolo, could you give us just a
minute?

Manolo leaves.

BARTLEY

I really wish you'd --

LINDA

I need you to work with me on the portal tonight.

BARTLEY

Haven't I set up everything for you to do your "research" on your own?

LINDA

I need you to override the time limits. I want to be able to view much closer to the present.

BARTLEY

How close?

LINDA

Like T minus ten minutes.

BARTLEY

That's going to be tricky.

LINDA

But doable?

BARTLEY

Yeah... yeah, it's doable. Can I ask why?

LINDA

I think my daughter's in trouble.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Linda watches as Bartley operates the portal. Cartwright is in a meeting with a LOBBYIST, a sharp dresser in his 30s.

CARTWRIGHT

How is this going to work?

LOBBYIST

Real simple. Five hundred thousand to get you elected. If you secure passage of the exemption, another five hundred thousand.

CARTWRIGHT

Just like that? Two great big checks?

LOBBYIST

Don't be dense, Mr. Cartwright.
The company's employees will
demonstrate a spontaneous outpouring
of support for your campaign. A
thousand checks, none large enough
to arouse suspicion. Deal?

CARTWRIGHT

Deal.

The men shake hands.

BARTLEY

That what you needed?

LINDA

Yeah. Now find Claire. At T minus
two minutes.

Linda turns away from her console.

LINDA

Call Congressman Hart.

Bartley adjusts the portal controls.

In the cube, Claire holds a baby girl as she stands on the
front stoop of an apartment. She screams at her husband,
drawing Linda's attention.

CLAIRE

What the fuck, Jimmy. I've had her
all fucking week. You take her for
one lousy afternoon.

Claire thrusts the baby at Jimmy, who panics and struggles
to catch her.

JIMMY

Christ, Claire. Don't do this.
You're drunk already.

CLAIRE

Not nearly, but I will be.

Claire jumps into her car and peels out from her driveway.

Tyler materializes next to Linda.

TYLER

What is it, Linda?

LINDA
Just a minute. Bill, follow her!

BARTLEY
I'm working on it.

Bartley struggles with the portal controls to keep Claire centered in the cube.

TYLER
Linda, I'm busy.

LINDA
I've got Cartwright on a silver platter. Too busy for that?

TYLER
No.

LINDA
Then hold on a minute.

BARTLEY
I'm losing her. She's moving too erratically.

Claire and her car disappear from the cube.

LINDA
Get her back!

BARTLEY
I'll follow the road, we'll catch up to her.

The scene in the cube follows the twisting road at extremely high speed. A flash of color blurs in the cube for a moment.

LINDA
What was that?

BARTLEY
Let's see.

Bartley reverses the action in the cube and slows it down. It settles on a horrific sight: Claire's car has plowed head-on into a mini-van, and both vehicles are twisted and torn. Claire's mangled head and torso are visible through the hole where the drivers' window was.

LINDA
No. God, no.

BARTLEY
Linda, I... I'm sorry.

Linda breaks down in sobs.

TYLER
What? What is it?

BARTLEY
Claire. There's been an accident.

TYLER
Oh, Linda.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

A weary Bartley walks into the media room, where Andrea sits on the couch, watching an old movie.

ANDREA
Honey? That you?

BARTLEY
Yeah.

ANDREA
Did you finish your work?

Bartley doesn't answer. He just stands there and starts to weep. Andrea turns to look.

ANDREA
Bill?

She jumps up and rushes to him.

ANDREA
What's wrong, honey?

He wipes his tears and clears his throat.

BARTLEY
Linda Thompkins's daughter. There was a car accident.

ANDREA
Oh, honey.

She holds him as he slumps slightly.

ANDREA
I'm so sorry.

Bartley weeps again.

BARTLEY

She was so young. Linda never got
to tell her how sorry she was for --
for --

ANDREA

It's all right. It's okay.

She pats him like a child for a few seconds. Then he
straightens up and wipes his tears again.

BARTLEY

Where's Jeremy?

ANDREA

Asleep. Don't wake him, Bill.

BARTLEY

I won't. I just want to... to touch
him and make sure he's still there.
You know?

ANDREA

I know.

Bartley walks down the hall to the doorway of Jeremy's room.
He turns the doorknob gently and cracks the door.

JEREMY'S ROOM

Bartley stands, framed in the doorway, for a moment, the dim
light passing around him and illuminating Jeremy's sleeping
face.

Bartley steps softly across the room and touches his son's
shoulder. Jeremy stirs, rolls over, and stays asleep.

Bartley watches over his son.

EXT. FUNERAL - DAY

Linda sits in mourning dress and veil at the graveside.
Jimmy sits next to her, his baby in his arms.

The service over, they rise.

LINDA

Jimmy?

JIMMY

Senator?

LINDA

Please, call me Linda.

JIMMY

Oh, of course. Linda. I mean, now that we've been brought so close by our shared tragedy.

LINDA

I'd like to --

JIMMY

You'd like? Who gives a shit? I'd like my wife back. I'd like my daughter to have a mother.

LINDA

And I want my daughter back.

JIMMY

That's a laugh, Linda. That's a fucking joke. You didn't want Claire, you just didn't like that she left you. Too embarrassing? A challenge to your authority?

LINDA

Why are you so angry at me?

JIMMY

Because if you hadn't fucked her up so bad, she wouldn't be dead now. She told me what you did to her dad. She was always afraid you were coming after me next. But you know what? I'm not afraid. I won't let you get your claws into my daughter. Stay the hell away from us.

Jimmy strides purposefully away. Linda begins to cry.

Tyler comes up to Linda.

TYLER

I'm sorry, Linda. I'm so sorry.

Linda wipes away a tear.

LINDA

No, he's right. I deserved that.

TYLER

I mean, I'm sorry I didn't call Yost for you when you asked.

LINDA

Would it have made any difference?
What could he have done? Tear
Claire away from a man who loved
her? Make her love me?

TYLER

I should have helped.

LINDA

So should I. I've got what you
wanted on Cartwright. Here.

Linda reaches into her purse and takes out a small plastic
card. She offers it to Tyler.

TYLER

You know what? I don't need it.

LINDA

You sure? Is it because it's from me?

TYLER

No, it's not that, Linda. I
appreciate the offer, but I don't
need it. I can run as hard as
anyone, and I'm going to win.

LINDA

Are we friends?

TYLER

Always. And Linda.

LINDA

Yes?

TYLER

You don't need it, either. You're
better than that.

Tyler kisses her cheek, then walks off.

She watches him go, then begins to sob.

INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY

Linda sits at her desk.

LINDA

Call Jimmy Jameson.

CONTROL VOICE

The call is blocked, Senator.

LINDA
Blocked. Of course.

She gets up, starts to gather up some papers... then changes her mind and sits back down.

LINDA
Call Tyler.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Linda and Tyler share a booth in an elegant restaurant. Linda picks at a salad. Tyler finishes a bite and realizes she's not eating.

TYLER
How are you, really?

LINDA
I'm not too good, Tyler. Jimmy won't take my calls.

TYLER
I understand. I wish I could help.

LINDA
What do I do?

TYLER
You've got to let them go, Linda.

LINDA
I just wish I knew she was going to be okay.

TYLER
Jimmy loves her. He'll take good care of her, he'll raise her right.

LINDA
Are you sure?

TYLER
I'm sure. How's the Roquefort?

Linda smiles.

LINDA
It's delicious.

She starts eating.

INT. BARTLEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bartley is meeting with Tomas. A knock interrupts their conversation. Manolo sticks his head in the door.

MANOLO

Dr. Bartley, excuse me. Senator Thompkins is here.

BARTLEY

His master's voice. I'll catch you later, Tomas.

TOMAS

Okay, Bill.

As Linda enters, Tomas reaches the door.

LINDA

Hello, Tomas, good to see you.

TOMAS

Senator. You look well. I was sorry to hear --

LINDA

Thank you.

Tomas exits with Manolo.

BARTLEY

What can I do for you, Linda?

LINDA

It's kind of big, Bill.

BARTLEY

Big campaign? Running for President?

LINDA

No, nothing like that. You've been a good friend, and I've asked you to do things I shouldn't have.

BARTLEY

I've come to terms with that, Linda. I'm a grownup. I knew what I was doing.

LINDA

Well, all that is over and done with. No more manipulation, no more blackmail.

BARTLEY

You mean that?

LINDA

I swear it.

Bartley rises from his desk, crosses to Linda, and touches her shoulder gently.

BARTLEY

You don't know how happy that makes me, Linda. But then, what can I do for you?

LINDA

Maybe give me some peace. I know I can never be part of Samantha's life, not really. But I want to know that she's safe and happy.

BARTLEY

You want to see her?

LINDA

I want to see her grow up.

BARTLEY

Using the portal to see the future?

LINDA

Schrödinger's cat, Bill. I can't stand not knowing. I can't.

Linda implores him with her eyes. He studies her face.

BARTLEY

You're prepared for whatever happens?

LINDA

Yes. I know I'm asking you to break the law again --

BARTLEY

Fuck that. I mean, you're prepared for whatever happens to Samantha? Even if she ends up dead, like Claire?

LINDA

Or miserable, like me. I won't try to interfere.

BARTLEY

I'll help you.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Bartley and Linda sit at consoles as Bartley runs the controls.

In the cube, Jimmy catches baby Samantha as Claire leaves for the last time.

BARTLEY

How far?

LINDA

Maybe four years?

Fast-forward: Samantha is in kindergarten.

BARTLEY

She's pretty.

LINDA

She's beautiful.

Linda is enthralled with the little girl finger-painting.

LINDA

Skip ahead.

BARTLEY

To?

LINDA

High school graduation.

Fast-forward: Samantha stands at the podium, delivering a salutatorian speech.

BARTLEY

Pretty and smart.

LINDA

Like her grandma. Let's see if she settles down.

BARTLEY

Okay.

Fast-forward: Jimmy walks Samantha down the aisle, gives her to her groom.

BARTLEY

They look happy, Linda.

LINDA

They do.

Linda is crying.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - DAY

As Jeremy eats his breakfast cereal, Andrea and Bartley sip coffee in the kitchen. Bartley watches Jeremy with fascination.

BARTLEY

Do you ever wonder what he'll be when finishes school?

ANDREA

Football player? Scientist? What do you want him to be?

BARTLEY

No, it's not that. He can be whatever he wants, so long as he's happy. Is he going to be happy?

ANDREA

Why don't you use your time machine and find out?

Andrea laughs, not noticing the guilty shock on Bartley's face.

INT. HOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Tyler sits at his desk, Linda seated opposite.

TYLER

You can't be serious.

LINDA

I had to know.

TYLER

At what cost, Linda? You've broken a bunch of laws and defied the express will of Congress.

LINDA

It was worth it. She's happy, Tyler. My granddaughter has escaped all of the shit I dumped on my husband and daughter.

TYLER

Can you finally leave all this alone?

LINDA

I can. Just one last look, and I'm done with it forever.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

As Bartley works the controls, Linda looks farther into the future: in the cube, her granddaughter has a baby girl.

LINDA

It's a girl!

BARTLEY

Congratulations in advance.

LINDA

Let's watch her grow up.

Fast-forward: the great-granddaughter plays with clay in preschool. She has a gift: her clay birds and animals are far better formed than the other three-year-olds'.

Fast-forward: the great-granddaughter, now a teenager, continues to sculpt. Her motifs are dinosaurs and birds.

BARTLEY

Happy and talented, Linda.

LINDA

Turn it off, Bill.

The cube fades out.

LINDA

Thank you.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Linda eats dinner with the family.

ANDREA

I must say, Linda, it's been such a pleasure talking with you. You seem so...

LINDA

Human?

Linda chuckles. Andrea smiles.

ANDREA

Well, yeah. I mean, for years you've had a mythic status in our household. Total control over Bill's work, imperiously swooping down from your exalted throne in Washington --

LINDA

As bad as that?

ANDREA

You know what I mean.

JEREMY

If you knew what Dad had to put up with, Mom always nagging him to invite you over.

LINDA

And he was good about it. He faithfully relayed every invitation.

BARTLEY

Could've knocked me over with a feather when she finally agreed.

ANDREA

Why did you?

LINDA

I guess because my involvement in Bill's work is coming to an end. Congress is ready to let Bill carry on with his work without so much hands-on oversight.

BARTLEY

Really?

LINDA

And that means I won't be coming down nearly as much, or maybe ever.

ANDREA

Hey, just because you don't have to come down for work, that doesn't mean you can't come down to visit. We'd love to have you.

Linda chokes up a bit.

LINDA

Thank you, Andrea. That would be lovely.

BARTLEY

Hey, Linda, after dinner, let me take you over to the lab. One last look, for old times' sake.

Linda gives Bartley a look of gratitude.

INT. TEMPORAL LAB - NIGHT

Bartley operates the console as Linda observes her great-granddaughter's continued growth.

The great-granddaughter, now college age, works among other students in a sculpting class.

Fast-forward: the great-granddaughter is out of college and in her own studio, working on a life-sized sculpture of a *Triceratops*.

Fast-forward: Linda sees her granddaughter and great-granddaughter together in the artist's workshop. They stand before a bronze casting of the *Triceratops*, as large as life. Between them, in front of the statue, is a small table with a bottle of champagne, a bottle of prescription pills, and a small glass dish.

They pour out champagne and toast each other. Then they measure out sleeping pills into a dish.

They take turns taking a pill at a time and washing them down with wine.

LINDA

Oh, my God, Bill! They're committing suicide!

BARTLEY

What?

Linda rushes over to Bartley's console.

LINDA

Pills and wine. Stop them!

BARTLEY

I can't, Linda.

LINDA

Yes, you can. Just --

Linda reaches over Bartley's shoulder to poke at his keyboard. He tries to push her hands away -- they struggle -- Bartley pushes Linda away.

Linda, enraged, clasps her hands together and swings them, connecting with Bartley's head. He's knocked sideways out of his chair.

Linda jumps in front of Bartley's console and furiously types in a series of commands.

The scene in the cube shifts slightly, so that Linda's granddaughter and great-granddaughter are not in the cube, but the table and statue still are.

There's a blinding flash.

The main lights go out, replaced by dim emergency lights. Smoke and sparks fill the air. Linda lifts her head from behind Bartley's console.

As the smoke clears, Linda sees the aftermath of her handiwork: the statue and table now sit in the cube, physically real and in the present. The DISH OF PILLS -- with nearly all the pills still remaining -- sits intact on the small table.

Linda smiles.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Bartley lies in a hospital bed, head bandaged, weak but alert. Andrea and Jeremy are at his bedside.

ANDREA

What are they letting you eat today.

BARTLEY

Still soft and bland.

JEREMY

What kind of food is that?

BARTLEY

Kind that sucks.

Tomas knocks on the door frame.

ANDREA

Tomas! Come in!

TOMAS

Thanks, Andrea. Jeremy, you're looking well. Not so you, Bill.

BARTLEY

I'm getting better.

TOMAS

Bill, can I speak to you?

ANDREA

Sure, Jeremy and I --

TOMAS

No, I think you should stay.

BARTLEY

Bad as that?

TOMAS

Worse, Bill.

BARTLEY

I'm out of a job, right?

TOMAS

It's not just that. It's...

ANDREA

What? Did the doctor say --

TOMAS

No. Not the doctor. It was Manolo.

BARTLEY

He was in the building? Was he hurt in the accident?

TOMAS

Manolo was at home. He's safe.

BARTLEY

Then what --?

TOMAS

You know his theory? Conservation across the time continuum?

BARTLEY

Yeah, but we all agreed it sets up a tautology.

JEREMY

Tautology?

Tomas ignores Jeremy.

TOMAS

Some of us aren't so sure.

Bartley lies back on his pillow, deep in thought.

ANDREA

Bill? Are you okay?

BARTLEY

I'm fine. I have to think.

ANDREA
Tomas, you'd better leave.

Bartley sits back up.

BARTLEY
No. Andrea, Jeremy, go home. I'll see you tomorrow.

ANDREA
But --

BARTLEY
Go on, honey, I'll be fine. Tomas and I have to talk.

Andrea and Jeremy take turns leaning in to kiss Bartley's cheek. They go to the door, where Andrea hesitates.

ANDREA
Don't overtire him, Tomas.

TOMAS
I'll take good care of him, Andrea.

Andrea leaves with Jeremy. Tomas turns back to Bartley.

TOMAS
If Manolo were somehow right...

Bartley lies back again.

BARTLEY
I understand perfectly. Can you salvage enough of the equipment to check it out?

TOMAS
Are you crazy? The consequences --

BARTLEY
If Manolo's right, we've already seen the consequences.

Tomas nods slowly.

INT. SENATE COMMITTEE ROOM - DAY

Parker presides over a committee meeting. Linda sits in her regular seat on the committee, a bandage still on her cheek. Bartley -- the real Bartley, not a holographic projection -- sits at the witness table. His head still sports a small bandage.

PARKER
I'm calling the question for a vote.

LINDA
Mr. Chairman, will you yield for a question?

PARKER
No, Senator, I will not. All those in favor of the motion, please signify by saying, "Aye."

The Committee Members respond with a chorus of "Ayes."

PARKER
All those opposed?

LINDA
Nay.

PARKER
The motion carries. Dr. Bartley, you're relieved of your duties, effective immediately.

BARTLEY
Yes, Mr. Chairman.

PARKER
A new director for the Institute will be appointed, and a new liaison from this committee will be assigned to work with him or her. Do I hear a motion to adjourn?

Linda looks pleadingly at Bartley. He remains impassive.

INT. SENATE OFFICE - DAY

Linda, at her desk, speaks with Tyler.

LINDA
I don't have any regrets. I did what I had to do.

TYLER
They're going to run you out of Washington, you know.

LINDA
I know. It doesn't matter.

CONTROL VOICE
Senator.

LINDA

Yes?

CONTROL VOICE

Dr. Bartley is here to see you.

LINDA

Send him in.

Linda rises as Bartley enters.

LINDA

Bill! Come in. You remember Tyler?

TYLER

Doctor, a pleasure.

BARTLEY

Congressman.

LINDA

Sit down, Bill.

Bill sits next to Tyler as Linda sits back down at her desk.

LINDA

Before you say anything, Bill, I want you to know how sorry I am for what happened in the committee today. I never meant for that to happen.

BARTLEY

What did you intend to happen, Linda?

LINDA

I intended to save my granddaughter's and great-granddaughter's lives. And I succeeded.

BARTLEY

No. You didn't.

LINDA

What do you mean?

BARTLEY

Tomas is the new director. I asked him to look at the time and place you'd last viewed.

LINDA

He found them dead?

BARTLEY

He looked for them. He didn't find them.

TYLER

Well, then --

BARTLEY

He didn't find anything. No studio, no city, nothing but the aftermath of a huge explosion.

TYLER

Explosion?

BARTLEY

Then he looked for other cities, other signs of life. There weren't any.

LINDA

What --?

Tyler reels slightly as he starts to put the pieces in place.

TYLER

Oh, God.

Tyler looks at Bartley, who looks back at him and nods slightly.

LINDA

How -- how can that be?

BARTLEY

Don't you know? Can't you even guess? Help her, Congressman. Tell her about conservation of mass and energy.

LINDA

Tyler?

TYLER

Conservation of mass and energy. The total of mass and energy in the Universe is a constant.

BARTLEY

At all times. At every single moment in time.

LINDA

And?

TYLER

And... and the temporal portal didn't just replicate the statue or the sleeping pills, did it?

BARTLEY

It retrieved them... actually snatched them from across a gap in time.

TYLER

Matter moving into our time...

LINDA

... and energy moving into the other time to compensate.

BARTLEY

Huge amounts of energy. Enough to cause the extinction of the dinosaurs... and of humankind.

LINDA

No. No! I reject that! If the temporal portal caused the extinction of the dinosaurs, that would be changing history. But in the unchanged history, where dinosaurs never became extinct, the temporal portal would never have been invented.

BARTLEY

You're saying it's a tautology, therefore impossible. But you're wrong. Just before the Big Bang that created the Universe, all the possibilities for every moment in time still existed. Like Schrödinger's cat, each moment of the Universe was in an unknown state.

TYLER

Then the Big Bang happened.

LINDA

Like opening the box that contains Schrödinger's cat. And the very first moments in time collapsed to a known state.

BARTLEY

Not just the first moments, Linda. All moments in time collapsed to a known state. Everything happened at once: the past, present and future all became real in an instant.

TYLER

Everything?

BARTLEY

Whatever is going to happen has already happened. You retrieved the dinosaur and caused the extinction of the dinosaurs. You retrieved the sleeping pills and destroyed our world.

LINDA

Destroyed... my granddaughter? My great-granddaughter?

BARTLEY

Them, and everyone else. It's not like we can evacuate the planet.

LINDA

Then we'll use the portal! I'll undo what I did!

BARTLEY

Linda, you saw what happened for yourself. It will always happen that way. You can't change it.

LINDA

I made it happen. I can change it.

BARTLEY

No. You didn't make it happen, not really. If I thought it could be changed back, I'd hijack the portal myself and undo it.

Bartley gets up to leave.

BARTLEY

Don't blame yourself. It was all meant to be.

Bartley pauses halfway out the door and turns to face Linda one last time.

BARTLEY

I mean, if you were really to blame,
I'd kill you here and now with my
bare hands.

He exits.

INT. BARTLEY HOME - NIGHT

Andrea, Jeremy and Bartley sit at the dining table.

BARTLEY

I've got money saved up. Why don't
we take a trip around the world?
See what there is to see?

ANDREA

For how long? Jeremy starts school
again in a month.

BARTLEY

He can skip school this year.

JEREMY

You mean it?

BARTLEY

He's already got most of the credits
he needs for his junior year.

ANDREA

A whole year?

BARTLEY

It's a big world, honey. I want
Jeremy to see it and remember it all.

Andrea looks into Bartley's eyes. She nods with understanding.

The parents look at their only child with love, and he looks
at them without fear.

INT. THOMPKINS APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Linda sits on her couch. Tyler faces her.

LINDA

We've got to start the colonization
program immediately.

TYLER

We'll set it up, Linda. We have a
hundred years. We can save a lot
of people.

LINDA

We can. We will. We're quite a team, aren't we?

TYLER

That we are.

LINDA

Tyler, I never...

TYLER

What, Linda?

LINDA

I was going to say, I never meant to hurt anyone. But that's a lie. I meant to hurt Walter. I would have hurt anyone who stood between me and Claire.

Linda shakes her head in bemusement.

LINDA

What a laugh. The only one who stood between Claire and me was me. Tyler, promise me one thing.

TYLER

What is it?

LINDA

Bill Bartley didn't do anything to deserve this. Promise me that you'll make sure his family gets into the colonization program.

TYLER

You'll see to it, I'm sure.

LINDA

Just promise me.

TYLER

All right, all right, I promise. Are you going to be okay?

LINDA

Oh, sure. I'm fine. Really. Go to bed, Tyler.

TYLER

I'll call you in the morning.

LINDA

You do that. Good night. End.

Tyler vanishes. In his place, the coffee table appears. On it is a large bottle of vodka, a few glasses, and the heavy glass dish containing the sleeping pills Linda stole from the future.

Linda opens the bottle of vodka and pours a large glass. Then she begins to take the pills from the dish, one by one, washing them down with the vodka.

INT. MARS CITY ALPHA - NIGHT

It is one hundred years after Linda's death. From a vantage point on Mars, a FUTURE FATHER, 30s, and FUTURE SON, 8, are part of a crowd watching the night sky through a window. The Son is clutching a toy dinosaur.

FUTURE SON

Dad?

The Father kneels to get eye-to-eye with his son.

FUTURE FATHER

What is it?

FUTURE SON

I'm scared. If the Earth is gone, how can Earthlings survive?

FUTURE FATHER

We're not Earthlings any more, son. We're just human beings. And human beings can always find new places to live and new ways of living. We'll be all right.

A COLONIST places his hand on the Father's shoulder.

COLONIST

Doctor Bartley? It's time.

The Father stands up.

FUTURE FATHER

Thank you.

He lifts his son onto his hip and they look into the sky.

One of the points of light in the sky becomes dazzlingly bright. The Father points as the crowd gasps.

FUTURE FATHER

Look!

The Father gives his son a reassuring hug and whispers.

FUTURE SON

Quick! Make a wish.

The light fades quickly.

FADE OUT.

THE END