

ANACHRONISM

Written by

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A time travel thriller.

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EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

A gorgeous cinemascope vista, looking out from atop a rocky cliff across a vast, sunbaked desert landscape.

The title emerges from the hazy horizon: ANACHRONISM.

Ominous sound design builds...

FADE OUT.

INT. PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

A less-wide screen, more video-looking.

The living room of a typical suburban house.

A middle-aged mother and father (40s-50s) sit side by side on the couch talking to an off-screen interviewer.

(need dialogue here) They talk about their son, David. They're on the verge of tears. From the context it sounds like he disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

ANNE

We're not sure what to believe.

INT. STRASINSKY'S OFFICE - DAY

Another interview. A police constable in his office.

CST. STRASINSKY

I was there, and I know what I saw. I can tell you the surveillance tapes were not tampered with. What is on those tapes is the events I witnessed that night. I don't know how he did it... whether it was all a trick, some kind of hoax...

Jump cut.

CST. STRASINSKY (CONT'D)

Look, I've spoken to physicists at the university here, and they can't agree whether time travel is even possible in theory. But the bottom line is that David Hall, if he's still alive, is a wanted criminal.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Finally an interview with a cute, nerdy young girl, Sarah (22). Red hair, pixie cut.

She's a bit tearful as she talks about David.

SARAH

I miss him every day. I don't think I ever told I loved him. And now that he's gone...

She sniffs away a tear. Stares off.

SARAH (CONT'D)

The important thing now is, I want to set the record straight. Even if no-one believes me.

FADE OUT.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT LANDSCAPE - DAY

The highway cuts straight through the barren landscape under the hot sun.

A lone school bus rolls down the highway into the distance.

INT. BUS IN DESERT - DAY

The desert road rolls past the camera. Pan to the driver of the bus, a bespectacled older man dressed for the outdoors, DR. REINHOLDT (60). Continue pan past him to reveal the university students filling about half the bus, with baggage filling the back rows of seats.

DAVID HALL (20)

a group of paleontology students from British Columbia on their way to the fossil beds near Drumheller, Alberta. (or the place in BC?)

DAVID

And what the hell am I doing here, besides getting motion sickness? Well, I'm a 20-year-old documentary filmmaking student and I'm here to immortalize this expedition for future generations.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's a thankless job, and no-one will ever know or care that I did it... but somebody's got to do it. (His smile fades.) Ugh, I'm never going to use that.

He turns the camera to look down the aisle to the back of the bus, which is filled with about ten students, about 50/50 guys and girls, and all of their camping gear.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Hey, gang!

The students respond to varying degrees, some nodding or saluting ironically, some ignoring or covering their faces.

INT. BUS - DAY, LATER

David is sitting next to one of the students, JOEL (22) attempting to interview him, but Joel is asking him more questions.

JOEL

So how did you get involved with this?

DAVID

Well, the paleontology department sent an email to the documentary film program, and I saw it, thought it'd be an interesting thing to document, and a fun trip...

JOEL

So the fact that the lovely Sarah Scott is on this trip had nothing to do with it?

Joel pauses and smiles. He grabs the camera.

DAVID

Hey! What---?!?

JOEL

Just gimme it a second.

He points the camera at David.

JOEL (CONT'D)

I saw you two talking at the year-end dorm party. Hey? You gonna try putting the moves on her out in the desert?

David blushes and looks away.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Hey-o!

Joel turns the camera around and looks down the aisle of the bus, zooming in on Sarah, the girl from the interview at the start.

JOEL (CONT'D)

Ooh, she's a cutie.

Sarah looks up and gives a shy smile to the camera.

David grabs the camera back.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

Dr. Reinholdt stands on a rise in front of a vast expanse of desert landscape.

He explains to David (off-camera) that the layers of sedimentary rock in this area were laid down 80-90 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period, when duckbill dinosaurs laid their eggs in the swampy ground.

Gesturing around him, he paints a verbal picture of how the landscape looked then.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

The students spread out to search for fossils.

Sarah is walking through the desert as David interviews her. In their own nerdy way, they might just be flirting a bit.

Sarah admits that the field of paleontology is the same as any other field, just like Stephen Jay Gould said - it's a bunch of people, with all the same petty jealousies and career-building as any other human endeavour. If a fossil is found, Dr. Reinhardt will probably take the credit.

EXT. DESERT - LATER

David wanders off by himself, narrating humourously in an impression of David Attenborough.

But then he spots something shiny in the dirt.

He digs it out while continuing to film. It's a strangely shaped object, metal, clearly manufactured - a Device of some kind that fits in his hand.

Dr. Reinhardt comes up behind David to see what he's doing, and David hides the mysterious Device in his bag. He covers, pointing out what looks like a fossil next to where he found the object.

Reinhardt is impressed - it seems to be a dinosaur bone. He puts a flag in the ground to mark the spot for tomorrow. But for today, it's getting late: they have to set up camp.

EXT. DESERT CAMP, EVENING

The students set up their tents.

EXT. DESERT CAMP - NIGHT

Joel is cooking on a mini-barbeque and handing out burgers.

The students eat dinner around the campfire. David sits next to Sarah, a little off to the side, and talks to her at a volume level that won't be heard by the others.

He asks her what she thinks about anachronisms.

SARAH

What do you mean?

DAVID

Oh, you know, like that fossil the Christians always talk about, where it looks like a human footprint stepping on a trilobite 500 million years ago.

SARAH

(she scoffs) Yeah, I know that one. You'd think a time traveler would have a better shoe. It looks more like a random rock to me.

DAVID

Well, the Christians say it's a sandal, and that it's not a time traveler, it just proves that people have been here since the Earth was created. But you think time travel is more likely?

SARAH

Technically, anything is more likely than Creationism. (they laugh.) But I don't think there have ever been any really convincing anachronisms.

INT. DAVID'S TENT - NIGHT

David turns on the onboard light on his camera and sets it up facing him. He sits cross-legged on his sleeping bag and takes the mysterious Device out of his bag.

He holds up the object, turning it around in his hands.

He gives part of it a twist and it springs open, revealing delicate inner workings, like futuristic clockwork. He is in awe.

He grabs the camera, brings it closer and zooms in. As he starts to fiddle with the tiny cogs inside---

BAM! A blast of video interference.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

The camera is overwhelmed with brightness before the auto-exposure compensates for the sunlight.

David is no longer inside the tent, he's lying on the ground in the blazing sun. He's in pain - he clutches at his head and moans. He's disoriented. He throws up.

What the hell is going on here? He looks around. He's alone in the desert. It seems to be the campsite, but the tents and the bus are gone, everything is gone.

David makes a journal entry on the video camera. He's in the desert alone. No water, no phone. Just his clothes, his camera, and the Device, which at this point he doesn't dare mess with.

He sets off on the 20 km walk back to the nearest town.

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

When David finally gets there, a gas station's security cameras film him staggering in.

INT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

David enters and unsteadily heads straight for the counter.

In a croaking voice he asks the GAS STATION ATTENDANT for water. The attendant initially says he'll have to pay, but then he seems to recognize David.

The attendant goes to a bulletin board and grabs a Missing Person poster. He shows it to David.

David passes out. The gas station attendant rushes around the counter to help.

FADE OUT.

BLACK SCREEN.

Audio from a 911 call, with the dialogue matched by subtitles for clarity.

DISPATCHER (FEMALE)
911 Emergency.

The gas station attendant's voice tells her what happened. Then...

GAS STATION ATT'ND
...and I think it was this guy
David Hall who's been missing -
that student who disappeared from
the dig about four months ago.

As he says this the Missing Person poster fades in and the camera zooms in. It is David.

INT. HOSPITAL (ALBERTA) - DAY

Now David is in the hospital, making another video journal entry. They've got him hooked up to an I.V. for hydration and electrolytes, but otherwise he's fine.

Suddenly he remembers. Shit!

He checks his pants pocket. The Device is still there.

Thank god.

INT. HOSPITAL (ALBERTA) - LATER

He makes a phone call to his parents' cell phone.

His mom (Anne) is frantic, her joy tempered by concern. The police called them, they're already on their way from Vancouver.

She asks where he was for four months. He says he doesn't remember. She says it's okay, she's sure he's been through a lot. They'll see him in two days.

INT. HOSPITAL (ALBERTA) - LATER

Excerpt from a police interview with David still in the hospital bed, on a video camera of lesser quality.

David is noticeably uncomfortable, but he sticks with his story: that he can't remember anything that happened.

INT. PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Talking-head interview with David's mother and father Anne and Brent again.

They talk about picking up David at the hospital, driving him back home to Vancouver, and settling in again at home. David would be staying with them for August, the remaining time until going back to school in September.

INSERT: This reunion, trip and arrival home are illustrated with still photos and some video.

Anne and Brent say they were concerned because David wouldn't tell them what had happened. They suspected, and still do, that it had something to do with drugs. He'd had a bit of a drug problem in high school and so of course they were afraid he'd fallen off the wagon.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

David's bedroom at his parents place is still set up like it was in high school, with posters on the walls and model spaceships hanging from the ceiling.

David shoots with his video camera again while having another look at the Device. He's trying to figure out the dials that set how far you travel into the future.

But his heart's not really in it. It seems more like he's using this as an excuse to use the camera as a confessional.

He wants to get in touch with Sarah but he's concerned about what she might think about his disappearance.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM / SARAH'S DORM-ROOM - NIGHT

David gets in touch with Sarah by a video chat (like Skype.) Both video windows are visible: one of David in his room at his parents' place, one of Sarah in her dorm at school.

Sarah had heard that David had been found, and she's relieved about that, but she's angry that he didn't contact her sooner. They have a lengthy, conversation - we just see jumpcut snippets of it.

Eventually it comes out that she doesn't believe that he doesn't remember what happened. She figures he was off on a drug binge or something and doesn't want to admit it. She went through this kind of thing with her brother and she's not going to go through it again. She says she doesn't want to have anything more to do with David.

DAVID

Alright, I'll tell you the truth.
It's not drugs... but I can't tell
you now, let me tell you in person.

Sarah reluctantly agrees.

INT. SARAH'S DORM-ROOM - DAY

David's video camera is rolling again as he sets it up on a tripod in the corner of Sarah's dorm room.

Sarah, sitting on the edge of the bed, is getting angry.

SARAH

Put that away, why would you need
to shoot this?

David explains that he can't just tell her what happened, he has to show her. And it's only the second time he's done this, so he has to document it.

She's extremely dubious. He takes out the Device and she asks what it is. He tells her he found it on the dig.

DAVID

Now prepare yourself. I'm going ahead one minute, if I've got this right.

SARAH

What?!?

DAVID

Just hold still, and after it happens, just stay calm and wait one minute.

He opens the Device and triggers it.

BAM! Video interference streaks the screen as David disappears.

Sarah screams. She gets up, paces the floor.

SARAH

David?!

She goes out in the hall for a moment, then returns.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Okay, calm down, it's some kind of trick. Just wait a minute.

Suddenly -BAM- David reappears - exactly where Sarah is standing.

Sarah is blasted out of the way, onto the bed.

He rushes to help her, but she hits at him.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Get away!

He retreats and she calms down.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What the hell is going on?

David takes a deep breath.

DAVID

It's a time machine.

Sarah stares at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I didn't know whether to believe it either - I thought maybe I was going crazy - but now that I've done it again, and with a witness, I know it's real. (pause) And I have no idea what to do next... I'm just lost. I'd sure appreciate being able to talk to you about it.

She's still very confused, says she needs time to think.

He says he'll go now, but he asks her not to tell anyone.

SARAH

Of course... I don't need anyone to think I'm crazy.

BLACK SCREEN.

Text appears on the screen.

A series of text messages between David and Sarah.

She apologizes for being mad at him, and agrees to meet up with him to talk about the Device and what to do with it. She suggests they meet at the park on campus.

EXT. PARK - DAY

They sit on a bench at the park. David puts the camera on his backpack on the ground looking up at them at an odd angle. She complains about the camera, but he says this could be the greatest scientific discovery in the history of the world, no hyperbole, and they have to document it all.

They speculate on how the Device got there - buried in the ground in a fossil bed 85 million years old. It could have been left there by aliens, or by time travelers from the future. (David thinks he has the dials figured out well enough that he's pretty sure it can go into the past too.)

David mentions how the time travel hurts and makes you sick, but that it was much less so the second time - he suspects that the farther you go, the worse it is. So probably traveling millions of years would kill you, unless you're a genetically engineered super-person of the future! They laugh about the futility of this speculation.

They're interrupted by two classmates of David's - the DOCUMENTARY STUDENTS (early 20s) haven't seen him since he returned from being missing. David greets them and tactfully brushes them off, but another DOCUMENTARY STUENT comes along. When he's gone, David and Sarah decide to go talk somewhere more private.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - LATER

They sit in the front seats of Sarah's car.

Sarah remembers now - she thinks it's important to make sure the Device isn't radioactive. David takes out the device.

SARAH

This thing is obviously packing a tremendous amount of energy... it might be nuclear powered, or something beyond that. I don't want us to be the next Marie and Pierre Curie.

Sarah rummages in the back seat and finds the Geiger counter she borrowed from a friend in the Physics department. She scans the device. It's clean - just normal background radiation levels.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - LATER

Driving in Sarah's car now. David shooting from the passenger seat.

Sarah says that just because there's no radiation doesn't mean it's safe.

SARAH

I don't think we should use it to go into the past until we know more about it. As long as we go forward we're safe. But if we go back, we could create a paradox and... seriously, we could destroy the universe. Haven't you ever seen Back to the Future?

They joke about two little students destroying the universe, but David agrees they shouldn't go back in time yet.

EXT. / INT. DAVID'S GARAGE - LATER

Sarah and David arrive at his parents' place.

They get out of the car and David tells Sarah that he's moved into his parents' garage.

DAVID

It's a pretty cool setup. Lemme show you. My own lab. (He cackles like a mad scientist as he opens the rolling garage door.)

They go inside. David has fold-out couch for a bed, and a big white dry-erase board to use for studying the device.

They talk about what to do next. David says they need to keep the device secret, because if anyone found out about it, it would certainly end up in the wrong hands - the American government, or the CIA. And anyone with this device would dominate the world if they didn't destroy it.

They agree to keep it secret for now. David says they should study it, only going forward in time. But Sarah doesn't want to - she's afraid of the awesome power and danger in that little Device. But David says, if she doesn't help him, he's still going to do it anyway.

Sarah asks him to turn the camera off.

CUT TO:

INT. GARAGE - LATER

David, in his garage laboratory. Alone. He talks to the camera, beginning the studies to figure out how the dials work.

He looks at the video of his second time-jump, in the dorm. The small increment he thought would be a minute ended up being about 45 seconds. So it needs further study. Suddenly there's a knock - David is startled. There's Sarah peeking in the window.

David turns the camera around to the garage door and hits the garage door opener. Sarah comes in from the blinding white outside. She's decided to join him and help with the research. He brings her up to speed - he's figured out that the small dial's smallest increment is 45.6 seconds, but doesn't know how the other dials work.

INT. GARAGE - MONTAGE

Montage of David and Sarah doing research. David makes more jumps, Sarah times them by checking the video playback.

He tries to convince her to try timejumping, but she doesn't want to - she's too afraid.

She does the math on the big white-erase board.

They do a series of experiments to figure out what the physical boundaries are. If you're holding something, it comes with you. David even tried bringing a broom and sticking it straight out - it doesn't get cut off. They can't figure out how it separates the person from the ground, but somehow it does.

They already know what happens when you rematerialize where something is - it pushes the other thing out of the way. That's what happened to Sarah in the dorm room when she got blasted onto the bed.

As David and Sarah work together, they joke around. They get more comfortable with each other. There begins to be more flirting, more touches on the arm.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

After some frustration Sarah's finally got it figured out - the Device uses a totally different time system than ours. Its small increment is 45.6 seconds, and it's on a base 6 system rather than our base ten system. It doesn't seem to ever line up with any Earth time amount like a day or a year. Maybe the smallest time increment is based on a multiple of an atomic decay rate.

But the point is, they now know how to convert our time into the Device's time and how to set your jump time on the dials. They now can control how far in time they jump.

DAVID

Hot damn. And you know what, I actually have a little something on hand for just such an occasion. Time to celebrate.

He gets out some champagne.

SARAH

Room temperature?

DAVID

What, you're supposed to refrigerate this shit?

They have some champagne and get a little giggly, dance a bit.

They end up kissing. Then Sarah notices the camera.

SARAH
(laughing)
Shit!

She turns it off.

INT. GARAGE - MORNING

David wakes up Sarah with the camera. They're in the fold-out bed, apparently naked. Sarah is embarrassed.

David wants to talk. So now they know how to use the device... but what to use it for? Sarah says that classes are starting next week, maybe they should just put the device on hold for now.

David says he's got an idea - they can use it to make money. Gambling, the lottery, the stock markets... there are major possibilities here.

Carrie says the risks are too great for something selfish. They agreed never to go back in time - they can't risk a paradox just to make money.

INT. SARAH'S DORM - EVENING

David arrives at Sarah's dorm and shows her a Missing Person poster - for an eight-year-old kid. It's a kid from Vancouver, who's been missing for about a month and a half. Right on the poster, it says the time and place the kid was kidnapped - he was playing in his own backyard.

David says he can go back and save the kid.

Sarah says no, he can't, because if he stops the kidnapping, then the parents won't put up the poster, and he won't know to go back and stop the kidnapping. It's a textbook example of a paradox. But David has it all figured out.

DAVID
It won't cause a paradox. Because I'll bring the kid back to the present before I return him to his parents. So as far as the parents know, he'll still be missing for a month and a half. They'll still put up the posters, and I'll still see the poster, and I'll still go back to save him.

SARAH

What are you going to do to the kidnapper, shoot him?

DAVID

No, I'll just get him on video so hopefully we can identify him later, and then I'll grab the kid and get him out of there.

Sarah finally agrees. But she says they first have to test whether two lifeforms can go through a jump at the same time.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

David and Sarah test it out on a houseplant. It seems fine, but then they realize it'll take a while to tell if the plant is dead or not.

They also need to make their first back-in-time jump.

INT. PARENTS' HOUSE - LATER

David finds his parents' dog, SCRUFFY, a Scottish terrier.

DAVID

C'mere, pup!

INT. GARAGE - LATER

Sarah doesn't approve of testing on Scruffy, but David is really sure it'll work.

Sarah is holding the camera, David is holding the dog.

DAVID

OK, so how is this going to work... Two minutes ago, you were here. So we're going to have to leave the garage for a few minutes so I have some time to arrive in. We don't want me to bump into my future self. Or my past self. Whatever.

They start to leave.

EXT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

They're leaving the garage when there's a BANG and the usual burst of video noise.

Scruffy leaps out of David's arms and starts running away.

Before David can get the door closed, Scruffy 2 comes running out, chasing Scruffy.

The two Scruffies start trying to sniff each other's bums and run around in circles barking at each other.

SARAH

Oh no!

DAVID

Well at least we know he's alive.

David grabs one of the Scruffies, who squirms while the other one keeps yapping.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I hope this is the right one. Okay, I'll go around back, you can get my other me, my future self, outta there, cuz I have to go back in time now.

SARAH

Okay.

David takes his Scruffy around to the other side of the garage. The other Scruffy settles down to a low growling.

Anne comes out on the back deck of the house.

ANNE

Everything alright back there?

SARAH

Um...

David 2 comes out of the garage.

DAVID 2

Yeah, sorry, there was another dog in the alley...

ANNE

Alright...

DAVID 2

I think he's had enough excitement for one day.

He picks up this Scruffy and walks toward the house.

DAVID 2 (CONT'D)
(to Sarah)
I'll be back in a minute.

He goes into the house with Anne and shuts the door.

Sarah goes to the corner of the garage.

SARAH
(whispering)
Ok! You can come out now!

David comes out, still holding Scruffy, and with a few nervous glances toward the house, he heads back into the garage.

DAVID
See you soon!

He closes the door. Momentarily we hear the muffled bang and see the video noise.

David 2, who is now simply David, pops back out on the back deck.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Hey!

He jogs down to meet Sarah outside the garage.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Pretty wild. But we know it works anyway, Scruffy's fine, and the timeline seems intact. Right?

They look around. Everything seems normal.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay. Time to be a hero.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - NIGHT

So now it's time for David's mission. He does the conversion math, sets the dials, and hands Sarah the calculator. Sarah checks his math. It's right.

They agree that all David will do is go back a month and a half, and when he comes back he'll just flip the direction switch to forward so he doesn't have to take time resetting the dials.

They drive to the street the boy was kidnapped from and check it out. There's no back alley. David will have to sneak from the front yard into the back yard.

They leave this street and drive to a nearby alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

David gets out of the car and goes down the alley, hides behind a dumpster and goes back in time.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Suddenly it's day. David's in pain - this is the longest time jump since the first one. He walks quickly out of the alley.

EXT. STREET/YARD - DAY

David goes to the street the boy was kidnapped from. He sneaks up to the yard and halfway down the side of the house.

Hiding behind some bushes, he sees the kid playing with his toy truck in the sandbox. David whispers to the camera. "Alright, where the hell is he?" David's looking around, getting really nervous. The kidnapper isn't showing up, and he's afraid someone's going to spot him hiding in the bushes with a camera.

David spots a white van pulling up in front of the house.

"Shit! OK, that's it, I'm going for it." He flips the direction switch on the Device.

Then he walks right out into the back yard, up to the kid. The kid turns, seeing him... and David picks him up and time jumps.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Instantly it's night again. The kid is screaming.

David drops him and falls down in pain.

The kid scrambles loose and runs toward the house. Motion sensor lights go on. The kid runs to a sliding door, banging on the glass.

BOY
Mommy! Daddy!

The kid's FATHER (40) opens the door - sees his son - then sees the stranger on his lawn.

FATHER

Hey!

David starts running, camera under his arm. He jumps over the fence into the neighbour's yard and along the side of the house.

He bursts out onto the street and the father appears behind him in pursuit. He runs down the alley through the pools of orange light from streetlights. Behind him the father is gaining on him.

David ducks into another yard, flips the direction switch back and timejumps again.

EXT. OTHER YARD/STREET - DAY

And it's day again. A family in their backyard, little girls screaming in terror. A big dog barking.

He scrambles back out into the street - a pickup truck's front grill about to slam into him and---

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Timeskip again, back to night.

David is dry heaving and in agony. The kid's father is back - he hits David with a flying tackle.

The Device is whipped out of his hands, the camera goes tumbling and cuts out.

CUT TO:

BLACK SCREEN.

Another police dispatcher.

A woman's voice tells the dispatcher who she is - she's the mother of the kidnapped child. She tells the dispatcher to send a police car as soon as possible - they've got the kidnapper tied up, but they don't want to take any chances. The dispatcher says that the mother should take her son to the hospital to be checked out.

INT./EXT. POLICE CAR/STREET - NIGHT

Now the onboard camera of a police car picks up the story. The car pulls into the street and sees the father with David tied to a lamp post.

The police officers park and get out. COP 2 stands keeping an eye on David while COP 1 talks to the father on the edge of frame. The father tells Cop 1 that he caught the kidnapper and they've got their son back. His wife is on the way to the hospital with their son to have him checked out, as the dispatcher suggested.

The father shows the cop the video camera David was carrying as well as a strange object he found (the Device). The Cop thanks him and takes the two items.

DAVID

I'm not the kidnapper, I was ---

COP 1

Sir, I wasn't talking to you.

DAVID

I was returning their son, I---

COP 1

Sir, I need you to be quiet now.

DAVID

I wanted to do the right thing!

COP 1

Be quiet. You'll get your turn down at the station.

Cop 2 goes around behind David to untie him from the post and cuff him. David doesn't fight back. Once David is cuffed, Cop 2 brings him to the police car.

FADE OUT.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

SARAH

I never should have let him do it. I was driving around the block, waiting for David to come back, but when I saw him the guy had him on the ground already... I didn't know what to do, so I... I just kept driving.

She looks down in shame.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I could have saved him but I just kept driving.

INT. PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

BRENT

We didn't even know he was out that night. The police didn't even call us til the next day, when it was all over.

INT. POLICE STATION, FRONT OFFICE - NIGHT

The police station has many surveillance cameras, which are the source of the footage for all the scenes there.

Cops 1 and 2 bring David, still cuffed, into the station.

They tell the Desk Cop who he is. The cops begin the process of booking David. Simultaneously, the Desk Cop calls his superior officer to tell him that the suspect arrested for the kidnapping has arrived and that there's evidence too: a video camera and some other piece of electronic equipment. The superior officer says he's on his way.

INT. POLICE STATION, BOOKING AREA - CONTINUOUS

David has his fingerprints and mugshots taken.

COP 3 is a middleaged, mothery woman in charge of booking people. She's chatty. She complains about how crappy this old station is - says this station is 40 years old.

COP 3

But pretty soon they're gonna demolish this dump, and build a brand new state-of-the-art police station here. Next year, I think.

INT. POLICE STATION, FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Constable Strasinsky, the superior officer, arrives. He says to put the suspect in the interrogation room and let him stew for a while. Strasinsky wants to have a look at the evidence first.

It's going to take a while - they have to call the tech guy and get him to come in to get the footage off the camera. Strasinsky is pissed off about it.

He has a look at the other piece of evidence - The Device. It's in a Ziplock bag. He holds it up, turns it around.

CST. STRASINSKY
Some kind of communication device?
...Maybe the tech guy'll know.

INT. POLICE STATION, COMPUTER ROOM - LATER

The TECH GUY finally has the video ready to play.

Strasinsky and his PARTNER (40) watch the footage with him, drinking coffee out of white styrofoam cups.

It begins on the night that Sarah drove David by the kidnapped boy's house to check it out, and then drove him to the alley.

Jump cut through the police officers watching the footage. They're a bit puzzled by the time jumps, but they figure the footage is just a mix of old and new.

When it gets to the footage of David actually running up and grabbing the kid, Strasinsky is ecstatic. He claps his hands.

CST. STRASINSKY
Oh, it never ceases to amaze me.
How these idiots manage to
videotape their own crimes. God-
damn that's rock solid evidence!
We've got this fucker on ICE!

INT. PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

The interview with David's parents again.

ANNE
We don't know what David's
connection was to all this. But we
know our son. He would never...

BRENT
He might have had something to do
with people. Certain people. He
fell in with a bad crowd in high
school, when he had his problems.
And maybe that has something to do
with all this.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

SARAH

He wasn't the kidnapper. The evidence is there on the tape. The white van.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

The footage of the white van is played back in super-slow-motion. The van is seen in profile.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Constable Strasinsky's interview.

CST. STRASINSKY

The videotape we recovered from the scene of the crime is certainly evidence. But the footage of the van doesn't prove his innocence. It's just a van. Our video experts have been over it and they can't get a license plate. But even if they could, there's nothing to link that vehicle to the crime.

INT. POLICE STATION, COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT

The general atmosphere is one of celebration - Strasinsky, his partner and the tech guy all agree.

They shake hands, and Strasinsky hugs his partner.

CST. STRASINSKY

OK, I'm ready. Not that we need anything from this guy, but let's go ask some questions. I'm gonna have some fun. This dirty little paedophile is gonna rue the day. He is gonna rue the fucking day.

INT. POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

The interrogation is being videotaped by the police on an inferior video camera. It's high angle, from behind the interrogators. The room is small and the walls are heavily marked by years of prisoners bashing them with chairs.

David sits behind a table, sweating, looking exhausted and nauseous. Periodically he rubs his eyes and his temples as if in pain.

The offscreen voices of Constable Strasinsky and his partner question David.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Alright, please state your full
name.

DAVID
David James Hall.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
And your address?

DAVID
I'm staying at my parents' place
for the summer, at 4343 Union
Street.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Where is that?

DAVID
Burnaby.

PARTNER (O.S.)
That's Burnaby.

Pause. Jump cut to later in the interrogation.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Where were you on the night of July
15th?

DAVID
July? I don't know.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
You don't know. Nobody knows, do
they? You were missing for three
months. Where were you?

DAVID
Listen, I don't feel well, I think
I---

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
What were you doing in the back
yard of the Thompson house tonight?

DAVID
I was bringing back their son.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Did you kidnap him?

DAVID
No, I---

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Did he come with you willingly?

DAVID
Look, I found him, I wanted to
bring him back.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Where did you find him?

DAVID
I...

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Where did you find him?

DAVID
In the alley at Willingdon and
Rosser.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Willingdon and Rosser.

DAVID
Yes.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
What were you doing there? That's a
long way from home.

DAVID
I was throwing out some garbage.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
That's a long way from home. (long
pause) What did you say to him?
What did he say to you?

DAVID
I... I...

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Why did you have a video camera
with you? (Long pause.) We've got
it all on tape.

(MORE)

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You didn't find him in any alley.
You kidnapped him from his parents'
backyard.

David gulps. He knows he's screwed.

Jump cut.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I want to know about the time you
spent this summer... the three
months you were missing. What
happened? Where were you?

DAVID
I don't know. I was on a dig in
Alberta in May and I...

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
It says here you disappeared from a
dinosaur dig in Alberta and
returned three months later.
Parents filed a missing persons
report, it was on the news, you had
a lot of people worried.

DAVID
Listen, I need to---

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Where were you for three months?

DAVID
I don't remember.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
You don't remember anything?
Nothing for three months?

DAVID
Right.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Do you have blackouts?

DAVID
No, I...

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
I see here you've had some drug
problems in the past. (Pause.) Did
you take any drugs during your
missing three months?

DAVID
No, I didn't.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
How do you know that if you don't
remember anything?

He waits. David is looking terrible.

CST. STRASINSKY (CONT'D)
What is this object?

Strasinsky holds up a plastic bag which contains the Device.

DAVID
I don't... It's a toy...

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
A toy.

David vomits a stream of blood onto the table.

PARTNER (O.S.)
Oh, Jesus.

The interrogators stand up, their heads coming into frame.
David collapses to the floor.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Alright---

PARTNER (O.S.)
We'd better---

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.)
Yeah, I know.

The sound of a door opening, more light spills into the room.

CST. STRASINSKY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
McTavish! We're gonna need an
ambulance!

The Partner enters the frame and picks up David, pulling him
to his feet.

PARTNER
Come on.

He drags David out of the interrogation room.

INT. POLICE STATION, HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Partner pulls David into the hall. David is essentially dead weight. He flops to the floor and the Partner turns to look down the hallway.

CST. STRASINSKY
(to himself, mumbling)
Fucking junkies, they fuck
themselves up and we're the ones
who have to take care of 'em.

PARTNER
Yeah.

CST. STRASINSKY
We should just let him die. Instead
the taxpayers are going to spend
hundreds of thousands, maybe
millions, on his trial, after we
save his life with free health
care.

PARTNER
We should just let him die.

They sigh.

Jump cut. The paramedics are arriving. They come down the hall with a folded-up stretcher.

Strasinsky and his partner step out of the way, next to David's prone form, and watch as the paramedics unfold the stretcher.

Suddenly David is on his feet, bumping past Strasinsky. He runs down the hall.

DAVID
(yelling)
I got a bomb! Nobody move!

He pulls the Device from its plastic bag and holds it out for all to see.

Everybody freezes.

DAVID (CONT'D)
We're all just gonna hold still and
nobody gets hurt.

CST. STRASINSKY
Take it easy---

DAVID
Back off!!!

He pops the Device open.

Strasinsky, his partner and the two paramedics react - they can't help backing off a bit.

DAVID (CONT'D)
This thing is set to go off in two minutes. That's not enough time to get the bomb squad here so I'm the only one who can disarm it.

A moment of tense stillness. Strasinsky realizes everyone is waiting for him to say something.

CST. STRASINSKY
Okay. I'm sure you don't want it to go off any more than we do. Now if you'll just---

DAVID
Shut up. I have to make a phone call. Where's the phone?

The partner and Strasinsky both answer, pointing down the hall to the front office.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay. Okay.

He backs away down the hall. When he rounds the corner Strasinsky and his partner cautiously follow, leaving the paramedics behind.

INT. POLICE STATION, FRONT OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

David advances toward the Desk Cop, who is already aware of what's happening.

DAVID
Go! Over there!

David gestures and the Desk Cop goes over to the others.

David turns and backs toward the phone.

Flashing lights. Sirens. David looks up, toward the front door.

CST. STRASINSKY
You're not getting out of here,
David. Now deactivate that bomb.

David looks around anxiously.

He looks down at the Device and fiddles with the dials.

DAVID
Okay. That's five more minutes.

The cops are disappointed - it's not over yet.

David picks up the phone. He dials.

Waits.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Sarah, I'm sorry.

He listens, but her voice is inaudible to the surveillance camera.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Yeah. It's okay, you did the right
thing. Otherwise they'd have you
now too. Listen, I need your help.
Can you look something up for me?

He puts his hand in front of his mouth and the receiver so only she can hear him clearly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(mumbling)
...when... demolished... How much
time... calculations for me.

David keeps his eyes on the cops in the room and the ones out the door. It's a long wait.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Okay. Hang on. Okay.

He sets the dials on the Device.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(softly)
You understand this is the farthest
I've ever gone. I honestly don't
know if I'll survive. But I don't
have any choice.

Sarah is saying something.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Listen. I'm going. But you have to understand. If I survive, I can't come back, it would kill me. So you'll just have to wait for me. Okay? And if I don't survive... You'll have to come get the Device. Keep it out of the wrong hands.

Sarah says something.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I love you. See you later. I hope.

He hangs up the phone.

The cops are really on high alert now.

CST. STRASINSKY

Okay, put it down now, Hall!

David turns toward the cops.

DAVID

You're never gonna believe this.

He triggers the Device.

BAM!

He vanishes, the screen washed with video snow.

Strasinsky and his partner hit the deck.

They wait... puzzled.

Strasinsky gets up. He runs to the space where David stood. Waves his hands through the empty air.

CST. STRASINSKY

He's gotta be here somewhere! Tear this place apart!

He runs out to the front doors and offscreen. His partner walks into the space where David was.

The front doors open and a whole group of cops come into the police station to look around.

FADE OUT.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

The interview with Sarah.

SARAH

That's the last I saw of him. But I haven't given up hope.

INT. PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

ANNE

No, we haven't heard a word from him. We know the police have our phones tapped and---

BRENT

And we think they had us followed at first, too. So maybe David knows he can't contact us. Or maybe he's...

Brent and Anne look at each other sadly. Anne looks directly into the camera.

ANNE

David, if you see this, please, just let us know you're alright. At least send us a postcard or something.

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Stock footage of a building being demolished by explosives and imploding. Dust fills the frame.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

SARAH

Yeah, they demolished the police station recently. I went to the site... I... I snuck in at night to search for... for David. Well, I didn't know whether to hope to find him or not. But I didn't find anything, just rubble.

She is in the middle of her interview when there's a knock at the door.

She excuses herself and gets up, leaves the room.

The documentary crew whispers to each other.

The sound of the door opening.

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

David!

DOC DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Go! Go! Go!

The camera is wrenched off the ground as the members of the documentary crew hustle to the front door.

FREEZE FRAME - we catch a glimpse of one of them with a pistol drawn.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

CST. STRASINSKY

We had undercover operatives pose as a documentary film crew, to interview people who were close to David - his parents, his girlfriend. He tricked us, so we figured it was our turn to play a trick. To see if any of them would admit to being complicit in his escape or would reveal any information on his whereabouts. But we certainly didn't expect this to happen.

INT. APARTMENT, ENTRANCEWAY - DAY

The documentary crew hustles into the entrance area. Guns are visible on the edges of frame, pointing toward David and Sarah, who stand by the door.

DOC DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Hold it right there! Nobody move!

David and Sarah are certainly frozen, glancing around at the guns.

SARAH

Son of a bitch. Chance to clear his name, my ass.

Title card:

On December 17, 2013, Anne and Brent Hall won 35 million dollars in the national lottery.

Lottery corporation and federal police investigations are ongoing, but so far have found no evidence of wrongdoing.

FADE OUT.