How to Build a Time Machine

By Benet Simon

1)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

LARGE FRAME. Six year-old Johnnie Severn sits on the floor of his 2002 bedroom, toy planes hanging from the ceiling, a toy robot in the corner, and various complex equations on notepaper plastered to the walls. Johnnie listens to a Discman and fiddles with a screwdriver on some project.

CAPTION: WHEN I WAS SIX, I DECIDED TO INVENT A

TIME MACHINE. I WOULD BUILD ONE ONCE

I HAD THE RESOURCES, THEN SEND IT BACK

TO MYSELF NOW AND SAVE

MYSELF THE TROUBLE.

2)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Johnnie turns around to look behind him.

CAPTION: ALL I HAD TO DO WAS TURN AROUND

AND ...

3)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Looking over Johnnie's shoulder to an empty space beside his bed.

F/X: NO TIME MACHINE!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Eight year-old Johnnie sits at a desk in his bedroom, pensive as he looks up from assembling a model of a complex molecule helix.

CAPTION: WHEN I WAS EIGHT, I REALISED THAT THE

REASON THIS HADN'T WORKED BEFORE WAS
BECAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH TO BUILD
A TIME MACHINE BACK THEN. ONCE I DID,
PERHAPS RIGHT NOW, MY PLAN WOULD

WORK RIGHT AWAY.

5)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Johnnie turns around to look behind him.

CAPTION: ALL I HAD TO DO WAS TURN AROUND

AND . . .

PAGE TWO

1)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Looking over Johnnie's shoulder, an empty space beside his bed.

F/X: STILL NO TIME MACHINE!

2)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A very serious-looking Johnnie, eleven years old and wearing mirrored lab goggles and thick plastic gloves, holds a terrified cat, CHARIMAN MEOW, towards a

glowing PORTAL of some kind.

CAPTION: WHEN I WAS ELEVEN, I SUCEEDED IN

SENDING MY PET TABBY, CHAIRMAN MEOW,

FIVE WEEKS INTO THE FUTURE.

3)

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF LONDON - NIGHT

New York glistens with electric lights beneath the moon.

CAPTION: THE RESULTING POWER SURGE HAD QUITE

THE KICK TO IT.

4)

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF LONDON - NIGHT

New York dimly lit by moonlight and no electric lights.

5)

INT. COURTOOM - DAY

LARGE FRAME. Johnnie sits in the dock, flanked by a stern looking policeman, as an angry LAWYER addresses the JURY. He points an accusing finger at Johnnie.

Watching the trial are rows of people, many of them in plaster casts and bandages and holding up signs that read "HANG HIM!" and "HANG HIM TWICE!".

Johnnie pays no attention to the proceedings. He's focused on his wristwatch, which is slightly awkward since he's wearing handcuffs that are chained to his feet, and a little orange jump suit.

CAPTION:

NATURALLY, NO-ONE BELIEVED A

WORD I SAID. BUT I'D DONE MY
RESEARCH, AND JUST BEFORE THE
JURY ADJOURNED . . .

JURER (THOUGHT BUBBLE): KID'S LYING.

JURER #2 (THOUGHT BUBBLE): TOTALLY LYING.

JURER #3 (THOUGHT BUBBLE): DID I LEAVE THE OVEN ON?

PAGE THREE

1)

INT. COURTOOM - DAY

The outline of an alarmed Chairman Meow begins to materialise, hovering in the air in the middle of the courtroom. Everyone in the courtroom looks astonished apart from Johnnie, who grins.

2)

INT. COURTOOM - DAY

LARGE FRAME

Chairman Meow explodes, showering blood and guts all over the horrified jury, the JUDGE, the LEGAL TEAMS and the front two rows of everyone attending the trial. They all look shocked and horrified, except for Johnnie, who scratches his chin, wide eyed with excitement.

JOHNNIE: FASCINATING!

F/X: S'PLOSION!!!!!

INT. GOVERNMENT LAB/ AIRCRAFT HANGAR - DAY

LARGE FRAME

Johnnie looks like a kid given keys to a sweet shop as armed and uniformed SOLDIERS escort him into his new laboratory. They are led by a smiling GENERAL, who gestures towards a line of saluting STAFF in white coats.

CAPTION: INSTEAD OF PRISON, I BECAME A

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE ON ONE OF THOSE

NIFTY RUN-AND-BE-SHOT CONTRACTS.

4)

INT. JOHNNIE'S BUNKER QUARTERS - NIGHT

Johnnie's room is a mess, clothes and pieces of tech lying where they were dropped, his bed unmade. Then there's a hot tub, and he's in it - under the watchful eyes of three security cameras, all pointed right at him with a little red light on the side.

From his hot tub, Johnnie looks directly at the reader, ecstatic with joy. He has a bottle of Champagne in one hand, a naked young white girl in the other, and a naked young Asian lady massages his shoulders. A third naked lady, this one black, lies across his lap with a rubber duck perched on her butt. Strategic bubble bath keeps it PG-13(ish).

CAPTION: SO LONG AS I DELIVERED, I GOT WHATEVER I

WANTED. AFTER PUBERTY, THIS MOSTLY

CONSISTED OF EIGHTEEN YEAR-OLD

PROSTITUTES.

INT. GOVERNMENT LAB/ AIRCRAFT HANGAR - DAY

LARGE FRAME

The hangar is filled with Johnnie's inventions: a giant death ray, a futuristic-looking tank, cyborg soldiers doing impossible physical feats like crushing cars with their hands and leaping over the tank, and what looks like a one-man spaceship with really big guns on the side.

CAPTION:

I BUILT DEATH RAYS, TANKS, SUPER

SOLDIERS AND SPACE SHIPS, BUT BY MY

EIGHTEENTH BIRTHDAY I COULD STILL ONLY

SEND THINGS FORWARD IN TIME (ALBEIT

SAFELY NOW). THE ARMY WAS NOT

UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS.

PAGE FOUR

1)

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Terrorists in turbans and middle Eastern garb sit around a fire, their rifles leant against the cave walls.

CAPTION:

IF YOU KNEW WHERE YOUR ENEMY WAS

GOING TO BE, IT WAS PRETTY HANDY.

2)

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Heavily armed American soldiers begin to materialise at the back of the cave, unseen by the oblivious terrorists.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Twenty-three year-old Johnnie charges about delighted and half naked in his Darth Vader head underpants, waving his hands in the air as he runs through the windowless facility hallway with a sheet of paper squiggled with equations, and a sketch of something like a high-tech Easter egg. Shocked SCIENTISTS and SOLDIERS gawp at him.

CAPTION:

FINALLY, AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF TWENTY-

THREE, I CRACKED IT.

4)

INT. LAB - DAY

The DEVICE from the sketch, fully realised and about the size of a very large Easter egg, sits on a workbench, looking sciencey. Beside it, its proud inventor, Johnnie. Johnnie wears a lab coat and looks very professional and grown-up, fists on his waist as he strikes a heroic pose, screwdriver in one hand. This is only slightly undermined by the fact that he wears monster feet slippers.

Much older scientists and military top brass, including the General, stand around the invention clapping and saluting.

F/X:

TIME MACHINE!

5)

INT. LAB - NIGHT

In a nightcap and banana motif pyjamas, Johnnie pokes his head and torso around the door of the dark laboratory - it's empty. The time machine sits where he left it.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Twenty-three year-old Johnnie appears in a warp field in his old bedroom behind his six year-old self, nightcap discarded and a lab coat over his banana pyjamas. He still wears monster feet slippers. Adult Johnnie holds the time machine and looks proud. His younger self sits on the floor as he did at the start, listening to his Discman and oblivious.

PAGE FIVE

1)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

LARGE FRAME. The General appears behind adult Johnnie in the warp field and drags him and the time machine back to the future. Johnnie's younger self still has headphones on, so doesn't hear any of this.

SOLDIER: OH NO YOU DON'T! BACK TO WORK, YOU!

2)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Even with his headphones on, Johnnie hears the loud **POP!** sound behind him as his future self vanishes, and starts to turn his head.

F/X: **POP!**

3)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Looking over Johnnie's shoulder to an empty space by his bed.

F/X: NO TIME MACHINE!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Six year-old Johnnie looks right at us and shrugs.

5)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Johnnie goes back to fiddling with a screwdriver on some project.