

[company redacted]

| | |
|--|---|
| TITLE: The Traveler | COVERAGE DATE: 1/16/2020 |
| WRITER: Austin Everett | GENRE: Science Fiction |
| LOCALE: USA: Madison WI, Minneapolis MN, Billings MT, Portland OR, Berkely CA | CIRCA: Begins in 2023, spans billions of years |
| FORM/LENGTH: Screenplay, 118 pages | DRAFT: 6 |
| BUDGET ESTIMATE: Mid to High | ANALYST: Ben Johnson |

LOGLINE: A man encounters a strange occurrence every morning that causes him to move through time exponentially, he must find a way out or risk outliving his family and everyone he's ever known.

| | EXC. | GOOD | FAIR | POOR |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| CONCEPT/PREMISE | X | | | |
| PLOT/STRUCTURE | X | | | |
| CHARACTERIZATION | | | X | |
| DIALOGUE | | | X | |
| CINEMATIC/PRODUCTION VALUE | X | | | |

| | RECOMMEND | CONSIDER | PASS |
|---------------------------|-----------|----------|------|
| WRITER EVALUATION | X | | |
| PROJECT EVALUATION | | X | |

SYNOPSIS: SCOTT TREDER is a lab technician at a cancer research facility associated with Madison University. While driving to work one morning around 7:52 AM, Scott gets a headache and experiences a strange occurrence [1] where he seemingly jumps forward in time exactly one day. His disappearance troubles his wife AMY and 7-year-old son LYLE, and Scott has trouble explaining his whereabouts during the jump in time as to him it felt like mere seconds. Amy takes Scott to a doctor who doesn't find anything wrong, later Scott bonds with Lyle by reading him a section of "2001: A Space Odyssey." At this point in the book, the author Arthur Clarke is describing the supercomputer HAL.

Returning to work the next morning, Scott observes a cancer cell doubling itself and feels another headache coming on. As 7:52 hits, Scott experiences another jump in time [2] and lands on the ground of his cubicle, scaring his co-worker ANDY who mentions to Scott that he hasn't seen him all week. This leads Scott to realize that he has jumped two days ahead, and he rushes home to his family. Amy is worried that Scott is lying about his time-jumps and suspects him of cheating. The next morning, Amy and Lyle witness Scott's jump at 7:52. [3]

When Scott returns, he has jumped four days ahead. He hypothesizes that the amount of time he skips is growing exponentially (much like the cancer cell he observed previously). Scott and Amy enlist the help of PROFESSOR BECK, a theoretical physicist who also works at Madison University. Beck is skeptical but agrees to observe Scott's next jump [4], which spans eight days. When Scott returns, Beck accuses him of staging a hoax. MAGGIE PAULSON, another

professor of theoretical physics, believes Scott's story and leads him and his family back to her office to talk about Scott's situation.

Maggie hypothesizes that if Scott is really returning to the same place after each jump, he would be floating in space days behind the earth's solar path. Later, tensions arise between Scott and Amy; Amy is upset about Scott being away for so long. Maggie observes Scott's next jump [5], Lyle remarks that Scott's fifteenth jump will span 45 years. Maggie, with help from grad students ANITA and LEON, records another one of Scott's time jumps [6] with a high speed camera and numerous sensors. When Scott returns from the jump, he is surrounded by reporters and cameramen as it is revealed by Maggie that Leon leaked footage of Scott's jump to the media.

Scott discovers that Amy and Lyle left town to avoid media attention and travels to Minneapolis to meet up with them at the house of Amy's mother BETH. Amy is glad that Scott is back but tells Scott his absence reminds her of her father's absence. Scott's next jump [7] shows Beth that he's telling the truth about the time jumps. After another jump [8], Lyle is noticeably older and Amy is no longer present. Scott jumps another time [9], this time the trip spans 256 days. Lyle vows to find a way to save Scott.

The next jump [10] lasts 1.5 years and Scott is surprised to find that Amy now wants to divorce him. Amy leaves, he reluctantly signs the divorce papers and asks Beth where Lyle is. Beth is sympathetic to Scott as she doesn't agree with the way Amy has handled the situation. She reveals that Lyle has been writing letters to Scott and offers to take him to a bus station to travel to the return address on one of the letters. Scott gets a hotel room in Billings MT and sets an alarm so he will be prepared for the next jump.

The jump [11] happens earlier than expected, moving Scott at 6:52 instead of 7:52. He lands three years later in the same hotel room, startling a sleeping couple. Stealing their car, he travels to the address in Portland and meets up with Lyle (now age 13.) Lyle brings Scott to the basement, where he's crafted a computer system and electromagnetic sensor based on HAL from "2001: A Space Odyssey." Lyle mentions recording Scott's next jump at 5:52 the next morning, which leads Scott to realize that the reason he misjudged his last jump was due to the time difference between Minneapolis and Billings. Hearing a man's voice upstairs with Amy, Scott realizes that she has moved on with DERRICK, another man. Scott hides in the basement until the next morning.

Lyle wakes up Scott and becomes upset at the thought of six years in the future being the next time he'll see his father. Scott consoles him and asks him not to devote his life to trying to save him. Scott begins the next jump [12] but time freezes. He sees a woman and falls back into a pile of electronics as he comes back to reality. Lyle is now 19 and takes Scott to the University of Berkely CA, where he is a theoretical physics major. On the way, Lyle theorizes that the woman is the cause of Scott's time jumps. At Lyle's dorm they discuss physics and Lyle reveals that Amy is now married to Derrick. They plan Scott's next jump to be at the rare book section of Bancroft Library.

Scott jumps another 12 years [13]. Lyle is now in his early thirties and has published a thesis on Scott's condition that gained the attention of Maggie, leading her to reconnect with Lyle for the purpose of helping Scott. They set a public spot on campus for the next jump. As it gets closer to the supposed time of the jump, Scott gets a headache earlier than usual. Maggie mentions a theory she had when first meeting with Scott, that the occurrences are somehow directed. Scott jumps [14] and time freezes once again as he comes face to face with the unknown woman. When he comes back to reality, Scott is surrounded by a crowd of people with odd hairstyles and face tattoos. They call Scott "The Traveler" and a prophet, and demand him to speak. A man rushes Scott, another strikes him down in effort to defend him. A woman tries to coerce Scott into impregnating her.

Lyle rescues Scott from the crowd and they meet up with Amy, who expresses regret about divorcing Scott. She acts as a decoy so that Lyle and Scott can escape to a safe house. Lyle explains that the crowd of people waiting for Scott were religious followers of "The Traveler," who believed a myth that Lyle created about Scott's time jumps. Lyle's version of HAL is now the basis for an automated smart home. The next day, Lyle equips Scott with armor and a gun and says his goodbyes. Scott jumps [15] 45 years and is greeted to the sight of a heavily armed militia led by MARY, who explains they were sent by Lyle to protect him.

Enemies move in to Scott's position and the militia fight their way out. En route to a safe place, the soldiers tell Scott about "The Word" and what it means to be a "Witness" of The Traveler. Scott reunites with Lyle, who is now frail and old. Lyle explains that he wrote The Word as a basis of a religion to protect Scott when returning from future jumps. He asks Scott to promise him that he'll "see the journey to the end" and equips him with a suit of armor powered by HAL.

Scott puts on the suit, Lyle explains a theory that the reason for Scott's headaches is the mysterious woman honing in on Scott's consciousness and hopes that the suit will be able to hide it from her at the right time. It works for a few seconds, but Scott jumps again [16] and finds a message left by Mary stating that Lyle died shortly after his jump. Feeling defeated, Scott jumps three more times [17][18][19]. HAL urges Scott to seek food, Scott heads towards a town in the midst of a war. Scott attempts to purposely put himself in the path of danger, HAL resists. Right as a missile fires at Scott, he jumps again [20].

HAL reminds Scott of his promise to Lyle, to "see the journey to the end," and reads him a passage of The Word. A hyperlapse begins, showing a series of jumps [21-29] where civilizations rise and fall and a series of geologic changes occur. [30] Scott finds himself in a desolate place, HAL can find no signs of life and reads another passage to Scott. The passage continues as Scott jumps a few more times [31-40]. Scott rises into the atmosphere and observes the Earth in the form of Pangea Ultima. Another jump [41], the Earth is now on fire and after the next jump [42] it is no longer safe for Scott. After a few more jumps [43-49], HAL runs out of power and Scott begins to hallucinate Amy and Lyle.

Cut to black and Scott is back at the scene of the first jump, where he meets OMEGA (the mysterious woman) who tells him that she is "the End." Omega explains that she has brought Scott to the end of the universe to serve as a witness to the history of mankind and to cross over to the next universe. Scott resents her reasoning, Omega transports them both to different points

in time. First is a scene of young Amy making dinner while Scott cradles an infant Lyle, then Omega takes Scott to his last jump with Lyle in the militia base. Scott tells Lyle about his journey through human existence and remarks that he made it to the end.

Omega takes them back to the site of the first jump and explains that Scott's headaches are due to a brain condition that would've led to an aneurysm if Omega had not interfered with his life. Omega gives Scott the choice to continue on with her, or to return to his life with the knowledge that he will die in a definite time. Scott chooses to return to his life, and is brought back to Amy and Lyle, who are getting ready for the day with the TV on around 7:49 AM. A news report mentions a female Traveler returning from a jump, Scott turns off the TV and walks away to join his family

COMMENTS: *The Traveler* has an excellent concept and a compelling story, and is something that I think can appeal to a wide audience. Though the characterization and dialogue didn't fully connect with me, I was very intrigued by the story and found it exciting to keep reading, as I wanted to see what each jump in time had in store for Scott.

I believe the general premise of the script, that a character travels time in exponential increments, makes for a great storytelling structure and is a unique twist on the typical time-travel genre. The fact that the audience doesn't know why or how Scott is being transported makes the story even more compelling, as it offers a sense of mystery and a puzzle for the audience to decipher as the story progresses.

As strong as I think the story is, I believe the characterization and dialogue could be a bit better. Lyle is a character we see at several ages throughout the story, yet his character doesn't seem to change as much as it should. Scott's motivation isn't always clear throughout the story and sometimes his emotions towards other characters or circumstances seem to change rather quickly. There are also a few points where the dialogue sticks out as a bit unusual (i.e. Beth's threat to Scott when she is first introduced in the story.)

There were multiple points in the story where I questioned the motivation behind a character's action, but this could be due to the fact that the story is told from Scott's point of view and those motivations may not be something that Scott would be aware of. Though I believe adjusting these dialogue and characterization choices would make the story stronger, I believe it would only require a minor rewrite.

Though it would shine most as a high tier spectacle, I believe this project could be adjusted to fit a humble budget if need be. The science fiction of the story, while a crucial part of the plot, is vague enough to be portrayed in a multitude of ways. If this particular story doesn't entirely match up to what is currently needed, I believe this writer may have a few more compelling stories to consider.