

# **NO TURNING BACK**

**Josh Kelly**

“Finally, it is done, an experiment in which thousands of humans have attempted to complete, but never seemed to succeed. An experiment that, well, took me thirty-three years to complete. Albert, I present to you, the time traveller.”

“You’re kidding me, right?” exclaimed Albert. “I thought you gave up on this bad boy a long, long time ago, as in decades ago!” Albert proceeded to stare down this giant modernized machine, stroking his hands down the smoothed edges of this masterpiece.

“Pretty good, huh?” boasts Raymond as he scratches his overgrown beard as a result of staying up too late. Both men proceed to admire this masterpiece, talking about how it could affect the future of the human race, and more importantly, how these lifelong friends will soon be put down in history.

“You know what, Ray,” slurs Albert as he gently puts his glass of Whiskey back on the table, “We really did it this time, I mean, we’re gonna’ be millionaires, we’re going down in history, brother, yet you don’t seem all that excited about it.” Albert sits up straight and points his bloodshot green eyes towards Raymond for what felt like ten minutes.

“Listen Albert, do you have any idea how long I spent working on this beauty, I mean, you may as well say I’ve spent my whole life working on her, and, forgive me if I’m wrong but I have the feeling that you’re going to try to take all of the credit for it”, Ray

says as he adjusts his glasses.” You said it yourself, buddy, you forgot I was still working on this.” At this point Ray is in a shiver, breaking into a cold sweat, as this is one of the first times he’s ever spoken to Albert like this.

“You’ve got nothing to worry about, Ray” explains Albert with a sort of evil grin on his face, “I’m gonna’ head up to bed now, I’m exhausted, I’ll see you in the morning”. Albert begins to stumble out of the sitting room, grasping onto every arm chair he walks by. He suddenly turns around, doing his best to maintain eye contact with Ray. “Oh yeah, I forgot to ask, when are we- sorry, I mean you going to tell the world about this, I mean, people need to know about this, sooner rather than later buddy”

Raymond sits up, attempting to make himself look more intimidating than he really is. “I haven’t really thought about it yet, I mean, this is a huge invention, maybe in the next week or so.” Albert nods his head and slowly stumbles up the stairs.

Wednesday morning, 6:30am, as birds chirp from the gutter of their little apartment in Arkansas, another early start for Raymond. He dashes straight for the basement with no breakfast, no clothes, just a pair of pyjamas, no hesitation. He quickly gets the banners he had bought from the dollar store the previous night. ‘The teleporter’ hung proudly across this 6.6ft device. What felt like twenty minutes, turned out to be three hours, as Raymond heard the footsteps of Albert getting out of bed.

“Morning fella, heavy night?” asks Ray as he begins to prepare breakfast for both men.

“Meh, could’ve been worse.” Answers Albert. “Hey, have you put any more thought into when you’re gonna’ let the public know about our- apologies, I mean your invention?”

Ray turns around and places a plate of buttered toast in-front of Albert. “Yeah actually, I have. I was thinking maybe today? I mean, it’s not too late, it’s only 9am and I woke up especially early today preparing a presentation for this bad boy.” Says Ray as he adjusts his collar.

“Why didn’t you ask me to help you to prepare the presentation? Hey, between me and you, it’s pretty obvious that I’m the more creative one. I think we both know that, deep down in that little stubborn heart of yours.” Albert takes a bite into his cold toast, avoiding eye contact with Raymond. The air in the small blue painted kitchen became more tense, both men sitting awkwardly eating their luke-warm porridge.

“Today, I’m presenting it today, whether you like it or not. I’m gonna’ go call the local news station to see if they can get some crew to record this.” Says Raymond as he proceeds to walk up the stairs covered in stained carpet. Ray walks into his room full of posters of aliens and science fiction jokes. He sits himself down on his un-made bed and throws his head into his hands. After a while he walks towards the house phone and begins to dial the number of the local news station. “Time travelling, 33 High street, 4pm, this is history”, is all he says. He doesn’t want to give any more information, he wants to leave it short and sweet, to give a kind of mysterious vibe.

**Later that day...**

Raymond is in a panic, the noise of the room being filled with “What if”.

3:45pm, there isn't a sign of Albert, anywhere.

Raymond walks down to the basement to give the time travelling machine, which was later named “The Original”, one final check. Everything is up to date. A minute or two later he hears a loud knock on his front door. Doing his best not to make a loud noise running up his stairs, he dashes for the door handle, right after fixing his tie.

“Evening, Mr. Harris. You know at first I didn't believe you, I thought you were insane, but something about you convinces me you're not. May I?” The news reporter steps foot into Ray's apartment.

“Right down here, sir, I can't wait for the world to see this.” Raymond leads the way down to the basement, what he is about to see is indescribable. Ray steps foot into the cold basement, with the time travelling machine in a heap welcoming the camera crew. Albert was up to know good, all along.

“No way this is happening, there is no way Albert would do this to me” Raymond thinks to himself. He quickly rushes towards the time teller device, sitting comfortably above the machine. ‘1939’ was the only thing that was read, followed by the time in which Albert had made his move, ‘3:41’, Raymond falls to his knees in despair.

“Time travelling disaster”. The headline of the daily newspaper was on every kitchen counter, with a photo of Raymond on his knees.

Raymond is in utter distraught, he must make a life threatening decision- will he go back to the past and attempt to bring back Albert, or does he just stay in the present and forever feel guilty?

The following morning, Raymond finds himself on the edge of his bed tying the laces of his steel toed boot. Bringing only a few days' worth of bread, fruit and water, he makes way to the basement.

"Lord, protect me and guide me on this mission I pray, help me to find Albert, amen", Raymond prays as he kneels before this six foot six device. "Well here goes nothing". Raymond steps into this intimidating machine, not knowing what to expect. He is followed by a wave full of chaotic sounds and visions, clocks surround his head as if he had just been knocked unconscious.

Three hours later, he finds himself waking up on a filthy, bloody battlefield, right in the centre of no-mans-land. His vision is extremely blurry, his head is spinning, but he knows he needs to get out of there. Gunshots and explosions fill the air as he runs in slow motion as far away from the noise as possible.

"Why, Albert. Why would you let jealousy get the better of you, why?", yells Raymond as he falls to his knees and looks up to the sky, tears running down his face onto his messy beard. It seems as though all hope is lost. He's not returning home; he thinks to himself.

Nine and a half hours later, he finds himself nibbling on the last piece of bread he had brought with him. After shouting obscenities and walking endless miles on end, he comes across a run-down little shack. He cannot help but approach it, for all he

knows, this shack could be full of soldiers ready to blow his head off. He completely disregards this thought. As he gets closer, he is welcomed by a voice, humming a familiar tune. As he approaches the front-door, the voice grows louder. "It cannot be...." He thinks to himself.

Raymond knocks gently on the wooden door of the shack. After about thirty seconds he hears footsteps creaking on the wooden floor inside. As his heart rate drastically increases, the footsteps get closer and closer. Finally, the door-handle moves downward, followed by a dramatic opening of the door. Raymond cannot believe his eyes.

"Boy am I glad to see you", Raymond says after a ten seconds stare at each-other. "What are the chances I happen to come across you in the middle of a warzone that happened seventy-nine years ago. I just can't believe it". Raymond proceeds to stare back at Albert who hasn't said a word this whole time.

"You have no idea do you?" asks Albert as he grins sinisterly at Raymond. "Let me explain. I assume you thought I was dead, correct?"

Raymond nods convincingly. "Well, would you believe me if I said that I've been here for nineteen years, working on the exact same model that you had built in the present?" asks Albert as he walks back into his little shack, arms folded. "Follow". Albert proceeds to stroll into this little room to the left, the other room being a pigsty like kitchen.

"This don't make no sense, none of it. Nineteen years? What in tarnation!" Raymond's face became saturated with defeat. "Yesterday, it was yesterday when I followed you to the year of

nineteen thirty-nine.” Raymond buried his face into his dirty hands.

Raymond follows Albert to the time travelling machine. Raymond’s face beamed with jealousy. This machine was mightier, better looking, and more accurate than Raymond’s. “She’s a beaut”, says Raymond has his face filled with despair.

“You’ve came right on time, too. I’ve been working on this baby for nineteen years, man, that’s the only reason she looks sleeker than yours”, says Albert as he grins and walks closer to it. “See, there must have been a fault in your machine. I didn’t arrive here in nineteen thirty-nine, more like nineteen twenty fella’. I’ve been living off the scraps of food the soldiers leave behind them for the past year. Before that? A bottle of water and some stale bread the locals would throw at me. They thought I was crazy, dude! When I first woke up nineteen years back, in the middle of a farm, I thought I went insane. I found myself running and screaming uncontrollably for hours on end, telling people that I’m a time traveller from ninety-nine years in the future. I made a name for myself ‘der psycho’ meaning the psycho. I had never been so frightened in my life, as I’m sure you’re frightened right now. But guess what?”, asks Albert, eyes wide open and bloodshot, “Imma bust us outta this hellhole!”

“How? Is she done? I don’t know about this, Albert. But sure anything to get us out of here.” Raymond shakes Alberts sweaty hand one last time before setting the date on this masterpiece. A loud irritating noise came from the base of the device.

“Three, two, one.... Go!”, both men jump into an ecstasy of blurs hoping for the best.

## **2 days later....**

“We’re not gonna make it, we aint gonna make it Al, we aint makin it home.” Albert sits up swiftly. After scratching his head for thirty seconds, he looks to his left, only to see Raymond in a rapid eye movement form of sleep, still in a state of anxiety.

“We’re home. Raymond were home! Oh my gosh the basement has never seemed so welcoming. Home sweet home!” Albert stands up as if he had just ran a marathon and walks over to the small dirty mirror over behind the time traveller device. “I’m still nineteen years older, though”, he thinks to himself.

Grunts and groans come from Raymond’s direction. Albert looks around in slow motion, as if they were in some sort of a dramatic movie. Expecting a scream of panic or a temporary short term memory loss, instead, he’s only greeted with a grin.