

The Mysterious Traveler

"OPERATION TOMORROW"

Originally broadcast April 11, 1950

F/X: Train whistle

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER: This is the Mysterious Traveler, inviting you to join me on another journey into the realm of the strange and the terrifying. I hope you will enjoy the trip that will thrill you a little...and chill you a little. So settle back, get a good grip on your nerves and be comfortable -- if you can -- as we journey with a young scientist into the unknown future. It's a story I call "Operation Tomorrow".

MUSIC

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER: My story begins in a scientific laboratory, cut out of solid rock, many feet underneath New York City University. Amidst a maze of electronic apparatus, Professor Wilbur Malcolm, a middle aged, pipe smoking man, is making methodical tests, aided by his new assistant, Fred Andrews.

F/X: Beeping

MALCOLM: The main output coils seem to be working the way they should, you readied the meters, Fred?

ANDREWS: Yes, Professor. But I wish I knew what we were doing.

MALCOLM: You will in a few seconds, my boy. Now, wind up that alarm clock and put it here on this lead table in the center of the magnetic field.

ANDREWS: This old alarm clock?

MALCOLM: Yes.

F/X: winding and ticking of a clock.

ANDREWS: There. All right, it's in the magnetic field. Now what?

MALCOLM: Now I'm going to turn on the current. You give me the readings as we go along.

ANDREWS: Right sir.

MALCOLM: Here we go.

F/X: beeping begins and increase in frequency as numbers go up.

MALCOLM: The readings, please.

ANDREWS: One-thousand volts positive, main output two...one-thousand five-hundred...two thousand...three...four... five...six...seven...eight-thousand...nine...ten-thousand.

MALCOLM: All right, we've reached critical voltage. Now watch the clock closely, Fred.

ANDREWS: The clock? Yes sir. Why, it's getting a little hazy. Hard to see. Now it's transparent, as if it were made of glass. What is this, Professor?

MALCOLM: Patience, my boy, watch and observe. That's the scientists' motto.

ANDREWS: The tick's getting fainter. Fading out. The clock is disappearing. Professor, the clock has vanished!

MALCOLM: So it has. Gone completely.

ANDREWS: But... but where? Don't tell me you've discovered the secret of invisibility.

MALCOLM: Oh, something bigger than that, Fred. But watch now. I'm going to cut off the alpha tubes. Now I'll cut in the beta tubes. That will give us a negative charge and reverse the magnetic field. Ready Fred?

ANDREWS: Yes sir.

MALCOLM: Here we go. Readings please.

ANDREWS: Two-thousand volts negative...three-thousand negative... four-thousand... five... six... seven... eight... nine... ten-thousand volts negative.

MALCOLM: Good, I'm holding the field at ten-thousand. Now watch where the clock was.

ANDREWS: I'm watching, sir. Good Lord, I see a...a ghost of a clock there. Just a misty outline. Now it's becoming clearer and clearer. It's transparent! Now it's almost solid! Why, I can hear it ticking again!

MALCOLM: And there, it's back. Yes, Fred, the clock is back. And as you can hear, still in good working order.

ANDREWS: But where was it? Where did it go?

MALCOLM: Where did it go? It went into the future.

ANDREWS: Into...the future?

MALCOLM: Yes, my boy. That clock has just penetrated approximately one year into the future. You've witnessed a demonstration of something that, up to know, has always been considered a fantastic dream...time travel.

ANDREWS: Good Lord.

MALCOLM: Well, that's enough for today. You're coming home with me, Fred, while I tell you my plans.

MUSIC

ANDREWS: How did you stumble onto this time travel effect, sir?

MALCOLM: Well, it came about almost by sheer accident. My main purpose, which is a top secret operation, is to develop electronic controls for atomic space ships.

ANDREWS: You mean they've been developed?

MALCOLM: No, not yet, but it shouldn't be long, now. Science is making incredibly rapid advances. Sometimes it worries me. When you travel so fast there's danger of a collision.

ANDREWS: Yes, I know. We're, all of us, worried that the world is headed for a gigantic disaster, but there doesn't seem to be anything we can do about it.

MALCOLM: Perhaps there is. That's what I've been working around to tell you, Fred.

ANDREWS: Well what, Professor Malcolm?

MALCOLM: Well this time travel effect that I stumbled upon accidentally, I've kept it a secret. You're the only person, besides myself, to know about it.

ANDREWS: I'm very flattered sir.

MALCOLM: I know I can trust you. And I need your help. I'm not sure we're really ready for time travel. As you were just saying, we're going so fast now, so many new discoveries, that we don't know how to handle for the world's good, I hesitate to add one more to the list.

ANDREWS: I think I understand.

MALCOLM: On the other hand, maybe it can be used for mankind's benefit. I have a wild scheme, Fred. Very unscientific, and yet...

ANDREWS: What is it, Professor?

MALCOLM: Well, it's this. I propose to send you on a little jaunt into the future.

ANDREWS: Into...the future?

MALCOLM: Yes. I want you to bring back information. I want to find out what's in store for us mortals of the twentieth century, Fred. If it's bad, war, perhaps. Just knowing about it in advance may make it possible to prevent it. Do you follow me?

ANDREWS: It would be like knowing in advance about a train wreck, and then seeing that it doesn't happen.

MALCOLM: I know you'd understand. That's why I sent for you. As soon as we've completed our tests, I propose to send you through time, one-hundred years into the future.

MUSIC

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER: For days and weeks, Fred Andrews and Professor Malcolm experimented, until they were sure it would be possible to send a human being into the future and bring him back safely. At last they were ready for the big test, for the actual transmission of Fred himself through time.

ANDREWS: Professor, I'm already. Why are you hesitating?

MALCOLM: Well Fred, since we've been working, suspicion has been growing in my mind.

ANDREWS: What suspicion, sir?

MALCOLM: I don't think this is going to work.

ANDREWS: But Professor, we've sent dozens of objects into the future and brought them back, even live animals, cats, dogs...

MALCOLM: Yes, but we've never brought back an object from the future itself. I mean one we didn't send there.

ANDREWS: No, that's true.

MALCOLM: And I wonder if...well, no matter, we'll see. Now remember, gather all the information you can. And get back to this spot six hours from now. I'll activate the return field then and bring you back to nineteen-fifty.

ANDREWS: Yes sir, I'll do my best.

MALCOLM: I guess that's all. Good luck, my boy.

ANDREWS: Thank you sir.

F/X: beeping begins

MALCOLM: Five-thousand volts positive...six-thousand volts...how do you feel?

ANDREWS: I feel fine, Professor.

MALCOLM: ...eight-thousand volts...nine...ten-thousand, critical voltage. You're beginning to move forward into time...getting transparent now...can you hear me?

ANDREWS: (MECHANICALLY AND FAR OFF) Yes, Professor Malcolm, I can hear you, but you sound very far away. I can't see you any longer. I seem to be in the middle of a fog, a mist. Now I'm just surrounded by blackness. I can't hear or see anything.

MALCOLM: He's gone. Pray heaven, he comes back safely.

MUSIC

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER: For a long moment, Fred Andrews felt as if he was spinning dizzily through empty darkness. Then the feeling passed and he cautiously opened his eyes to find himself standing in an empty room, the laboratory which he had

just left, an hundred years ago. Unsteadily, he crossed the room and with difficulty he opened the door. He gasped. Outside was a maze of corridors and hallways, briefly lighted, as if a whole city had been carved out of the rock of Manhattan Island. As he stood there, someone came walking swiftly past him. An attractive girl in full military uniform.

ANDREWS: I...I beg your pardon...

FRENCH: Yes?

ANDREWS: ...but...uh... can you tell me... FRENCH: What are you doing here?

ANDREWS: I...

FRENCH: This section is forbidden to civilians.

ANDREWS: Forbidden to civilians? I...I don't get it.

FRENCH: How did you get past the guards? Where are your identification papers?

ANDREWS: Identi...now wait a minute. Since when does an American citizen have to carry identification papers?

FRENCH: Ever since the war started, as you know quite well. Put up your hands.

ANDREWS: A gun! Now look miss, you don't have to threaten me, I'm harmless.

FRENCH: Stand still I want to see if you're carrying a weapon.

ANDREWS: Well, satisfied? The only weapon I have is a fountain pen.

FRENCH: What's your name?

ANDREWS: Frederick Andrews, Ph.D.

FRENCH: Your draft card, please.

ANDREWS: Draft card? Look, what's all this about? War, draft card, identification papers? All these tunnels that have been dug down here, I, uh, I'm a stranger here.

FRENCH: I don't know what you're up to, but no one can be that ignorant. You're coming along with me to see Colonel Phillips.

ANDREWS: Colonel Phillips?

FRENCH: He's the security officer for this sector. And I certainly hope you have a good story to tell him.

MUSIC

PHILLIPS: So your story, Mr. Andrews is that you come here from the year nineteen-fifty? You must realize it's a very unconvincing tale.

FRENCH: Completely unconvincing, in my opinion, Colonel.

ANDREWS: Well, it's the only story I have. I was born in nineteen twenty three, and in nineteen fifty, Professor Wilbur Malcolm of City University sent me into the future. Now I'm here, and, uh, oh, I forgot to ask the date.

FRENCH: It's April tenth, two-thousand fifty.

ANDREWS: Exactly one-hundred years. Professor Malcolm's calculations were accurate to almost the minute.

FRENCH: Colonel, in my opinion, this man is a very clever spy.

ANDREWS: A spy! But...look at that stuff you took from my pockets, the notebook, fountain pen, my driver's license dated nineteen fifty. Those coins, and bills, the cigarettes, surely they convince you I came from a hundred years ago.

PHILLIPS: I think we can settle the question, Mr. Andrews. Our technical department can tell whether this currency is genuine and approximately how old it is. Lieutenant French?

FRENCH: Yes sir?

PHILLIPS: Send all these things by pneumatic tube to the technical department and ask them for an immediate report.

FRENCH: I'll have a report for you in half an hour.

PHILLIPS: When the report comes, Mr. Andrews, I'll know how to handle your case. If you are a spy, you know the penalty.

ANDREWS: Well, I'm not worried, Colonel. Now, may I ask a few questions? Are you at war?

PHILLIPS: We are indeed at war.

ANDREWS: And these miles of tunnels I saw, carved out of the solid rock...

PHILLIPS: This city has retreated underground, Mr. Andrews, no one lives on the surface now.

ANDREWS: Good Lord. How long has the war been going on?

PHILLIPS: We've been at war Mr. Andrews, off and on of course with periods inbetween in which both sides have rested up for ninety-five years.

MUSIC

ANDREWS: Well, a visitor at last. Hello, Lieutenant French.

FRENCH: I'm sorry, Mr. Andrews that we had to keep you locked up until you were clear.

ANDREWS: Does that mean you believe my story now?

FRENCH: Technical division says your story is true.

ANDREWS: I'm free now?

FRENCH: Well, not exactly, Mr. Andrews. This is a military sector and you're a civilian. But I am to be your guide for the time being.

ANDREWS: Good. Then, suppose I call you Emily and you call me Fred.

FRENCH: Alright, Fred.

ANDREWS: There's a great deal I want to see and learn before I go back to nineteen-fifty.

FRENCH: Go back? You mean, you can return?

ANDREWS: Of course. Professor Malcolm will turn on his gadgets to bring me back at four o'clock.

FRENCH: That's only three hours. I'll have to report this to Colonel Phillips. Um, after I've reported, what would you like to do?

ANDREWS: I'm anxious to see what's going on. And I'd like to collect a number of books with the latest scientific and historical datas to take back with me.

FRENCH: Yes, alright, I'll phone the Colonel, then I'll show you around.

MUSIC

FRENCH: Fred, here's the plotting room for the flying bomb attack.

ANDREWS: Good Lord, it's as big as a theater, and as dark. What's that big board with lights on it? That's the chart board which records every flying bomb within a thousand miles of American territory.

F/X: VOICE 1 & 2 on FILTER over PA

VOICE 1: Self guided missile, entering detection over Greenland. General course south, southwest.

VOICE 2: I have it plotted, send up interceptor rockets when it reaches zone four.

VOICE 1: Yes sir. Rocket thirty-four thirty-five successfully intercepted at defense zone four.

FRENCH: Now you see Fred, two lights just went out. That means we sent up destroyer rockets which brought the bomb down.

VOICE 1: Rocket bombs twenty-nine and thirty-one have eluded interception at zone three.

VOICE 2: Interception salvo at zone two. If they penetrate, use interceptor L one-hundred at zone one.

FRENCH: L-one-hundred is our new, top secret interceptor, Fred. Hardly anyone knows how it works, but it never fails.

ANDREWS: Four more lights went out then...

FRENCH: Hm Hm. And here comes the report.

VOICE 1: Last four rockets successfully intercepted.

VOICE 2: Roger that.

FRENCH: Well, Fred, what do you think of modern warfare?

ANDREWS: Oh, it's horrifying. And everybody here seems to take it so calmly.

FRENCH: You can't get excited when a thing has lasted almost a hundred years on and off.

ANDREWS: That light, number twenty-five. It's still on and moving.

FRENCH: It should have been destroyed by now. Do you suppose...

VOICE 1: Rocket number twenty-five has eluded interceptor attack by L-one-hundred.

FRENCH: It has, but it can't have.

VOICE 2: Report on twenty-five, please.

VOICE 1: Detection base 103 reports number twenty-five apparently new-type rocket non-metallic instruction, able to battle citing mechanism of L-one-hundred.

VOICE 2: Order technical crew to search for fragments after the hit. Send general warning to eastern seaboard area, and give plotted strike prediction.

VOICE 1: Very good sir. All personnel in eastern districts, all personnel, bomb strikes you in ten seconds. Battery area, bomb strikes you in five seconds...four seconds...bomb strikes you in three seconds...two seconds...one second...

F/X: explosion

VOICE 1: All personnel, bomb strike over.

FRENCH: Alright, Fred, I'll take you to the viewing room next. You can see for yourself what this city looks like in the year two-thousand fifty.

MUSIC

FRENCH: Lieutenant French reporting back with Mr. Andrews, sir.

PHILLIPS: Very good lieutenant. Well, Mr. Andrews, have a good look around?

ANDREWS: Yes sir. I saw the city through the television viewing screens.

PHILLIPS: Not quite the city you left, is it?

ANDREWS: It...it's unbelievable. Just acres of twisted steel and fallen stone, the skeletons of giant buildings lying across one another, rusting. It's like the end of the world.

PHILLIPS: Not quite, perhaps not even the end of civilization. Man is an adaptable creature.

ANDREWS: But are we winning, sir?

PHILLIPS: Nobody wins a war anymore, Mr. Andrews. We're holding our own and we hope that when the end comes there will be peace on earth forever.

ANDREWS: But how did it start, sir? We were trying so hard to prevent war back in nineteen-fifty. In fact, one reason for my trip into time was to get information that might help us to keep war from breaking out.

PHILLIPS: Lieutenant French, why didn't we think of that?

FRENCH: Think of what sir?

PHILLIPS: If the world of nineteen-fifty knows the truth, maybe it won't happen. Either they can prevent the accident that started all this back in nineteen fifty-five, or at least they'll know the truth when it does happen.

FRENCH: Of course, sir. Mr. Andrews can take the true story back with him.

ANDREWS: What story, I don't follow you.

FRENCH: Fred, you asked how the war started...

ANDREWS: Yes.

FRENCH: It started because of an accident and an over jittery world.

PHILLIPS: Yes, my boy, a horrible irony.

FRENCH: Fred, listen. During the nineteen-fifties, the government established a special experimental base in the heart of the Arizona desert, in a little town called Red Rock.

ANDREWS: In Red Rock, Arizona?

FRENCH: Yes, that's right. The first space rocket was put into production there, and work was pushed on the problem of fuel.

PHILLIPS: During the course of the experiment, an explosion occurred late in nineteen-fifty five.

FRENCH: It was a terrific blast, wiped out the whole base. The first reports were

sabotage, that the enemy had blown up the base because they were afraid we were on the verge of getting space flight.

PHILLIPS: Before the truth became known, our newspapers screamed for retaliation. The enemy became panicky and decided to strike first, and phase one of the war was on. When we discovered the blast was really an accident, it was too late to stop.

ANDREWS: That's horrible, sir. War because everybody was just too jittery.

PHILLIPS: But it doesn't have to be. Don't you see, if you take back the true story before it happens, it won't have to happen. Now look. I've assembled a dozen books for you. The information in them will enable your scientists to prevent that blast at Red Rock base.

FRENCH: Now Fred, you've got to get the facts back to them. You've just got to.

ANDREWS: I will. Believe me, Professor Malcolm and I will see to it that this war doesn't start in our time.

PHILLIPS: Good. Now come along. You've only five minutes more.

MUSIC

ANDREWS: This is the exact spot where I was lying when I came through the time dimension, Colonel Phillips.

PHILLIPS: You've only thirty seconds more, Andrews. Remember, impress the lesson of the accident of Red Rock on the world. These books, hold them close to you so they'll go back with you.

ANDREWS: Yes sir. There, I've got a good grip on them.

FRENCH: Fred,

ANDREWS: Yes, Emily?

FRENCH: Oh, uh, just good luck.

ANDREWS: Thanks. Maybe I'll pay another trip to two-thousand fifty.

FRENCH: I hope so.

PHILLIPS: It's sixteen hundred. If Professor Malcolm is on time...

F/X: beeping begins.

FRENCH: Look Colonel, he's getting transparent. He's disappearing.

ANDREWS: (MECHANICALLY AND FAR OFF) Goodbye, Emily. I guess this is it. Hope to see you again, sometime.

FRENCH: But sir, the books, they aren't disappearing, they're just as solid as ever. Fred! Fred!

ANDREWS: What? I can hardly hear you. Everything's gray and misty. Are you still there? Emily! Are you still there?

FRENCH: The books, Fred!

PHILLIPS: Andrews, you're going back with the books! They're staying here.

MUSIC

MALCOLM: He's appearing. He's returning. Thank heaven he's safe! Fred, Fred my boy. Fred, what's the matter. You're staring at me as if you didn't know me. Here Fred, let me help you up. It's I, Professor Malcolm.

ANDREWS: Professor Malcolm.

MALCOLM: Yes. Don't tell me you don't remember!

ANDREWS: Professor Malcolm?

MALCOLM: Yes, yes Fred. What's the matter?

ANDREWS: My...my head...it feels so funny. I can't seem to remember who you are, or what's happened to me. What am I doing here?

MUSIC

MALCOLM: Well Fred, how are you?

ANDREWS: Oh, Professor Malcolm, it's good to see you, sir.

MALCOLM: I can't tell you how I've been blaming myself ever since the experiment.

ANDREWS: Oh, nonsense, I haven't suffered any harm. Just a blank place in my mind. I can't understand it. Do you suppose the experiment failed?

MALCOLM: Well you were gone for six hours, somewhere, that's all I know, Fred. If you did get to twenty-fifty, Fred...

ANDREWS: Yes sir?

MALCOLM: Well, I have a theory that though we can move from past to future, it's impossible for anything belonging in the future to move to the past. The structure of time itself prevents that.

ANDREWS: I see.

MALCOLM: So if you did try to bring back any books or papers, they stayed behind.

ANDREWS: Hm. You must be right.

MALCOLM: You can't remember because nothing that you didn't take with you could come back with you. Even including sensory impressions on your brain cells. The very

act of returning wiped out your memories.

ANDREWS: Maybe if I went again we could find some way around the problem. There must be some way, sir.

MALCOLM: Not now, Fred. I'm dropping the whole subject for the time being. I've been transferred to a new assignment, and you're coming with me.

ANDREWS: Well what is the assignment, sir?

MALCOLM: All spaceship research is now being concentrated at a new base now being developed. You and I are going out there to help develop a fuel that will take a rocket to the moon.

ANDREWS: I see. Where is the base, Professor Malcolm?

MALCOLM: Oh, some place in the west. I believe they call it Red Rock, Arizona.

MUSIC

ANDREWS: Red Rock? The name seems awfully familiar to me. I wonder why?

MUSIC F/X: train whistle

MYSTERIOUS TRAVELER: This is the Mysterious Traveler. Well, time travel doesn't seem to be all it's been all it's been painted. Especially if you can't remember what's happened when you get back. You aren't worried about the future, are you? You know that tonight's story couldn't possibly happen, or could it? Oh, you have to get off now? I'm sorry. But I'm sure we'll meet again. I take this same train every week at this same time.