Space Rover, Episode IV: Rewinding the Watch – Audio Version
By Hamish and Graham Wilson

The main theme *The Space Rover* plays.

Scene One: *A Cracking Good Time*

Narrator: The *Space Rover* roams pointlessly through space. Inside, our good Captain is piloting the craft on a relaxing jaunt on the far end of the Space Commonwealth, drinking some sort of clear liquid. Hopefully not spare anti-freeze. With a quiet whir, a man appears beside him.

Captain: And just what have you been up to for the past few hours?

Hologram: Exploring file-systems, directory structures...

Captain: What for?

Hologram: You never know what you will find. Largely illicit pornography, true, but even that can be used for extortion if you know how.

Captain: Wait a minute... I don't recognize that.

Hologram: Why should you?

Captain: Don't tell me you have been accessing someone elses' systems again?!

Hologram: If they are not going to encrypt them, what's to stop me? There is a saying that the innocent have nothing to hide, however, I think in this case it is just plain old naivety,

Captain: Yeah, and in the mean time I get in trouble for cracking pass-codes.

Hologram: * smirks * You bought it, *it* broke it, you pay for it.

Captain: What am I going to do with you?

Hologram: Well, something nice preferably.

Captain: * sighs *

Hologram: Anyway, you can find out all kinds of interesting stuff. Want to know why the Plutonian Governor was assassinated in 2143?

Captain: The Plutonian Governor has not been assassinated. Ever. He got the flu once, but got better. Ah, what a tumultuous week that was.

Hologram: Not yet, but he will be. I got the assassin's notes right here. Such neat handwriting, too.

Captain: The assassin's what?!

Hologram: I did not even know they made poison coated cuff-links. Can we get one pretty please? It would really go well with your fine taste in haberdashery.

Captain: My what?! ...No! And don't you feel an ethical responsibility to inform the authorities?

Hologram: Eh, I have decided he was a tyrant anyway. Complete with finely trimmed moustache.

Captain: Suggestive facial hair aside, how, pray tell, did you come up with that?

Hologram: Pluto, being only a *dwarf* planet, is one of the more underfunded terraformed colonies. This has lead to a hard-talking but in the end rather do-nothing separatist movement. The Plutonian Governor was elected as a separatist, and yet, nearing the end of his second term, the place is still firmly in the Commonwealth's grasp, without even the slightest concessions towards self-governance. Mail within Pluto is still sorted on Neptune, by way of Venus.

Captain: Well, that is hardly surprising is it? Change rarely works that way. You need more than greased palms. Maybe with greased mortars...

Hologram: He will probably win a third term, given that the separatists know that he is the closest to actual power they can get in this system. The general public on Pluto tend to have anti-Commonwealth sentiments and yet their government doesn't follow them. What is more tyrannical than a non-people power government?

Captain: The lengths you go to justify your petty meddling in other people's lives. I could have safely survived or maybe even thrived if you hadn't spent that moment of my life with that waffley apologetic hidden as witty commentary.

Hologram: A: you and I both could have thrived in the time you spent spurting out that headbanger, and B: excuse-making hidden as insight? What do you call a political speech other than excuse making? Seriously, if you are going to talk to me like that I might as well go back to network cracking.

Hologram clicks his fingers and his image shuts off.

The Captain sighs deeply.

Captain: At least holograms do not yet have the vote...

<div align="center">

Scene Two: *A Space Station, An Eccentric, A Delivery*
The Captain is talking towards his view screen.

</div>

Captain: Certainly, will do sir. Pleasure doing business with you.

A beep indicates that the conversation is terminated.

Peter: So then, we've gotten a commission? Another child's party? Little Timmy's got such rave reviews. We've made the Michelin's guide in youth catering.

Captain: Something perhaps even more auspicious than that! Inform the crew.

Peter: All one of them?!

Captain: Yeah, yeah, just do it please...

Peter: Computer, activate the holo-emitter system.

A whoosh as Hologram materializes into the cockpit.

Hologram: Hey! I was just about to win that game of Pong against the ship's computer! About damn time too! It's only my fifth attempt… this evening!

Captain: Oh boo hoo, so sad. We've got work to do.

Hologram: Oh, someone has actually had the ill sense to hire you? Forged Turf kept quiet then?

Captain: Are you kidding? He was quite pleased to have a Fleet veteran attend to his task.

Hologram: That whole *Labrador* story has finally died down has it? Funny what a little blackmail can do to a free press to make them forget. I am almost sorry for Terry, he can't be very popular with Big Mash's Magnetic Management right now.

Peter: Could also be the public's tendency to collective amnesia. Anyhow, we will be picking up and delivering a three month supply to one 'Freedom Station'.

Hologram: Freedom Station? Don't tell me, it's where anarchists come together to swap bomb making recipes? Mmm… smell the glycerine.

Peter: Well, nothing so eighteenth century I'm afraid. The Station is a small private one, owned by a Bernard Anchanko. An eccentric who decided to buy out an old rendering plant, only to never leave it again. He lives alone, apart from one holographic servant.

Hologram: Another hologram?

Peter: Yes sir, made to look like his deceased wife. Apparently the station is his way to be free from the horrors and hassles of the rest of the galaxy.

Peter taps a few keys.

Peter: That's him and his hologram.

Hologram: Hmm, he has taste in light. I might like this mission. Even so, sounds like somebody has issues dealing with the past. What a hermit.

Captain: As long as he is a well paying lunatic I don't really care.

Hologram: So why us then?

Captain: His usual supplier has been delayed, and his stocks were beginning to fall short, so he started looking for someone else to get them to him a little more promptly. Hard to find good people these days.

Peter: Your placement of sugar in their delivery craft's plasma injector was a little underhanded, though.

Hologram: I guess we had better get going then, as we don't want him asking for his money back simply because it took us thirty minutes longer to pick up and deliver than agreed. Do you think we should also add in a complimentary mint? A fruit basket? A discount coupon for Jamtastic Space Ale?

Jingle plays out.

<div align="center">

Scene Three: *It's Gone!*
The *Space Rover* flies and then suddenly stops.
</div>

Peter: Wake up sir, we appear to be here, but there is a problem.

Captain (blearily): What problem? You're not leaking coolant again are you?

Peter: My structural integrity is fine, sir. My concern is a matter of the structural cohesion, or sheer existence for that matter, of another object.

Captain: Get... to the... point.

Peter: Freedom Station. It is not there.

Captain: You mean you improperly set our course? Wrong left turn after Eris?

Peter: No sir, our position corresponds to the points on all three axes specified. We should be right next to it. It is not there.

Captain: All right, let me take a look.

The Captain messes around with the ship's instruments for a second.

Captain: Hmm, you're right, I don't see a station there. Wait a minute, wait a minute! There is something. I'm putting it on screen.

Peter: It appears to be the support frame for the station... but nothing else.

Captain: Are you suggesting that someone came and shot up the place?

Peter: No sir, there would be debris floating around and blast marks on the frame. It looks more like the station has yet to be built.

Captain: What are you suggesting? It *has* already been built!

Peter: A message buoy beside it is transmitting, "Space station under construction, up for sale July 13, 2134." The atomic structure of the frame indicates it was just recently scaffolded.

Captain: Are you telling me this station was suddenly reconfigured to be the way it was when it was being built?

Peter: It seems to be the only plausible explanation.

Captain: Alright, inform the crew.

There is a still pause.

Peter: This *again*?

Captain (wearily): Yes....

Peter inhales sharply.

Peter: Computer, activate holo-emitter.

Hologram materializes before them. He stares at Peter contemptibly.

Hologram: What are you doing? I was having an excellent de-frag back there! Always the same...

Peter: You need to de-frag? What kind of archaic file system are you running?

Hologram: Hey, I just de-frag for fun, you should try it sometime. Relieves stress like nothing else. Anyways, what do you want?

Peter: We appear to be encountering temporal difficulties.

Hologram: What? Lost your wrist watch Captain? Have you checked behind the cushions?

Captain: Freedom Station has relapsed back to its original foundation; and no, before you ask, you were not right about him being a rabid bomb maker after all, as there is no evidence of blast damage.

Hologram: What are *you* suggesting then? That this self-delusional oaf had a run in with a 'flux capacitor' instead?

Captain: I am not suggesting anything. I am just saying we have a problem, namely the state of my commission. We do not have a billing address if he does not live here yet.

Peter: Captain, if I may, how much do you think the supplies in the back are worth on re-sale?

Captain: Hmm. Well, *that's* settled then. I doubt he'll want them by the time this station is refinished anyway.

Hologram: I just love the logic of cause and effect... and the petty criminal mind for that matter.

Captain: Hey Peter, get us out of here, its too weird around here.

Peter: Yes sir, seeking out a more 'socially acceptable' level of weirdness.

Peter flicks a few switches and the *Rover* sets off.

<div align="center">

Scene Four: *Illicit Negotiations*
The Captain is again talking on the interstellar comm link in the *Rover* cockpit.

</div>

Captain: Alright, excellent. We should arrive at your docking port in three quarters of an hour. James out.

A beep once again indicates that the conversation is terminated.

Hologram: "Mr. Fence" has managed to find a buyer for our stolen goods then?

Captain: They are not stolen, just a little bit too early on the delivery front for Mr. Anchanko....

A blur of beeps and trills from Peter's direction.

Peter: Hang on, my sub-etha receiver is alerting me of flash news reports.

Hologram: Oh, yes? Another war? Stock market crash? Or the great tsunami? Something nice and deadly I hope – I've not had a very good year...

Peter: No, these articles seem to concern objects disappearing, or regressing, just like the Station.

Hologram: Hmm, congratulations for that. I had just successfully convinced myself the scanners were faulty or we're on hallucinogenic coffee sweetener or something... before you had to go and be Mr. Worldly Informed...

Peter: The Commonwealth Prime Minister has called his top scientific advisers to discuss what is going on. He has also called his security adviser under the assumption that this is actually a vast criminal conspiracy...

Captain: Nothing like a man of paranoia to be able to launch nuclear armaments, eh?

Hologram: Still, that's their lot isn't it. What is this supposed to do with us?

Peter: Just thought I would throw it out there sirs, that's all.

Captain: Well, I don't care what is causing all this – as long as it can help me get a little cash.

Peter: In the meantime, I'll set the ship's scanners to look for that signature I got off of Freedom Station. We will try and stay clear of those anomalies in future.

Hologram: Or past and present for that matter...

<div align="center">

Scene Five: *Unloading, Reloading, Repeat*
The *Rover* is docked at space supply station.
The Captain, Peter and Hologram are standing in a spaceship cargo bay.

</div>

Computer: Message sent.

Captain: Okay, I've just settled the account with the manager here. Let's unload our stock.

Hologram: * sigh * If you say so...

Captain: Get a move on already, after all, you are exactly as strong as the emitter projects you to be.

Hologram: I'm taking one, I'm taking one, alright?!

Captain: Okay my turn now... wait… wait a minute? Did Hologram take both those crates at once? Hmm, perhaps I have not been giving him enough credit. Well, I will just take this one over here...

Footsteps fade, and then return. There is a contemplative pause.

Captain: Wait a minute, Hologram can't take three at once, and he did not pass me. I only took the first one, so where did that other crate suddenly go? What's going on here?

With an eerie whir, the box in his hand goes missing.

Captain: What the hell? I was just holding one! Where did it go?!

His only reply is more cold dark silence.

Captain: I guess I will just sit down on this other crate here and clear my eyes.

Another whir and then a thundering crash.

Captain: Owww! ...Peter, Hologram, get over here now!

Hologram walks into the room with Peter following.

Hologram: I said I was coming, no need to get all anal retentive...

Captain: Am I the only seeing anything really weird happening?

Peter: As far as I know. ...What happened to all the supplies?

Captain: I don't know, they just seem to have disappeared!

Peter: Is it possible that someone in here is stealing them behind your back?

Captain: It's either that or we have a poltergeist with an unnerving taste for boxes of... spaghetti marinade?!

Hologram: The wrath of Freedom Station and its delusional keeper maybe?

Captain: Ha, ha. How drawl.

Another eerie emanation.

Hologram: Hey, come and take a look at this!

Captain: It's gone! The entire landing dock has up and vanished.

Peter: Hmm, add spaceship docks to your poltergeist's favourite collectibles.

Hologram: Let's get out of here before it adds sentient beings to that list. Judging by the fact that that last box was full of backup electronics, I should think it would want me and Czech slave boy here first!

Peter: And more importantly before the adjacent dock holding the *Rover* follows suit as well....

The sounds of rushing footfalls echo in the bay.

<div align="center">

Scene Six: *Exposition Composition*
The *Space Rover* flies through space, escaping the space supply station where it had been docked.

</div>

Captain: There, we should be a safe distance from whatever was causing the disappearances now, at least in theory.

Hologram: So what the hell has been going on anyway? This is really starting to annoy me!

Captain (sarcastically): Yes, we can tell.

Peter: Search me.

Captain: The last time you said that referring to my account passwords, I spent over two hours searching your directory structure for the damn things. Please use a different turn of phrase.

Peter: Very well. Actually, I may have found something that could vaguely explain what was happening back there.

Hologram: Oh?

Peter: I found this document online about a very similar event. The author's explanation involved a time paradox breaking the rules of cause and effect.

Captain: A lime pair of socks? What are you talking about?!

Peter: A time paradox, what were *you* talking about?! Something has happened to create an inconsistency in continuity. Because of this event, objects can evaporate into thin air.

Captain Okay, enlighten us then.

Peter: Well, for example, say an object was created at one point in the universe and transported later to another. This is a plain example of cause and effect: the cause was the transportation of the object, and the effect was it appearing at a new point in the universe. If we were to erase the cause, the effect can not happen. The object stays at the point of its creation.

Hologram: Or if the cause of the object's creation did not ever happen, the effect of its existence can not happen either and thus it just disappears. Poof!

Peter: Precisely.

Captain: May I remind you that this piece of writing is from a science fiction fan fic database? Flagged in subcategories "Weird", "Disturbing", "Immature" and at the same time "Adult"? As such, I hardly think we can take it seriously, and I have a sinking suspicion I don't want to read any of it further.

Peter: Well, to be fair, we hardly have a better theory than the wisdom of perverts.

Hologram: Still, we could be a bit more scientific. And in better taste.

Captain: Okay, how?

Hologram: All scientific hypotheses must be theoretically testable. I think it is time for an experiment.

Peter: Agreed, let us go down to that large asteroid and begin.

Captain: Alright, fine. We'll give it a go then.

<div align="center">

Scene Seven: *The Experiment*
Peter begins setting up the experiment, whilst Captain and Hologram wait in the cockpit.

</div>

Captain: What do you mean you are betting against it? This whole experiment was your idea!

Hologram: Right, unlike you I saw a money making opportunity out of a disturbing time phenomenon.

Captain: Oh, I saw plenty. Just not one so counter-productive, you dishonest weasel.

Hologram: I personally prefer the term scheming optimist, but whatever floats your boat. Besides, does the name Anchanko still mean anything to you?

Captain: That was different.

Hologram: It was petty theft, whilst I am merely playing the game of chance. Quite profitably I hope...

Before the Captain can respond, the airlock doors clunk as Peter returns.

Peter: Alright Captain, we are ready.

Hologram: Good, how exactly is this going to work then?

Peter: It is fairly simple, though a bit inelegant. I have a short track laid down with a cart on it. I shall roll it down the track and thus create a temporal cause. I shall then excite the particles within, based on a signature I read emanating from the vanished docking bay. Then we will see if the cause is erased and the effect vanishes, causing the cart reappear at the start of the track.

Captain: Sounds good. Begin.

The cart rolls down the tracks. The *Rover* then emits the effecting radiation. Before long, the eerie whir from before is heard. The cart slams back at the start.

Peter: It would seem the trains are not even running on time. The cart is abruptly back where it started.

Hologram: Unfair! You rigged it by designing it to work! I demand a more untainted sample!

Peter: I could throw you out the window. If you were to just fly away, you would win.

Hologram: But then I'd lose out either way!

Peter: Only pragmatically. Your honour would be vindicated.

Captain: Sure, and I'll expect you to *honour* the bet by the end of tomorrow Hologram, or I'll corrupt your image and give you an obscene lavender shirt...

Peter: Petty gambling aside you two, there is a more pressing matter of what we should do now. We know what is happening but not why and thus what to do about it.

Captain: Shouldn't it simply be a matter of isolating the paradox in question?

Peter: Yes, but given an over six billion year history of our planet alone we have a lot of time to correlate through.

Hologram: Perhaps we should start with the big one.

Captain: What are you drivelling about Hologram?

Peter: No, no, he does have a point. The reports I have seen, have shown that some of the objects affected are not man-made or even near any human settlements. Therefore it seems reasonable to exclude actions from Earth as being those in paradox.

Hologram: And what one cause has had more effects across the board then the original big bang that expunged all matter throughout this expanding universe in the first place?

Captain: Have you all been attending open university behind my back or something?

Peter: I for one have, and I like to stay informed on the state of matters or, in this case, matter itself. In any event, this still does not help us much. We have tested a function and have a hypothesis for its origin, but we still have no plan of action.

Captain: Isn't it obvious? We need a time machine!

Hologram: Oh yes, and you know where to purchase one do you? Eddy's Amazing Fundamental Physical Law Breakers? Pop in today for amazing discounts on the out-of-this-world faster-than-light drive and the eternal perpetual motion machine? Or perhaps you are a medium hoping to consult the ghosts of Einstein, Bore and Hawking? The level of pseudoscience seems about right there...

Peter: Actually sirs, I have an idea. We need not disrupt the flow of time ourselves by venturing backwards, as the universe itself is doing a sufficient job of inverting events. I will start seeing if I can either make a drive to take advantage of this, or plot out a course heading in order to use some such temporal singularity.

Captain: In English please?

Hologram: He is going to go play with circuit boards and star charts...

Peter: In layman's terms, yes indeed!

Captain: Alright, in the mean time I'm going to count my money – both from those supplies we sold and your immanent honouring of the bet Hologram!

Hologram: Next interstellar calamity I'll beat you, I swear, next catastrophe!

Scene Eight: *The Visitors*

The sounds of Peter at work on machinery. The whir returns.

Peter: Hmm.... tricky.

Captain: What? Problem?

Peter: A little bit of one, I have lost three of my prototypes already.

Hologram: Because of the paradox? Or carelessness?

Peter: No, I actually think it is indicating I am really onto something here.

Captain: Then why the problem?

Peter: Because it is just the boxes. Utilizing the temporal signature I recorded is a fickle art of flowing through past events, and I seem to be *only* able to localize it onto a single object.

Hologram: Which won't do us much good.

Captain: We could hack it onto Hologram's portable emitter and he can go and check it out. Sure, he would be floating through the void from the beginning of eternity onward, but just think of the history he would witness!

Hologram: What? Stars twinkling whilst empires rise and fall around me? Possibly a few amusingly shaped asteroids once a millennium? Yes, a highly entertaining way to pass the interminable eons...

Peter: All jokes aside, I would like to get back to this please.

Captain: All right, all right. Not that I *was* joking… much.

Peter returns to poking at his latest prototype.

A sudden flash brings them all to attention: sitting in the back is another, somehow suaver, Peter. There is an odd crackle to his voice.

Future Peter: I would offer introductions, but given our past or present acquaintance I think it would be pointless and a source of strained grammar.

Hologram: Two Peters?! Well, now we really are hallucinating on coffee supplements...

Future Peter: I remember that line! Still do not care for it. Too clunky. At any rate, I do believe this is what you are all looking for...

Peter: A complete prototype?

Future Peter: I do not know, I came here and gave it to me and then used it to come and give it to me *again* as I am now doing, so I guess it works… if a little a tediously.

Hologram: It would only be tedious if I understood any of it. As is, it is simply a confusing jumble.

Future Peter: Ah, yes, I recall that line too. You are quite dull the second time around Hologram. Moving on, I've fulfilled causality as best as I think I am supposed to, so I guess I should cap my paradox and be off then.

Captain: Yes, I think that is probably wise. I don't think I could stand two of you with Hologram around as well.

Future Peter: That remark too – it is like re-reading a novel around here. Oh, for a world class copy editor. Anyways...

He presses a button on the the prototype in Peter's arms.

Future Peter: Oh yes, before I go. One more thing, I was told to warn you about the Cap...

Future Peter vanishes in a puff of temporal self-correcting logic.

Captain: Cap... achino? What was he on about you think?

Hologram: I am quite sure – I think Peter to-be just warned us about you Cap-tain.

Captain: Me? What do you think I am going to do?

Hologram: I don't know, but I think you should be sectioned just in case.

Captain: You're enjoying this aren't you?

Peter: Captain, incoming ship...

Captain: Not now Peter... anyways, Hologram that is by far the most offensive thing you have ever said...

Peter: What? It appears to be another *Rover* sir!

Captain: Yeah, yeah... carrying on, I am tired of you always running me down. I mean, after all, I am the one who owns you, you know! Without me you'd still be a homeless drifter, and I'd trust you to make a few less remarks like that one given...

Peter: Captain, *you* are hailing us....

Captain: Peter, for Capricorn's sake stop interrupting me!

Future Captain (on comm): I know you have the time drive! But stop and listen!

Captain: That goes for you there too! Stop interrupting me *everyone*!

Future Captain: Well then, you can start by not interrupting *me*!

The Captain stops mid-sentence and audibly gasps.

Captain (meekly): Who... are you?

Future Captain: * sigh * I would have assumed you at least would recognize me...

Hologram: Should I start a fresh pot or is this just the right level of psychoactive sugar high?

Scene Nine: *Damming Prophecies, Bitter Struggles*

Future Captain: Now then, are all assembled mature and sedate enough to actually be in a position to listen to me?

Peter: Go ahead, just in case I'll record the conversation for future reference...

Hologram: Your faith in our collective memory and attention span is awe-inspiring Peter...

Future Captain: Well, let me get right to the point. You lot are at present attempting to be goody two shoes and correcting the universe's ills. Head my advice: stop it!

Hologram: Why should we? I don't fancy being degenerated into a flashlight or something...

Future Captain: Aren't you wondering why I am *coughing fit * like this?

Hologram: I know, well, knew you from your perspective... you don't take care of yourself, it does not surprise me that you end up like that one day.

Both Captains: Shut the hell up Hologram!

Hologram: Hey, I'm just saying: those flesh and blood *are* only flesh and blood after all...

Peter: I still wish to know your complaint sir.

Captain: Yeah!

Future Captain: Well gag the light one and I'll explain this to you. * winces * You are planning to make a journey to the beginning of time and correct a paradox. Did it occur to you the implications of this?

Peter: Well, we did consider the reality of what would be if we did *not* proceed.

Future Captain: The Heisenberg uncertainty principle states that even the most inconsequential action * cough * or even mere observation can exert an influence on particles in the micro-verse – let me just put it simply: you * bleep * things up right royally!

Hologram: There! There! You see, the bet was not fair! You, I mean he, just said so! Heisenberg!

Captain: Hologram, you really need to learn about time and place... besides, that money is still mine, you little rat, and furthermore...

Peter: Ahem! I for one would like to know how we "* bleep * things up" exactly?

Future Captain: With the universe in a pre-Big Bang state, all mater was compressed into an infinitesimal mass that was very easy to manipulate. Your minimal input irrevocably changed the structure of all matter everywhere.

Hologram: And how does that give you the lungs of an 80 year old chain-smoker?

Future Captain: By correcting the paradox, you did preserve the old causality, but it remained with the new modifications. Structures have been shifted and variables tweaked, and now everything is brittle and unstable * he breaks into a coughing fit * including me...

Peter: But we do not have any choice – if we take no action we will all be erased!

Future Captain: How do you know? Who are you to take up the initiative? I mean who are we: travelling refuse of the universe, or what? Leave it to someone else and see what happens. Just don't try and play heroes yourself – we don't have it in us to pull it off properly! * coughs again * I know.

Hologram: I don't think I want to rely on others for my own survival, thank you very much.

Peter: We will keep your warning in mind sir, we will try and interfere as little as possible and...

Future Captain: No, if you attempt to proceed I will open fire! I'm deadly serious here!

Captain: Are you insane! You kill me and we will both cease to exist! Or something unpleasant at least. I'm not even sure anymore.

Future Captain: I'd rather kill myself than leave me the way you are going to leave us all.

Captain: I don't take threats from anyone – even myself!

Peter: I am afraid there is nothing you can say to stop us from doing what needs to be done, sir.

Captain: After all, mother always told us to stand up to bullies, remember?

Future Captain: She also told us to be true to ourselves you nitwit... which includes me.

Captain: Yeah, well screw the future! I am me as well, and I don't care who you are...

Hologram (irritated): They are like brothers... six year old brothers...

Future Captain: You lot are obviously unable to listen to reason, * coughs * so farewell!

The comms close and there is a brief pause before the sound of rounds battering the hull blare through. Klaxons sound.

Hologram (trying to keep his balance): Yep – entirely like brothers!

Captain (enraged): Peter, give me the guns!

Hologram: No Peter, you take the guns yourself! I don't want to die!

Captain: Just leave it to me! He'll be mincemeat in two seconds!

Peter: I shall metal-man the guns. Captain keep us moving, and Hologram watch the readouts!

Hologram: Incoming rounds, move us Captain!

A clanging whoosh as the ship dodges fire.

Peter: That sounded like a close one. Steady.

Captain: I am coming around, be ready to fire Peter!

Hologram: We are aligned with his engines! Fire now!

Present *Rover* fires into the future *Rover*.

Hologram: Good shots. He should be disabled.

Future Captain (on screen): Well... I'd say see you soon but by then you will be me!

Captain: Not if I can help it!

Future Captain: Nor if can I! Farewell again... dear self! * coughs *

The comm fades into static and there is a brief calm before...

Hologram: He is coming on a ramming vector using his ship's remaining momentum! You really are desperate!

Peter: Nothing new there. Captain, can you get us out of the way?

Captain: I don't think so, this thing is hardly that manoeuvrable you know. Can you blast him away?

Peter: Not unless you want to be slammed by wave after wave of future *Rover* rubble.

Hologram: Peter, why don't we just activate the paradox drive!

Captain: Yeah! Good idea! Hurry up and get us out of here!

Peter: On it.

Hologram: Impact in 10, 9, 8...

Peter: Impending.

Hologram: 7, 6, 5, 4, 3...

Peter: Activating now!

Hologram: 2...

The temporal whir, leaving future *Rover* locked on course to nowhere. It explodes.

Scene Ten: *The Big One*

Narrator: Location: Beyond the universal frontier. Projected Age of Our Universe: -2 minutes, 37 seconds.

Captain: We made it!

Peter: Indeed we did! Here we are before point 0 on the -A axis!

Hologram: -A axis? Not heard of that one.

Peter: Yes, well you know of the three spacial axes?

Captain: You mean width, X, height, Y, and depth, Z?

Peter: Precisely, and those are the first three dimensions, and the fourth?

Hologram: Time isn't it?

Peter: Exactly, and if this works as the number system, at this point we'd go into the negatives, thus...

Captain: Marking it on the -A axis.

Peter: Yes, and assuming an additional axis of probability we would have...

Hologram: -B?

Peter: How did you know?

Hologram: Just lucky.

Captain: So… what now?

Peter: We need to ensure the creation of the universe and break the reversion paradox.

Hologram: Just wait a second!? If there is no universe yet then where are we?

Peter: * darkly * The void of nothingness between universes. * brightly * Our universe is actually right over there.

Captain: But that is just a dot! Are you sure that is not just a speck of dirt on the screen?

Peter: Well, maybe… no… trust me on this sir, that is the universe in compressed form, heavily magnified and abstracted. Now then… hmm… umm...

Hologram: I get the feeling that maybe a plan was in order before we came out here...

Peter: We had insufficient time to prepare, this will require further processing. In the meantime, here's some music.

Light jazz begins to play.

Captain: Well, this could be a long one… better get comfortable… * yawns *

Peter: Careful re-positioning your extremities.

Hologram: Ow! * fzzt * * clunk * * fades out *

Captain: Where did Hologram go?

Peter: You disrupted his image. I think his emitter just fell into the control panel by the turret controls.

Captain: Uggh, now I have to go and look for him. Which is the the open hatch button?

The sound of the *Rover* firing.

Peter: That was the trigger sir.

Captain: Whoops.

There is a pause.

Peter: Captain, did you see a holographic emitter fire out the gun port?

Captain: Either that or we are loaded with over-sized silver bullets for fighting space werewolves.

Peter (mater-of-factly): He is heading for the universe.

The music concludes. Suddenly, a cacophonous boom as the emitter collides.

Peter: I think now would be a good time to assume the duck and cover position sir...

<div align="center">

Scene Eleven: *Difference: Minimal, Absence: Pervasive*

</div>

Captain: ...Aaaaghhhhh!

The ship returns to the present with an anticlimactic whir.

Captain: Whoa, Peter! Where are we?

Peter: The ship's chronometer seems to indicate we have returned to the present – 2142 of the year our secular space lord, the Common Era.

Captain: That's good I suppose. Any damage?

Peter: Not that I can detect. I am having the computer do a matter analysis. By comparing a newer sample with pre-revision data we shall see if we have made any fundamental structural changes to the makeup of the universe.

Captain: Well, that was sure one hell of a ride, eh Hologram? ...Huh?

Silence answers him and he then remembers.

Peter: If his emitter survived the expulsion and explosion, he has spent the last 13.7 or so billion years drifting as the universe continually expands sir.

Captain (quietly): Well, I guess he'll just have to continue that voyage...

Peter (solemnly): It appears so sir... * the computer beeps * Ah, that is one bit of good news! The amount of divergence is minimal, the curse seems broken!

Captain: Yeah, well, I still think I will take out a health insurance package, just in case.

Peter: I do not suspect that it would cover temporal based degradation sir. Maybe as an act of God.

The two spend a moment in silence to collect their thoughts before the comm system beeps.

Captain: Who the hell is that now?! Surely it can't be me again!

Peter: No sir, it is Bernard Anchanko.... something about stolen goods...

Captain: Tell him to go away, I'd rather go through another time wave than talk to him!

Peter: Wait sir! That could be it!

Captain: What? What do you mean?

Peter: If we act quickly, we can still utilize that last temporal jump to accelerate our course of action, and then be snapped back to our present position after the time-line reasserts itself.

Captain: Why would we want to do any of that? Sounds like a big headache.

Peter: May I submit a novella entitled "Journey to the Edge of the Universe"? We could get there in a matter of seconds rather than billions of years, and get back without having ever really left.

Captain: Full speed ahead Mr. Jules Verne! And bye bye Mr. Anchanko!

<div align="center">

Scene Twelve: *The Recovery*
The *Rover* time warps into a distant region of space: a clear border to nothingness is present.
</div>

Peter: Alright, based on my calculations this should be it. The ends of our universe. * darkly * The opening of the infinite void.

Captain: Are you going to keep doing that? And are you sure we are even going to be able to find him? Surely this must be like the proverbial needle in the haystack.

Peter: Only if the haystack was expanding at an ever increasing rate, sir.

Captain (wearily): That does not make it any better!

Peter: Activating scanning and sensor devices.

The ship's computer makes an elaborate set of radar type scanning pings.

Peter: Hmm, no results returned. I shall try extending the range.

Captain: Alright, but I'm starting to think this was not quite so smart an idea.

The two wait again.

Peter: No, still no readings. * readjusts controls * Longer range...

Captain: Oh! This is impossible! We will never find something as small as his emitter!

With a sudden thunk, a small metal object slams and embeds itself into the windscreen, causing a small crack to arch across the surface of the window.

Computer: Damaged windshield detected. Hull integrity compromised. Contact nearest service technician!

Peter (smiling): Ah, there we have it! One 13+ billion year old holographic emitter! And just 4.5 contemporary cracks in the windscreen.

Captain: Remind me to take you to New Vegas when this is over, given that improbable bit of luck... Specifically to pay the nearest glacier.

<div align="center">

Scene Thirteen: *Booting Up*
The *Rover* remains floating on our side of the edge of the universe.

</div>

Captain: How does it look?

Peter: If it was you at age 13 billion you would look considerably worse I imagine.

Captain: Do you think it still works? After all that time?

Peter: Only one way to find out, sir. It does not seem to have been disturbed that much, assuming the initial shock of the Big Bang was not too traumatic.

Captain (aside): Now that is one hell of a big if...

Peter taps on the emitter's activation button and chucks it in the air.

Hologram (crackly and distorted): Gungoclka cack nogeefa chhdeosfo whacak!

Peter tries again.

Hologram (crackly and distorted): Gungoclka cack nogeefa chhdeosfo whacak!

Captain: Well, as much as I'd hate to say it, I find it hard to say that is not normal for him...

Peter: Cruel aside, *aside*, sir, you are partially right. There is hope of salvage.

Hologram: Yuizkziz mobaga zucchini, linguine!

Peter: Well I will be. Recognizable vocabulary!

Captain: Could you please do something Peter, this is starting to get really old.

Peter taps a few keys on a terminal.

Peter: I am having trouble rebooting his core program.

Hologram: Gibber daddle ex-Captain, deidroido dishonourably discharged!

Captain (angered): Enough of this, I'll kick that glorified toy!

A loud bang as the Captain throws the emitter against the wall.

Hologram (reset): Ugh! Start process initiated!

Peter (astonished): Well, I will break my warranty! Brute force repair.

Hologram (befuddled): Where am I?! What's going on?!

Captain (sarcastic): Nothing much, you just triggered the Big Bang and spent 13 billion years riding the universe's most influential tidal wave. You know, nothing major. The usual. Quiet afternoon.

Hologram: Oh ha, ha. Funny... * he pauses to think * Hmm, wait a second, do you know what this means?

"Also Sprach Zarathustra" begins to play.

Peter (puzzled): No.

Hologram: I created the universe.

Peter (forceful): No.

Captain (dismissive): Let's not overstate things here.

Hologram (with great zeal): I am god!!!!!!

Peter: Just happened to have Thus Spoke Zarathustra on standby?

Hologram (pompously): Of course! For I… your creator...

Captain: Peter! Get us back to the present before he goes all Ten Commandments or something.

Peter: Forsooth, I shalt.

A final whoosh as the *Rover* warps back home with a final whir. The music however continues.

<div align="center">

THE END

</div>

Narrator: Captain James and his future self was played by Hamish Wilson. Malcolm Wilson played Peter Gans Lee, his future self and the narrator, while Graham Wilson played the one true god Hologram.

Narrator: The head writer was Graham Wilson, with Hamish Wilson as head editor and Malcolm Wilson as director. The series was written using *LibreOffice Writer*, and the music, audio effects and general editing were completed by Malcolm Wilson using *Audacity*.

Narrator: *Space Rover* is a *Fedora* and *Arch Linux* powered project, hosted by *icculus.org,* mirrored on the *Internet Archive* and *YouTube*, while distributed in free and non-patented Ogg Vorbis and FLAC formats. Special thanks to *Grant/Naylor Productions* and *Douglas Adams* for the series inspiration, as well as the venerable *Land Rover* car manufacturer.

The Space Rover theme tune plays us out.