

The Camera

By John DeFelice

Epilogue

2045

“We have breaking news from the Middle East,” declared Desh Kinsey, morning broadcaster for CNN.

“At approximately 4:13 a.m. this morning, sources within the US Space Force have confirmed that two missiles were launched towards Israeli airspace. We are told that both missiles were destroyed, apparently by the Israeli air missile defense systems. Our sources tell us that radiation levels in the atmosphere indicate that the missiles were nuclear. It is believed the attack was launched from Tehran, but the Iranian government has denied the claim.”

“Just moments ago, Iranian President Hamid Khatid issued the following statement on the Al Jazeera Media Network in Farsi, translated below,” Kinsey continued.

«اجازه دهید کاملاً روشن کنم که جمهوری اسلامی ایران سلاح هسته‌ای در اختیار دارد و هرگز نداشته است. این تنها نمونه‌ای دیگر از جنگ تبلیغاتی است که توسط اشغالگران نامشروع اسرائیل علیه ایران ادامه دارد. دولت صلح آمیز ایران بلافاصله علیه اسرائیل به سازمان ملل متحد شکایت خواهد کرد.»

“Let me make myself perfectly clear, in no uncertain terms, does the Islamic Republic of Iran possess nor has it ever possessed nuclear weapons. This is just another example of the propaganda war that continues to be waged against Iran by the illegitimate Israeli occupiers. The

peaceful government of Iran will immediately file a complaint against Israel to the United Nations.”

For over forty years, the Iranian Government had denied that the goal of its nuclear program was for the development of weapons of mass destruction. They claimed that nuclear weapons are condemned by the Quran and that their facilities for the enrichment of uranium were solely for the peaceful purpose to aid their nation’s transition from a fossil fuel non-renewable energy source to safe nuclear energy.

However, for all those years up to the present, they had continually denied the International Atomic Energy Agency access to inspect their nuclear facilities by playing a calculated game of cat and mouse with IAEA inspectors. On July 14, 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JOPOA), commonly referred to as The Iran Nuclear Deal was signed with the goal of rewarding Iran economically in exchange for them reigning in their nuclear aspirations. However, they continued to violate core tenants of the agreement. After the Trump administration overturned the deal and set in place draconian sanctions, the Iranian economy took a dose dive. After Trump’s reelection bid failed, the newly elected Biden administration spent four unsuccessful years trying to resurrect the deal. In an act of blatant defiance, in June of 2022, Iran disabled most of the security cameras installed by the IAE used to monitor their nuclear facilities and began operating in the dark.

For years, Iran’s nuclear capabilities remained hidden from the world. Could it have been possible that Iran indeed developed nuclear capabilities and launched the attack missile attack on Israel? After all, in the past, several of their leaders had threatened to wipe Israel off of the face of the earth. The question was *not* would Israel respond, but *when*.

As news of the incident spread across the world, the US and its NATO allies braced themselves for an Israeli response. However, in the hours proceeding the missile attack, something odd occurred. More accurately, something *didn't* occur. The Israeli government remained silent. There was no public response to the missile launch from them.

Their silence brought terror upon the world. There was speculation that Israel was preparing to launch an all-out nuclear attack against Iran. Diplomats around the world frantically tried to open up a dialogue with Israel but were given the cold shoulder. No country, including Russia or China, was able to discern Israel's intended response to the attack.

For years, it was believed that the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, had carried out clandestine attacks against Iranian nuclear facilities, including being accused of poisoning several Iranian nuclear scientists and exploding bombs at enrichment facilities. However, in 1981, Israel carried out a not-so-clandestine attack on an Iraqi nuclear facility. They sent a squadron of eight fighter-bombers, each equipped with two 925 kg bombs and destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor located 17 kilometers southeast of Bagdad. The Iranians learned from the attack and built their nuclear facilities below the ground in heavily fortified structures. Did Israel's silence indicate that they were planning an all-out attack on Iran's nuclear facilities? If so, it was feared that attack may involve nuclear weapons in an attempt to finally neutralize Iran's nuclear capabilities. The world held its breath.

However, days, weeks and months passed with still no response from Israel. In fact, after several years, the memory of the event faded from the minds of the world and remained a mystery. No one had any way of knowing why there was no Israeli response after the event. That is, until the Teitelbaum Journals were discovered. They were written by a scientist by the name of Nicodemus Teitelbaum. He had been writing in them ever since he was young. However, at

the time of the missile attack, Teitelbaum was not your ordinary scientist. In fact, he was one of the richest men on the planet. It was only after his death, nearly thirty years after the missile attack that his journals were discovered among his estate that he had left to his closest and only friend, Charlton Greiner. It was Greiner who had sparked Teitelbaum's interest in finding the origin of the Star of Bethlehem. Greiner immediately turned over the journals to scientists at MIT who served as a beneficiary of Teitelbaum's foundation. Within the pages of the journals, scientists discovered the reason why Israel did not respond to the attack on that day. The journals indicated precisely the location where the missiles were launched from and the reason *why* they had been launched. The bombshell was that the journals explained in precise detail, the scientific experiment that Teitelbaum conducted at a cost of billions of dollars. After examining the journals for several years, scientists concluded that Teitelbaum died thinking that his experiment was a failure. That defeat caused him to spend the rest of life in bitter seclusion. Despite Teitelbaum's brilliance, they believed that he died not knowing that his experiment had perhaps inadvertently changed the course of mankind for eternity and helped solve a mystery dating back to the birth of Jesus Christ.

Chapter One

In time of Abraham, after Sarah gave birth to Isaac, his first-born son Ishmael and his mother Hagar were expelled. Their departure marked the beginning of tension between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac that has continued until the missile launch into Israeli airspace. Ishmael's descendants became the Arab nation that later converted to Islam. Isaac's descendants became the nation of Israel. Iran has Persian roots so therefore they are not Arab, but their conversion to Islam has tied them to the hatred of Israel that dates back to the time of Abraham.

Sixteen hundred- thirty eight years after the death of Abraham, a star arose from the east signaling the birth of Christ. The story was recorded in the Gospel of Matthew around seventy years after death of Christ.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem saying, "Where is the newborn King of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage. Matthew 2:1-2.

Almost two thousand years later, the story of the Star of Bethlehem telling the tale of the magi from the east traveling to Judea to worship the newborn Christ is still being told and remains a mystery. Was this just a fabricated story repeated throughout the years like a fairy

tale? After the death of Christ, the story was so profound that it was etched in the walls of the catacombs where the early church met in Rome to worship in secret to hide from the persecution of Christians. Theologians believe the significance of the story is that it shows that salvation through Jesus Christ was meant for the gentiles as well as for the Jews since the magi that followed the star were pagans. If the story was true, where did the star come from? There have been many theories as to its origin ranging from it being a comet or an extraordinary alignment of planets. No solid scientific evidence as to its origin had ever emerged, until scientist believe they solved the mystery after the discovery of The Teitelbaum Journals. They were the result of years of research that began when he was Nicodemus Teitelbaum was young and that's where our story begins, when Teitelbaum was in elementary school.

At an early age, everyone began calling Nicodemus Teitelbaum "Nico." He was tall and thin with short, curly, black hair and had a distinctive, rather large, pointed nose. Even though Nico came from a Jewish family, he had many Christian friends in his neighborhood in Andover, Massachusetts, near Boston. One Christmas, one of his closest friends, Charlton, was participating in a nativity play at his church and invited him to attend. Charlton was Catholic, a religion that Nico, admittedly, knew nothing about. In the play, his friend played one of three wise men who brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to pay homage and worship the new born King of the Jews. Charlton was dressed in a colorful robe and wore a long, white, fake beard that hung several inches from his chin at times and Nico found it quite entertaining.

"The three wise men were magi from Persia," the narrator explained. "They saw a star rise from the east and they followed it as it came to rest high above Bethlehem where the baby Jesus lie in a manger with Mary and Joseph."

As Nico followed the play, some of the details from the plot made him a little uneasy. He was a bit of a 'nerd' when it came to history, particularly Middle Eastern History. He was obsessed with facts and details, not only when it came to history, or science, but accurately, with *life* in general. Both his father and grandfather were scientists, so I guess you could say it was in his DNA. While most of the kids in his class thought that history was boring, Nico, on the other hand, listened to every word his teachers spoke with awe. In history class, he always felt as if he was magically transported back to the time period they were studying. Because of his love for history, it was back in those early years in school when Nico became fascinated by the concept of time travel. He wasn't satisfied with just reading about history, he wanted to experience it firsthand.

While he watched the play, there were two things that gave him a 'stone in his shoe' and caused the natural curiosity inside him to stir. First of all, he was pretty sure there that the magi could not have come from Persia. He would have to wait until he got home to scour through his books on the history of the Middle East to quench his thirst. Nico was like a vampire when it came to learning. When he found something that interested him and it sparked his curiosity, he would not rest until he found blood.

Secondly, he was mystified by the story of magi following a star that signified the birth of Christ. Having been raised Jewish, he had learned about the prophecy of the star in Hebrew school, but it was the first time he had heard the nativity story where the prophecy was fulfilled. The implications of that story for him as a Jew was life changing. That night watching the play sparked something inside of him that one day would lead to his conversion to Catholicism.

As Nico watched the play, what he had learned in his youth about the Hebrew prophecy of the star came rushing back to him. He was both ecstatic and puzzled because at first, he

couldn't understand why the fulfillment of the prophecy in the nativity story had never been taught to him before. He had always considered himself a rational and logical person. He began to reason that because he was being raised Jewish, it was neither *rational* nor *logical* for his Hebrew teachers to focus on a story that focused on Jesus Christ since the Jews had rejected him as Messiah. During the play, the story of the prophecy played repeatedly in his mind. He was taken back to the book of Numbers. There, in one of the first five books of the Torah, known as the Pentateuch, the story of Balaam is found.

As the Israelites attempted to possess the promised land as foretold by their ancestors, Balak, king of Moab, where Jordan is now located, had seen what the Israelites had done to their enemies. He told messengers to bring Balaam, the seer to him. He wanted Balaam to curse the Israelites and was offered great financial incentive to do so. God spoke to Balaam and said, "Do not go with them and do not curse them for they are blessed."

At first, Balaam would not listen to God. When an angel of the Lord blocked the path of Balaam and his donkey, God miraculously caused his donkey to speak to him. It led to Balaam to see the angel and realized that God wanted him to bless the Israelites. Balaam would proclaim a series of visions or oracles from God which drew the anger and wrath of King Balak. In his Fourth Oracle, he proclaimed what would become known as 'the prophecy of the star.'

He uttered this oracle:

"The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of one whose eyes see clearly,
the oracle of one who hears the words of God,
who has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision of the Almighty,
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:
"I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob;

a scepter will rise out of Israel.
He will crush the foreheads of Moab,
Edom will be conquered;
Seir, his enemy will be conquered;
but Israel will grow strong.
A ruler will come out of Jacob
and destroy the survivors of the city.”
Numbers 24:15-19

As he recalled the words from this ancient text, it became clear to Nico that the nativity play that he was watching was a fulfillment of the prophecy of the star that he learned about from the Book of Numbers when he was young.

Chapter Two

When the play ended and he was about to be reunited with his friend, he put on his best poker face. He had questions for Charlton but he didn't want to do anything to jeopardize their friendship.

"Bravo, bravo," he said while clapping. "You deserve an academy award for that performance." Then he grabbed Charlton's beard and pulled on it causing it to make a sound as it snapped back into place. "BOING!"

They both laughed. Charlton was happy his friend had come to watch the play. On the way home, Nico did question Charlton about the play, but he tiptoed very softly.

"So, the three wise men were magi from Persia?" Nico asked Carlton, trying be very careful how he posed the question in an attempt to conceal his skepticism.

"Yeah, the magi were priests from Persia who studied the stars" he answered.

"From Persia?" Nick responded trying to conceal his puzzlement. "And they visited Herod in Jerusalem?" He added.

"Yeah, Herod tried to trick them," Charlton said. "He told them to go the Bethlehem and find the child so that he too, could worship him. But he really wanted to kill Jesus."

“Hmm,” Nico responded trying to sound agreeable.

“When magi didn’t return to Jerusalem. Herod had all the newborn babies in the country killed,” Charlton added.

As soon as Nick heard Charlton tell him the evil deed that was committed, he knew immediately why King Herod had all the children killed. Isaac the son of Abraham, had two sons, first born Esau, and Jacob who later was named Israel by God. Esau had sold his birth right to Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup and later Jacob tricked their father Isaac into giving him Esau’s first-born son’s blessing. Jacob went on to become the father of the nation of Israel and the descendants of Esau became the Seir, the forerunner of Rome. According to Balaam’s prophecy, Seir would be conquered and Edom would be destroyed. Herod was a descendant of Edom and was familiar with the prophecy of the star. He was determined to prevent *anyone* from rising up and destroying his legacy. Even if that meant murdering thousands of innocent children.

“That’s horrible,” Nico responded and decided he’d better exit the conversation about the play “Well, that was fun and you did a good job.”

The rest of their walk home, Nico steered clear of any more conversation about the details of the events portrayed in the play. Friendship and loyalty trumped any of his doubts about the play, at the moment, that is. As soon as he got home, the wheels began to turn.

From what I remember about the political climate in the Middle East at the time of the birth of Christ, I’m pretty sure they magi couldn’t have come from Persia. If they didn’t come from Persia, where come from? And what about that star? Where did it come from?

After that day, watching that nativity play set in motion a lifetime of searching for the origin of the Star of Bethlehem. He was fascinated that a story from the Hebrew Torah could be connected to a story in the Christian New Testament. He was convinced that it was more than a random coincidence. He believed that it had to be a part of God's plan for man and a hunger inside was born. At the same time, as a future scientist, he knew it was his responsibility to first collect all available information before he formed his hypothesis on where the magi had come from if they hadn't come from Persia and where the star had originated from. He already had a hunch that the magi had come from somewhere else in the Middle East. He knew he had a book somewhere that talked about the history. He remembered when he had first bought it he started reading but quickly lost interest it because he found that it wasn't relevant to anything he was studying at the time. Nico did that quite often. Many times, at the local book store, he would see a title and his brain would start to tingle and he just *had* to have it. Then, after starting to read them he would decide to shelve them for another day. I mean, *literally*, shelve them. As a result, one entire wall in his room was a giant book shelf that was filled with history books. He knew he had a book on the history of the magi, he just had to find it.

His eyes scanned the rows of his bookshelf one by one like a computer searching its data base until it found the file it was looking for.

Here it is! The Mystery of The Magi, by Dwight Longenecker.

Nico was a notorious note taker and could always be found with a journal, sometimes several journals tucked underneath his arm. After he had found the book he had been looking for, he spent several days studying it and recording what he had found on note cards, before he began to write in what would become known as volume I of the Teitelbaum Journals. Here is what he had written:

Evidence the Magi could not have come from Persia

Entry I Background information. Who were the magi?

One of the earliest mentions of the magi is by the Greek historian Herodotus, who says they came from the region of Media, in what now is northwest Iraq and Kurdistan. They were one of the six original tribes that made up the nation of the Medes, who appeared from the north during the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid periods. It is believed the magi began as tribal shamans, soothsayers, astrologers and medicine men. The Roman historians Pliny and Tacitus associated them with sorcery and magic and Pierre Briant, in his definitive of Persia, describes their functions as “scribes, haruspices, exorcists, doctors and singers.” Jerome, writing in the fourth century, identified three classes of magi: some were practitioners of demonic magic, others were experts in astronomy and the science of nature, while a third group was a caste of ascetical priests. Like most pagan priests, the magi offered animal sacrifices and tried to foretell the future by examining the entrails of animals, interpreting dreams, and studying the stars.

Before the conquest of the Middle East in sixth and seventh centuries AD, most of the people of Mesopotamia followed the ancient religion of Zoroastrianism. As Cyrus’s Achaemenid Empire grew, Zoroastrianism became the official religion and the primitive cult of the magi evolved as they adopted the teachings of Zoroaster. By the time Cyrus’s son and successor, Cambyses II, the magi became the official Zoroastrian priests of the Persian Empire.

As the Achaemenid Empire gained strength, the magi also grew in power. No longer mere tribal witch doctors, they had become masters of wisdom, theologians, interpreters of dreams, skilled astrologers and mathematicians. And Greek philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy had its roots in the wisdom of the Persian magi.

Entry II How did the magi fall from power in Persia?

The magi were at the peak of their power under Cyrus the Great. In the previous reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabonidus, the magi were a recognized power group with the ruling body known as the Council of Megistanes, which selected the monarch, and in theory, could check his power and even depose it. Once elected, however, the king had absolute power and anyone who tried to dethrone him did so at the risk of their lives. After the death of Cyrus, that's exactly what happened to the magi. After an attempted coup by the magi, supporters of Darius set off a purge and slaughtered them. The event led to an annual festival called the Magoponia, celebrating the killing of the magi. After the slaughter, Darius exiled the magi to their native Media, while others fled to Asia Minor. During the festival, the remaining magi were obliged to remain in seclusion or risk death. Despite their near annihilation by Darius, the magi continued to have an advisory role in his court and enjoyed a resurgence under Darius's son Xerxes. However, their status changed 150 years later when Alexander the Great burned the Persian capital of Persepolis. He destroyed their temples and ancient books, destroying the magi and their religion. Little or nothing is heard of them during the Greek domination of Persia in the fourth century BC. As Greek control waned and Parthian power began to grow, the magi experienced a slight resurgence. However, after the diaspora of magi to Asia Minor, they began to grow in stature in the region controlled by the Nabateans.

Entry III The status of the magi at the birth of Christ.

At the time of the birth of Christ, the city of Petra was the thriving capital of the Nabatean Kingdom, a major power in the Middle East. Covering most of the Sinai Peninsula and extending

along the eastern coast of the Red Sea, The Nabatean Kingdom, at its height, spread across northern Arabia and present-day Jordan to Damascus in Syria. By the first century BC, the fiercely independent Nabateans dominated the vital trading routes that extended from India across the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean to Egypt, Parthia and Rome and had become incredibly wealthy. Nabatean Kings considered themselves equal players with the like of Pompey, Julius Caesar, Herod the Great and even Mark Anthony and Cleopatra. In the decades leading up to the birth of Christ, Petra was considered an equal to Jerusalem.

The Nabateans had a shared ancestry with the Hebrews. It is believed they descended from Nebaioth, grandson of Abraham through Ishmael. It is believed that Petra served as a home for refugees fleeing from Jerusalem after they were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BC. Those fleeing Nebuchadnezzar would have found fellow Jews already settled in Arabia.

Conclusion: The Magi were no longer in a position of power in the Parthian Empire who controlled Persia at the time of the birth of Christ. Furthermore, the Parthians were in constant conflict with Rome who controlled Judea at the time of the birth of Christ and therefore, would not send a delegation to Herod in Jerusalem. I conclude that the magi were from the Nabatean Kingdom and probably traveled from Petra a distance of a little over one hundred miles to meet with Herod in Jerusalem and another seven miles to Bethlehem.

There was no need for Nico to even visit the public library to solve the mystery of where the magi had really come from. All the resources he needed were right there in his bedroom. To discover the source of the Star of Bethlehem was a different story. Over the next several weeks, he studied all of the prevailing theories as to its origin, but all of them left him unsatisfied. They ranged from the star, being a comet to it being a rare unusual alignment of the planets. None of the theories could explain Matthew's account of the star rising in the east before following a path

towards Bethlehem and then remaining above the city below. The sentence that Nico wrote to end his first journal placed him on lifetime journal that would culminate with the experiment he performed on the day missiles were launched towards Israel. This is what he wrote:

I am one hundred certain that the only way to discover the origin of the Star of Bethlehem is to travel back in time and witness events first hand.

Chapter Three

2005

MIT, Freshman Year

Nico spent most of his high school years at Philip's Academy dreaming about time travel and researching the science that would be needed to make it a reality. He was valedictorian at the prestigious high school so he had the option of attending the college of his choice. It wasn't a difficult decision for Nico to make. All of his life, he had dreamed of attending MIT like his father and grandfather before him. He was confident that with his research, it would be what he would learn about quantum physics at MIT that would allow him to achieve the scientific breakthrough of inventing time travel that would cement his name in history. His grandfather served on the MIT Faculty and was a close advisor to Robert Oppenheimer, the 'Father of the Atomic Bomb.' Just as the atomic bomb changed the world, Nico was confident that his time travel technology would change the world as well.

However, Nico was a realist. After researching time travel since he was in elementary school, he was aware that time travel would never be possible unless he was able to discover the 'missing link.' To Nico, the 'missing link' was similar to the 'spark of life.' As a scientist, he accepted that the universe had been created by the 'Big Bang Theory' but as a Jew, he was certain that it was God that initiated the 'spark of life.' As realist, Nico knew he had to earn a living in order to fund the development of his time travel technology. He had a plan. Nico was a avid photographer. Besides having one of his journals tucked under his arm. Nico could always be found carrying a camera. I don't mean just any camera. Nico always had a camera that had the latest technology. Just as Bill Gates and Paul Allen foresaw the future of personal computers and

invented Microsoft, Nico foresaw the future of virtual reality cameras and was going to make sure he was at the forefront to the industry. After all, when he would one day visit the past, he would have to record what he had seen as proof.

Nico knew attending college would present challenges for him, the biggest being not being able to spend as much time with his girlfriend Ann as he was able to do during high school. Ann had attended Central Catholic High School in Andover that was located just a few minutes from Phillip's. Ann would be attending Harvard and although MIT was not far from Harvard, they both knew that their heavy class loads would no doubt limit the amount of time they could spend together.

Ann's family were the owners of Piantedosi Bakery in Malden. Her grandfather, Salvatore, had founded the bakery in 1916 and its ownership had passed to her father Thomas. Many of her relatives on both sides of her family worked at the bakery. Ann and her three brothers, Robert, Thomas and Joseph were expected to one day run the business. Since Ann was the oldest, her parents expected her to attend Harvard to get an education that they felt was necessary to run a business in the modern world.

Nico and Ann dated all throughout high school. He had been introduced to Ann by his friend Charlton, who had invited him to watch the nativity play at St. Augustine's School, where Charlton and Ann attended. In fact, Ann played the part of the Virgin Mary in the nativity play that Nico watched.

Nico could never get out of mind his father's reaction when he had introduced them to Ann after they had started dating in high school.

"Mom and dad, I like you meet Ann," he said.

“It’s so nice to meet you,” Nico’s said extending her hand to greet Ann.

Nico’s dad was not as accommodating. He wanted to size Ann up first before he extended any pleasantries. “Ann, do you attend Phillip’s?” He asked in a judgmental tone. He knew that attending Phillip’s was a symbol of status quo.

“No, Mr. Teitelbaum, I go to Central.”

Nico’s dad facial expression told the whole story. He had been raised an Orthodox Jew and still had an Old Testament mind set. He still believed that Jews shouldn’t be mingling with Gentiles, let alone dating one. Nico, always a quick thinker, immediately went into damage control mode. “Ann’s parents own Piantedosi bakery,” he said. His response quickly drew a slight look of disapproval from Ann that she neatly disguised with a fake smile.

“Oh, that’s wonderful.” Nico’s mom responded enthusiastically. “I just love their bread.”

“Thank you,” Ann responded, but she noted that Nico’s dad remained silent.

After they left Nico’s house, Ann scorned Nico for his comment about her family owning the bakery. “Was that really necessary?” she asked. Nico just shrugged.

“I know exactly what you were trying to do?” She said. “I don’t want to be judged by my family’s money.”

“I’m sorry,” Nico said. “You have to forgive my dad. He’s a little old fashion when it comes to religion. He’ll come around, when he gets to know you,” he added.

Ann was silent. What did you expect her to say? What Nico really meant was he didn’t care what his dad thought about Ann being Catholic. He knew in his heart that one day he would marry Ann and for that matter he had already decided that he would convert to Catholicism. It

was good that he had that attitude because he knew his dad would never get over the fact that his Jewish son was dating a Catholic. Nico and Ann's relationship led to a rift between Nico and his father. When the day came when Nico and Ann would marry, Nico's father would become even colder towards him.

When Nico enrolled at MIT, he had to declare a major. Since MIT, or any university for that matter didn't offer a major in time travel, he settled on a double major in electrical engineering and computer science. He needed the electrical engineering knowledge to develop his virtual camera technology and the computer science knowledge to be able to program a computer to perform the massive number of calculations he determined that it would be necessary to achieve time travel.

It didn't take long for Nico to find out that he wasn't the only MIT student who dreamed to be the first to invent time travel. One of those individuals was graduate student Amal Dorai. Dorai was an avid fan of the internet comic strip *Cat and Girl*. It was *Cat and Girl* that gave him the idea to host a Time Traveler's Convention. The theory was that time travelers from the future could come back to 2005 and attend the event. The date was set for the spring on May 7th. When Nico first heard about the planned event he dismissed it as a hoax, but his interest peeked after he heard that several high-profile MIT physics professors would be speaking at the event.

However, he remained skeptical. The convention was to be held at the famed MIT East Campus. The East campus had the peculiar reputation for turning out off beat inventions like a person size hamster wheel and a roller coaster made out of two by fours. Nico had accumulated a countless number of journals filled with notes on the what quantum physics would be necessary if he were to achieve a break through and invent time travel. When May 7th came around, he walked to the East Campus with his traditional journal tucked under his arm. He had waited

months to listen to the lectures by the MIT physics professors and he was confident that he would hear *something* that might lead to a theory as to what was needed for him create the elusive ‘spark of life’ that was needed to initiate time travel. As soon as he arrived at the East Campus, his enthusiasm dimmed. There was a party atmosphere and you could tell that a lot of kids were wasted. There were jugglers and a band called the Hong Kong Regulators were playing and Nico thought they were horrible. A makeshift landing pad had been constructed to facilitate the flow of time travelers that were expected. Nico shook his head as he joined convention attendees that were slowly making their way to the East Campus. The auditorium only seated 400 people and Nico wanted to beat the crowd and get a seat up front so he could hear the lectures and take notes. Judging by what he had seen outside, he predicted the crowd would be just as noisy as they were outside.

Nico turned out to be right. The auditorium was completely full and was standing room only and it didn’t take long to figure out that he had been duped even by the MIT physics lecturers. They played right into the hands of the rambunctious crowd and told joke after time traveler joke. At one point during their talks, all three of lecturers tried to be serious and tell that crowd that based upon what we currently knew about the laws of physics, time travel was impossible.

Duh! Nico thought out loud.

After the professors concluded their talks, Doria stepped to the microphone and announced while looking at his watch, “It is exactly 9:45 pm and our guests are scheduled to arrive at 10 pm sharp. Let’s make our way outside to greet them. Please, please, don’t get too close to the landing pad for your own safety. Oh, and one more thing. We have prepared a table of snacks for our guests, so please, keep your hands away from the table.”

The auditorium emptied and the crowd made its way around the landing pad. You could see that the crowd in the front rows were salivating as they eye-balled the table of snacks at the back of the landing time. The clock ticked away and the crowd began a count down as the time approached 10 pm. 10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1. The crowd roared as the clock struck 10 pm as billows of smoke began to arise from a fog machine behind the launch pad. Simultaneously, a member of the Massachusetts DeLorean Club came flying down the street in a DeLorean like the one driven in *Back to the Future*, an obvious hoax.

As the smoke from the fog machine dissipated, as Nico had predicted, the landing pad was empty. The crowd was silent, but it didn't long for a few students in the front row to make their way across the launching pad to the snack. Soon they were joined by a river of students flowing across the launching pad looking like they hadn't eaten in weeks. They looked like a herd of zombies that had run across some innocent prey and they devoured them as a frenzied group.

Later on, that night when Nico spoke with Ann over the phone, she tried her best to console him in his disappointment. Her tone was caring but tough. "Nico honey, I know you're disappointed, but isn't that the life of a scientist?" She asked.

"You're right." Nico answered. "But I was looking forward to some serious discussions on time travel."

"I understand." She responded. "But in your zeal, you didn't consider that the event was being held at the East Campus. It's like Nazareth, what good science comes from the East Campus?" Nico had developed a new found love for reading the Bible, the New Testament, in particular but at the time wasn't astute enough to understand Ann's New Testament reference.

"What? Nico asked in an agitated tone.

“Never mind, I’ll explain later.” Ann said.

After they said their goodbyes, Nico slouched back in his chair, and tried to mentally regroup. However, he picked up the journal that he had taken to the convention and had intended to take note from the professor’s talk. He shook his head as flipped through its empty pages. In times like this, when Nico mindset was clouded by disappointment, he resorted to the one thing that always comforted his troubled mind. He got up from his chair, walked to a bookshelf and cradled about ten of his journals in his arms. He walked back to his chair and let all the journals fall to his feet. One by one, he picked up each journal and slowly but deliberately paged through them. They all were filled cover to cover with notes and quantum physics formulas that Nico had experimented with in his mind for years. He looked forward to the day when he would be able to physically test his formulas.

Chapter Four

Over the next three years, because of their busy school loads, Nico and Ann weren't able to spend the time that wanted to spend with each other. Instead of creating a wedge between them, they became closer to each other and they began to fall deeper and deeper in love. Although they weren't engaged yet, they both knew that one day they would be married. As result, one day Ann suggested that Nico move in with her at her apartment in Cambridge not far from the Harvard Campus. Ann knew that her parents would not approve of the move, but deep down and inside she knew that they would understand. After all, they both cared deeply for Nico and knew that one day they would be married. However, Nico struggled with the move. He knew his mom would understand, but it was his dad that he was worried about. He knew his dad would never approve of him living with a woman let alone a *Catholic* woman. His relationship with his father had gradually deteriorated and he knew moving in with Ann would make the situation worse. He decided to try and solve the problem with the same methodology he employed when he tried to solve a scientific problem. He documented his feelings in a journal. This is what he wrote:

December 2008

I love Ann more than anything else in the world.

I know that Ann loves me as well.

Ann is Catholic and I am a Jew. When I marry Ann, I will convert to Catholicism. It will be smooth religious transition. What I know about Catholicism and the New Testament it appears

that they are both a fulfilment of the Torah. This is evidenced by the story of the Star of Bethlehem being a fulfilment of the prophecy of the Star in Numbers. I know that my father will never approve of me marrying a Catholic and converting to Catholicism, but I will one day travel back and time and prove to him that the story of the Star of Bethlehem was true and not a fabricated story. He is a scientist and he will accept the scientific evidence that my camera will provide.

Nico moved in with Ann over the Christmas break in the winter of 2008 and as expected his father didn't approve and his mother was understanding. Their apartment was small but comfortable but there was enough room for each of them to have their own study desk. There was also enough room for a large book shelf where Nico could store his collection of quantum physics books.

Near the end of the semester, Ann came home and announced that she had a surprise for Nico.

"I bought a couple books for you. I know you'll be taking classes this summer but you need to take a break and read some fiction this summer to refresh your mind off of school until you back full time in the fall." She said. She handed him two books entitled *Christ the Lord*. One was subtitled *Out of Egypt* and the other was subtitled *The Road to Cana*. Nico had a puzzle look on his face

"They're by Anne Rice, she's Catholic." Ann said. Ann knew that Anne Rice was one of Nico's favorite authors and that he had read all of her vampire novels. She thought he would enjoy Rice's accounts of Jesus. Even though they were work of fiction, Rice had done extensive research and had incorporated a great deal of Catholic tradition into the novels which was quite a

departure from her normal writings. Nico read both books and did indeed enjoy them immensely and felt reading them would assist him in his conversion to Catholicism when that day would come. Ann was right. Nico entered his senior year at MIT refreshed.

His senior year, Nico had a class that focused on emerging camera technology. During that time period and for years to come, virtual reality camera technology focused primarily on video gaming. Nico was confident that he could easily find a job as an electrical engineer within the industry when he graduated in May. This would fit neatly into his long-term plans. He planned to use what he learned to build a camera that would record his time travels as evidence. Nico felt he was at the right place at the right time. He was fortunate that MIT had always been in the forefront of emerging camera technology.

In 1992, Michael McKenna of MIT's Media Lab had demonstrated the earliest documented virtual camera rig which he fixed a Pholhemus magnet motion sensor and a 3.2-inch portable LCD TV to a wooden ruler. The Teitelbaum Journals would be filled with Nico's notes on camera technology as it correlated to computer programming. It was during his senior year that his skills as an electrical engineer merged with his skills as a programmer. It was when he learned that artificial intelligence programming held the key to designing virtual camera systems. He learned to program techniques such as constraint solves, artificial intelligence scripts and other autonomous agents. He knew that at the time it was nearly impossible for humans to time travel. So, the robotics that controlled his camera would have to 'think for itself' during time travel.

As Nico's senior year progressed, he was faced with several life decisions. Should he pursue his doctorate degree or enter the job market? Naturally, his father wanted Nico to pursue his doctorate degree. After all, both he and his father, Nico's grandfather held doctorates and both taught at prestigious colleges. However, Nico had no plans to ever teach, ever. At the time,

Microsoft was developing its Kinect 3D scanner/webcam technology and Nico was hungry for hands on experience after spending the last four years in a world of ‘theory.’ He easily secured an interview with Microsoft since they were eager to recruit MIT grads. However, he knew going to work for Microsoft in Seattle presented a major problem with his relationship with Anne. As the end of the semester drew near told Ann,

“We need to talk.”

As Nico presented his case to Ann, her eyes began to well up with tears. Then she spoke.

“Nico, you know how much I love you,” she said.

“I love you, too,” Nico replied.

“Nico, look, you have to do what’s best for your future, *our* future,” she said.

“I’m going to be working on my MBA for the next two years, so take the job at Microsoft and we’ll work it out,” she added. Then they embraced. “I love you,” Nico told Anne.

The he reached into his pocket and pulled out a small box, “Ann, will you marry me?”

Chapter Five

To Seattle and Back

Not surprisingly, Nico father didn't take the news of Nico's and Ann's engagement well. He didn't say anything. He didn't have to. His body silence and body language told it all. When Nico broke the news of their engagement to his mother and father, he shared his plans to work for Microsoft on the Kinect Project for two years while Ann completed her MBA at Harvard. When he announced his plans, his mom showed a look of concern on her face. She knew how difficult the long-distance engagement relationship would be for Nico and Ann. On the other hand, Nico swore he saw a smile break out on his dad's face. At first, he thought maybe his dad was getting over the fact that he wasn't pursuing a doctorate degree and was happy that Nico had chosen a world-wide industry leader like Microsoft to work for. However, the more he thought about it, he decided that his dad's smile was because maybe he thought that that the long-distance engagement would collapse. He decided to not share that thought with Ann.

With Nico busy working long hours at Microsoft in Seattle and Ann busy working on her MBA at Harvard, the next two years flew by. They did their best to see each other on holidays and on occasional weekends. During those two years, Nico filled journal after journal with camera technology notes. He wasn't concerned at all about technology trademark infringement at all. He knew that the massive camera that one day he would build would require innovative technology that would be far beyond what Microsoft was currently developing. With that in mind all of his journal notes centered around basic electrical engineering and data processing. He was very careful because at some point the future, he needed to make sure he would be in sole possession of the patents for the technology he would invent. It was important to him to have the patents for that technology solely in his name.

During his time in Seattle, he was in close contact with his friend Charlton who assisted him while he contemplated his move back to Boston. Charlton, as you may recall, was his friend who had invited him to watch the nativity play. They had become close friends and it was Charlton who had introduced Nico to Ann. Charlton came from a family of Johns Hopkins graduates so he attended there instead of MIT. However, they had kept in close contact with each other and Nico had asked Charlton to be his Best Man in his wedding. When Nico graduated from Johns Hopkins, he took a position as an electrical engineer at Boston Dynamics, an emerging leader in robotics technology in the world. Boston Dynamics was located in Waltham, about thirty minutes from where Ann would be working at the family bakery business in Malden.

Boston Dynamics was formed in 1992 as a spinoff of MIT. Taking a position with Boston Dynamics was an easy decision for Nico to make. He envisioned his time traveling camera to be guided by a robot from within. From all of his research and planning on time traveling, Nico had become convinced that sending a human back in time would be dangerous if not possible. In almost all of his theoretical models, he concluded that the breaking down of human molecules may be impossible, at least for the time being. While that concept may make good entertainment for television and movies, none of his models found the breakdown of any organic material for time travel feasible.

Nico knew his time at Boston Dynamic would be short. He filled his journals with notes as usual, but he was convinced the robotic technology that was needed to guide his time traveling camera was sufficient in its present state and could be easily command programmed. He saw no need to reinvent the wheel. Again, he was ever cautious that the technology he would be using would be either patent protected through his own invention or a purchase of current technology

or through a licensing agreement. His goal was to learn the ins and outs of robot technology and he would be on his way. First, he had some important business to take care of; a wedding.

Nico and Ann were married at St. Augustine's Catholic Church in Andover on Memorial Day weekend in 2011. Nico stood at the altar in awe at the beauty of his bride as she walked down the aisle escorted by her father. Her coal black, curly, hair stood out boldly against her shapely, pure white wedding dress. Nico thought she looked just like an angel, an *Italian* angel. Just as Ann was about to reach Nico at the altar, Nico glanced at his mother and father who were standing in the first pew. His mom had the biggest smile on her face but his father was staring off into the distance.

Nico had gotten used to his father's behavior so he just shrugged it off. However, what Nico was not aware of was that his father was moving towards an advanced stage of Alzheimer's. He had spent the last two years away from his family while working in Seattle and had not picked up on his father's deteriorating health. When he did visit them on holidays and occasional weekends, his father was distant and cold towards him and he just assumed it was because of his relationship with Ann. Because of his father's past brilliance as a scientist and as a professor, his mother couldn't find a way to tell Nico the truth about his father's condition.

The wedding reception was a spectacle in itself. Guests were transported in an air-conditioned bus from a local hotel to the extravagant home of the Piantadosi family built on the banks of the Charles River. Ladies were provided comfortable, fluffy slippers as soon as they exited the bus so that they could abandon their formal footwear and easily negotiate the hilly terrain. Mint juleps with a jungle of fresh mint flowing from the glasses and plump and fresh Katama raw oysters flowed freely served by waiters in formal attire before dinner was served. Delicious

Lobster Bisque was followed by a meal of tender rack of lamb. At the head table during the meal, surprisingly, Nico's father leaned over to him and said, "Son, we need to talk."

The next morning, family and close friends met at nearby Wellesley College for brunch. Guests were provided a copy of the *New York Times* where Nico and Ann's wedding announcement could be found. Nico made it a point to find some private time to ask his father what he wanted to talk to him about. It had been on his mind all evening.

When an appropriate time presented itself, Nico asked, "Dad, what did you want to talk to me about?" Nico was surprised and a little shocked at his father's response.

"What are you talking about?" His father asked. After Nico told his father what he had said to him at the reception, his father just looked at Nico with a blank stare on his face.

"I don't know what you're talking about." He told Nico.

Nico excused himself and immediately went to talk to his mom.

"What's going on with dad?" Nico asked his mom.

"Sit down." She told Nico.

Nico took the news about his father having Alzheimer's Disease hard. His relationship had been slowly deteriorating and now this. He was so excited that his father wanted to talk to him last night but the door to his mind had closed. It would be years before Nico's father would tell him what he wanted to talk to him about.

Chapter Six

Crossroads

After a relaxing one-week honeymoon in Hawaii it was back to work. Ann finished her MBA at Harvard and headed back to work bakery's corporate office in Malden. She was named head of marketing by her father and was charged with expanding the business beyond Boston and New England. Under Ann's direction, over the next ten years, Piantedosi would expand into the New York, Baltimore, Chicago and Los Angeles markets. Meanwhile, Nico's time at Boston Dynamic extended to three years. Even though Nico determined he would be able to use existing robotics technology to guide his time traveling camera, he knew that the software he would be writing to initiate commands to the robotics technology had to be flawless. Once the project would be launched there would be no margin for error nor second chances. During his three years at Boston Dynamics, while Nico was learning robotics technology, he used both his electrical engineering and computer science programming skills to lay out the schematics he felt were needed to guide his vessel.

Over those three years, besides learning robotics technology and programming that technology, Nico continued to perfect his camera technology. He was confident that his technology was marketable, but he was concerned that it could be easily copied. He was particularly concerned about technology emerging in China. He was well aware that the Chinese were notorious for stealing technology. They also had a huge advantage over the west when it came to labor and production costs. He kept a close eye on emerging camera technology not only in China but around the world.

As 2014 approached, it represented a crossroad in the life of Nicodemus Teitelbaum. After graduating from MIT in 2009, he had spent two years in Seattle working for Microsoft learning camera technology. After marrying Ann in 2011, he spent the next three working for Boston Dynamics learning the robotics technology needed to guide and control his time traveling camera. Over that five-year period, in his journals, he had meticulously designed the schematics needed to build it. During that time period, he scoured through countless scientific journals to try and discover the quantum mechanics that would be needed to break through the dimension of time that both Albert Einstein Kurt Godel had written about and had studied so extensively. The volumes of mathematical equations recorded in his journals were astounding. However, being the realist that Nico was, he knew he would have to discover the ‘spark’ that would be needed to break through the dimension of time. He was confident that one day that knowledge would be revealed to him. He often thought about Napoleon Hill’s classic book, *Think and Grow Rich*. In it, Hill explains that great ideas are right there in front of us in another dimension and will come to us as a result of hard work, determination, and patience. Nico was certain that one day the missing piece to the puzzle will appear to him.

He knew that his time traveling camera would have to be launched into the atmosphere in the form of a satellite. In fact, his invention would be traveling through time as a satellite. He now knew that the time had come for him to work for a satellite company to acquire the technology that would be needed to launch and carry his camera back through time. However, that decision created a major problem for Nico. The company that he had his sights on was based in Colorado. Digital Globe had just launched the most advanced EO satellite that offered the

highest commercially available resolution.

But what about Ann? There was no way he could ask her to abandon her position in the family business. Would she be willing to only see him on the weekends and holidays like they had done when they were engaged? But that was different. They were married now and often talked about starting a family. First, it was “we’ll start a family after my time with Boston Dynamics was up.” Nico had no idea what to do and was angry that he had gotten himself and his marriage into this situation. He loved Ann very much but deep down inside he always knew that his dream of inventing time travel was his first love. He knew what he had to do.

“I’m flying to Colorado Monday for an interview with a satellite company,” Nico told Ann.

“Colorado?” Ann responded. “The weather’s nice there.” Then, she hung her head and fell silent. She knew this day would be coming. She didn’t know when, but she knew it *would* be coming. The tension between Ann and Nico has been slowly escalating. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to see the root of their problem. Nico had slowly become possessed with inventing time travel. Ever since Nico and Ann had first met, they were inseparable. Nico was drawn to Ann’s supportive and nurturing nature. With Ann by his side, Nico felt there was nothing he couldn’t accomplish. However, with each new technology Nico’s mind would absorb, he became more and more like evolving Artificial Intelligence. At first, he needed Ann, specifically, for someone to communicate with; someone to share his thoughts and dreams. As

long as he could remember, Charlton had been his closest friend. He was the only person that he shared what he had written in his journals. After all, it was Charlton that had invited him to the nativity play that set-in motion his lifelong dream of discovering the origin of the Star of Bethlehem. As time went on, Charlton became Nico's *only* friend. At both Microsoft in Seattle and Boston Dynamics, Nico made no friends. He didn't need any. All he needed was technology. After Nico assimilated the technology he needed at both companies, it was time for him to evolve. Sadly, Nico no longer needed Ann, he needed technology.

Chapter Seven

Nico and Ann quietly divorced. Nico's mother was devastated when she first heard the news.

His father was emotionless, but Nico was certain that deep down inside he was happy. They sold their home and Nico headed off to Westminster, Colorado to work for Digital Globe.

Westminster is located twenty minutes from Denver. Nico rented an apartment in nearby

Lakewood. It was the Fall of 2015 when Nico began at Digital Global. Before long, the first major

snow storm struck the Denver area and Nico headed for the slopes. He always had enjoyed skiing but never had the time. Ever since Nico and Ann had married, Nico tried to devote his full attention to Ann. Now that she was gone from his life, there was a giant void inside of him. Skiing helped fill that void. You would think that Nico's new-found free time on the weekends would have given him additional time to work on his time traveling camera.

His time on the slopes, whether it be Vail, Aspen or Breckenridge provided him the most important aspect of his research. And that was *time* to think. During the weekday he worked and, in the evenings, he documented everything he was learning from Digital Global. His weekends were spent on the slopes *thinking*. Of course, he took the occasional weekend trip back to Andover to visit his mother and father. He soon found out that those trips home caused him a degree of depression because of his father's slowly deteriorating condition.

Ever since his father had told him there was something he wanted to talk to him about caused Nico to always wonder what it was.

Chapter Seven