

## What's Past Is Past

by Stephen Jay Blumberg, MSPE



“So, you’re saying that this book here is not going to be published for another fifty years, but you have a copy...you have THIS copy...and you brought it to me from the future...that you came BACK from the future with this book.”

“Yes, that’s right!”

“Preposterous!!”

“You’re holding the actual book. You can see the date of publication right inside, and the ISBN, too. It’s right there.”

“This has to be a spoof. You had this book printed recently with the phony date and everything. You can’t go into the future and come back. I mean, you can go into the future. Einstein proved that, but you can’t go back in time.”

“And yet here I stand. Kind of.”

“Kind of?!! What the hell do you mean by that?”

“You’re actually looking at, and having a conversation with, a facsimile of me. And yes, that’s actually a facsimile of the actual book.”

“Facsimile.”

“Yes.”

“Of you.”

“That’s right. Fifty years from now, you’ll be able to create a facsimile of yourself, and also do with it pretty much anything you please.”

“I’m supposed to accept as fact that the real you is still somewhere in the future someplace? You can see I’m trying very hard not to laugh right now. And by the way, how do you create a facsimile of yourself?”

“With an app on my laptop.”

“Now I am laughing. Or, as YOU would say, ACTUALLY laughing. You want me to believe that fifty years from now, given the constantly accelerating rate of technological advancement, people are still using laptop computers? I’m supposed to believe not only that, but also that you sent a facsimile of yourself back from the future?”

“Why not use your computer, and find out when the author was born? Maybe that will convince you.”

“That won’t prove anything! You still could’ve had this book here, made up to fit exactly the parameters you chose. If your motive in going to all this trouble was to bend my brain, so to speak, or warp my consciousness, if you will, then you’ve failed. I know that this is you I’m poking in the chest with my finger right now. We

shook hands when I came in, and your hand was nice and warm. And I can smell your minty-fresh breath from all the way over here. And you have a crusty little booger in the corner of your left eye. Should've washed your face this morning before taking your fantastical trip through space-time."

"Very funny."

"No, seriously. How did you go fifty years into the future in the first place? You'd have to have traveled a very great distance through space at a rate close to the speed of light to do it. That technology does not yet exist! Not only that, you couldn't possibly afford it. Space travel is, you should pardon the expression, astronomically expensive."

"That's not how I did it. Or I should say, not how it happened."

"This time travel just HAPPENED to you? I thought you were pulling my leg all along here, but now you want me to believe in some kind of paranormal fantasy event? I think it's time, yes, TIME, for me to go. This has been so much fun I can hardly wait to get the hell out of here!"

"I woke up one morning last week, and all of a sudden it was 2074."

"Good-bye."

"Please don't go! This is important!"

"This is definitely NOT important. It's just plain old bullshit. Where'd I leave my jacket?"

"It's important to me. I want to figure out what happened just as much as you do."

"Wrong again! I do NOT want to figure out what happened here. I KNOW what happened. You went to a lot of trouble, and probably spent a pretty penny having that book printed and

everything. But you wasted your time and money, my friend. Now tell your actual self to put this facsimile away where it belongs and come back here so we can still be friends. There's just no way I can be friends with a fake you."

"It's funny that you said that just now, because, as you said before, original me can't go back in time. Original me can't come back to you in person, hence the facsimile. But trust me now. I am not a clone. I'm an exact copy. In 2074, the technology is a machine very similar to the 3-D printers in use today. The original me sent me to you so we could still be friends, just like always. Other than that I'm showing you this book, the original me has no idea what I've said or done since coming here. I'm free to be me however I choose, and I choose to continue our friendship. You can be with me just as you've always been."

"Okay, fine. We'll be friends just like before. But, speaking of trust, there's no way I'll ever believe this cockamamie story you're laying on me. I know you'll eventually fess up and tell me the truth. Meanwhile, whatever you were trying to achieve with this stunt, failed. Do facsimiles eat? If they do, maybe this one will go to lunch with me, down to Pritzker's Deli. My nickel."

"Sure. Very nice of you. You do realize I'll never have to actually prove to you what I've told you. Someday you'll see."

"What I see right now is a hot pastrami on rye with coleslaw and Russian dressing in my future. I sure as hell hope, when I eat it, it's not a facsimile."

"If it is, it'll be exactly the same as the original."

"Where's that book? I thought I put it down right here on the table."

"Original me deleted it." Ω