

TV IS A TIME MACHINE

by Phil Gietzen

I am a stranger in a stranger land. I was born in Beaumont, Texas, April 14, 1941. Aries, Sagitarius moon, Leo rising. My mother (Scorpio), nine months pregnant, trained to Beaumont, Texas on the City of New Orleans to see my Dad who was on a business trip. In 1941 she was afraid to fly, but I wondered myself if it might not have been better to have been born in an airplane in 1941, instead of Beaumont, Texas. I mean, my chart would have been different. Alas it was Beaumont not the airplane. I came, though, not from Beaumont, but from Blue Ridge, East Tennessee, Western North Carolina. My folks have been in that neck of the Great Smokeys for nigh on 200 years. They fought the war between the states, rebels of a sort unknown in this time. They fell to the guns and swords of the industrial Yankees who not only enslaved the Negro and the South, but the world, Vietnam to Watergate.

"This is Arlene Francis telling you once again that the biggest is not the best. This smaller Phillips tablet contains more antacid than either of the two leading roll type tablets . . . This is Arlene Francis telling you once again that the biggest is not the best . . . once again the biggest is not the best . . . once again . . . once again . . ."

On the West Coast we see everything three hours after it happens. Everything ABC/CBS/NBC sends us. When people in New York are watching Johnny Carson on the Late Show from Hollywood, it's 11:00 p.m. in New York, but in Hollywood it's still daylight and the California sunset is beginning to make the shadows of the palms along Sunset Boulevard look like spiders along the great Star Mile. Every night I watch the ABC news at 5:30, then I watch the NBC news at 6:00, and then I watch the CBS news at 6:30. I get all the news from three different networks. Plus I learn from watching all three, instead of just one of the three, as people in the East do, that Arlene Francis appears on each of the three stations simultaneously in the East but in the West she comes on during each of three separate broadcasts. So once again I see Arlene Francis telling me that the biggest is not the best. I see the war in Viet Nam three times . . . the same pictures but with different voice over . . . I see the politics three times . . . I see the snafus, the failures, the headline stories not in the context of a choice between ABC/CBS/NBC but as an hour and a half long feature film . . . each group telling the stories their way but still telling the same stories. The point here of course is that the present in New York is the future in San Francisco, and the present in San Francisco is the past in New York. Our 12:00 noon is their 3:00 p.m. Extending the idea further why not our Saturday being their Monday or

our 1972 being their 1984. . . . All these different time zones really tell us nothing about what is happening. When the president of the USA speaks to Neil Armstrong and Buss Aldrien at Tranquility Base while 600 million people watch a simultaneous event is happening in everyone's present, but in a multitude of time zones . . . for some it is night for some it is day . . . for some it is 1972 and for some it is 2021

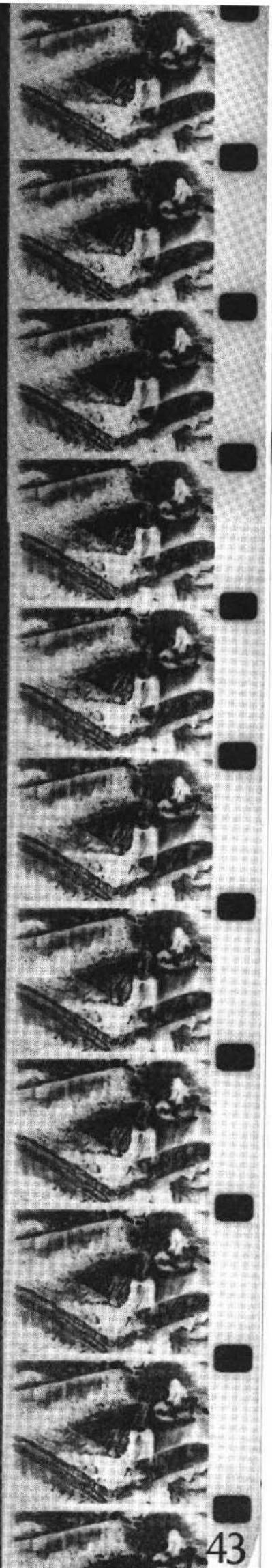


SH Stonehenge to Tranquility Base
TQB This is Tranquility Base, go ahead Stonehenge.
SH We have an unauthorized . . . coordinates New East Web Charlie with a prox time of 1968 . . . we are transmitting Fax simily.
TQB Check. We are copying you at three two one zero . . . copy.

INSIDE TRANQUILITY BASE

Officer Get that unscrambled and let's see it. Get Sarg Ekoms up here.
Sarg What's up Colonel?
Officer We have another unauthorized — a blue verbal — that went solex two right into an elevator, 1968, New East Web Charlie. Take a look at this. . . .
Decker Uh, this is unauthorized. My reasons for doing this experiment are several. Uh, first um, as I said this is totally unauthorized.
Officer This disc got picked up in 1968. We don't know if this is going to change the future or not, but we cannot allow unauthorized transmissions. Our world is a world of obedience. The existence of the State is more important than the existence of this individual or this recording.

Officer Sarg, you are to stand by to jump at 2100 hours. Your prox time will be 1968.5 . . . your assignment will be to record any activity surrounding this record that might endanger the future and report back here at 237 point 9. We will see that Decker is taken into custody. If we have negative results on your survey we will Warp Decker pre-transmission with a different program and get rid of this recording.
Sarg Sir, a jump from here to 1968 is a long way, I figure it at least 100 siderial years, if my calculations are correct.
Officer 89 siderial years.
Sarg Pretty dangerous Sir. Any restrictions on what I can take through with me?



Officer Yes. Your Jump Captain is packing your equipment. Better get started. Good luck.

Decker Anyway I estimated that on high energy levels solex could walk this disk retro to the negative templative current setting which is, as I say, should be prox year AD one nine five three.

TQB Stonehenge, this is tranquility Base.

SH Go ahead TQB.

TQB We will Warp Sarg Ekoms in 39 seconds, stand by.

SH Standing by. . . .

TQB Warp!

SH We have firing signal . . . we have firing signal.

Decker We have some sustainers now that were born prox time AD 1953. I've touched with some of them. But they are so full of plastic that it's next to impossible to get any kind of print out from them.

SH We lost him. We lost him! Tranquility Base, this is Stonehenge. TQB come in. We lost him!

TQB We are reading you Stonehenge. We have rectifiers up. If we don't find the trouble, it will mean that the future has been changed.

Announcer Good evening. Tonight we will broadcast the first of a series of programs honoring the inventor of electronic television, Dr. Philo Taylor Farnsworth. These programs are made possible by circumstances arising from Dr. Farnsworth's many inventions. We are especially privileged to have with us tonight the famous Sarg Ekoms.

Sarg In that now dead future from which I came, a method by which I could penetrate the temporal screen and thereby the fourth dimension allowed me to visit you in your time. As a result of a penetration of the space time continuum, I was able to collect data concerning the past for the people in my time. But when I became familiar with the attitudes of your people, I began to change.

Announcer The results of Sarg's experiments and experiences are the subject of this series of programs. In a moment this episode of contact with the future will begin, but first a word from Tadlock Gravity Cars. *TADLOCK* — the first name in gravity cars introduces the *Ecology X3*, the most advanced surface vehicle in the world today. Our fusion powered, totally silent, completely clean computer slave surface cars are the finest to be found. The interiors are fitted for the utmost comfort for intercity, continental, or oceanic travel. From the garden belt to the central city, from Wenderland to Chandigar, the *Tadlock Gravity Car* is the people's choice. The *Ecology X3* has no moving parts, emits no energy conversion wastes, runs for seven years on a single fusion tube under normal conditions. *Tadlock Gravity Car* has developed a computer slave microwave which conforms to any existing surface pattern from altitudes of from 25 feet to 25,000 feet and whisks you intrametropolitan at speeds of 450 miles an hour in complete comfort. See the *Ecology X3* at the *Tadlock Gravity Car* showroom today. *TADLOCK* gravity cars.

Voice See the *Ecology X3* by Tadlock Gravity Car at your dealer's showroom today. Now, we go first to Lawrence Colman in Beaver City, Utah for his report on Dr. Farnsworth's birthplace.

Announcer L. Colman We are here in Beaver City where Dr. Philo Taylor Farnsworth is born on a windy desert morning, August 19, 1906. . . .

