

Everything in Its Place

By

Burgis Beamis - Inventor Extraordinaire

FADE IN ON:

INT. COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY

The sign on the door reads "Amherst College - R&D". A DEWEY DECIMAL SYSTEM chart covers one wall, framed photos on either side.

BURGIS BEMIS (45) putters around a machine. He's a tiny man with a huge mustache. A lab coat flaps on his limbs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Witness Mr. Burgis Bemis, a charter member in the fraternity of inventors. A little man whose consuming passion is knowledge and order -

Books and papers fill the office, labeled with post-it notes. Burgis stacks them in neat piles.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

- haunted by the scars of time.

Burgis fusses with a Hummel on a bookcase, and turns it to face the pictures.

INSERT:

- An old timey photo of a bearded man. "Melvil Dewey" written underneath.

- The other shot is more modern: a sweet matron with chubby cheeks.

Burgis kisses the woman's photograph, and walks towards the machine.

He sets a timer to 30 minutes, and steps on a metal plate. The tower HUMS: loud and deep.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In just a moment, Mr. Bemis will enter a world lost long ago. Just waiting for him to arrive.

Burgis shrugs off the coat. He's stark naked underneath.

Vacuum tubes WHINE. The machine reaches critical mass.

Burgis pushes a button. A beam lances out, bathing him head to toe.

Burgis vaporizes instantly.

INT. LIBRARY - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

SUPER: Amherst College - 1875

Antique furniture everywhere: most of it brand-new. A carved desk. A leather couch. Bookcases on each wall.

The room's empty. The glass door closed.

POOF. Burgis reappears; as naked as when he was born.

The shadow of a BUSTY FEMALE walks by outside.

Burgis ducks down - covers "naughty bits" with his hands. He looks at a nearby clock. The time reads 1:30 pm.

The door handle shakes.

MELVIL DEWEY (20) storms inside, a wool coat draped across his frame. He seems far younger than his picture - an energetic man with intense eyes.

DEWEY

Annie, where is my pencil!?

Burgis ducks behind an office chair.

Melvil hangs the coat on a hook, and rummages through papers on his desk.

Burgis peeks over the side. Melvil reaches for a drawer -
- inches from the small man's face.

PENELOPE (O.S.)

Mister Dewey, it's over here...

Melvil wheels around, and heads outside. Burgis SIGHS. Relieved.

He steals a glance at a calendar. The date reads September 15th... 1875.

BURGIS

Yes!!!

He skips merrily across the room. Grabs the coat and tries it on for size.

MOMENTS LATER

The coat dominates Burgis' frame. Scrawny legs protrude from underneath like pale hairy toothpicks.

The wool starts to itch. Burgis scratches like a madman.
The door SLAMS open again.

DEWEY

Sir! What in blazes are you doing here?!?

Burgis swings around. Melvil gawks at him, a two sided
pencil in his hand.

BURGIS

I, um. Mr. Dewey! I'm Burgis Bemis.
Ph.d....!

He marches across the room. Dewey backs away.

DEWEY

(cold)

That's my coat.

BURGIS

Oh. Yes. I'm sorry!

He starts to remove it. Dewey grabs his lapel.

DEWEY

That's quite all right. Leave it be.
(yells over his shoulder)
Annie - please summon Mr. Levits.
Immediately!

Dewey retreats to his desk. Burgis plops down on the
couch, a huge grin on his face.

He fiddles with statues on a table. The men regard each
other warily.

BURGIS

(giggles)

I can't describe what a pleasure it is to
meet you. Me and Melvil Dewy. In the
flesh!

(pause)

I'm guessing Mr. Levits is security?

Dewey nods.

BURGIS

(cheerful)

No matter. I only came to see you. I'll
return to the future shortly.

Dewey blinks.

DEWEY

Pardon me. Did you say "the future"?

Burgis bounces up and down with glee. His buttocks SQUEAK against the couches' leather.

Impatience grows on Dewey's face. He TAPS the two sided pencil on the desk.

Burgis points at it enthusiastically.

BURGIS

Yes. I'm an inventor. Like you!

DEWEY

(beat)

One that travels through time?

Dewey reaches into a desk drawer. He withdraws a revolver silently, and lays it across his lap.

Burgis fumbles with index cards on a table, stacks them into neat piles.

DEWEY

Don't touch that!!

Burgis jumps. Papers fly everywhere.

He drops to the floor to sweep them up.

The coat hikes around his waist, presents Dewey with a heinous view.

Dewey claps a horrified hand over his eyes. Burgis stands up quickly.

DEWEY

You came from the future. To meet *me*?

BURGIS

Oh yes! You are a hero of mine. A reformer who revolutionized the information industry! In a way, you helped me build my time machine... Without your cataloging system, science would still be in the dark age!

Dewey stares at index cards on the floor.

DEWEY

You seem obsessed with organizing. Sir.

Burgis looks embarrassed.

BURGIS

Yes. Well. I have what they call OCD. But surely, you understand. An intelligent man *needs* to keep things organized! Otherwise, things go astray.

His voice trails off. He combs his mustache with a finger.

BURGIS

I wasn't always this way.

His eyes drift from Dewey. Towards a place far away.

BURGIS

It all started with my wife. Meredith.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

INT. BURGIS AND MEREDITH'S KITCHEN

SUPER: 2016

MEREDITH BEMIS (40s) stirs dough in a mixing bowl. The merry matron from the photograph.

Burgis sits at a cluttered table nearby.

It looks like a paper mill exploded. Cooking ingredients piled on papers. Books scattered everywhere.

Meredith places the bowl on the table, turns away.

MEREDITH

Would you prefer chocolate or vanilla chips?

BURGIS

(cranky)

I don't care. It's the same to me.

MEREDITH

You can't work *all* the time! Put down the books and eat!

Burgis grabs a tin labelled "Peanuts", and shovels a handful in his mouth.

BURGIS

Do as you wish. But leave me be!

Meredith grabs the tin from his hand, and sprinkles bits in the bowl.

MEREDITH

There! You've decided for me.

She stirs without looking - takes a taste.

Meredith turns red, and starts to CHOKE. Her pudgy hand grasps her throat. Burgis stares at the container.

BURGIS

Peanuts!?!

He jumps to his feet and scrabbles through a tangled sea of papers.

BURGIS

Darling - where's your allergy pen!?!

MEREDITH

Gawwwwkkkkkkk!

Meredith falls over backward. The bowl CLATTERS to the floor. Burgis stares helplessly.

BACK TO:

INT. LIBRARY - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES - DAY

Burgis SNIFFLES, and wipes away a tear.

BURGIS

My wife. She had an allergy. My messy ways killed her. I swore then and there to dedicate myself to putting everything in order. And erasing my mistake.

A speechless Dewey stares at him.

DEWEY

Tragic. Yes, indeed.

He swivels his chair towards the entrance.

DEWEY

(yells)

Annie! Where's Levits?!?

No answer from outside. The clock TICKS loudly. 1:58 PM.

DEWEY
(to Burgis)
So. Have you gone back and saved your
Meredith?

BURGIS
Well, no. I came here first. This is my
first test.

DEWEY
(shocked)
Surely, your wife's life takes
precedence?

BURGIS
It's easier to travel back a great
distance. Jumping to a date within one's
lifetime: it's complicated. In strange
ways...

DEWEY
Your machine. Where is it?

BURGIS
Back in my lab, of course!

DEWEY
Then - how can you return?

BURGIS
It's on a timer.

DEWEY
(chuckles)
A timer? How very droll!

Burgis stares at him.

BURGIS
Why?

DEWEY
A time machine - on a timer.
(chuckles)
That's funny. Don't you see?

Burgis scratches madly at his leg, exposing Bemis family
jewels. Dewey winces.

DEWEY
Good God, Man! Put that away!

BURGIS
What..?

DEWEY
Your nudism. It's on display.

BURGIS
My...? Oh - that!

He jumps up and fastens the coat. Bits of him bounce around freely.

DEWEY
(drily)
You have a reason for that, I pray?

BURGIS
Yes, of course! The device can only transport flesh. Like in the Terminator movies!

DEWEY
The what?!?

BURGIS
You know, with Schwarzenegger... Oh. Right. Never mind.

He scratches his balls. Reaches out to Dewey.

BURGIS
I only have moments left. And I'd dearly love to shake your hand...

Dewey jumps away.

Annie's silhouette flits past the door, a male companion at her side. Dewey's face lights up in relief.

DEWEY
Please excuse me!

He grabs the gun, and runs outside.

MOMENTS LATER

Burgis stands in the room, alone. Shadows flit in the hallway. Voices raised in urgency.

DEWEY (O.S.)
The man is deranged!

Burgis' face falls. He heads for a bookcase, and fusses with figurines. He looks down.

To his eye, the furniture seems astray.

DEWEY (O.S.)

No, I don't think he has a weapon. No, I haven't searched him. Please don't ask me to explain!

Burgis pushes against the bookcase.

It wobbles, and settles against the wall. Burgis smiles. Everything is right again.

He looks at the clock. 1:59 PM.

The door SLAMS open.

Dewey rushes into the room, revolver drawn. A thuggish man (MR. LEVITS) thunders at his side.

MR. LEVITS

Back to your asylum, nutter boy!

BURGIS

Please - there's been a mistake!

Burgis backs away, horrified.

Levits SLAMS him into the wall. He frisks Burgis' coat pockets, and slides his hand underneath.

MR. LEVITS

Let's see what ya got... What the hell!?!?

(to Dewey)

You dinna tell me he was naked!

Burgis throws a punch at Levits.

- and stumbles into the bookcase. It wobbles. Topples.

Squashes Dewey like a pancake underneath.

A trickle of blood runs from Dewey's ear. Burgis stares at him, horrified.

The clock reads 2 PM.

Annie SCREAMS. Burgis fades away...

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE OFFICE - EVENING

POOF! Burgis reappears in present day. Naked - and in full glory.

He grabs his lab coat off the floor, and looks towards the machine.

It's not there...

A jumble of wooden beams are assembled in a corner. Steel planks are soldered to the sides.

A sign on front reads: "Tyme Machein."

BURGIS

My stars and garters - this can't be!

Burgis looks towards the wall. The Dewey Decimal Chart is gone. An illustrated horse and buggy in its place.

Burgis dashes to his papers, and grabs a diagram.

The drawings look like a steam punk's wet dream. A mass of pipes, hand driven cranks.

BURGIS

(mutters)

"Without you, science would still be in the dark age."

He runs to a bookshelf, panic growing in his eyes.

BURGIS

No matter, Dear Meredith... I can build it again!

(pause)

Why can't I remember?

He flips through titles. His engineering books are gone. In their place: "Alchemy 101". "Foraging for Dummies".

Burgis falls to his knees.

BURGIS

No....!

Light fades at the window. There is no electricity...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The best laid plans of mice and men. And Burgis Bemis - a small man who wanted nothing but to master time. Burgis Bemis, now just part of a stunted landscape - a fragment of what science *could* have been. Here, in the lost Time Zone.

FINAL FADE OUT: