

**EFFECT AND CAUSE**  
**By Damian Synadinos**

**AUTHOR BIO** Damian Synadinos was born and raised in Columbus, Ohio. He is married with 2 young children, and tests software by day. By night, he exercises his creative side by participating in local theater and improv. This is only the second play he has written! Enjoy!

**SYNOPSIS** Effect and Cause tells an uncomplicated story about 2 brothers sharing drinks and fellowship at a café. Both have needs that can only be satisfied by the other. The younger and slower brother needs some encouragement, while the older and wiser simply needs a place to stay. And also, everything is backwards.

**CHARACTERS** Otto – Well-dressed [black slacks, dress-shirt, tie], educated, older brother of J.J.  
J.J. – Sloppily-dressed [jeans, blue t-shirt, ball cap], uneducated, younger brother of Otto  
Bob the waiter – Dressed in black, apron [optional], fabulous

**SETTING** A café.

**NOTES** All entrances and exits are done *backwards*. That is, the actors walk backwards on and off stage. As much or as little backwards ancillary action can take place as the director/actors see fit. Have fun with it!

#### **PRODUCTION HISTORY**

- March 2012 - Madlab – 3 in 30: Disaster
  - <http://madlab.net/3-in-30.html>
- November 2012 - Future Tenant – Future Ten
  - <http://boringpittsburgh.com/what-to-do-412/future-tenant-presents-armageddon-10-minutes-til-doomsday/>
- November 2012 - Variations Theatre Group
  - <http://variationstheatre.com/newsite/harvest-theatre-festival/>

#### **REVIEWS**

- <https://www.post-gazette.com/theaterreviews/2012/11/06/Future-Ten-packs-much-into-one-acts/stories/201211060153>
- <http://www.pghcitypaper.com/pittsburgh/future-ten-9-10-minutes-til-doomsday/Content?oid=1585504>
- <https://issuu.com/pghcitypaper/docs/20121107cp> (Page 40)

[LIGHTS UP - J.J. is seated alone at table for 2. On the table are (at least) a half-full bottle of beer, a half-full glass of milk, and a full vomit bag. BOB THE WAITER stands behind the table.]

**OTTO**

[Enters wearily with an ice pack strapped to his head, a bloody nose/lip, a loose tie, and is wearing a trash bag for pants]

Ahhh! This day just keeps getting worse and worse!

**J.J.**

Hey, hey, hey, Otto! Don't walk out on your brother like this! Things are bound to turn around...!

**OTTO**

I don't care about the bill!

**J.J.**

Sooooo, are you picking up the bill, or...?

**OTTO**

[Angrily] Yes, I'm leaving!!!

[Sits]

**J.J.**

Are you leaving?!

**OTTO**

No, I'm not ok!!

**J.J. and BOB THE WAITER**

Are you ok?!!

**OTTO**

[Holds his nose and cries out in pain. After yelling in pain, OTTO doubles over to violently vomit into the vomit bag. As he does this, he slams his face into the table. NOTE: At this point, OTTO can covertly wipe the fake blood off nose/lip as he slams his head into the table and covers it with the vomit bag]

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Takes the vomit bag from OTTO]  
Here's your vomit bag, sir!  
[Exits hurriedly]

**OTTO**

[Holding back vomit]  
Mmmmpffff!

**J.J.**

Ohhh...I got a good question! If time *was reversed*...then would you know *not* to order the milk?

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Enters quickly]  
Hold on, sir, I'll go get a vomit bag!

**OTTO**

[Dry heaving]  
I think I'm going to be sick!  
[Tightens his tie]

**BOB THE WAITER**

Hi! Is everything ok?  
[Exits calmly]

**OTTO**

[Belching] I think that milk has spoiled!

**J.J.**

Is something wrong with the milk?

**OTTO**

[Quickly goes from feeling queasy, to feeling fine]  
[Annoyed] Backwards clockwise...? What the hell are you talking about?! Quit asking stupid questions!

**J.J.**

If time was reversed in Australia do clocks turn reverse and go backwards clockwise?

**OTTO**

[OTTO takes a small sip of the milk]

This isn't that hard to get!

**J.J.**

I don't get it...

**OTTO**

[Exasperated] No, no, no! If time was reversed, it wouldn't rearrange the *pages* of the magazine. It would simply be like you *read* the magazine before you *read* the magazine! Get it?

**J.J.**

If time was reversed, then what happens to *Time Magazine*? Do the pages get rearranged?

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Enters]

No, you don't look ridiculous! You look great!

**OTTO**

[Stands]

I look ridiculous!

[Dejectedly exits]

**BOB THE WAITER**

Ohhh! I love Cher! [Singing] If I could turn back time! If I could find a way-

**J.J.**

Ok, ok. I'll tell you. It's some super-secret project that *turns back time*.

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Surprised] Awww! C'mon! You can tell me! I'm your waiter!

**J.J.**

[Arrogantly] Hmph. You wouldn't *get* what we're talking about.

**BOB THE WAITER**

So, what are you boys talking about?

**J.J.**

Everything is ok, thanks.

**BOB THE WAITER**

Hi! Is everything ok?

[Exits]

**J.J.**

[Wondering aloud and sipping his beer]

Hmmmm...*mean*-time? I wonder if that can be reversed, too...?

**BOB THE WAITER**

[OTTO and BOB THE WAITER enter. OTTO is wearing black slacks, and BOB THE WAITER has a pitcher of milk]

Don't worry! We'll find you something to wear, sir.

**OTTO**

That's fine, but what will I wear in the *meantime*?

[OTTO sits]

**BOB THE WAITER**

Sorry, sir! We can dry those for you in the back, if you like.

**OTTO**

Stop that!!!

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Begins to dab vigorously at OTTO's crotch with a dishrag]

Let me dry that for you, sir!

**OTTO**

My pants are soaked!

**J.J.**

Hey, hey, hey... you're supposed to be cheering me up!

**OTTO**

Ahhh! You boob!  
[Stares at his pants]

**J.J.**

[Checks watch]  
Hey, look! My watch is still running forward! Look!  
[Reaches across the table to show his watch and knocks over the beer spilling it onto OTTO's pants]

**BOB THE WAITER**

Here's your beer and your milk, sirs!  
[Picks up the full glass of milk, the beer, the pitcher and Exits]

**OTTO**

[Frustrated] No! Well, yes...but- Hmmm...that's a good question... [Thinks]

**J.J.**

So, what happens if you rewound a movie while time was reversed? Would it play forward normally?

**OTTO**

[Annoyed] How can you not get it?!

**J.J.**

[Skeptically] I don't get it...

**OTTO**

No, no, no! You see, if time was reversed, you would have already answered "Blue" before I asked the question about your shirt! Get it?

**J.J.**

[Confused] Blue.

**OTTO**

[Proudly] What color is your shirt?

J.J.

Blue.

**OTTO**

[Sighs] Ok, ok. [Thinks] Here's a good example: Just say, "Blue".

J.J.

It's clear as day! [Pauses, still confused] Can you...give me an example?

**OTTO**

It's clear as a bell!

J.J.

Ahhh! It's so clear!

**OTTO**

Like I said before, you can tell if time was reversed if that which *is going to* happen has already happened, and that which has *already* happened is going to happen!

J.J.

Ok, so, *how could* you tell if time was reversed?

**OTTO**

[Considers the question, then sadly] No, the experiment didn't work. We would *definitely* be able to tell if time was reversed.

J.J.

So, can you tell if the experiment worked? I mean, could you *tell* if time was reversed *right now*?

**OTTO**

[Checks watch] Yes, it's 10 after 10.

J.J.

Today at 10?! Wow! [Checks watch] Hey! It's after 10, now!

**OTTO**

I'll be able to begin work immediately, since they've already started running experiments. In fact, one of the experiments was supposed to begin today at 10.

**J.J.**

How exciting! No more disasters! When do you start?

**OTTO**

Exactly! No more accidents! No more misfortune or misadventures! No more catastrophes or calamities or cataclysms! *No more disasters!* It's all very exciting!

**J.J.**

It's a lot confusing! So, if you can change what happens, then you could avoid disasters and stuff?

**OTTO**

Why so secret? Because if we can know what's going to happen before it happens because it already happened, then we can *change* what happens! [J.J. looks lost] It's a little confusing at first, but you catch on after a bit.

[OTTO looks directly at the audience and winks]

**J.J.**

[Embarrassed] Sorry, bro! So, why all the secrecy?

**OTTO**

[Otto reaches across the table and covers J.J.'s mouth]

Shhh!!

[Otto removes his hand from J.J.'s mouth]

**J.J.**

[Excitedly and loudly] Reverse time! Wow!!

**OTTO**

You can *reverse time!*

**J.J.**

I don't get it...

**OTTO**

[Shocked] So what? So, what?! [Enthusiastically] So, in theory, if you can invert the ambient oscillation of a phased and modulated beam of light in a quantum vacuum with minimal variance, the cubic dampening effect will prolapse all subjective matter into anti-time resulting in instantaneous historic influence! Get it?

**J.J.**

[Unimpressed] Hmph. Reverse time. So what?

**OTTO**

Reverse time!

**J.J.**

Reverse...time?

**OTTO**

Ok, ok. I'll tell you. [Glances around before speaking] It's this top-secret project that's...attempting to...*reverse time*!

**J.J.**

[Surprised] Awww! C'mon! You can tell me! I'm your brother!

**OTTO**

Well, it's this top secret project that's... [Stops suddenly and eyes J.J. suspiciously]

**J.J.**

Next week? No problem! So, what project will you be working on?

**OTTO**

[Relieved] Whew! Thank you! Now, I *might* need to move in with you as early as next week. Once the security check clears, I can report to the laboratory and begin project work.

**J.J.**

You can stay with me!! No problem! That's what brothers are for!

**OTTO**

Yes, I got the job! Which means that I'll be moving to town...and will need someplace to stay for a while.

**J.J.**

Soooooo, anyway...you got the job?! Awesome! Congrats! High fi-  
[Begins a high-five, but then realizes it's a bad idea and stops]

**OTTO**

[OTTO Glares at J.J.]

**J.J.**

See! Time heals all wounds.

**OTTO**

[BOB THE WAITER enters and unstraps the ice pack from OTTO's head]  
Ohhh. Thank you! That feels better, already.

**BOB THE WAITER**

Here's your ice pack, sir!  
[Exits quickly with the ice pack]

**J.J.**

[Embarrassed] Sorry, bro.

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Enters hurriedly]  
Hold on, sir, I'll go get an ice pack!

**OTTO**

[Grimacing in pain] No, I'm not ok! Can you get me something for the pain?

**BOB THE WAITER**

Are you ok, sir?  
[Exits]

**J.J.**

Hey, hey, hey...you're supposed to be cheering me up!

**OTTO**

Ahhh! You dodo!  
[Clutches his head in pain]

**J.J.**

[Excitedly] You got the job?! Awesome! Congrats! High-five!

[OTTO and J.J. attempt to high-five, but clumsily miss each other's hands. J.J. smacks OTTO in the head]

**OTTO**

The second reason is to tell you... [Dramatic pause] I got the job!!

**J.J.**

[Doubtful] Hmph. It would take something amazing for things to turn around. So, what's the second reason?

**OTTO**

No problem! That's what brothers are for! Besides, things are bound to turn around...!

**J.J.**

[Depressed] Yeah, well... Thanks. I could sure use some cheering up.

**OTTO**

Well, I wanted to meet for two reasons. The first reason is that I know things haven't been going your way recently and I...just wanted to cheer you up!

**J.J.**

[Upbeat] So, what's up? Why'd you wanna meet?

**BOB THE WAITER**

[Enters]

One bill, one beer and one milk. Coming right up, sirs!

**J.J.**

I'll have a beer.

**OTTO**

Yes, only one bill, please [Points to self] and I'll just have a milk.

**BOB THE WAITER**

Hi! I'm Bob! Spelled the same in reverse! [Chuckles] I'll be serving you today. Can I get you started with some drinks?

[Exits]

**OTTO**

[Checks watch] J.J.! Its ok, I haven't been here long. Besides...time flies when you're having fun!

**J.J.**

[Stands]

Otto! Sorry I'm late.

[Checks watch and exits]

**OTTO**

[Pleased] Ahhh! This day just keeps getting better and better!

[LIGHTS DOWN]