The Golden Record

by

Aaron and Jordan Kandell

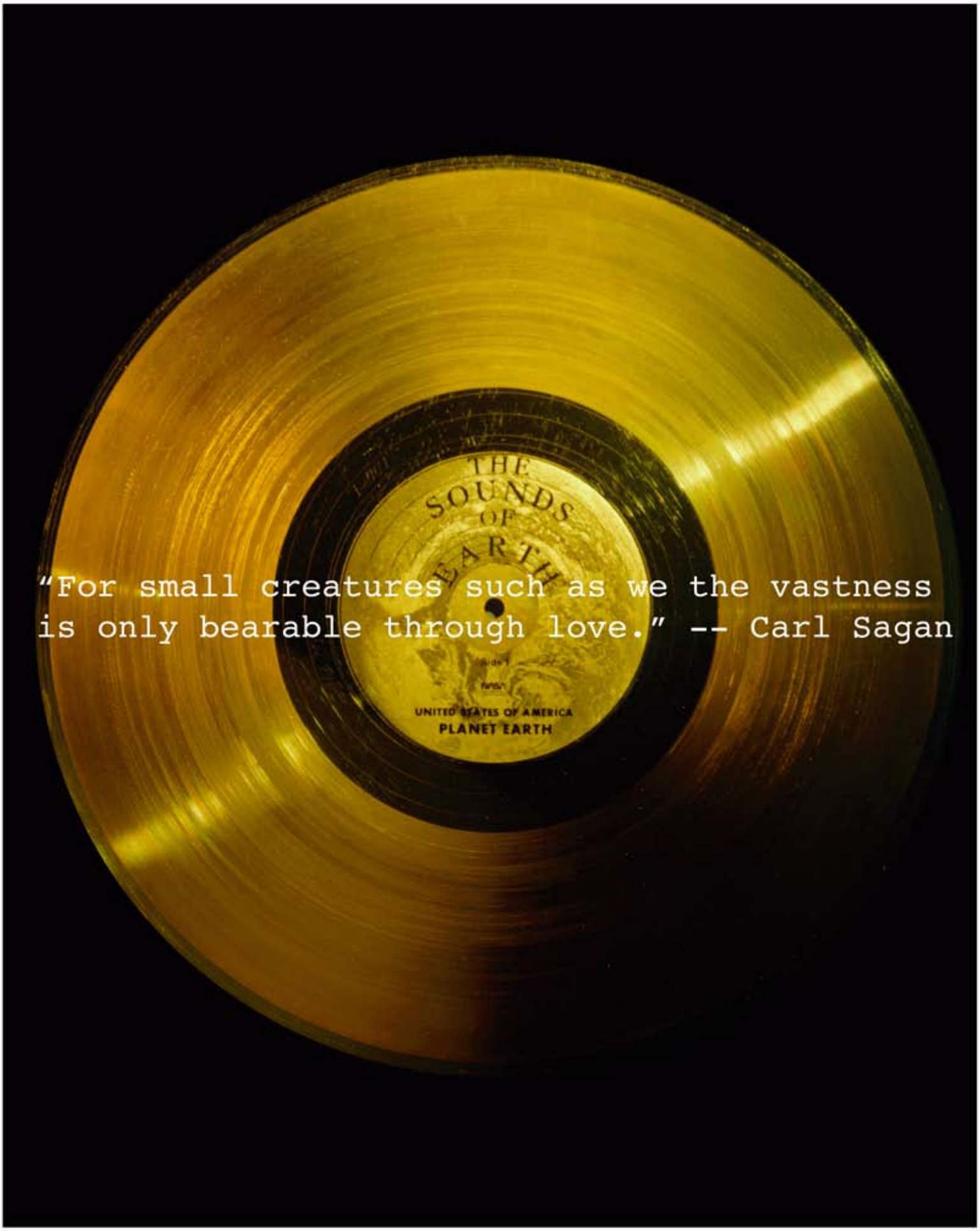
Based on a true story

Note: this script references actual music and images sent on the Voyager Golden Record. To download the contents of the record:

PLEASE CLICK THIS LINK

Sukee Chew
Hopscotch Pictures
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"For small creatures such as we the vastness is only bearable through love." -- Carl Sagan

OPEN ON A STAGE

Stark, framed by black. Just a podium with NASA's iconic logo. And a WOMAN (65) who shyly takes the mic. Gathers herself like a lighthouse awaiting a storm. Then looks up... right at US.

WOMAN
It is often said scientists are unromantic. That their obsession with truth robs the beauty from our world. Once upon a time, I shared this view. But that was before I met Carl...

She breaks off, a private moment of reflection. Who she is and where we are remain a mystery. All we know is she is beautiful impassioned, eloquent. When she speaks it's like a confession.

WOMAN
We can't circle back, but we can remember. Time is not a wheel but a heartbeat. Everything we made and everything we lost. This is my memory, but it's about something more: a mission. A golden record. And the greatest love I know.

She stares into camera. And as she slowly smiles...

FADE TO:

PROFOUND DARKNESS

Punctuated by ten thousand pinpoints of light. A sprawling kaleidoscope of suns, worlds, stars, at the center of which--

OUR PALE BLUE DOT

Glimmers like a precious jewel. Fifty million miles out it's smaller than a marble. All life, all history, our entire world nothing more than a sapphire speck on the vast cosmic ocean.

AND PULLING BACK

We realize it's really A REFLECTION in the metal of an antique spaceship. VIKING 1. Its name inscribed below a American flag.

A VOICE (CARL'S)
Are we alone in the universe?

The Viking orbiter spins, revealing MARS: red sand seas beckoning below. A probe detaches; begins a fiery descent.

THE VOICE
Today we take a giant leap toward answering mankind's biggest question.

Safely through the martian atmosphere, a mushroom parachute opens and a VW bus sized lander separates from its aeroshell. Retrorockets slow the lander's final approach to the surface.

THE VOICE
Will we find life on other worlds?

TOUCHDOWN! Viking 1 settles like a leaf onto alien soil: man's 1st mark on a planet not our own. A robotic camera snaps a PHOTO. An antenna aims at the distant dust mote we call Earth.

THE PHOTO

Fills screen: downloading line by vertical bit line as we...

CUT TO:

A PRIMETIME NEWS BROADCAST

Of 41 year old CARL SAGAN: in trademark turtleneck sweater, broadcasting from NASA Mission Control. Hair sideswept across his prominent forehead, thick eyebrows accentuating his almost boyish, unconventional good looks. VOICE like a rolling wave.

CARL
The images you are seeing now are the first ever from the surface of Mars.

A second shot of the Red Planet FILLS FRAME. Flickering as--

INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

TIMOTHY FERRIS (32) leans in and SLAPS the side of his 1976 trinitron TV. Suited up in a tux, Tim is the dashing Science Editor for *Rolling Stone*. He fast-scrawls notes on a flip-pad.

TIM
Ann, are you seeing this?

ANN DRUYAN: aspiring author, activist and absolute knockout with Farah Fawcett hair enters, checking her watch. A woman in a man's world she owns herself completely; holds nothing back.

ANN
What's with Carl Sagan and the turtlenecks? Seriously, it's May.

TIM
I finally land an exclusive with the most famous scientist in the world and you're stuck on his sweater?

He cranes to watch the TV but Ann blocks his view.



Viking takes vivid Mars photos

PASADENA (UPI) — Viking 1 rode a parachute and a cushion of rocket power to a smooth landing on Mars Tuesday and discovered a rocky, rolling desert with sand dunes under an usually bright late afternoon sky.

Its first two black and white pictures, displaying clarity never before seen from a robot explorer, appeared as if they had been taken at sunset in a desert in Nevada.

"Its a very exciting place," said astronomer Carl Sagan. "Mars is extraordinarily interesting."

The seven-foot tall spacecraft landed only 17 seconds late after an 11-month voyage from Earth 214 million miles away. Viking was quickly transformed into a nuclear-powered science observatory bearing the flag of the United States and a Bicentennial emblem honoring the nation's 200th birthday.

"For Viking today, the search is just beginning," said Viking mission director Thomas Young two hours after the big parachute and then three rocket engines eased the spacecraft to a gentle touchdown.

the fourth planet out from the sun.

Dr. Thomas Mutch, chief of the photographic experiment, said there was no obvious evidence that water had a role in shaping the surface. Pictures from orbit suggested the landing area was in a drainage basin for once-mighty rivers that geologists believe existed a billion years ago.

He said one picture showed a middle altitude cloud layer on the horizon.

Nation's growth

New York Times, July 20, 1976

Below is a link to Carl (left side of image) on **ABC News**, July 20, 1976 (scroll to 2:11 in):
http://abcnews.go.com/Archives/video/july-20-1976-viking-lands-mars-10252193



ANN
You're making me meet your parents, don't make me look bad being late.

TIM
You look great.

He takes her in his arms and kisses her. Simultaneously maneuvering her ever so subtly so he can still see the set.

ANN
You know in Eskimo culture it's a criminal act to kiss with eyes open.

TIM
If that were true they'd have a lot more broken noses. Seriously though--

He rubs his nose lightly against hers, an Eskimo kiss.

TIM
I need to cover this for my magazine.

ANN
But first you've got a deadline with me. C'mon, Sagan isn't going anywhere-

She drags him out the door. As it shuts we push INTO THE TV... video growing larger, more vibrant; Carl shedding pixels, COMING TO LIFE as we morph right through the screen into--

INT. NASA'S JET PROPULSION LAB (JPL) - PASADENA

The brain center of NASA Mission Control. Carl stands before a CBS News crew, overlooking a room of jubilant scientists.

CARL
Mark this moment: July 20th, 1976. The day man for the 1st time reached another world: our closest neighbor in a cosmos of billions and billions. From mission control, I'm Carl Sagan.

The cameras go dark. The instant he's off-air the room erupts: champagne, applause and handshakes all around. Carl's team rush in to congratulate him, but he heads past them, to lift--

NICK SAGAN: his precocious, 6 year old son. A mini-Carl.

CARL
There's my little spaceman. Tell me, Copernicus what do you think of Mars?

NICK
It looks like Arizona.

Carl laughs, flies his son around like a rocket.

NICK
And where's all the Martians?

CARL
We only just landed! We'll find them.

NICK
And what if they eat your ship, dad?

CARL
We'll take a picture of them doing it. Which will prove they exist.

He locks eyes with the one man in the room not celebrating...

MEET BRUCE MURRAY

JPL's Mission Director and Carl's most outspoken critic.

BRUCE
You should teach your son real science, Sagan, not science fiction. You keep telling everyone we'll find life on Mars, you only set them up for disappointment.

CARL
You don't know that we won't, Bruce.

BRUCE
There's no evidence yet that we will.

CARL
Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

BRUCE
And life beyond Earth is a lovely idea, but that's all it is. <u>An idea.</u>

CARL
Like putting a man on the moon? Like landing on Mars?

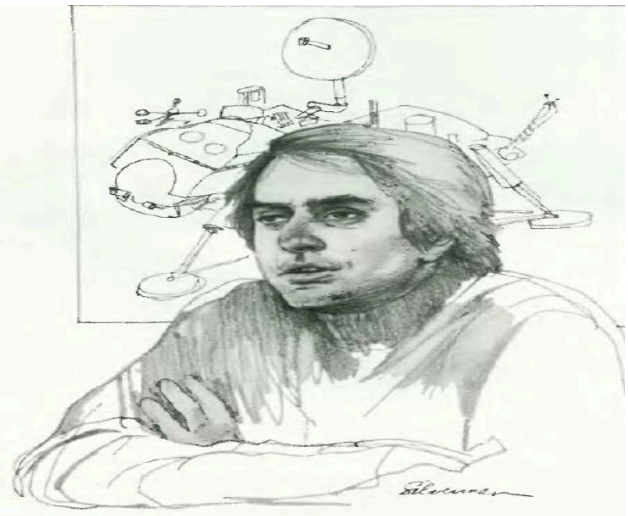
He points to the images just coming in from the Mars lander.

CARL
It's the craziest, most impossible ideas that tend to change our world.

BRUCE
Passion is one thing, Carl, but don't let your obsession ruin you. Because NASA won't be there when you fall.

PROFILES

A RESONANCE WITH SOMETHING ALIVE—I



Carl Sagan

Currently, the most ardent advocate of the possibility of life on Mars, and on a lot of other places distant from our planet, is Dr. Carl Sagan, a professor of astronomy at Cornell, who has been on the scientific teams planning several of NASA's unmanned spacecraft missions. On August 10th last year, the day before Viking 1 was supposed to be launched from the Kennedy Space Center, in Cape Canaveral, Florida, Sagan was addressing a dozen or so children seated on the hot cement near the pool of the Ramada Inn at Cocoa Beach, about twelve miles from the launching pad. A youthful-looking man of forty-one, with long, straight black hair combed at a sloping angle across a high forehead, Sagan (who pronounces his name to rhyme with "pagan") is a controversial figure, but most scientists will agree that if he doesn't embody the spirit of the whole Viking enterprise he at least supplies its imagination. On this

AMONG those who won't devote much time to examining the photographs for life is Dr. Bruce C. Murray, a geologist who was a member, along with Sagan, of the imaging team of Mariner 9, the spacecraft that began orbiting Mars in mid-November of 1971 and, over almost an entire year, sent photographs covering the whole planet. Murray, a thickset, solidly built man, is a professor of planetary science at the California Institute of Technology; following a stint as leader of the imaging team of Mariner 10, which flew by Venus and Mercury, he was made director of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, in Pasadena, which Caltech runs for NASA, and which is the flight-operations center for Viking. (NASA's Langley Research Center, in Hampton, Virginia, is in overall charge of the project.) As a geologist, Murray is fundamentally interested in the earth, and, unlike Sagan, he has studied the other planets primarily to learn more about this one. Many scientists regard Murray as being, in his own fashion, as impressive as Sagan in his outspokenness. "Bruce is as good in his ultra-conservative way as Carl is in his ultra-far-out way," a colleague of both said recently. Sagan's ideas about life on Mars irritate Murray. At a symposium on November 12, 1971, the day before Mariner 9 went into orbit around Mars, Murray and Sagan shared a platform at Caltech with Ray Bradbury and Arthur C. Clarke, the science-fiction writers, and Walter Sullivan, the science editor of the *Times*, for a discussion later published as a book, entitled "Mars and the Mind of Man." Murray, who considered himself the solid dough amidst the general leavening, said:

I really don't think there is any life on Mars. There never has been any evidence of it. It has just been a very attractive idea. You cannot completely disprove the possibility of life there any more than you can disprove life on the moon. . . . It just becomes less and less likely. And it has become very less likely as we have gotten more information about Mars. When you go back to find out why people thought there might be life there, it was in part, if not entirely, the result of this wishful thinking and the Edgar Rice Burroughs kind of popularization.

The New Yorker, June 20th, 1976.

Excerpted from 2 part profile on Carl and Bruce's rivalry

He masks his threat with a smile that does nothing to hide the rivalry. LINDA SALZMAN, Carl's bombshell blonde wife, cuts in.

LINDA
Sorry to break up the festivities, but Carl's running late for Carson.

Before Carl can argue further, she pulls him and Nick away.

CARL
Just as the gloves were coming off.

LINDA
What would you do without me?

CARL
Win more arguments probably.

LINDA
As brilliant as you are, it's unwise to win every battle. Especially against your boss.

Like a dog to a higher pitch, Carl hears her tone's subtlety.

CARL
We talking about Bruce or you and me?

LINDA
With me you're always losing.

She shoves a schedule into his hands and marches him out an exit to a waiting limo. As they climb in the CAMERA PANS PAST--

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER - MATCH-CUT

And continues panning to the other end of the limo -- where Ann and Tim climb out: LA morphed to NYC. Ann grins at Tim.

ANN
So this is why we're all glammed up.

She heads for the marquee but Tim blocks her. He's nervous.

TIM
Annie, I need to tell you something.

He never calls her Annie. And she knows instantly:

ANN
We're not meeting your parents.

Tim shakes his head. Ann is NOT pleased.

ANN
So why the hell did you drag me here!

TIM
I asked the driver to take us to the most romantic place in New York, but since he didn't speak English--

He pulls out a ring. Actually more like a large pebble bound by rusty paperclips into a sort of DIY band. Ann stares at it.

What the hell is that?

TIM
It's the biggest rock I could find.

He slips it on her finger as a sewer vent billows smog nearby.

TIM
I think we should get married.

You're kidding.

TIM
I'm serious.

You're proposing next to a sewer.

TIM
You want me to get on one knee?

He starts to bend down but Ann quickly pulls him back up.

ANN
I don't want any more fumes going to your head.

TIM
I mean it Annie, marry me. I know it's only been a year but honestly--

He points at himself like a game show hostess would a prize.

TIM
Who are you gonna find that's better?

ANN
Boy you really know how to sweep a girl off her feet.

Tim takes the cue. Hefting her ungracefully into his arms.

TIM
Did I forget to mention I love you.

He leans in for the kiss but she stops his lips with her hand.

TIM
Is that a no?

She looks into his eyes, a long contemplative beat.

ANN
No.

TIM
To the marriage or--

She kisses him.

ANN
No to the "*no*".

Tim laughs relieved. Twirls her. Romantic despite the setting.

ANN
Now please carry me away from here.
It smells like shit.

Lips locked he hauls her back into the limo as we SWITCH BACK--

INT. LIMO - HOLLYWOOD

To Linda and Carl. Who's gazing deep in thought at the stars twinkling to life outside his window, Nick asleep in his lap.

LINDA
If you can pull your head out of the clouds I could use you here on Earth.

Linda rolls his window up, opens his overambitious schedule.

LINDA
Our redeye gets into JFK at 8. You're meeting Random House at 10. Here's the manuscript to proof on the plane.

She gives him his unbound book: <u>The Dragons of Eden.</u>

LINDA
After that you've an interview for Rolling Stone. And PBS wants a time to discuss the ***Cosmos*** miniseries.

CARL
Schedule it for when we return to LA.

LINDA
And your family... when's a good time to pencil them in?

Carl sighs. Rubs his forehead, suddenly very tired.

CARL
I was right, you are mad at me.

LINDA
No I'm exhausted. And lonely. If you aren't crusading for NASA, you're off writing your next opus, teaching too many classes at Cornell, or booked on TV. There's no space for Nick or me.

CARL
Everything I do is for you and Nick. That's why you're here with me.

He ruffles his sleeping son's hair. Linda's a pot on high heat-

LINDA
As your secretary, maid, editor, chef... everything BUT your wife.

Carl cups her face, a tender moment, genuine and heartfelt.

CARL
You're my gravity.

LINDA
Then why does it feel like we're out of orbit?

The limo pulls to a stop outside *The Tonight Show* studio.

CARL
I'll do better. Tell me what you need-

He takes her hand, calmly. She's simmering. So much unsaid...

LINDA
(instead)
Go on, you can't be late for Carson.

Carl slides to the door. Pauses. Leans back and kisses Linda, cold, cursory. And as he opens the door and exits--

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - LATER

Another door SLAMS open, and Tim stumbles in. Still carrying Ann. Still passionately kissing. She full-body straddles him. Two bound magnets. Mouths melted together. Clothes coming off. They fall backwards over the couch, out of view, to the floor.

IN FRAME ABOVE THEM

The TV's still on. ARCHIVE FOOTAGE now of "*The Tonight Show*".



From The Tonight Show in 1980: Johnny Carson impersonating Carl Sagan, while Ed McMahon plays it straight.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jVQg87MA9s



Carl on Carson in 1978. A regular guest, he appeared 26 times between 1973-1986.

ED MCMAHON
Please welcome the "Voice of Science" world famous astronomer Caaarl Sagan!

JOHNNY CARSON enters in black turtle neck and Carl Sagan wig.

JOHNNY CARSON
(a spot-on impersonation)
Why thank you, Ed. Good to be back.

ED MCMAHON
Is it possible, doctor, to sum up briefly the vastness of the universe?

JOHNNY CARSON
(stressing each syllable)
The universe is made up of billions and biiiillyuns of galaxies...

Tim's head appears as the audience bursts into laughter.

TIM
I have to write this into my article.

He reaches for a pen. Ann's hand rises, pulls Tim back down.

SMASH TO BLACK

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Light streams in. Tim awakes on the floor. Sits up to find Ann in a suit, clacking away at a typewriter.

TIM
Morning man pants. You're up early.

ANN
Or late. Since I didn't sleep at all.

She slams the last key. Triumphantly yanks the page out and drops it with a flourish on top an unbound manuscript. It's the title page to her first novel: <u>A Famous Broken Heart.</u>

TIM
Is that...

ANN
I finally finished it. My 1st novel. Feels like I just summited Everest.

TIM
And how's the view?

She grins down at him on the floor.

ANN
Disappointing.

He laughs, pulls her in as she gathers her purse and keys.

TIM
What's the rush I don't work till 10.

ANN
It's 11. And I'm late for my big publisher's meeting.

TIM
I thought you said it was next week.

ANN
I said that last week now it's today.

TIM
Don't worry they're gonna love it.

ANN
Not everyone's as easily seduced as you. You interviewing Sagan today?

TIM
Tonight at Nora's. Come with me.

ANN
I can't. I'm on double-shift at the bookstore, then the museum.

TIM
Reschedule. I really want you to meet Carl. He's the most--

ANN
Incredible man you've ever met. I know. I'll see if I can make it.

She kisses him quickly on the lips, like a manic hummingbird.

TIM
That's all I get?

ANN
You've got me forever, what more do you want?

She kisses him again, this time on the cheek. He goes for more but Ann's already fluttering out the door. As it closes--

TIM
There goes the future Miss Timothy Ferris TITAN of the literary world!

EXT. RANDOM HOUSE TOWER - NYC - DAY

PAN DOWN from the banner on the world's largest publishing house to find Carl and Linda swinging Nick between them.

CARL
Ok Nicarus, I need my arms back now.

NICK
(clinging to him)
Can't I come to your meeting, Dad?

CARL
I'd rather go with you, FAO Schwartz is way more fun than publisher notes.

NICK
Why, they gonna tear you a new one?

Carl shoots Linda a look: *who taught him that?*

LINDA
See what happens when you're away, he spends too much time with Frank.

She means Frank Drake, Carl's best friend who we'll soon meet.

LINDA
You sure you want to do this book?

CARL
You still think it's a risk?

LINDA
I think you'll either win the Pulitzer or ruin your career.

CARL
According to Bruce and half the science world I'm doing that already.

LINDA
Why stop now?

Her sarcasm hints at the edge of a deeper issue here.

CARL
When you believe something deeply, you have to follow it wherever it leads. Even if that's off a cliff.

LINDA
Funny, you said the same thing when you married me.

CARL
And was I wrong?

LINDA
Depends. Am I the belief or the cliff?

Carl leans in. Cracks her stony expression with his grin.

CARL
Cancel dinner. I'll take you out instead. We'll celebrate, you and me.

LINDA
We can't. You committed to interview with Rolling Stone tonight.

CARL
I'm trying to make it up to you.

Linda smiles. Kisses her husband softly on the cheek.

LINDA
I know.

She strolls off with Nick. Carl stares after them a long beat. Then heads inside. As he disappears through a revolving door--

ANN EXITS OUT THE OTHER SIDE

She stares up at the Random House sign. Then angrily tosses her manuscript into the trash. And storms out of frame.

A BEAT as a homeless guy rescues it and a half-eaten burrito from the garbage; flips through her book while enjoying lunch. Until Ann RUNS BACK out of breath. He takes one look at her...

HOMELESS GUY
Just 'cause someone tells you so, don't mean it's trash.

...and hands it over. To his surprise, Ann hugs him.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - MAGIC HOUR

A setting sun glows gold over Manhattan as Ann and Tim stroll arm-in-arm out of Central Park and into a fancy brownstone. Tim swings a champagne bottle, cheery to Ann's moody silence.

TIM
Listen, your book is terrific. Forget Random House. What do they know?

ANN
They're only the biggest publishing house on earth. And they're right, my novel is derivative.

TIM
So what. Good writers borrow, great writers steal. Oscar Wilde said that.

ANN
I'm pretty sure it was Shakespeare.

TIM
Wilde stole it from Shakespeare.

ANN
That's my point. I need my own story.

TIM
You can't beat yourself up over one rejection. I've had hundreds.

ANN
Is that supposed to cheer me up?

TIM
No, but what if I spoke to my editor--

ANN
Tim, I asked you not to pull favors!

TIM
He called me. He has major notes but--

ANN
(excited now)
Anything he asks but the title stays.

TIM
He's already changed it.

They step into an elevator, each floor named. Tim hits EPHRON.

ANN
To what?

TIM
The Red Limit.

ANN
From *A Famous Broken Heart?*

TIM
(confused)
No. From *The Search for the Edge of the Universe*.

ANN
Wait, I've lost the thread... are we still talking about *my* book?

TIM
No, mine. They're gonna publish it!

It's huge news. Ann genuinely tries to share Tim's excitement, but his timing is, unfortunately, dreadful.

ANN
That's great. Your first book.

The elevator opens into a apartment. Tim steps out. Ann stays.

TIM
Did I miss something?

ANN
No, I'm thrilled for you. Really.

TIM
So why are you still in the elevator?

ANN
You go ahead. You've a big interview with Sagan. I don't want to spoil it.

TIM
I'm sorry if my good news ruined your bad. I thought it'd lift your spirit.

ANN
For such a smart, charming man... sensitivity is not your strong suit.

TIM
And for an empowered, talented woman, it's cute how ***oversensitive*** you are.

Ann crosses her arms, he's not exactly helping his cause here.

ANN
It's not just the book. What have I done with my life that matters? That makes a difference. That lasts.

TIM
Annie, your expectations are too high for everyone... especially yourself.

He takes her hands, pulls her playfully out of the elevator.

TIM
Now c'mon, let me show you how boring "successful" writers really are.

With that he drags a reluctant Ann into the apartment to find--

INT. DINNER PARTY - CLOSE-ON

Carl standing on top the dining table, waving a wine bottle like a conductor's baton. Happy-drunk and mid-joke.

CARL
So then the reporter asks: "How often do you get high?" And I swear to god, without cracking a smile, Buzz Aldrin replies: "Whenever NASA lets me!"

The dinner guests burst into laughter: Linda, plus hosts NORA EPHRON and CARL BERNSTEIN (young and still madly in love).

TIM
And Carl wonders why the scientific community doesn't take him seriously.

Everyone at the party turns, then rises to greet Ann and Tim.

CARL
Says the man who talked me into being profiled in a rock 'n roll magazine.

TIM
You can still say no.

Carl hops off the table. Clasps Tim's arm affectionately.

CARL
To the best science writer I know?

TIM
Flattery won't get you a fluff piece, even if it's the biggest compliment I've ever had. Meet my fiancée Ann.

ANN
You're all Tim's been talking about.

CARL
Then I already owe you an apology.

The sparkle of his smile spreads to Ann. With his sleeves rolled up, he's more charming than she imagined, in spite of his turtleneck. They hold on each other... a locked-in beat.

BERNSTEIN
Careful Tim, Sagan looks like he's just discovered a new star.

He cuts in, taking Ann's hand and kissing it flirtatiously.

BERNSTEIN
But even they don't shine so bright.

NORA
It's you she should worry about. Every marriage needs at least one good secret. Clearly mine's falling for shameless flirts.

LINDA
And mine's marrying a man who's idea of foreplay is probing the surface of Mars. Don't mind our halfwit husbands. I'm Linda and this is--

ANN
Nora Ephron, I know. I loved your *Esquire* exposé on small breasts.

NORA
I wish I had more to expose! My wit is unfortunately bigger than my tits.

ANN
Well I envy both. It's an honor.

NORA
Honor is for saints and soldiers.

She links arms with Ann, sweeping her into this charmed world.

NORA
Let's not stand here like marble statues! This is a party after all.

LINDA
Speaking of which...

She grabs Tim's wine bottle, pops off the cork with her teeth.

LINDA
LET'S DRINK!

SMASH TO:

INT. PARTY - LATER

A stonehenge of empty bottles and plates litter the table -- Ephron and Bernstein stacking them in a game of drunken jenga. The rest of the party (the Sagans, Ann and Tim) have migrated to the floor. A joint passes around as Tim interviews Carl.

TIM
Say we do find life on Mars. So what?

CARL
It will be the greatest discovery--

TIM
In the history of history. I know that's what everyone says. But why?

CARL
Because it'll prove we're not alone.

TIM
It'll prove life CAN exist elsewhere, but you can't talk to a microbe.

CARL
If basic life can survive Mars' harsh environment, it's a near mathematical certainty intelligent life has evolved *somewhere* in the universe.

LINDA
I think the jury's still out for intelligent life here on earth.

She blows a perfect smoke ring as everyone laughs.

Carl takes the roach, inhales an expert hit, passes it to Ann. Who stares at the most famous scientist in America, shocked.

TIM
Say we are alone, Carl. And there's nothing out there but dust and rock and endless cold.

CARL
We keep looking.

ANN
But at what cost?

Everyone turns and stares at Ann who's been quiet up till now.

CARL
Any. Though our country pays peanuts. Less than 1% of our budget on science-

ANN
Which is still billions that could go to solving this world's issues versus sending rockets to other ones.

Her passion takes the room by surprise, especially Carl. He smiles at her... but it's a challenge. She struck a chord.

CARL
This nation spends more every year on bubblegum than we do on outer space.

ANN
And both are a waste.

CARL
Every major advance man's made is the result of science. Our 1st ancestor picked up a stone and made a tool. Innovation has been the key to our survival ever since.

ANN
Or it's how we'll destroy ourselves. That 1st tool was a knife. Now it's a bomb. We'll never reach life on other worlds if we don't preserve our own.

Fire in her voice, her eyes burning hot. And Carl's her moth.

CARL
What ended the Cold War wasn't a missile but a man on the moon. That's the only thing that brings small creatures such as we together: a truth bigger than ourselves.

ANN
And I think the only thing that makes the vastness bearable is love.

On her feet now, surprising even herself. But she can't stop--

ANN
You want to find life? You're looking too far. It's here. It's US. It's <u>now</u>. Excuse me.

She shakes off Tim's calming hand and EXITS. Leaving a stunned silence behind and Tim at a loss. Linda hands him the joint.

LINDA
Surprise Tim, your lamb has fangs.

Her wild laugh cuts the tension. As Tim slowly joins in... Carl stares after Ann, lost in thought.

EXT. PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT

Laughter spills out of the party onto a rooftop balcony overlooking Central Park and Manhattan beyond. Carl steps out to find Ann, staring up at the faint few stars above.

CARL
It's ironic isn't it. The brighter our world gets, the harder it is to see the stars.

Lucky Ann Druyan Enjoys A Life Of Curiosity

Like many of us, Ann Druyan would like to know everything.

``I have so many questions I want to get to the bottom of,`` she said recently during the Chicago stop on a national book promotion tour. ``I really want to know how the universe is put together and why we are this way. And I`m really lucky enough to do that as a daytime job.``

A lifetime of such luck and happiness, Druyan says, has prompted friends to dub her ``Miss Bliss.`` Druyan traces that good fortune to her birth in Queens, N.Y., to Harry and Pearl Druyan, who met on a subway train. ``Even that was luck,`` she says. ``What if they hadn`t been on that train, in that car?``

She always had love, intelligence and self-confidence, but she did not have a distinguished academic career, Druyan says. She was ``derailed`` from her interest in science and math when a junior high school teacher ridiculed her excitement over the universality of pi, the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

``I raised my hand and said, `You mean this applies to every circle in the universe?` and the teacher told me not to ask stupid questions,`` she recalls. ``And there I was having this religious experience, and she made me feel like such a fool. I was completely flummoxed from then on until after college.``

Druyan describes her three years at New York University as disastrous, but after leaving school without graduating, she says, she discovered the pre- Socratic philosophers and began to educate herself. It was the logical, scientific methods used by these men that renewed her interest in science.

She met Carl Sagan in 1974 at a dinner party hosted by writer Nora Ephron. Sagan was there with his second wife, and Druyan was with another man. It was not love at first sight, she says, but the laughter and conversation were intense.

The two couples became friends, and Sagan asked Druyan to help him create a compilation of music and messages to send to alien civilizations on NASA`s space probes Voyager I and II. The 90-minute recording, with an apparent shelf-life of a billion years, includes sounds from Chuck Berry, Bach, whales and kissing lovers.

``Since making that record I have never been afraid of death,`` Druyan says. ``I feel like I`ve touched something that will live forever, or as close to forever as humans can reach.``

Chicago Tribune, Nov 15, 1992

ANN
Sorry I went after you in there.

CARL
Never apologize for being passionate. It's a thing I find most people lack.

ANN
Funny, most people claim I have too much. Tim says I chase the impossible-

CARL
My critics accuse me of the same.

ANN
But that hasn't stopped you?

CARL
It's driven me to question more.

ANN
And if you don't find your answers?

That sparkle reenters Carl's smile as he leans into the night.

CARL
When I was five my parents took me to the 1939 World's Fair and it was like magic. Moving images in a box called TV. Future cities powered by cars and electricity. "The World of Tomorrow".

He points to the lights of the cityscape below.

CARL
Science fiction then, reality today. Imagination carries us to worlds that never were. Without it we go nowhere.

ANN
And you imagine other worlds are out there--

They look up together at the stars twinkling dimly overhead.

CARL
I believe somewhere, something incredible is waiting to be known.

ANN
That sounds an awful lot like faith.

CARL
The only difference between science and religion is one has proof and the other god.

ANN
Yet here you are chasing stars.

CARL
(smiles)
And what do you believe?

ANN
What I know: that we exist. That life is sacred. That we should cherish what we have. Because as far as we know, we're it.
(locking eyes with Carl)
And if we're not... why wait, or pray for contact when we can make our own.

On Carl truly disarmed. And as his smile now spreads to Ann--

CARL (V.O.)
Man has always been drawn toward the beauty of the unknown...

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY

The Florida sun sparkles on a crowd gathered before a stage on which Carl speaks; the metal towers of NASA's famous launchpad rising dramatically behind him. Beside him Bruce Murray hovers on edge, as Carl addresses the press with electric intensity.

CARL
5000 years ago, using only the stars as guides man's 1st voyagers set sail across the vast ocean for worlds then unknown. This summer NASA will launch a new voyage inspired by that past.

He pulls a cloth, covering a model of the VOYAGER SPACESHIPS. Cameras FLASH. Pens scribble. Bruce claims the mic from Carl.

BRUCE
In 2 months, Voyagers 1 & 2 will set sail to map Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus and Neptune. Worlds never explored.

CARL
And that's just the start. From there they will journey on. To the edge of our solar system and by 2013...
(quoting Tennyson)
"Beyond the sunset and the baths of all the western stars." Man's first explorer into the uncharted cosmos.

A forest of hands go up. Bruce picks. A reporter aims at Carl.

REPORTER
Dr. Sagan, why should the public care about unmanned missions? Especially now, after the spectacular failure of the Viking landers on Mars.

Carl leans into the mic to answer, but Bruce blocks him out.

BRUCE
I wouldn't call sending two ships 50 million miles to land on another planet a failure. The issue here is one of expectations. See popularizers like Sagan got everyone so excited about life out there, the public would've been disappointed with anything less than little green men.

CARL
Who knows maybe you scared them away.

He leans in as the press eat this up. Bruce is sweating.

CARL
Look, I know robots digging on Mars was as exciting as watching an ant farm. Less cause we didn't find ants--

Chuckles from the journalists. Carl at home in the spotlight.

CARL
But the only way to find life in the universe is to explore.

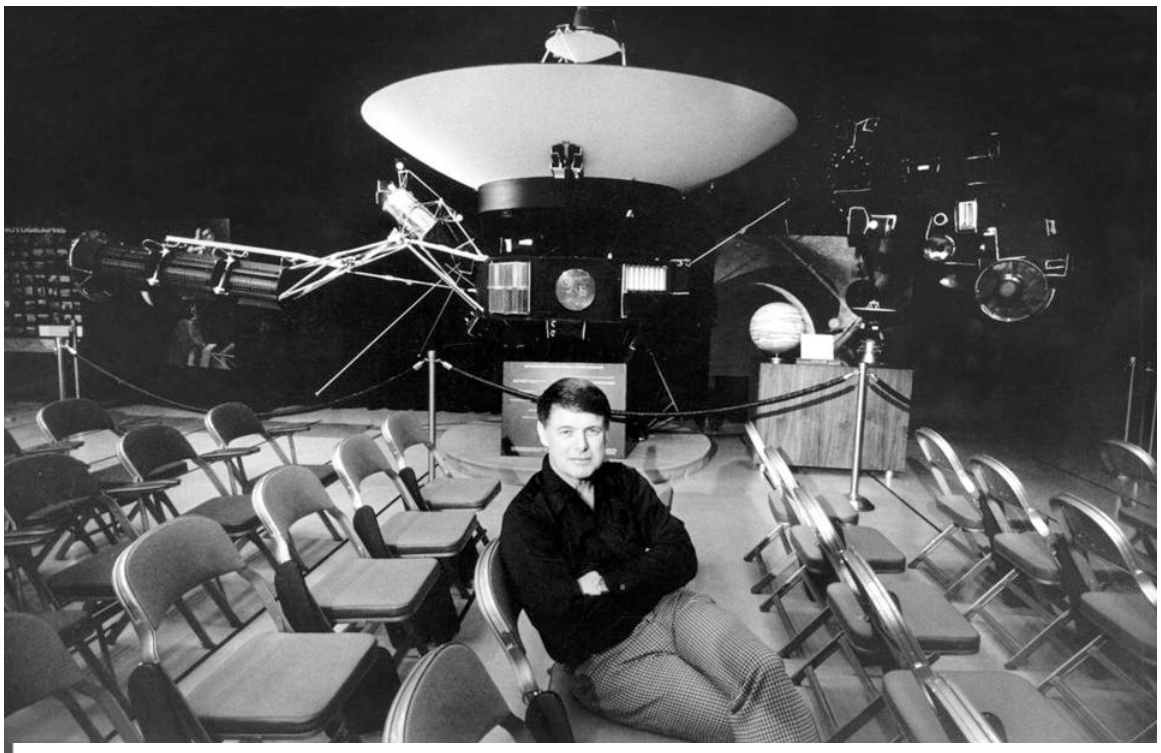
Bruce cuts back in, a controlled boil, to reclaim Carl's spin.

BRUCE
Finding life is not Voyagers mission.

CARL
Discovering the New World wasn't Columbus's either. Just as 5000 years ago, those first voyagers sailed into the unknown of the Pacific in their ancient canoes with nothing but a yearning. And a hope.

And now he turns to address Bruce directly. A challenge.

CARL
The truth is we have no idea what's out there. And that's why the public should care. Because this mission is our best chance of finding out.



MARS PROBE SHOWED NO SURE SIGN OF LIFE

Viking Soil Test Produced Gases, but Scientists Are Not Certain the Reaction Was Biological

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD
Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, Sept. 17—After a year of analysis and perplexity, American scientists are now all but certain of one thing about the results of the Viking landings on Mars: They produced no proof of life in any form there.

NY Times, Sept 17, 1977. *Image of Bruce Murray, sitting before Voyager 1*

BRUCE
Okay, that's it for questions. NASA will be releasing a press kit soon.

Bruce pulls Carl away from the mic, all smiles, shaking Carl's hand a bit too tight as the cameras FLASH and FLASH and...

EXT. COCOA BEACH - FLORIDA - DAY

FLASH! Linda lowers a polaroid as Carl poses with Nick and a pack of wide-eyed 6 year olds in NASA tees. Bruce observes while 'mission directing' a company BBQ up the beach.

CARL
Ok, does everybody have a bottle?

He hands out vintage glass coke bottles to each excited kid, as Nick helps pass around paper and crayons.

CARL
Now before we cast them out, I want you to each write a message.

NICK
What should we say?

CARL
Good question. What do you want whoever finds it to know about you?

Nick thinks a long moment. Smiles, scribbles. One by one the kids slide their crayon notes inside their bottles, and Carl corks each one. Then in his best NASA mission control voice:

CARL
Houston we are go-no-go for launch. In T-minus 3-2-1...

ALL THE KIDS
BLASTOFF!

They arc their bottles far out into the tide. Watch as they drift out toward the horizon.

NICK
Do you think anyone will find them?

CARL
Well your bottle is pretty small and the ocean immensely big, so the odds are pretty slim...

Nick's face drops. Linda frowns at Carl, *what are you doing?*

CARL
But let it drift long enough and it's bound to wash up somewhere. It's the same with the Voyager spaceships...

He slips his own message into a bottle. Sets it out to sea.

CARL
Imagine each of your bottles floating across the vast sea of interstellar space. Endlessly adrift. And then...

He scoops up a handful of sand, holds it out.

CARL
How many grains of sand do you think are in my hand. Hundreds?

NICK
More like thousands.

CARL
And how many grains on this beach?

TIMID BOY
Millions?

SMART-ALEC
Billions!

CARL
And what if I told you there's more stars in the sky than all the sand on all the beaches of the world?

A crazy fact, but true. We almost hear little minds exploding.

NERDY GIRL
That'd be like a gazillion worlds!

CARL
Even more.

NICK
So how can we possibly be alone?

Carl smiles at his son, the same childlike wonder as the kids.

CARL
That my little astronomer is what I'd like to know... more than anything.

He lets the sand run through his fingers, where the sun makes each grain sparkle as they fall.

NICK
So what message are you putting on Voyager, Dad?

Carl looks at his son, incredulous. The answer surprises him.

CARL
We're not.

NICK
Why?

Such an innocent question -- a simple connection that until now no one at NASA has made.

CARL
That's a good question...

And just like that the seed of a BIG IDEA begins to take root.

CARL
(echoing Ann)
Why wait for contact when we can make our own.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CAPE CANAVERAL - NIGHT

Linda carries Nick in astronaut pjs to bed, as Frank Sinatra's "Beyond the Sea" wafts over a balcony overlooking the Indian River and moonlit Atlantic Ocean beyond. Carl's huddled over a scrapbook, scribbling furiously.

LINDA
Come to bed now, Carl.

CARL
I'm having an epiphany.

LINDA
Save your epiphanies for Monday.

But he can't and she sees he's a lost cause. She exits annoyed as the record skips: *Beyond the Sea, beyond the sea, beyond...*

Frustrated Carl crumples his sketches. Moves to the turntable, lifts the needle off vinyl. Inspects the record for damage.

Across the water, a FULL MOON breaches cloud. And the disk in Carl's hand suddenly lines up perfectly with the bright disk in the sky. <u>It hits Carl at once.</u>

CARL
That's it!

He drops the record, needle falling in groove, Ol' Blue Eyes crooning: *I know beyond a doubt / My heart will lead me there soon...* as Carl's scrapbook fills with diagrams.

BRUCE (V.O.)
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND?!

EXT. COCOA BEACH - POOLSIDE TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Bruce sits at a kitschy bamboo bar, Carl's proposal laid out between tiki-mug maitais. His face a formidable shade of rage.

BRUCE
A Golden Record?

CARL
Listen we've sent messages to space before, but those were radio signals, shots fired in the dark. What if we sent something tangible, something we can attach to the Voyager satellites.

BRUCE
Like a record made out of gold?

His sarcasm is met and drowned by a tidal wave of sincerity.

CARL
It's the one thing that can endure the rigors of space travel. Think about it, paper will decompose. A tape would erase in Earth's magnetic field. Any other transmitter will run out of power. But a record...

He flips through his drawings: 2 parts brilliant 1 part manic.

CARL
Is light, durable and technologically simple enough that any advanced life who finds it should be able to play it. And think of the message we can encode! Sounds, images, music. Plus--

Bruce downshifts from angry to annoyed. He signals his check.

CARL
Gold doesn't oxidize so it'll survive millions of years. <u>If not forever.</u>

BRUCE
And you want NASA to fund this?

CARL
And put it on Voyagers 1 and 2.

BRUCE
A <u>GOLD</u> Record.

CARL
A time-capsule of life on Earth. That captures the spirit of all we are.

Bruce shakes his head, not buying it.

BRUCE
It's a publicity stunt, Sagan. Just like everything else you do. Now if you'll excuse me, I have 4000 actual scientists working on a billion dollar mission that needs attention.

He rises and heads for the door. Carl doesn't quit so easily.

CARL
And who funds that mission, Bruce? You heard the press back there, NASA is losing the support of the public.

BRUCE
And as the 'face of space', that's your fault! You turned our Mars mission into a talk show punchline. Now you wanna send up some cosmic kumbaya?

CARL
This is our chance to ignite peoples' imagination. The record is a symbol--

BRUCE
Of what! And for whom? I'd like to believe there's someone else out there too, but if there is this won't reach them. It'd be like...

CARL
Casting a message in a bottle into the sea, hoping it washes ashore?

BRUCE
Exactly! And even if it did, it would take tens of thousands of years to reach whatever life <u>might</u> be out there. And then, ***IF*** they understood it, 100,000 more to reply. If they even cared. If they even could.

CARL
And what if they do find it? You're already casting Voyager into space... why send an empty bottle?

Bruce chews on this. A small opening that Carl dives through.

CARL
A billion years from now when mankind has come and gone, this will live on.

BRUCE
So will the plastic umbrella in my piña colada.

He bites off his pineapple chunk for emphasis and stands up.

CARL
All I'm asking for is a small team. And I will claim full responsibility.

BRUCE
You want to hang your career on this noose, go ahead. I'm not giving you any funding. Nor do you have official NASA support. All content you select is subject to my review and approval.

CARL
But you'll put it on Voyager?

BRUCE
I promise nothing. You got 6 weeks. It fails, you take the heat. It hits the press, I kill the whole thing.

Carl shakes Bruce's hand though it wasn't offered. Heads out.

BRUCE
And Carl? One last thing...

Carl turns back. Bruce tosses him a copy of ***Rolling Stone***: the April 7th, 1977 profile Tim wrote on Carl gracing its cover.

BRUCE
No rock and roll.

We PUSH IN on the magazine's title as it transforms now into--

INT. ROLLING STONE HEADQUARTERS - NYC - DAY

The company marquee. Beneath which a cover shoot is underway. Fleetwood Mac in their 1977 prime -- Mick, Stevie, Buckingham, the McVies -- all cuddled together on a giant bed as a young Annie Liebovitz snaps her infamous photos from atop a ladder.

The band's hit ***You Make Loving Fun*** pumps over the scene as Tim leads Carl past on a fastpaced walk-n-talk through the office.

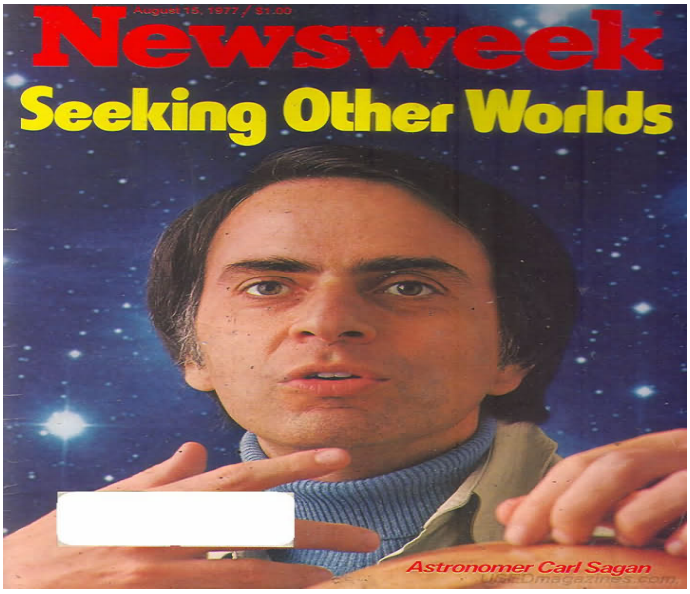
TIM
That's great. That's the cover!



Rolling Stone, April 7th, 1977. Tim's profile of Carl is the second feature listed on cover.



Rolling Stone, March 24th, 1977.



Newsweek Cover, Aug 15, 1977

CARL
Who's the band?

TIM
You've never heard of Fleetwood Mac? Their album ***Rumours*** is #1.

CARL
I see why. Sex sells but that bed is--

TIM
A bit much? Not after you read Cameron Crowe's exclusive. Apparently they're all sleeping together.

He ducks through the writers bullpen into his editor's office.

TIM
So tell me about this record. A human mixtape? Sounds too hippie for NASA.

CARL
It is. That's why I'm ***unofficially*** asking for your help.

TIM
I'd love to but I've got a publisher pouring kerosene down my throat, an editor lighting fire under my ass... plus a wedding to plan.

CARL
I'll write the foreword to your book.

TIM
If I ever get through my edit! I'm sorry, Carl. I can't.

CARL
This is a chance, Tim, to create something that will last longer than anything anyone has ever made. Don't you want to be a part of that?

TIM
You're preaching to the wrong choir. I'm a journalist. You need a dreamer, not a skeptic like me.

CARL
I need both.

TIM
Who else have you asked?

CARL
Only everyone I know.

TIM
Well I know one person you forgot...

INT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART - NYC - DAY

Ann's working her 2nd job, bored at a desk in museum uniform, renting audio guides to tourists. Carl steps up, next in line.

CARL
How much for a tour?

Ann lights up surprised and happy to see him. She plays along.

ANN
$3 sir, for the self-guided audio.

CARL
I haven't had much luck recently with unmanned missions. How much are you?

ANN
More than this museum can afford.

CARL
All I can offer you is a great story.

Ann looks at him, a strange smile. Slowly rises from her desk.

ANN
(to a coworker)
Tell Martin I'm on my lunch break.

COWORKER
But it's 4 o'clock!

Ignoring this Ann takes Carl's arm; leads him into the museum--

ANN (V.O.)
What makes anything a masterpiece?

INT. PERMANENT COLLECTION - MOMA

Ann guides Carl through the masters' wing of the gallery.

ANN
Is it the craft of the artist? The quality or fame of a work?

She pauses before Picasso's *Three Musicians*.

ANN
For me it's the way something moves me. Captures what words never can.

Carl squints at the Cubist classic. Shakes his head.

CARL
I have to confess I'm art illiterate. Linda paints, and I've been to the Louvre... but I just don't get it.

ANN
That's because you think too much. Art is for the heart, not the mind.

She steers Carl over to the museum's most famous painting.

ANN
Here, take Van Gogh's *Starry Night*. Intellectually we see his perspective is skewed: the stars are too big and close to earth. But emotionally it makes sense. They're almost in reach.

Carl studies the canvas as though seeing it for the 1st time.

CARL
So this one image achieves what I've spent my career trying to express.

ANN
Which is exactly where science fails and art succeeds. Art tells us we're special, sacred. Science reminds us we're not. We're just a lonely speck in a vacuum of darkness.

CARL
But that is exactly what makes us special: that despite impossible odds life exists. Science proves we are the greatest miracle in the universe.

ANN
I guess I never looked at it that way-

Carl points at *Starry Night*.

CARL
Because your perspective is skewed. But I could use your point of view.

ANN
On what?

CARL
A real way to reach those stars...

INT. MOMA - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS

Carl returns Ann to work, the two locked in a lively exchange.

ANN
So let me get this straight. You want to condense the entire human experience into an hour long record?

CARL
Not just human, all life on Earth.

ANN
Well if you're gonna overreach may as well go all the way. And to be clear you have no approval, no guarantee it'll even launch...

CARL
And no funding.

ANN
So you're asking me to work for free?

Ann's supervisor Martin interrupts, pointing to his watch.

SUPERVISOR
Hey Druyan, this museum isn't your private showroom! You're on the clock and if you wanna keep working here--

ANN
I don't.

She removes her badge, dumps it in his hands. Turns to Carl.

ANN
When do we start?

The contagiousness of her smile is impossible to deny as we...

CUT TO:

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tim in a total state of denial.

TIM
You quit your job!

He's mid argument with Ann who clips on earrings by the door.

ANN
Jobs plural, I quit them both. I don't know why you're upset. You're the one who told Carl to recruit me.

TIM
As a passion project. On the side. I didn’t think you’d drop ***everything***.

He fumbles with a tie. Taking his frustration out on the silk.

ANN
I needed this push. Now I can focus on what I really want to be doing.

TIM
How does sending a message into space advance your writing career?

Ann knots the tie for him, pulling it intentionally tight.

ANN
Unlike you, writing isn’t the ONLY thing I care about.

TIM
No, you care about everything. That's your problem.

ANN
I don’t see how that’s a problem.

She heads out the door. Tim follows, arguing down the hall.

TIM
You can't change the whole world, Annie. You have to pick and choose.

ANN
I just did.

They step into an elevator. At odds as the doors BING closed--

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - SIMULTANEOUS

BING! The elevator opens, only <u>Linda and Carl step out</u>. Locked in a similar argument as they move through the hotel lobby.

LINDA
This isn’t a discussion if you’ve already made up your mind.

CARL
I thought you’d be excited about--

LINDA
A space record? It’s career suicide.

CARL
You’re missing the bigger picture.

LINDA
It only ever is the big picture with you, Carl. Forget the cosmos for a damn minute! I'm here on Earth.

She spins on him, the middle of the lobby.

LINDA
Your book's done, Viking mission's over... this is our time together.

CARL
Which is why I want you on the team.

LINDA
That's the opposite of what I mean.

CARL
We have the opportunity to build something important here: a cultural Noah's ark. Don't you want to share that with me?

LINDA
I'd rather share a life with you.

She takes his hand, fire trying to melt ice.

LINDA
But you never stop. Even when you're *here*, you're still up here--
(she taps his head)
And when you work, nothing else does.

CARL
That's why we should do this together. I promise it'll be better.

LINDA
And if I won't?

Carl clenches his jaw, determination fused with defiance.

CARL
Then I'll do it without you.

She pulls her hands away from his.

LINDA
So I'm losing you either way.

She pushes out a REVOLVING DOOR, Carl following as it SPINS--

INT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

--a complete 360° CIRCLE: carrying us into the famous NY eatery into which Ann and Tim now ENTER, still arguing.

TIM
All I'm saying is your decisions affect me. From now on we should be making the major ones together.

ANN
Like you postponing our wedding?

An iceberg below this tip. Tim quickly tacks to avoid impact.

TIM
That wasn't a choice. You know how much I have on my plate. And this will only delay everything further.

ANN
Carl's project is 5 weeks. You act as if it's gonna ruin your whole life.

TIM
No, I fear it's gonna consume yours.

Their tension is cut by a cheerful hostess.

HOSTESS
Good evening. Dinner for two?

CARL (O.S.)
Actually it's six.

Ann and Tim turn as Carl and Linda ENTER the restaurant now. Both couples greet each other warmly; smiles plastering over their relationship issues still simmering below the surface.

ANN
Who are the other two?

INT. RUSSIAN TEA ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Amid a sea of high heels and fancy suits, 'Astral Artist' JON LOMBERG sits in overalls and tie-dye shirt across from FRANK DRAKE, Carl's best friend and infamous SETI astronomer (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). On the table before them, they've rearranged 12 wine glasses into a makeshift xylophone.

As the others approach both men strike up Wagner's ***Ride of the Valkyries***: fingers gliding circles around the wine rims, each glass tuned a different note. It's ludicrous and mesmerizing.

SEEKING AN END TO COSMIC LONELINESS

Among scientists, there is growing acceptance of the idea that the universe may be filled with intelligent life. Now their effort is to find it.

By Timothy Ferris



Dr. Frank Drake. Arecibo, Puerto Rico

The New York Times Magazine (excerpt)
October 27, 1977

Simple in conception, SETI is difficult in practice. The conception has been set forth by Drake: "At this very minute," he writes, "with al most absolute certainty, radio waves sent forth by other intel ligent civilizations are falling on the Earth. A telescope . . . pointed in the right place, and tuned to the right frequency could discover these waves." That's all there is to it. Aim th radiotelescope in the right di rection, tune its receiver to th right frequency, and if the sig nal is strong enough, you wi make the greatest discovery i the history of exploration.



Jon Lomberg was the principal artistic collaborator of astronomer Carl Sagan. From 1972 until Sagan's death in 1996, Lomberg illustrated most of Sagan's books and magazine articles, and he was Chief Artist for Sagan's classic television series. For his work on COSMOS Lomberg received in 1981 a Prime Time EMMY Award for "Outstanding Individual Achievement in Creative Technical Crafts." Lomberg has art directed many other science programs for television and videotape.

www.JohnLomberg.com

CARL
I'd apologize for keeping you, but it seems you made good use of your time.

FRANK
Lomberg here showed me how to arrange the glasses into a harp.

JON
And Drake figured out how to tune the pitch by adjusting the level of wine.

LINDA
I bet it works in reverse too.

Linda grabs a glass and drains it.

LINDA
Yup, I feel more harmonious already.

FRANK
Try another, it'll make you less shrill.

He hands her another glass, clear animosity between these two. This whole gathering's a powder keg and everyone has a match.

CARL
Ann, Tim may I introduce Jon Lomberg, my artistic collaborator. And my son Nick's godfather: the honorable Dr...

TIM
Frank Drake, the yeti of SETI. Never thought I'd see you in the wild.
(explaining to Ann)
The good doctor here believes aliens communicate with him via radio waves.

FRANK
And you misquote me in every article.

TIM
You're welcome. I make you sound like an eccentric lunatic versus a raving one.

He offers Frank a hand. Frank grins. Pulls Tim into a hug.

CARL
Great we're all friends. Let's begin.

JON
Shouldn't we wait for the rest of the team?

LINDA
There isn't enough wine in here to keep either of us amused that long.

Frank and Jon spin on Carl as the situation sinks in.

JON
It's just the six of us?

TIM
5 Actually. Ann's yet to convince me.

LINDA
And Carl me.

She shares a knowing look with Tim. Frank breaks into a grin.

FRANK
Perfect! People, in my experience, only tend to complicate things.

WHOOSH! Everyone jumps as a waiter ignites a flambé beside the table, breaking the tension. Jon hands out wine to the team.

JON
Plus nothing's ever fun if it's easy.

He raises his glass in toast. As everyone joins with a CLINK.

INT. DINNER BOOTH - MOVABLE FEAST

The CAMERA CIRCLES with the waiters as they continuously bus plates of food to and from the table where Frank, Jon, Carl, Ann, and eventually Linda and Tim, engage in a lively debate.

CARL
If you could send any message to an alien world, what would it be?

JON
Not even a question. I'd send the great works of art: Monet, Da Vinci--

Scientist Frank cuts artist Jon off, passions stirred quickly.

FRANK
Please, if I'm an alien who's never seen a human being, how would I even begin to process ***Water Lilies***? We need to send more universal things.

ANN
Like music.

FRANK
Or math, the universal language. And the only thing any advanced intelligence will understand easily.

ANN
Then call me primitive cause I didn't make it past geometry. I think we need to send things that move us deeply, make us unique.

The fire of conviction in her. It pulls Carl in like a magnet.

CARL
I'm with Ann. This is our chance to capture the beauty of life on Earth. Who we are, what we believe.

At this Linda jumps in, the opposite of Ann. Not buying in.

LINDA
And who are we?

TIM
(matter of fact)
An immature species struggling to survive on an insignificant planet, circling a humdrum star, in a lost corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people.

He snaps the head off a baguette casually as Ann scowls at him-

LINDA
I MEANT who are we to speak for humanity? No one here is an expert. Not in anthropology, art, religion, history. We're at best a ragtag team.

CARL
The "experts" thought this was crazy.

LINDA
And doesn't that tell you anything?

Before Carl can reply, Ann does for him. Impassioned.

ANN
Yeah, that we're on to something.

She shares a look with Carl, the only one that gets him.

ANN
Most people spend their lives chasing meaning, some purpose to the chaos.
(MORE)

ANN (CONT'D)
This is our chance to shout into the void. To sing. That we may be small, we may be insignificant, but we are here. And this is our great story.

And with that line Tim understands suddenly why she's set her mind so completely on this. But he's still a skeptic.

TIM
And if no one takes you seriously?

CARL
We'll prove why they should. Skeptics laughed at Galileo and Einstein too.

TIM
They also laughed at Bozo the Clown.

CARL
Exactly. Those are ***big shoes*** to fill.

TIM
Honestly Carl, you want to condense all human history into an hour long record. Where do you even begin?

CARL
That's easy. With Beethoven.

A collective groan goes up. Tim can't help but get roped in.

TIM
You wanna inspire aliens, not put them to sleep. Let me guess, next you'll want to include opera.

CARL
What's wrong with opera?

TIM
Other than it's boring? If you send music it should be from around the globe, not just dead white Europeans.

ANN
I agree. Much as we like to think we are the only species, we should also include sounds from all life on Earth-

CARL
Good idea! Can you two organize that?

TIM
Hold on, I still haven't said I'm in.

Ann shares a charged look with Tim. His choice made for him.

ANN
He'll advise, I'll spearhead.

JON
And what about images? It's one thing to *hear* Earth but to truly comprehend the miracle of a sunset, the birth of a baby, you really have to *see* it.

FRANK
Let me help choose them. Otherwise you'll send something tacky like *Mona Lisa,* or *The Last Supper*, god forbid.

JON
You got something against religion?

FRANK
Are you asking me as a scientist, an atheist, or an educated human being?

JON
95% of humans believe in a higher power. How do you capture the human condition without mentioning faith?

FRANK
Whose? There are over 4200 religions practiced in the world. You can't show one without excluding the rest.

Carl cuts in before the religion train jumps the tracks.

CARL
It's settled. You and Jon are a team.

He looks to Linda hoping she'll join, but she is stone.

CARL
It seems we have our work cut out for us. With 20 people this project could take a year. We have 5 and a month.

ANN
Then we better get cracking. And I know exactly where to begin...

With a mischievous grin Ann pulls a "45" LP from her purse. Slides it to the center of the table. CAMERA ZOOMING IN as everything else drops away. The arm of a stylus ENTERS FRAME.

As the record spins: ***Johnny B. Goode*** **(track 1) begins to play--**

START MONTAGE:

INT. COLONY RECORDS - NYC

Carl and Ann squish together in a listening booth at the back of a record shop as "Johnny" spins between them. Ann's loving it, rocking out freely. Carl's not feeling it. He hands her a Beethoven LP. Ann holds up Bob Marley. Carl: Bach. Ann: Bowie.

EXT. COLONY RECORDS - DAY

Ann and Carl exit the store, laughing as they struggle to haul a crate overstuffed with LPs. Across the street, Jon and Frank exit a bookstore -- Frank with a cart of National Geographics, Jon a pile of art books. They load up the trunk of Carl's car.

EXT. SAGAN HOUSE - ITHACA, NY

Carl races up a wooded driveway in his orange convertible porsche (with PHOBOS license plates) to a mansion overlooking the dramatic gorges of Cornell. Nick Sagan runs out to help carry a stack of books across the yard into the foyer where--

INT. SAGAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Jon and Frank stand amidst a sea of photos, arguing over the merits of art vs photography. Jon pins Michelangelo's ***Sistine Chapel*** to a wall. Frank replaces it with a **photo of human anatomy**. It's clear from their "REJECT PILE", Frank's winning.

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - MATCH-CUT

Speaking of rejection, Tim sweeps a publisher's denial note into a trash bin along with several wedding brochures. Pulling back we see he's preoccupied: typing and talking on the phone. Annoyed, Ann recovers it. Cuts it into the letter 'N' as she sorts through a tall stack of records. Tim shakes his head.

INT. BRUCE MURRAY'S OFFICE - CROSS-CUT

To Bruce, shaking his head as he reads Carl's book at his desk overlooking Mission Control. Annoyed, he chucks it in the can.

INT. ANN'S BEDROOM - SPLIT-SCREEN

Ann reads Carl's book, laughing as she talks on the phone to--

INT. CARL'S BEDROOM - SPLIT-SCREEN

Carl on the phone in bed with a red-marked copy of Ann's book.

INT. ANN'S DESK - DAY

Ann sets Carl's red-marked copy of her manuscript next to her typewriter, and with renewed conviction, begins to write. Over her desk she's cut rejection slips into the word: ***MOTIVATION.***

INT. SAGAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Linda comes in to find her wall now fully plastered in photos. Frank, Jon and Nick all passed out before the collage, which is arranged by theme: HUMAN - ANIMAL - NATURE - TECHNOLOGY. She storms off in search of Carl, clearly not thrilled.

INT. MILKY WAY FOYER - NIGHT

Carl now dances among the planets of a 3D model Solar System. The record of "Johnny B. Goode" spinning in a turntable, the needle running to the end of the groove as Carl sings along! Rocking out freely just like Ann did. Linda stands in the door arms-crossed, watching this new Carl. She doesn't like it.

END SONG AND MONTAGE.

TIM (V.O.)
I told you this crazy project was gonna consume our lives...

EXT. CORNELL CAMPUS - ITHACA, NY - DAY

The red brick towers of Sage Hall cut a crisp profile against the bucolic backdrop of Ithaca town as a ***NYC-ITHACA*** bus rolls into Cornell's main quad, unloading co-eds. Plus Ann and Tim.

ANN
You didn't have to come, Tim.

TIM
She says after a 5 hour bus ride from hell with ***The Big Red*** lacrosse team.

He hauls suitcases off the bus as a drunk 'n rowdy lacrosse team pour out behind hoisting a NCAA title trophy and SINGING.

TIM
Thank God I'm not a sportswriter.

ANN
Please tell me you're not gonna be like this the entire trip.

TIM
What, stressed? What did you expect. I'm a month behind deadline.
(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
I should be working on my book, not your and Carl’s fool quest.

ANN
You’re right, why I ever thought bringing you up here would be romantic is suddenly beyond me.

TIM
Romance isn’t something I can afford until after my book is complete.

ANN
Sorry, I didn’t realize passion and priorities were mutually exclusive.

Linda and Carl PULL UP in his infamous orange Porsche HONKING.

CARL
You made it, welcome to Cornell! Hop in quick before my students spot me.

He cuts their storm cloud with his sunny energy. Linda also greets them warmly. As they pile in the car, a crowd of co-eds does in fact begin to swarm, paparazzi style.

ANN
What’s that all about?

LINDA
Carl teaches so rarely these days they started a “Catch Carl” contest.

TIM
What’s the prize for winning?

CARL
Trust me, you don’t wanna know.

He peels out as the kids chase his car. Linda leans back.

LINDA
So how was your ride up?

Ann and Tim share a tight look. In unison:

ANN/TIM
Bumpy.

EXT/INT. SAGAN HOUSE - SUNSET

The fiery fingers of a setting sun streak the sky golden over Carl’s wooded mansion overlooking Ithaca Lake. Ann pauses on the porch to admire the view as Carl leads Tim into the foyer for a tour of a lifesize 3D Solar System model that Jon built.



The Cornell Review's

I Touched Carl Sagan

WINNER!!!

JOE NOVAK, the winner of this year's "I Touched Carl Sagan" Contest, will receive

- a year long subscription to **The Cornell Review**
- The beverage of his choice!
- The insane, undying love of Cornell

The intrepid Mr. Novak sneaks up behind Dr. Sagan and makes further contact. Shortly after this photo was taken, Professor Sagan took a leave of absence to undergo surgery.

The runner up is some guy called Dae Young Lee. Notice how Dr. Sagan is helpfully finishing up Mr. Lee's problem set for him.

Joe Novak vacuously stares into the camera as Dr. Sagan walks by in the background. Notice that Professor Sagan sneaks a peek at the daring freshman.

Joe Novak

Cover of the Cornell student newspaper (circa 1985)

TIM
So it is true, Carl... I always knew the world revolved around you.

He spins a huge-plastic Earth on a circular track around Carl.

CARL
This took Jon 6 months to create. All built to scale. And the best part...

He signals Nick, standing in the center of the model alongside Jon and Frank. His son flips a switch and under blacklight the stars begin to spin and glow. A homemade planetarium. Linda rolls her eyes as she joins Ann outside with a bottle of wine.

LINDA
Let me save you. You didn't come all the way up here to be bored to death.

ANN
I'm just happy to be out of the city. I get so claustrophobic there.

LINDA
And I'm lonely here. We should trade.
(hands Ann a glass)
I'm happy you came. Carl and I need more non-scientist friends.

ANN
You don't think scientists are fun?

LINDA
Not when you're married to them. Stick with writers, they at least know how to drink.

She clinks glasses with Ann, then downs her pinot in one go.

LINDA
Speaking of, have you two set a date?

ANN
To be honest we aren't exactly rushing.

LINDA
We or HE? Because if I didn't give Carl an ultimatum 9 years ago, I'd still be reading bridal magazines.

This echoes with Ann though she tries not to show it.

ANN
It's not just Tim. Did you ever have doubts about marrying Carl?

LINDA
Getting married's the one thing in my life I knew I wanted with certainty.

ANN
So you're saying I shouldn't worry?

LINDA
No sweetie, I'm saying there is no such thing as a sure thing.

A deeper undercurrent here, though Linda doesn't linger on it. She links arms with Ann and as the sun fades, leads her in.

LINDA
Now come on, let's go remind these fools what they're missing...

INT. DINING ROOM - SAGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The whole team lounges around a large table, doors open wide to the warm summer night. A record player sits as centerpiece. In front of each member is a stack of records. Carl toasts.

CARL
They say music is the great unifier. If our message does nothing else it's brought us misfits together. In the history of NASA, I've never seen a less qualified, harder working crew.

All clink glasses. Linda slings her arm chummily around Ann.

CARL
That said we're now 3 weeks from Voyagers launch. Our deadline is fast approaching. Time to make decisions.

He sets a record from his pile on the player. ***Beethoven's 5th*** **(track 2)** fills the room. Ann groans. Checks out Carl's stack.

ANN
You picked all classical!

CARL
I put "Johnny B. Goode" in there.

ANN
And three tracks by Bach.

CARL
Because no music is more beautiful or perfect in mathematical symmetry.

ANN
Yeah, it’s too perfect and humans are messy. The music we send should be emotional: Jazz, Folk, Rock n’ Roll.

She pulls album covers from her pile: Elvis, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan. Ann puts on ***Mr. Tamborine Man*** **(track 3).** Frank rebels.

FRANK
No way! If I can't understand what Dylan’s mumbling about, how would an alien? If we send only one song it needs to be this...

He replaces Dylan with the **Tchenhoukoumen (track 4)**.

JON
What the hell is that?

FRANK
Senegalese percussion, an example of man's first music. Kinda gets in your bones, doesn’t it?

He dances erratically to the beat, like a man with epilepsy.

JON
Yeah, rattles them. Why send tin cans when we have melody, myth, Mozart--

He puts on his pick: **Mozart’s Magic Flute Aria 14 (track 5).** Piercing, operatic high notes fill the room. Frank winces.

FRANK
I can hear alien ears shattering.

TIM
Assuming aliens have ears. You all got it wrong. What they need is SOUL.

As the opera crescendoes, he swaps in Blind Willie Johnson’s **Dark Was the Night (track 6)**. Hums along, low and guttural.

LINDA
This is lovely. It makes me want to draw a hot bath and slit my wrists.

She switches on Louis Armstrong’s **Melancholy Blues (track 7).**

LINDA
I’m with Ann. Let’s send Jazz. Or at least music that’s more uplifting.

CARL
This is a democracy. How about every one names a pick, and we include it.

LINDA
Louis Armstrong: “Melancholy Blues”.

TIM
“Dark was the Night.” Blind Willie Johnson.

ANN
If we’re vetoing Dylan then I guess Bach: “The Well Tempered Clavier”.

CARL
Really?

He cocks his head at Ann, who cracks a grin. Fucking with him.

NICK (O.S.)
I vote “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”.

Everyone turns to find Nick, eavesdropping in astronaut pjs.

CARL
You’re supposed to be in bed.

NICK
Can I be part of the team?

Ann takes his hand, with a warm smile.

ANN
You can help me. I have to record the sounds of nature. You can be my ears.

With Linda’s approval, she leads Nick into the yard outside.

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAGAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The silvery light of the moon shines over the Cornell gorges as Ann teaches Nick how to record sound with a microphone.

NICK
I don’t hear anything.

ANN
Shhh. They’ll only play if we listen.

Nick squirms but stays silent. Slowly that ***Universal Nightsong* (track 8)** most of us ignore, swells to life like a symphony.

NICK
The frogs?

ANN
And the crickets.

She catches one in the grass, shows Nick how it chirps.

ANN
We aren't the only life that sings. Before birds, or you and me, this was the first music on Earth.

Impressed, Nick touches the cricket's wing. It goes silent.

NICK
Do you think they sing in outerspace?

ANN
I hope so. Otherwise it'd be an awfully quiet place.

NICK
Not if we send our own music.

CARL
You recruiting my son to the project?

He joins them outside as fireflies twinkle to life like stars.

ANN
Nick here just helped me record our first murmur of earth.

CARL
What a lucky boy. Now your crickets will forever sing among the stars.

NICK
Dad, do you really believe there's other people like us out there?

CARL
Belief is just a word for what we don't know. People once believed the world was flat, the sun orbited the Earth, there was a man in the moon.

NICK
A man! Who thought that was true?

CARL
Everyone. Look you can see him still.

He puts his arms around his son, uses Nick's hands to point out the face in the full moon's craters. Nick's not buying it.

NICK
Those are just craters.

CARL
But we had to go there to know that. See everything changes... even truth.

NICK
But your record won't.

CARL
No that, like my love for you, will live forever.

Linda steps onto the porch behind them, calls loudly to Nick.

LINDA
Alright Copernicus, time for bed!

She heads back in where we see her laughing and drinking with Tim. Nick rolls his eyes, slips his hand into Ann's. Squeezes.

NICK
Thanks for sharing your song.

He beams at her, front teeth missing. Then skips to the house.

CARL
I think he's in love.

ANN
He's so sweet. And smart. Must come from Linda.

Carl pulls an imaginary dagger from his heart. Ann laughs.

ANN
Though clearly his flair for the dramatic comes from you.
(jokes aside now)
I'm concerned our record still isn't diverse enough. It's too Western. If our aim is to represent all humanity, we need to expand our chorus.

CARL
So what do you suggest?

ANN
Include more voices, ethnic music. Though I honestly wouldn't know the first place to start looking...

Carl squeezes her hand just like his son did.

CARL
Good thing I know someone who will.

They linger a moment together in the nightsong and moonlight, as a ***Navajo Night Chant (track 9)*** begins--

EXT. CORNELL UNIVERSITY - SCHOOL OF MUSIC - DAY

Summer light streams down on the bustling green quad fronting Cornell's Music School, where a WORLD FOLK FESTIVAL is under way. Carl and Ann weave through a multicultural crowd to a stage on which PROFESSOR ALAN LOMAX performs the Night Chant.

ANN
Is that him?

With his frumpy cardigan, owl eyebrows and untamed beard: the famous ethnomusicologist looks entirely out of place among his fellow dancers -- a circle of Native Americans in tribal garb. Yet he sings and dances in perfect, passionate unison.

CARL
What gave it away.

Lomax finishes the dance in a sweaty flourish, takes the mic.

LOMAX
Thank you! That was a Navajo Night Chant. Before that we had Melanesian pan pipes and a Javanese Gamelan. I'm Alan Lomax inviting all of you to support folk life, cultural equity, and the Global Jukebox.

He links hands with his fellow dancers and group-bows to wild applause. Carl and Ann push forward as he steps off-stage.

CARL
Professor Lomax, got a minute?

INT. LOMAX'S OFFICE - COLOMBIA UNIVERSITY

Lomax wipes sweat from his brow with a music sheet as he leads Carl and Ann through a door labelled: "Dept of Cantometrics". Inside: a small office densely packed with exotic instruments, recording gear, and a wall-sized, pinmarked MAP of the world.

LOMAX
I can't tell you how exciting this is: a record to represent humanity? I spent my life working on that dream.

He fumbles manically for a key, unlocks a hidden drawer. Pulls out a carefully framed, triple laminated PLAYLIST.

LOMAX
Disclaimer: music is subjective. So no matter what you pick, some know-it-all will disagree. That said, this is objectively and without question the greatest list of music ever compiled.

He hands the list to Carl, letting go only reluctantly.

CARL
It seems we share classical tastes.

LOMAX
Well you can't have a complete list without Beethoven and Bach.

Carl shoots Ann a *"I told you so"* look. She rolls her eyes.

LOMAX
But it's the indigenous music that matters most. These songs transcend boundaries; they connect the dots of human culture, human spirit.

ANN
We'd love to hear them.

LOMAX
Ah, there's the rub. I have some tracks, like the Georgian monks chanting "Tchakrulo"--

He unlocks a hidden safe. Pulls out handmade tapes. Presses play on **Tchakrulo (track 10)**, sings along in lilting baritone.

CARL
But the rest of it?

LOMAX
Beyond rare. Near impossible to find.

ANN
So do you have a more practical list?

LOMAX
Oh no, NO-NO. You don't understand. These are *perfect*. Take track 11: the world's most beautiful song, period. Unfortunately I was 23 when the Mbuti pygmies sang it to me in the forests of Zaire. I barely had money to eat back then let alone afford a recorder-

CARL
What about *Flowing Streams*, track 13?

LOMAX
Inarguably the single most important piece of music in 2500 years of Chinese history.

ANN
Let me guess, you don't have that either.

LOMAX
I have the address of the 91 year old chin master who still plays it.

CARL
Please tell me he's in the Bronx.

LOMAX
Yangshuo. And no substitute will do.

Ann shakes her head as Carl matches Lomax's song list to the pins on the map of the world: Africa, India, China, Peru.

CARL
We'd have to travel around the world to record half of these tracks.

Lomax nods enthusiastically and unblinking.

LOMAX
If you want a true blueprint of humanity all cultures should be given equal dignity on the playing field.

CARL
We'll start with the songs you have recorded. You mind if I borrow these?

LOMAX
Of course.

Carl reaches for the tapes; Lomax protectively yanks 'em back.

LOMAX
I meant of course I mind!

ANN
What if we just make copies?

She soothes Lomax with a smile, gently takes back his playlist and tapes as ***Cranes In Their Nest*** **(track 11)** begins to play--

EXT. FALL CREEK GORGE - AFTERNOON

Carl and Ann stroll together on Cornell's scenic gorge trail, the forest a riot of green. The waterfalls wild and swollen.

CARL
Is it just me... or is Lomax one clock short of cuckoo?

Alan Lomax and the Voyager Golden Records

In 1977, as preparations were being made for the launch of the two unmanned Voyager spacecraft, Alan Lomax was contacted by Carl Sagan. Sagan had been tapped by NASA to chair a committee to gather images, sounds, and songs that would represent Earth on a set of phonographic records — to be affixed to the outside of both spacecraft along with stylii and graphic instructions on playing them — and he hoped Lomax would help make the musical selections. Alan ultimately suggested fifteen of the twenty-seven performances that were launched with the probes on what are now popularly known as the "Voyager golden records."

The golden record's musical inclusions, however, were not initially so diverse, as the committee had drawn solely on the Western classical canon. Dr. Sagan thus asked Alan Lomax to participate in the selection process. Lomax had just finished compiling an anthology of world song*, in which he and his colleagues had chosen 700 pieces that they felt most effectively illustrated the breadth and depth of human musical style, and Alan ultimately contributed fifteen of the twenty seven final performances that were featured on the Voyager record. In Murmurs of Earth, a book recounting the Voyager experience, Sagan writes that it was Lomax "who was a persistent and vigorous advocate for including ethnic music even at the expense of Western classical music. He brought pieces so compelling and beautiful that we gave in to his suggestions more often than I would have thought possible. There was, for example, no room for Debussy among our selections, because Azerbaijanis play bagpipes and Peruvians play panpipes and such exquisite pieces had been recorded by ethnomusicologists known to Lomax."



*This anthology appeared in Lomax's Cantometrics: A Method In Musical Anthropology, EMC Press, University of California, Berkeley, California, 1977.

ANN
What's crazy is I think he's right.

CARL
And that's what concerns me, I agree! Though it goes against every scientific atom of my being.

ANN
So we should book the plane tickets?

They both laugh, not taking this truly seriously. Or are they?

CARL
Honestly Ann, I'm not sure anymore what I'm doing.

Not just the record he means. He's questioning everything.

ANN
You're following your belief.

CARL
Right off a cliff.

They arrive at a gothic stone bridge overlooking Ithaca Falls. Carl stares over the edge at the rocks far below. Conflicted.

CARL
In the summer this is where lovers come to kiss. In the winter to jump.

He faces Ann, opening up, the most vulnerable we've seen.

CARL
There's a good chance I'm committing career suicide to pursue this.

ANN
And I quit my jobs. You know why? Precisely BECAUSE it's so outrageous. And impossible. And romantic.

She opens to him. The truth at the core of her being:

ANN
If we don't lose ourselves in something... we're lost.

CARL
But how do you know you're not losing yourself in the wrong thing?

ANN
You're the scientist: you either examine the data, test every theory--

CARL
Or?

ANN
You follow the feeling.

The sounds of the forest rush in: the roar of the falls, the wind in the leaves. And they are alone, together in the mist.

As a haunting melody: ***Ugam*** **(track 12)** begins to play--

INT. NASA - BRUCE MURRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

The music crescendoes as we PULL BACK on Bruce. A tape deck blaring on his desk. Carl sits anxiously across from him.

BRUCE
What the hell are we listening to?

CARL
Azerbaijani bagpipes. Played by a Turkic shepherd to bring his flock together in the dark.

Bruce closes his eyes. Listens. His brow furrowed.

BRUCE
I like it.

CARL
And that's the problem. If we want great music like this, we have to pay for the rights, which is expensive and hard to track down. OR...

Carl slides a proposal across the desk. Lomax's list and map.

CARL
We record it ourselves.

BRUCE
I sincerely hope you aren't asking me to pay for bagpipe lessons.

He flips through Carl's proposal. Eyes widening as he reads.

BRUCE
China, India, Zaire, Peru... is this a joke or did you finally crack your head on the deep end?

CARL
I have 12 days to finish my message. This is the only way to do it justice within the deadline you gave me.

BRUCE
(shakes head in disbelief)
When you first brought this to me, I thought: ***Carl can't be serious.*** Now I see you're taking it too seriously.

He removes ***Ugam*** from a tapedeck. Slides back Carl's proposal.

BRUCE
My advice as a friend: drop this now.

CARL
And if I don't?

BRUCE
Then as your boss I'm ordering you to quit. There is NO message, Carl. It's over. Trust me, I'm saving your neck.

With finality he shows Carl the door. Meeting and mission over-

INT. FIRST TITLE BANK - LATER

Carl is at a new desk now. A loan officer reviewing his Record proposal. He hands it back to Carl. Hates giving out bad news.

LOAN OFFICER
I'm sorry, Dr. Sagan. I can't approve a loan for something like this.

CARL
I understand.

The loan officer smiles, relieved. Only Carl isn't finished.

CARL
And I'd like to close my accounts.

The loan officer's smile drops.

LOAN OFFICER
You have several accounts here: joint savings, personal, and retirement. Which one would you like to cash out?

Carl's made up his mind now... and there's no going back.

CARL
(like a death sentence)
All of them.

INT. SAGAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Frank and Jon both stand in front of their giant wall collage of images. In each hand, they hold a final stack of photos.

FRANK
We've narrowed it down to 200 images, but there's only space on the record for 100. So we need you to decide.

REVERSE ON -- Nick, their impartial munchkin judge.

JON
You're representing the entire human race. No pressure, go with your gut.

On 3, they both lift their photos -- Jon's: **a glorious sunset (#1)** Frank's: **a man riding an elephant (#2)**. Nick picks Frank.

JON
Really? Mine has layers, clouds, color spectrum, birds in flight!

NICK
(shrugs)
I like pachyderms.

JON
Fine, lightning round.

They lift two images of an **island (#3)**. Nick picks Frank. Two of a **classroom (#4)**. Frank again. Two **gymnasts (#5)**. Frank.

JON
Ok Frank what did you bribe him with?

NICK
A double brownie sundae.

FRANK
I never said anything about brownies!

JON
So much for an unbiased judge.

As Nick heads for the kitchen, Jon notices Carl tapping at the window. He has to kick aside photobooks to pry open the door.

JON
How long you been standing there?

CARL
Long enough to never again trust either of you with my son.

He reaches in a closet, then tosses Frank an old camera.

CARL
Here's an idea: instead of fighting over the wrong images, you two should go take the right ones.

A loud CRASH off-screen interrupts him followed by a scream:

LINDA (O.S.)
OH MY GOD!

All three men drop everything and race into the next room--

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Where they find Nick, casually eating a massive sundae as he watches Linda and Tim, entangled on the floor. Hard to tell for a beat if they're hysterically laughing... or crying.

CARL
Is everyone alright? What happened?

LINDA
Nothing. Except Tim's a total genius.

TIM
All I did was phone a few contacts. It was Linda's brilliant idea.

Ann bursts in from the other room.

ANN
I heard a crash. Why are you guys on the floor?

NICK
They were dancing.

He gives Ann a chocolate sundae smile as if that explains it.

LINDA
Celebrating. We figured out what the record's missing... a Rosetta Stone!

TIM
See we were joking about what happens if aliens don't speak English. How will they decode our message?

LINDA
So Tim called his contact at the UN--

TIM
And the Secretary-General himself just signed on. With 30 ambassadors.

They talk so fast and giggle so much, it's hard to keep up.

CARL
What the hell are you talking about?

LINDA
Hola. Buongiorno. Konnichiwa.

TIM
That means hello in three languages.

CARL
I know what it means.

Again they burst into hysterics. Clearly stoned, or worse.

LINDA
We’re gonna record greetings in every language. A kind of human dictionary.

ANN
Terrific! I still don't understand why you're entangled on the floor?

LINDA
Because brilliant as he may be, your fiancé can’t dance to save his life.

She springs to her feet. Twirls a victory dance around Carl. Happier than we’ve seen. Something released inside her.

CARL
Yet I leave you for two days and you turn into a ballerina. I thought you wanted nothing to do with the record?

LINDA
I changed my mind. Why should you and Ann have all the fun?

A challenge here, invisible lines being drawn.

ANN
I thought you were too busy, Tim, to work on anything but your book?

TIM
Linda needed my help so I decided to squeeze it in. Aren’t you the one who wanted me to get more involved?

LINDA
I think we should all be dancing. Or did Bruce not grant your funding?

All eyes on Carl. The whole team eager to know. Their mission hinges on it. Carl locks eyes with Ann. <u>Then lies to everyone.</u>

CARL
Actually, he did. Can I talk to you?

He takes Linda's hand, spins her to a stop.

INT. MILKY WAY FOYER - TWILIGHT

The painted stars of the model Milky Way glow neon around Carl and Linda, who angrily reads Carl's trip proposal.

LINDA
This is what you asked Bruce for?

CARL
It's just an idea.

LINDA
I know you, Carl. Nothing's ever JUST an idea with you. You're committing.

CARL
Not without you. Come with me.

LINDA
To record pygmies?

CARL
To preserve ancient cultures that are everyday vanishing. It'll be the romantic getaway you've been wanting.

This is a turning point for Carl. His grand romantic gesture.

LINDA
8 days in 5 countries with monsoons and malaria doesn't exactly sound like a romantic getaway to me.

CARL
I don't understand. I thought you wanted to spend more time with me.

LINDA
I wanted you to spend more time with your family. Not fly off to Timbuktu. And now with these UN greetings...

CARL
Let Tim cover that.

LINDA
Tim's doing us enough favors as is. Plus this is the first thing I've done in years for *me*.

She glances out the window where Tim sits writing alone, while nearby Ann piggybacks Nick: recording a brewing thunderstorm.

CARL
A month ago you wanted me to ditch the project, now suddenly you're gung-ho about the least important thing?

LINDA
Because only what you do has meaning?

CARL
Linda. Help me here cause I'm trying.

LINDA
And for once I'm finally achieving... something on my own. Be happy for me.

CARL
I am. But I want you to come with me.

LINDA
You don't, trust me. Take Frank.

CARL
You think he's neurotic now? He's 10 times worse jet-lagged.

LINDA
What about Jon?

CARL
Just the word *plane* makes him panic.

Outside it starts to rain. Tim runs for cover but Ann doesn't. Instead she spins Nick, laughing. Linda follows Carl's gaze.

LINDA
It's Ann you want to take.

CARL
It's you I'm asking.

LINDA
Though we both know you'll be happier without me--

She hands back Carl's proposal, decisive. A line in the sand.

LINDA
You've made up your mind. So have I.

She leaves Carl, alone amongst the stars. His eyes connect with Ann, as the ROAR of thunder grows louder and LOUDER and--

EXT. ITHACA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CLOSE ON:

A 747 comes barreling STRAIGHT AT US down a runway! Engines thundering as it lifts off, just clearing Frank! Who straddles the top of the tarmac fence, snapping photos on Carl's camera.

FRANK
Jon, you have to come try this, it feels like you're touching God!

He SHOUTS with glee as Jon fidgets anxiously in an idling car.

JON
That's because you're an inch away from shaking his hand in heaven.

FRANK
I'm an atheist. We don't believe in heaven.

JON
How about hell?

He points at a convoy of security cars SCREAMING toward them. Frank quick-scrambles off the fence; dives through the window.

JON
Tell me you got the shot.

FRANK
I dunno. I hope so. Let's roll!

Only Jon doesn't. He pins Frank with a glare.

JON
You don't *know*? If we're going to prison, you better have got the shot.

FRANK
Forget prison, if you don't drive right now, we're gonna get a whole different kind of shot.

He jams Jon's foot to the pedal and they PEEL OUT, airport security fishtailing in their dust. Both men howling like madmen as they now race past the--

EXT. DEPARTURE TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

Where Tim and Linda are just dropping off Carl and Ann.

CARL
We'll be back in a week. You sure you can handle the UN alone?

3

PICTURES OF EARTH,

by Jon Lomberg



Courtesy F. D. Drake

106. Airplane in Flight

Frank Drake took this photograph on the runway of Syracuse airport, one jump ahead of the security guards, who undoubtedly wondered what he was doing there. Anything for science! The jet is plainly taking off, and smaller airplanes of different types are visible on the ground.

Murmurs of Earth, p.106. Random House, 1978 -- *Jon recounts this true story in his chapter of the book the team wrote about creating the Golden Record.*

LINDA
I've been married to you for 9 years;
I think I can handle stubborn men.
(speaking of which)
It's not too late to change your mind-

CARL
It's not too late to change yours.

He leans in to kiss her, gets only a cold and cursory cheek.

CARL
I'll call you when we land in Peru.

LINDA
Call Nick, he'll be more excited to
talk to you.

Carl nods, stung. Ann and Tim share a more intimate parting.

ANN
You really don't mind me going?

TIM
Of course not, I'm actually looking
forward to the lack of distraction.

ANN
I'll give you a sec to rephrase that.

TIM
You know what I mean. I can focus on
finishing my book. By the time you're
back I should have my edits complete.
(takes her hands)
I know I haven't been so available,
but I promise we'll plan the wedding
when you return. That is, if you
still wanna marry me.

He leans in to kiss her playfully, but Ann stops his lips.

TIM
Is that a no?

She looks into his eyes, a long contemplative beat.

ANN
No to the "no".

She kisses him. Their routine. Only now, <u>less passionately.</u>
Carl cuts in with their bags, all heavy audio equipment.

CARL
Don't worry, Tim. I'll keep her safe.

ANN
Me safe? Worry about yourself.

She hefts her AND Carl's bag overshoulder and without waiting, heads for the gate...as another jet ROARS OVERHEAD soaring us--

EXT. MACHU PICCHU, PERU - DAY

Into a cloudless blue sky. On the terraced slopes above the ancient Incan city, Carl and Ann now record a group of Andean llama herders playing the ***Panpipes and Drum Song (*****track 13).**

EXT. GATE OF THE SUN - MAGIC HOUR

The sun sets as Carl and Ann stroll together on the Incan Trail above the famous ruins, surrounded by snowcapped peaks.

ANN
It's incredible isn't it, yesterday my world was the size of a shoebox apartment. And now--

She takes in the peaks, the stone ruins, the misty valley.

CARL
Nothing like travel to remind you how tiny and insignificant we really are.

ANN
You make that sound like a good thing-

CARL
You think it's bad?

ANN
These strangers just sang us a song passed down from generations of llama herders. All living and loving, suffering and dying. Then there's me. In a world with so many people, what difference can I make? Can anybody?

CARL
It's not who we are that counts, it's our legacy. Like that song or this city. Nobody knows why the Inca built it, what purpose it served or why they left it. But still, it's here.

Below them Machu Picchu is bathed in the sun's last light.

ANN
But is that it? The best we can hope is to leave a tiny mark on eternity? I mean what if no one finds Voyager.

CARL
Even if we are the only two people to ever hear this record, it's worth it. Because right now what we do makes a difference. To you and me.

Maybe it's the altitude, or the way the light touches off the mountains and settles around their feet. But for this moment, they may as well be the only two people in this world.

Until they're interrupted by one of the Andean musicians from before, accompanied by his daughter: a pretty Incan girl.

INCAN MUSICIAN
My daughter ask sing special wedding song for you. Old-time. Much beauty.

Carl and Ann both step apart, laughing awkwardly.

ANN
Oh, that's sweet...

CARL
But we're not--

The girl exchanges words with her dad, who smiles slyly.

INCAN MUSICIAN
She insists. For future blessings.

Ann shares a bemused look with Carl who pulls out a recorder.

CARL
Who knows, it may end up being our favorite song on the whole thing.

He holds out a mic, presses PLAY as the girl begins to sing ***The Wedding Song* (track 14)**--

EXT. MID-TOWN EAST - NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

The romantic acapella lullaby is CUT SHORT by the blare of NYC traffic as Linda wild-drives Carl's porsche toward the UN, while Tim tunes the radio to Fleetwood Mac's *Go Your Own Way*.

TIM
Slow down, Nascar. You tempted the reaper enough on the turnpike. Let's not greet him 3 blocks from the UN.

LINDA
We're meeting the head of the most important political organization in the world, I won't be late.

She swerves across two lanes, cutting off several taxis.

TIM
Death is a pretty serious delay.

LINDA
You know I appreciate you coming down with me but you really don't have to--

TIM
What, help you? Unfortunately I do. I've a weakness for pretty damsels in-

Linda SLAMS on both her brakes and HORN as a bus cuts her off.

LINDA
I'm NO damsel. And I'm certainly not--

TIM
Distressed? Tell me, when's the last time you painted something?

This catches Linda offguard. She measures Tim as she drives.

LINDA
How did you know that I...

TIM
There's a room under the stairs in your house filled with art-school easels, cake-dried paints and dusty canvases. You wanted to be an artist once and you were good.
(piercing her with this)
But one day you woke up and realized the picture you created was something else entirely. Beautiful yes, but not a painting. You wouldn't trade it of course: you have Carl, you have Nick, you're happy. But you can't help wonder now and then when you smell linseed oil or wander alone through a museum what your life might have been-
(beat)
Recording these greetings is not the same as painting. But it's a start. It's yours. It's *something*.

Linda swerves the car to a stop outside the UNITED NATIONS, where flags of every country in the world flap in the breeze. She tries to hide it... but Tim's stripped her to the bone.

LINDA
You always snoop through peoples' personal lives?

TIM
I'm a journalist. I'm always looking for a good scoop.

By that he means her. And she knows it. And it's flattering.

LINDA
Well you should choose more wisely. There are 4 billion people in this world, all more interesting than me.

TIM
Don't sell yourself short so quickly.

LINDA
And what about you? Why not write your story instead of other peoples'.

TIM
Benjamin Franklin said either write something worth reading or do something worth writing. I'm still working on the second one.

LINDA
Well Tim, recording these greetings isn't the same as writing, but it's *something...*

She grabs a recorder and pulls Tim toward the iconic building.

LINDA
And if I can start, then so can you.

INT. UNITED NATIONS - CONTINUOUS

The two push into the United Nations' grand marble lobby where they're personally met by KURT WALDHEIM: the tall, sharp featured, piercingly blue-eyed Austrian Secretary-General.

WALDHEIM
Mrs. Sagan, we've been expecting you.
(checks his watch)
Here at the UN we consider tardiness to be the second greatest crime against humanity.

LINDA
Our apologies, Mr. Secretary-General.

WALDHEIM
And now you've committed the first. Never apologize for anything.

A joke clearly, though Waldheim doesn't smile. Instead he shakes their hands with a stiff, nazi-like vigor.

WALDHEIM
Follow me, we are very excited to help NASA record these greetings. Many ambassadors have been preparing their remarks all morning.

He guides them around a bend to the UN sound studio, where a line of ambassadors snakes down the hall. All very serious--

At the front: France gargles salt water, Spain warms up with tongue twisters, England practices what sounds like a Macbeth monologue, and China sweats as he redmarks a 4 page speech.

Linda and Tim exchange a look.

LINDA
Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. You have made our job amazingly easy but--

TIM
We were planning to record short greetings, not speeches. You know: *hola, bonjour,* live long and prosper.

He flashes a Vulcan salute. Waldheim stares at him unblinking.

WALDHEIM
As Secretary-General speaking for the entire assembly... you WILL permit me a slightly longer greeting.

Not a question. All diplomats watching. Tim and Linda fold.

TIM/LINDA
Of course/Absolutely!

WALDHEIM
Good then let's get started shall we?

INT. SOUND STUDIO - UNITED NATIONS - CONTINUOUS

A recording light blinks on. An analog tape rolls static. A microphone lowers from above. Waldheim clears his throat then--

WALDHEIM
As Secretary General of the United Nations, I send greetings on behalf of the people of our planet...

CUT TO:

THE FAMOUS APOLLO 17 PHOTO OF EARTH (FROM SPACE)

INT. SAGAN'S HOUSE - MATCH-CUT

Our ***"Blue Marble"*** **(photo #6)** is tacked to the "winner wall" now covered in images including Jon's jet takeoff **(photo #7)**. Onto the Earth pic Jon DRAWS symbols of the essential elements for life (water, oxygen, etc), as Frank delegates nearby.

WALDHEIM (V.O.)
...we step out of our solar system into the universe seeking only peace and friendship...

Frank leans in closer putting his arm around Jon's shoulder. As he fixes a mistake, Nick squeezes in between, on the phone. He studies the Earth, then pins his finger onto Africa as we--

EXT. CONGO - DAY

TELESCOPE DOWN from god's view into the continent. Zeroing in through cloud cover past Kinshasa to a forest village.

Where Carl cradles an old phone to ear, the only one in town, as a tribe of Mbuti pygmy children surround him playfully.

WALDHEIM (V.O.)
...to teach if we are called upon...

Ann too is encircled by pygmy women who reach up to touch her freckles, her hair. For them she plays her tape recorder: the panpipes song she recorded in Peru. The tribeswomen jump back in shock, then press forward to listen, eyes wide with wonder.

WALDHEIM (V.O.)
...to be taught if we are fortunate.

One begins to sing. Voice blending in, then transcending as--

EXT. ITURI FOREST - LATER

The music now subtly shifts, taking on new voices as sunlight filters through high rainforest canopy like strands of gold.

Ann and Carl join hands with a circle of pygmies who dance together, arms and voices raised in polyphonic harmony: ***the Pygmy Girls Initiation Song (*****track 15).**

WALDHEIM (V.O.)
We know full well that our planet and all its inhabitants are but a small part of the immense universe that surrounds us...

Carl and Ann lock eyes on each other, no longer just recording but joining as one in this joyous celebration of being alive.

AS WE RETURN TO:

INT. SOUND STUDIO - UNITED NATIONS

Where the crowd of diplomats has fallen quiet as Waldheim finishes his speech.

WALDHEIM
...and it is with humility and hope that we take this step.

He takes one now, back from the mic. Silence of a pin-drop.

WALDHEIM
Was that short enough?

This breaks the spell. Linda and Tim as one stop the taping.

TIM
That was...

LINDA
Perfect. Inspiring.

She shakes hands with the Secretary-General enthusiastically.

LINDA
More than we hoped for truly.

WALDHEIM
Because I can always add “May the force be with you” at the end.

For the first time he cracks a smile. Just fucking with Tim.

TIM
I don’t know what that means.

WALDHEIM
You’re sending a message to space and you haven’t seen *Star Wars* yet!

TIM
That the movie that opened last week?

WALDHEIM
Why do you think so many ambassadors signed on to record space greetings.

LINDA
Well we thank you Secretary-General for organizing it so quickly and cutting out the normal red tape.

WALDHEIM
Politics don’t always have to be about one-upsmanship and rivalry.

He shakes hands and exits. Leaving Linda alone with Tim.

TIM
You know for the first time I feel good about this whole thing.

They share an excited grin as the next delegate walks in.

FRENCH AMBASSADOR
Bonjour. Monsieur Secretary-General gave a beautiful speech, *non*? I feel it only fair my country which birthed the Enlightenment and Belle Epoque gets equal time as one which led the greatest genocide in history.

She pulls out a book of Baudelaire's poetry, pushes her way to the mic and in dramatic fashion begins, in French, to read.

TIM
Well, so much for diplomacy.

CUT TO:

EXT. US EMBASSY - AGRA, INDIA - CLOSE-ON:

A man shouting right at us, with MUTED words. Camera circling, the one face becoming many. A crowd all yelling silently.

ANN (V.O.)
Do you think we're whitewashing our message?

SOUND now surges in. A barrage of Hindi catcalls surround Ann and Carl as they wade through a crowd of rickshaw drivers fighting for their fare on the oversaturated streets of India.

CARL (V.O.)
What do you mean?

The boldest driver half-coaxes, half-pulls them to his neon-painted *bajaj*. Their only choice is to surrender, then cling for dear life as he careens into the frantic crush of traffic.

ANN (V.O.)
Well look around...

EXT. AGRA SLUMS - CONTINUOUS

Their moto-rickshaw rollercoasters down a narrow road in the heart of a massive slum. All around scenes of extreme poverty flash by at dizzying speed. The breadth of it is astounding.

ANN
Whether we like it or not the reality of most human existence is suffering.

They pass a mother beating a snarling mongrel away from trash scraps. Slumdog children playing cricket among the tin-can homes. A legless beggar praying in the road.

CARL
So what are you saying, we should show misery, pain, despair?

ANN
They're as much who we are as anything. Yet everything we've chosen for our record so far is positive.

CARL
Isn't that what you wanted: to make something that uplifts and inspires.

ANN
Of course, but don't we also have a responsibility to present the truth?

Their driver swerves wildly to avoid a head-on collision with a colorful overpacked bus, throwing Carl and Ann against each other. They hold here a beat. Then Carl shouts to slow down.

Instead the driver spins around, head-wagging to placate Carl. Ann shrieks as an emaciated cow wanders into the road ahead.

Their rickshaw veers last minute... slicing down an alley onto a wider road. Up ahead a mob buzzes around an ugly collision.

CARL
Now he slows.

A taxi has collided with a spice cart. Dried cumin spills out in a river from which a hysterical man lifts a bleeding child. A mob swarms like a cloud of angry hornets, shaking the taxi.

CARL
Is this really what you want an alien culture to see? Human brutality.

ANN
You told me that if we succeed, our message may become the only surviving record of life on Earth. Aren't we doing a disservice if we don't show all sides: the dark and the light.

She stops their driver, leaps out to help. But the child is already being carried off safely. And now the mob turns on the reckless cabby. Carl pulls Ann back toward the rickshaw.

CARL
Every choice we make excludes another.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)
To show EVERYTHING, Ann, is impossible. And crazy as it sounds, what if one day we give up violence, solve poverty, cure disease, end hunger, unite our common humanity toward the higher goal of peace.

ANN
You're right, that is crazy.

But she smiles, relieved as the cab driver emerges. Prostrates himself in forgiveness, as Carl and Ann's rickshaw pulls away.

CARL
This message can either be a record of who we are now... or a symbol for what we'd like to be.

ANN
And what symbol is that?

But the way he's looking at her, she knows the answer already.

CARL
The only one that makes the vastness bearable.

Ahead the famed white domes of the Taj Mahal rise like a vision beyond the slums: the ultimate symbol of love. As the soaring Indian raga ***Jaat Kahan Ho* (track 16)** begins--

EXT. TAJ MAHAL - DAY

CLOSE ON: a sitar, henna-tattooed fingers plucking its many chords; an upraised face: almond eyes, red painted dot of a bindi, a mouth full and brimming with song.

Mirrored in the water of the Taj's reflecting pool, an orange-robed ***swami*** (holy person) intones a raw, almost mystical tune. At her feet Carl and Ann listen in awe.

As the bars on Carl's recorder rise and fall with the song, something unspoken passes between them: silent and profound.

INT. TAJ MAHAL - MAUSOLEUM

The music carries us through the high-domed halls, the vaulted arches etched in sensuous calligraphy. Ann and Carl propelled by the swirling rhythm, the spellbound beauty at every corner.

They drift across the great marble floors, a dance between them: tango of the eyes. Drawn together. Somehow woven by the music; the mystique of this moment. The push-pull of desire.

EXT. TAJ MAHAL - REFLECTING POOLS

Rain ripples across the water, shrouding the image of the Taj.

EXT. TAJ MAHAL - GREAT GATE

A wave of visitors rush for shelter from the sudden downpour. In the crush, Carl and Ann get pressed close together. That electric proximity. Hum of lightening in the air.

The music swells, hastening it's heartfelt final notes. Carl looks at Ann, their faces too close. Then she takes his hand. Where everyone pushes in, she pulls him out. Into the STORM.

EXT. TAJ MAHAL HOTEL - MONSOON

Carl and Ann run hand-in-hand down the flooded streets of Agra; monsoon rain now full-blown. The two of them as wild as free as the storm. Happy, bone-soaked, they reach their hotel.

ANN
This is crazy!

It's not the storm she means.

CARL
You're shivering.

Not from the cold. Carl wraps her in his arms, rubs her warm--

INT. SOUND STUDIO - UNITED NATIONS - SIMULTANEOUS

Linda rubs Tim's arm, jolting him awake at the mixing board, where a stack of tapes are now piled high. He checks a clock.

LINDA
Don't bother, the sun set last week.

On the mic, the Indian Ambassador reads from a 9 page speech.

TIM
I swear the amount of hot air we've collected could fuel NASA's fleet.

LINDA
Do you think we can cut him off?

TIM
As long we do it tactfully.

That's all Linda needs. She rises, clapping her hands loudly.

LINDA
Thank you, we just ran out of tape.

INDIAN AMBASSADOR
But I didn't finish...

LINDA
It was great, we've got what we need.

She quickly escorts the flustered ambassador out the door.

INDIAN AMBASSADOR
This is an outrage. As ambassador to the world's 2nd most populous country I should get the 2nd longest speech. Who is your supervisor at NASA? I'm filing a complaint immediately!

LINDA
Feel free. Just please keep your complaint shorter than your greeting.

Like a mute button on a TV she shuts the soundproof door.

TIM
If that was you being tactful, I'm eager to see you tactless.

LINDA
Then you better buy me a drink.

EXT. WORLD BAR - NIGHT

An empty shot glass SLAMS DOWN onto a bar.

TIM
Two more please. And some martinis.

He carries the drinks out to a rooftop balcony overlooking the lit-up UN building below where Linda is taking a **photo (#8)**.

LINDA
Imagine if every light were a star, every skyscraper its own galaxy...

TIM
It'd take a billion years just for our message to cross 34th street.

They clink glasses.

TIM
Tell me what's it like being married?

LINDA
(ala Groucho Marx)
Oh it's a wonderful institution, but who wants to live in an institution?

TIM
Only hopeless romantics and the criminally insane.

LINDA
Aren't those the same thing?

TIM
And here I took you for Cinderella happily swept off her feet.

LINDA
No, I was never a girl who grew up on fairytales. I read more philosophy, so my view of romance was shaped by Plato more than princes. You ever read his Symposium on Love?

TIM
The one about prisoners in a cave?

LINDA
No, this one's a bit more uplifting.

She downs her drink, leans in:

LINDA
When the world was made, men and women were not separate but rather two beings joined by one soul. Only together we were too powerful, so the gods split us with lightning bolts. Leaving us to wander the earth alone, seeking, longing for our lost half. So that when we find each other, if we ever do, we once again become complete, inseparable, whole.

TIM
I'm sorry but that sounds like the oldest fairytale of all.

LINDA
You don't believe in soulmates?

TIM
I spent the past two years writing about what they call the Red Limit: the end of the universe. And you know what I discovered? It doesn't exist.
(MORE)

TIM (CONT'D)
It’s always expanding. And so are you, me, love, <u>everything</u>.

LINDA
What does that mean exactly.

TIM
I don’t believe we were made to be bound to any one person absolutely. Nature doesn’t work that way.

LINDA
Then why marry Ann... or anybody?

TIM
Because things expand together as often as they grow apart.

He’s talking about himself, but it resonates deeply with her.

LINDA
I think I need another drink.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - INDIA

Steaming chai pours into teacups as Ann enters the door connecting her and Carl’s rooms. Two hotel robes in hand.

ANN
My contribution to getting warm.

She passes Carl a robe. He slips it on over his wet clothes.

ANN
No-no, you’re soaking wet. Here...

She pulls his shirt up over his head, undressing him.

ANN
What’s that smirk?

CARL
I’m a grown man. What’s yours?

ANN
Nothing, this is just the first time I’ve seen you without a turtleneck on. Feels like I’m seeing you naked.

CARL
I have achalasia. It’s a rare throat condition. If my neck muscles get too cold it becomes difficult to swallow.

ANN
You don't have to invent a medical condition to defend your awful style.

CARL
I had to get surgery; I almost died! And it's not awful, it's dignified.

ANN
It hides your giraffe neck at least.

He lets her wrap the robe around him. Their eyes like magnets.

ANN
Turn around.

She strips her soaked top off, hair cascading like a river down her naked back. Carl catches her reflection in the mirror by the bed. With great difficulty looks away. Ann slips on her robe. Turns back to Carl who hands her chai. They clink cups.

CARL
To surviving our first monsoon.

ANN
To questioning everything.

They drink slowly, something loosened between them.

ANN
I'm really happy you brought me here.

CARL
I'm glad you were fool enough to come-

ANN
Why did you? I mean of 1000 people you could have chosen, why pick me?

CARL
You were the only one who said yes.

ANN
So I was your last choice?

CARL
There was never anyone else.

The way he says this simply unravels her.

CARL
You have a way of seeing the world unlike anyone I've ever met. It's...

Hard to find the right words. But she's waiting.

CARL
You fill everything with wonder. And you challenge me. I can't remember having better conversations with any other woman in my life.

ANN
Just women?

CARL
I do work with rocket scientists.

Ann laughs, fair enough.

CARL
Though to be honest, it's our silences that scare me more.

And now her heart's beating louder than the rain on the window-

ANN
You know the heart's a funny compass. Before I met Tim, I was in love with someone else. When he left me, I was crushed. But I realized it was the bravest, most honest thing anyone had ever done. Because he *knew* we weren't right. That's what he told me...

She leans close. Only inches separating them. And a thousand doors they could open, a thousand doors they might close.

ANN
When you find your great love you have to follow it, wherever it leads. Whatever it takes. No matter what.

CARL
Have you?

Ann stares deep into Carl's eyes, a terrifically long pause.

ANN
I'm not sure anymore.

Silence overtakes them both. Outside the rain intensifies its rhythmic pulse until it's almost unbearable. Carl leans in.

ANN
I should call Tim.

She pulls away. And like that, their second is gone. She exits fast, a brief look back. As a RINGING PHONE carries us into--

INT. TIM'S APARTMENT - WITCHING HOUR

The door SLAMS OPEN as Tim and Linda stumble in drunk and half-asleep. They trip over the couch together, laughing.

TIM
Warning: objects are closer than they appear.

LINDA
Now I understand why they call it crashing.

She climbs onto the couch. Tim throws a blanket at her.

LINDA
You know I was just as happy sleeping in that alley on the street.

TIM
What's a lumpy couch among friends.

Through all this the phone RINGS and RINGS and RINGS.

LINDA
Shouldn't you get that?

TIM
I'm in no condition to operate heavy machinery.

He crawls to the phone, his MACHINE answers before he can:

FRANK (V.O.)
Tim, it's Frank. What happened at the UN? Bruce Murray called me screaming. He's threatening to ax our project! We gotta contact Carl immediately.

Linda and Tim share a guilty look--

LINDA
Carl is gonna kill me.

Then they burst out laughing. For some reason right now it's the funniest thing on earth. Then, a drunken moment of truth:

TIM
You know I think your true half is still out there, looking for you.

Linda stops laughing. Shares a heartfelt moment with Tim.

LINDA
And I sincerely hope someday the universe will stop expanding for you.

Tim smiles, tucks her in. Rises to leave. Linda stops him.

LINDA
Tim, do you really like my paintings?

He answers by kissing her forehead. Then flicks off the light.

INT. AIRPORT BOARDING GATE - INDIA - THE NEXT DAY

A line of travellers file past a HONG KONG departure sign onto a plane as the PA announces final boarding. At the back of the line, Ann checks her watch nervously. Then ditches her bags to go on a frantic search for Carl.

She finds him at a nearby payphone furiously scribbling notes.

ANN
What are you doing, they're boarding.

CARL
I'm not coming.

ANN
What do you mean?

CARL
(yelling into phone)
I'll be there Frank. Just do whatever you can to stall Bruce till I'm back.

He slams down the receiver. A deep breath.

ANN
What happened?

Carl points to the frontpage of the day's paper on a newsrack.

ANN
(reading the headline)
"Attention Outer Space Beings: UN is sending a 'message in a bottle'.

CARL
Bruce is pulling the plug. Apparently Linda offended some UN ambassador who leaked the story. I have to fly home.

ANN
Can't you handle it from here?

CARL
Bruce doesn't know I'm gone.

ANN
(realizing)
He never gave you the funding.

Attention outer space beings: U.N. is sending 'a note in a bottle'

By R. M. SORGE
United Press International

UNITED NATIONS — Beings in outer space — in whatever shape or dimension they may exist — have been told in 12 languages that humans on planet Earth want peace and cooperation in the universe.

The message, spoken by delegates from all over the globe, was recorded Thursday in a basement conference room of the United Nations, to be floated in the vast area beyond Earth's solar system by two U.S. spacecraft — Voyager I and II.

THEY WILL BE launched by NASA from Cape Canaveral on Aug. 20 and Sept. 1 to explore Jupiter and Saturn and from there to Uranus and Neptune.

Eventually, the two craft will leave the solar system.

NASA asked the U.N.'s Committee for the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to record messages from its members in their native languages to be put aboard the Voyagers, on the chance that the craft may reach other intelligent life.

NASA representative Timothy Ferris said the messages will be recorded on copper discs, which theoretically will last up to a billion years in outer space. He said they will not be broadcast and could only reach intelligent life if intercepted and "played" by other beings.

"It is like a note in a bottle for the extra-terrestrials, if they exist and if they chance upon it," Ferris said at an informal meeting of the committee.

ITS CHAIRMAN, Ambassador Peter Jankowitsch of Austria, then called the delegates in alphabetical order to record two-minute messages from their countries to the space beings.

"Friends, I speak to you from planet Earth," said the first delegate, Australian Ambassador Ralph Harry. "I represent the country Australia, the island country in the southern hemisphere of our planet. We seek to live in peace with the peoples of the whole world, of the whole universe, and to cooperate with them for the common welfare of all living persons."

Harry spoke in English and then repeated his message in Esperanto. He was followed by delegates from Belgium, Canada, Chile, France, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sweden and the United States. Last to read out his message was Jankowitsch, who spoke in German.

ST. PETERSBURG TIMES ■ SATURDAY, JUNE 4, 1977

CARL
You’re gonna miss your plane.

ANN
(shoves him in disbelief)
You paid for everything! Why didn’t you tell me?

CARL
You wouldn’t have come if I did.

He’s right. And she’s glad she did. Carl takes her hand.

CARL
Ann, if you could have anything: any wish, any dream. What would you want?

ANN
To be part of something bigger than me. Something special. That matters.

CARL
That’s why you have to keep going without me. Finish our recordings.

He guides her to the gate. Gives the attendant Ann’s ticket.

ANN
What about you?

CARL
I’ll be fine. I can handle Bruce.

ANN
That’s not what I meant. What do you want... more than anything?

Carl holds on her a terrifically long beat.

CARL
Contact.

Ann steps into Carl. Kisses him slowly on his forehead. His right eye. His left cheek. For a moment neither breathes. Then, before he can speak, she turns and walks onto the plane.

EXT. NASA JET PROPULSION LAB - THE NEXT DAY

A towncar pulls up to meet a mob of press and protestors camped outside the main entrance. Bruce steps out, alarmed.

Half the people wave signs and banners: “NASA has doomed us all" and "Guess who’s coming to dinner... Aliens!” The other half throw vinyl, shout their picks for the Golden Record.

HIPPIE GIRL
You gotta send “Here comes the sun!”

PATRIOTIC IRISHMAN
“Danny Boy”, for the Irish!

Bruce pushes his way into the building like a thunderstorm.

INT. JET PROPULSION LAB - ENGINEER BAY

Sparks fly as NASA technicians torch, bolt and assemble the Voyager spacecrafts. Carl’s waiting for Bruce as he enters.

BRUCE
Just the man I want to see.

CARL
You can’t shut our mission down.

BRUCE
Oh, but I can. In fact I was under the impression that I already did.

He juggernauts through the bustling dock, Carl at his heels.

BRUCE
And in case you didn’t notice, this is our mission. This is our focus.

Bruce points at the impressive, expensive operation underway.

BRUCE
Everything you’ve done has been a distraction from that.

CARL
Bruce, just listen--

BRUCE
I DID, CARL! You didn’t. Do you have any idea how many wild fires I had to put out today? Everyone from NASA’s top brass to the Secretary of State. It’s a goddamn circus out there! You made NASA look like a pack of fools.

He pushes past, end of discussion. But Carl doesn’t back down.

CARL
You and I may disagree on many things, but we both want proof of life. This record is our best shot.

BRUCE
The record’s dead, Carl. Far as I’m concerned... so are you.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
You’re off Voyager. And if I have my say, you’ll be off all future NASA missions too.

He storms away leaving Carl for the first time lost for words.

INT. SAGAN HOUSE - NICK’S ROOM - MORNING

Nick lies on his space-themed bed, planet pillows pressed to his ears. Through his walls come the angry sounds of fighting--

INT. SAGAN HOUSE - BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

It’s a war-zone, battle lines drawn by Linda’s suitcases and clothing as she furiously packs. Carl’s at a loss.

CARL
I don’t know what you want me to say.

LINDA
Try ANYTHING. Try “I’m sorry”.

CARL
I can fix this.

Linda’s on fire and that’s kerosene. She EXPLODES.

LINDA
How Carl? <u>You lied to me.</u> You spent our life savings on your obsession. And now it’s cost us EVERYTHING!

CARL
You’re right, I took a risk and I should’ve told you. But this record--

Linda screams.

LINDA
WHO CARES ABOUT THE FUCKING RECORD!

And now she’s fighting back tears with every fiber she’s got.

LINDA
I don’t know how we got so far from where we started. But this isn’t who I am. And I can’t get back. If not to what we had... then at least to something <u>recognizable</u>.

A confession, a crossroad, a cry in the dark.

LINDA
You told me that of all the stars in the sky, even the brightest burn out.

She stuffs the last of her clothes in bags. Carl stops her.

CARL
I don't care about the stars anymore.

LINDA
But you do. You always will. And I can't keep holding onto the flicker of a light we long ago lost.

Before Carl can say another word she grabs her bags and exits.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SAGAN HOUSE - DAY

Linda loads suitcases and painting supplies into a car. Nick's belted in the back seat, confused and upset. Carl races out.

CARL
Linda please...

LINDA
I'm making this easier for us both. I love you, Carl. But love isn't supposed to make you feel lost.

She gets in the car and drives off. Stronger than she thought. Nick watches in the rear window as his father fades from view.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Carl reenters in a daze. His life's come unraveled. From the other room, a CRASH suddenly jolts him back. He moves to investigate as the sound of heated whispers grows louder--

FRANK (O.S.)
Oh shit, I think he's back.

JON (O.S.)
Did he hear us?

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl opens the door to find Frank and Jon huddled under a red lamp: dozens of wet photos drying on towel racks; the window blacked out with aluminum. The tub a giant developing bath.

JON/FRANK
Hey Carl.

CARL
What did you do to my bathroom!

JON
We needed a photolab.

CARL
Have you been in here the whole time?

FRANK
I told Jon not to listen...

CARL
So what's that microphone for?

He points to the big boom mic Frank's hiding behind his back.

FRANK
The important thing to remember is we hear your heart. And it's beautiful.

He presses the boom to the wrong side of Carl's chest. Jon who wears headphones, nods like he's listening along; SHOUTS loud--

JON
ALSO WE FINISHED ALL THE PHOTOS!

He gives Carl an unwanted hug. Whispers in his ear, heartfelt:

JON
Don't worry, it'll all work out.

FRANK
(slightly crazed)
Will it, Jon? I mean do you know that for a fact. Do you possess magic?

JON
I'm just trying to be nice.

FRANK
That's too bad, 'cause for a second I thought you were <u>actually</u> psychic.

CARL
Are you two stoned?

FRANK
Absolutely not! We took mushrooms.

He joins the huddle with Jon, all 3 faces a little too close.

JON
What are you going to do now, Carl?

And for perhaps the first time in his entire life--

CARL
I have no idea.

He lets this sink as ***Flowing Streams (track 17)*** begins to play-

EXT. YULONG RIVER - CHINA - DAY

Dawn mist drifts over emerald waters. A white crane glides past an ancient bamboo raft drifting lazily down a wide, tranquil riverscape. All around, tall green limestone peaks rise majestically like the spines of sleeping dragons.

Ann gazes out at this mystical land that has inspired painters and poets for millennia. At the flowing stream lapping against her raft: the same stream embodied in this 2500 year old song.

At the front of her raft a wizened 91 year old master MUSICIAN plays a *ch'in:* an ancient 7-stringed zither; the oldest and most revered instrument in China.

His music is incredibly simple. There are no words. Just a man and the haunting vibrato of his strings. Lomax was right...

It's the most beautiful song Ann's ever heard.

EXT. YULONG RIVER - CHINA - NIGHT

The song continues as Ann stands on the balcony of her hotel room overlooking the moonlit river and majestic peaks beyond. She cradles a phone to her ear. It rings and rings.

ANN
Where are you? Pick up.

But no one does. She waits one more ring then goes to hang up--

TIM (V.O.)
(answers, short of breath)
Hello?

ANN
(smiles)
It's me.

TIM (V.O.)
Oh hi, baby. I was just out the door.
Can I call you back?

Her smile drops. Not the loving response she was expecting.

ANN
NO. I'm in China. And I've been
trying to reach you since I left.

TIM (V.O.)
I know it's been crazy here. Slammed. And I just got a new assignment last minute. That's why I can't talk. The magazine's flying me to LA right now.

ANN
Till when?

TIM (V.O.)
Monday. My driver's outside.

ANN
Then who's gonna pick me up?

TIM (V.O.)
(shit, he forgot)
You'll have to take a cab. I'm sorry, Annie. I'll see you when I get back.

He can't get off fast enough. Ann fights to keep him on.

ANN
Can we at least talk for a minute? So much has happened. Like today I found our last musician and he was just--
(she has no words)
I have to play you his song.

TIM (V.O.)
Sweetheart, I wanna hear all about it, I do... but I HAVE to run.

ANN
I understand.

A lie for him. A moment of truth for Ann.

TIM (V.O.)
I'll see you in a few days. Bye.

ANN
Tim I--

But he's gone. Ann sets down the phone. Stares up at the full moon, the stars. Then picks up the phone again and calls Carl.

INT. MILKY WAY FOYER - SAGAN HOUSE - DUSK

The house is empty now, quiet. Carl wanders among his stars, lost in thought. The phone rings, but he lets the machine pick up. Its blinking red eye beckons like a beacon in the dark--

ANN (V.O.)
I know it's late but I had to call--

EXT. YULONG RIVER - CHINA - DAWN

On the balcony of Ann's hotel, a sleepless night has given way to the gold tinged half-light of dawn. Ann gazes at the stars.

Into her phone she plays ***Flowing Streams (part 2, track 18)***.

ANN
To share with you this song. Because it's what our whole message is about.

EXT. SAGAN HOUSE - PORCH - TWILIGHT

The same gold tinged half-light fills the sky as Carl gazes at the same faint stars above. The song connecting them together.

ANN (V.O.)
I can't explain it in words. Maybe that's the point. We can never share ourselves entirely with someone else. Yet we try regardless. We cast ourselves into the darkness and we hope. And though everything in the universe seems stacked against us, sometimes... we find each other.

Carl wrestles with his emotions. Lifts a phone. Slowly dials. As it rings...the SCREEN SPLITS IN HALF. Ann answers, knowing:

ANN
Carl.

CARL
I've been waiting my whole life for a message like yours.

And now his truth:

CARL
I only wish you left it 10 years ago.

Across the world Ann laughs... but her heart's in her throat.

ANN
Part of me hoped you wouldn't call.

CARL
And the rest of you?

Was up all night waiting. But she *won't* say that.

ANN
What do you think would've happened--

CARL
If I'd gotten on that plane with you?

ANN
If I had called 10 years ago.

CARL
I don't know.

But he does. And now his moment's slipping away from him like so many grains of sand. So many stars. And then...

CARL
I would have found you, wherever you are. On the banks of the widest river. And swam into your arms.

Just like that the whole world stops.

ANN
But we can't, we're with other people-

CARL
Yet in the vastness of space and the immensity of time, we found each other. And we can't pretend we haven't anymore.

It's all out now. And neither can fight it if they wanted to.

ANN
So what are we gonna do?

CARL
When you find your great love, you have to follow it. Wherever it leads, whatever it takes.

ANN
No matter what.

And there it is, no turning back.

CARL
If we do this it has to be for keeps.

ANN
How long will Voyager survive?

CARL
A billion years. Maybe more.

ANN
Then until our message is found.

Carl savors the romance of this, the sweep of her passion. Until reality kicks him back to earth.

CARL
But what if it never goes up?

ANN
It must. After everything we've been through. Everything we've done.

CARL
NASA's banned it from the launch.

His confession. A moment of silence as Ann lets this sink in.

CARL
It's my fault. I lied to the team, to you. I let everyone down.

ANN
You'll only let me down if you stop. We'll fix this together. For keeps.

For a man who just lost everything, Ann gives Carl a way back.

CARL
For keeps.

As one, they both hang up their phones. We linger in split-screen on their individual reactions: a stunned beat. Then... ANN's side blacks out. Hold on Carl. A smile blossoming as we--

FADE TO:

CARL (V.O.)
Our universe is 15 billion years old. Earth 4 1/2. Humans a mere 2 million.

INT. CORNELL UNIVERSITY - LECTURE HALL

Carl animatedly teaches his popular Astronomy 101 class: a standing room only of bright-eyed coeds. On a projector behind him, his soon-to-be-famous "Cosmic Calendar" is on display.

CARL
To put that in perspective, let's condense the entire history of the cosmos into a single calendar year.

He taps his finger on the first day of the year: January 1.

CARL
It begins with the Big Bang, here.

He slides his finger ahead through the months to September. As he talks, Ann slips in unnoticed at the back of the hall.

CARL
9 months later our Earth forms. Then life emerges on September 25th.

He traces his finger fast-forward to the last day of the year.

CARL
But modern humans don't evolve until here: 11:59 PM on New Year's Eve.

He points now to a large clock, minute just striking 11:59 AM.

CARL
Meaning our entire history only fits in the last minute of that last day.

The second hand of the clock TICKS loudly as Carl continues...

CARL
Here: the invention of Agriculture.

TICK: 11:59 and 20 seconds.

CARL
There: the 1st civilizations. Sumer, Egypt, the invention of astronomy.

The clock TICKS: 35. History leaping centuries by the second.

CARL
Buddha. Birth of Christ. Columbus.

Tick. Tick. TICK. 45 seconds. 46. 47...

CARL
Rise of science. The atom bomb. Space exploration of the moon and Mars.

...58. 59. The second hand strikes 12:00 with a loud CHIME. The end of class. But no one moves. 200 pins waiting to drop.

CARL
<u>NOW</u>. Your life and those of your children's children's children will come and pass all in the 1st fraction of a second of the next cosmic year.

He lets this sink in.

CARL
Which means our lives are completely meaningless. Or--

ANN
Every second counts.

The entire class turns to look at the person brave enough to speak up to their god. Carl smiles at Ann in surprise.

CARL
That's right. So what are you waiting for? Go. Live! Class dismissed.

Like a flock of geese his students take flight, a mass exodus.

Leaving Carl and Ann alone: seconds TICKING into an unhinged future. **The Wedding Song (track 14)** from earlier PLAYS now as--

EXT. FALL CREEK GORGE - PRESENT

Fingers entwined Carl pulls Ann breathless down a forest path. The light dances all around them as they emerge on the gothic stone bridge spanning the dramatic sweep of Ithaca Falls.

The sun sparks rainbows off the water, sets Ann's hair afire. Carl pulls her close... a flash of fear in both their eyes.

THEY KISS

As colors intensify; the spin, the song, the ticking all stop.

ANN
I love you.

CARL
I love you.

The wind sighs through the trees. A moment frozen in time.

CARL
No matter what.

They draw into each other again, holding tight.

INT. AIRPORT MOTEL - LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Tim pounds away at a typewriter, pages piled high. He stops to rub his eyes. Lifts a copy of Plato's Symposium. And reads.

INT - LINDA'S PARENTS HOUSE - NIGHT

Linda paints at an easel, Nick asleep beside her on a couch. Her emotions flow out in a fury to match her brush strokes. REVERSE ON HER CANVAS: soulmates sundered by lightning bolts.

ANN (V.O)
Do you think anyone else knows...

EXT. 30 STREET RECORDING STUDIO - MANHATTAN - MORNING

A sunny summer day in the city. Carl and Ann stroll arm-in-arm down a tree-lined street, unreasonably happy together.

CARL
About us?

ANN
(no)
What this ***feeling*** is like. I wish there was a way to capture it, put it on our record. To share more than just images and songs. To actually express the ***feeling*** of being in love.

CARL
If only humans were that emotionally and technologically evolved.

ANN
But what if life out there is? What if we could send a piece of ourselves that perhaps we don't yet know how to decode, but more advanced life could.

Now the gears start turning. A lightbulb flash inside Carl.

CARL
Like a brain scan?

ANN
Or a heartbeat.

CARL
Or both. A kind of human morse code.

ANN
That a billion years from now, when the continents have shifted and our sun has burnt out... will still echo.

CARL
(a sad smile)
If only we had a record and a ship to put it on.

ANN
Imagination carries us to worlds that never were. Without it we go nowhere. You told me that.

CARL
But I failed. And there's nothing I can do about it now. It's impossible.

Ann stops him now. In front of CBS Records. Takes his hands...

ANN
When has impossible ever stopped you?

A taxi pulls up to the curb. Bruce steps out looking unhappy.

BRUCE
You better not have begun without me.

CARL
Begun what? What are you doing here?

BRUCE
(to Ann)
You didn't tell him?

He hands Carl an envelope marked CLASSIFIED. Carl breaks the seal, lifts out a signed headshot of President Carter and his written greeting for Voyager. Carl reads an excerpt outloud:

CARL
"This is a present from a small distant world. We are attempting to survive our time so we may live into yours" --Jimmy Carter.

BRUCE
Seems your little publicity stunt worked after all, Sagan. I got an angry call from the White House Press Secretary demanding to know why NASA asked the UN Secretary-General to record a greeting for Voyager and not the leader of the free world. He made it very clear to me that the President's greeting will come first.

Carl's stupefied. He looks to Ann, who is grinning wide.

CARL
You knew about this?

ANN
Everyone on the team heard but you. We wanted to surprise you.

CARL
Does this mean our record's approved?

BRUCE
It means it's above my paygrade now. NASA's brass have formed a review committee. We're gonna take a vote.

CARL
And you intend to sway them to “NO”.

BRUCE
Unless you prove me wrong.

He claps Carl’s shoulder, a challenge. Then marches inside.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The E Street Band’s backing a young BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN in his *Darkness on the Edge of Town* prime. A young JIMMY IOVINE, future Interscope Records mogul, waves Carl into a sound booth-

IOVINE
You the ones making the Space Record?

Carl doesn’t quite know how to reply. Iovine eyes his sweater.

IOVINE
Well you clearly ain’t here for rock ‘n roll. Come on in, I’m your sound engineer. Jimmy Iovine.

He shakes hands avidly, then interrupts Springsteen mid-song.

IOVINE
Sorry, Boss. Time’s up.

SPRINGSTEEN
Don’t call me “boss”, you know I hate that. Alright E Street, pack it up.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Springsteen exits the studio as Jon and Frank arrive in Carl’s car. Beyond them Tim emerges from a subway, gift in hand.

TIM
Thank god I’m not the last one. Ann would’ve killed me. Is Linda here?

FRANK
I don’t think Linda’s coming. She and Carl...

TIM
I know, she told me. But she’s still part of this team. I convinced her to come. What’s that?

Jon unbuckles a rare Honeywell photo-to-audio converter that’s seatbelted in the front seat like a person. He gently lifts the machine out as Frank hefts an overstuffed crate of albums.

JON
This magic box is gonna convert our photos to sound waves for the record.

FRANK
We had to fly it in from Denver. One of only three in the world.

As he says it, Jon trips and smashes it on the curb.

JON
Don't worry it's just surface damage.

He lifts it. A big chunk falls off. Frank looks ready to kill.

INT. SOUND BOOTH - SIMULTANEOUS

Lights come on. The mix board powers up. Carl squeezes Ann's hand excited as Tim enters. She quickly releases Carl's hand.

TIM
What did I miss?

More than he knows. He woos Ann with the gift and a kiss.

ANN
(deflecting both)
What's this?

TIM
My book. I finished it!

Not one word about her trip or how's she's been? Ann unwraps his present: ***The Red Limit***. Turns it over, almost mournfully.

ANN
I'm happy for you. Your great story.

She hands it back. Tim expected excitement. This is different. A deeper shift in her that unglues him. Before he can respond--

FRANK
Coming through!

He stumbles by, straining under the Honeywell. Jon hauls the crate full of all the pictures plus Carl and Ann's recordings.

IOVINE
Whoa, wait. We're mixing all that?

JON
I hope this studio's paying you well.

IOVINE
(laughs, yeah right)
If I ever get through this, remind me to quit and start one of my own.

He loads the top album on a turntable -- as Linda slips last minute into the studio with Nick, who dashes into Carl arms.

NICK
Daddy!

CARL
Hey Copernicus, I missed you.

NICK
Can I come home now?

This breaks Carl's heart.

CARL
I don't know.

He looks to Linda, who blazes wordlessly past. Iovine starts the first song to mix onto the record: ***El Cascabel* (track 19),** a frantic mariachi number that now kicks off the--

"RECORDING" MONTAGE":

INT. FACTORY - CLOSE-UP:

On a revolving mold. Molten hot copper pours into frame. A press slams down, then retracts, leaving a perfect gleaming metal disc. Which a machine gently lifts out of view as--

INT. SOUND BOOTH - CROSS-CUT

Carl lowers the next LP in line to record onto the spinning studio turntable. Over his shoulder, Bruce jots each song in his clipboard, his foot tapping unconsciously to the rhythm.

Down at foot level, Frank's FACE APPEARS. Sweating, he plugs a cable into the mix board that winds back into the--

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Where Jon is just finishing duct-taping the Honeywell back together. He powers it on. Feeds Carter's message in like a fax. Frank and Jon wait, literally holding their breath.

For a second NOTHING. Then slowly the photo starts to convert. They high-five in victory as the image becomes sound waves--

INT. FACTORY - MATCH CUT

The same red and green sound waves rise and fall on a computer screen above a "groove machine". Our copper "mother" record spins as a diamond cutter etches the picture out in grooves.

INT. STUDIO BATHROOM - CLOSE-ON:

A real diamond, in a real ring, glittering in the hard light. Tim stares at it, at himself in the bathroom mirror. Feigns a smile of confidence...but his face is filled with uncertainty.

INT. STUDIO HALLWAY - REVERSE ON:

Carl, the same worry etched on his face as he tries not to watch Tim romantically pull Ann into the hall. His big moment. Only Ann evades, shrugging Tim off. Heads back in... to Carl.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUS

Jon and Frank are down to the last 2 images for conversion. Bruce rejects one: **Frank's anatomy photo** of a naked man and pregnant woman holding hands. He writes something on it in red, then presses it to the sound booth glass for Carl: SMUT.

Meanwhile, Jon loads the final photo: **The Blue Marble** of earth from space. It gets stuck halfway down. Frank laughs nervously then kicks the machine. It finishes converting as--

INT. FACTORY - MATCH CUT

Back on the assembly line, the same image of Earth is now pressed to the center of our copper record, becoming its label. Onto which is stamped a title: The Sounds of Earth.

INT. SOUND BOOTH - SIMULTANEOUS

Nick sits with Bruce cutely sharing a headset as they listen to the edited ***Sounds of Earth*** **(track 20)** audio journey Nick helped Ann record. Something changes in Bruce's face as Nick shows him the crayon drawings he made to accompany each sound--

Bruce smiles.

EXT. STUDIO STEPS - DAY

Linda sits smoking, watching a heavy rain fall. Tim joins her and they sit quietly: alone together, lost in their thoughts. Then Tim reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out...

His BOOK. Gives it to Linda. As she opens it, Tim touches the fresh yellow paint stains on her fingers. A knowing smile.

INT. FACTORY - CLOSE UP:

The completed Voyager Record spins center-frame. Shining, beautiful, and missing one key detail. As it rotates before our eyes: a fine metal mist turns it into pure, gleaming GOLD.

A hand lifts it, radiant in the light. Then with a hot pen etches an inscription into the takeout grooves:

"TO THE MAKERS OF MUSIC - ALL WORLDS, ALL TIMES"

END SONG AND MONTAGE.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

Empty takeout boxes litter the mix board. Everyone's exhausted but amped: the last mile of a marathon recording session. Even Bruce's come around. He's smiling now, jacket off, tie undone.

IOVINE
Is that everything, are we wrapped?

Carl cross-checks a master track list tacked to the wall.

CARL
We're just missing one thing. On the sound essay. A kiss.

IOVINE
Is that it? Easy...

He sucks his arm. A loud SMACK.

IOVINE
There, print it, done!

ANN
No, this is meant to be that impossible thing: a kiss that will last forever. It has to be real.

Her eyes find Carl's. He shakes his head, subtly. Turns to--

LINDA
Don't even think about it.

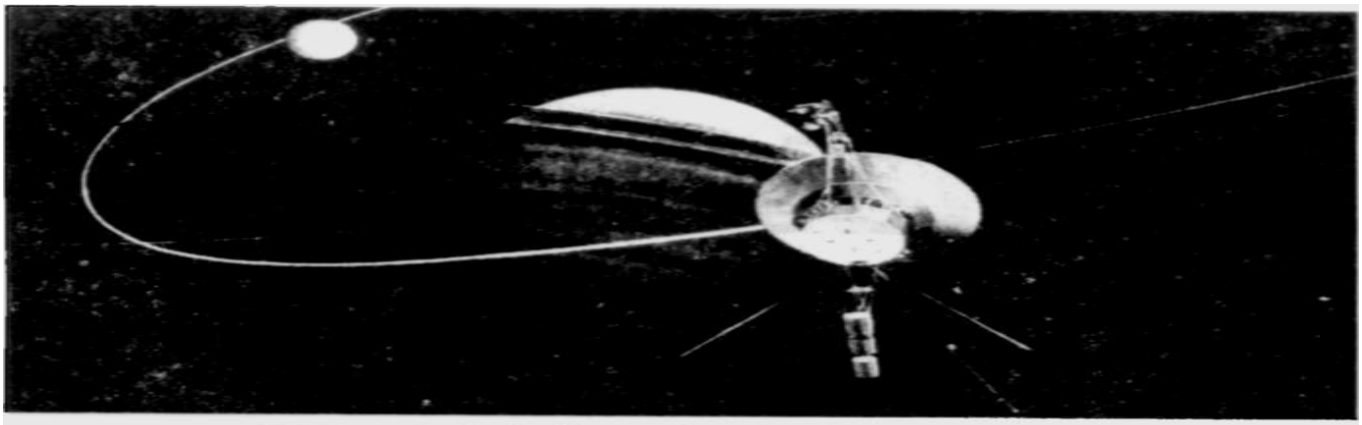
The tension in the room bubbles to boil. Tim grabs Ann.

TIM
A kiss to represent all kisses. I think I can manage that.

Hello Out There

Any Alien Beings Will Find Diverse Earth Data in 2 Voyager Spacecraft

By JAY SCRIBA of The Journal Staff



A NASA artist depicts Voyager I passing the planet Saturn.

What is worthy of immortality on just two hours of long play record — an engraved greeting card that could become last evidence of mankind's life on our planetary dust speck?

Such were tantalizing questions for the elite group of brainstormers — scientists, artists, musicologists, science fiction writers — who created the record on a shoestring, despite NASA's bureaucratic Catch 22s.

How to record our last kiss? Ann Druyan recalls that "After many unusable kisses that were either too faint or too smacky, Tim kissed me softly on the cheek and it felt and sounded fine."

And why not hold hands with Tim Ferris, contributing editor to Rolling Stone, as the Voyager rockets thunder into the sunny Florida blue: "Any creature who comes across Voyager and recognizes the record as an artifact can realize that it was dispatched with no hope of return. *That* gesture may speak more clearly than music. The record says: However primitive we seem, however crude this spacecraft, we knew enough to envision ourselves citizens of the cosmos. It says: However small we were, something in us was large enough to want to reach out to discoverers unknown, in times when we shall have perished or have changed beyond recognition.

"It says: Whoever and whatever you are, we too once lived in this house of stars, and we thought of you."

The Milwaukee Journal, Nov 27th, 1978.

Talks about the team, the contents, and the kiss.

He sweeps her up, dips her. Leans playfully in. At the last second, Ann turns away. SMACK! Lips connect with cheek.

IOVINE
Perfect!

But it's not. Ann doesn't have to say it. Tim follows her gaze to Carl's. And the truth hits like a 1000 volts. He knows.

ANN
Tim...

He doesn't stick around to celebrate. He's out the door.

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

A street market has sprung up. Happy families, couples in love out enjoying the day. Ann catches up to Tim in the crowd.

ANN
Tim wait...

TIM
Why, Ann? I've seen that look before.

It's the same one he gives her now. Only broken.

TIM
What happened while you were gone?

She can't answer him. Can barely meet his gaze.

TIM
Just tell me, do you still love me?

Ann looks up into his eyes now, a long contemplative beat.

TIM
Is that a no?

ANN
No.

TIM
To the no or...

She doesn't have to say it. The truth breaks both their hearts. Tim nods, no longer angry. He takes Ann's hands. Even now they're expanding together as much as breaking apart.

TIM
If you really love him, then promise me one thing--

The hardest thing he's ever said.

TIM
This time make it great.

Before either can pause for regret, he turns and walks away.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Ann returns, dismayed to find the whole team watching Linda confront Carl on the other side of the soundproof glass. Even ON MUTE their argument is clearly volcanic. And when THE SLAP comes... it's even more brutal for its silent ferocity.

Linda storms from the studio, stopping only to fling her ring at Carl. A single word escaping as she slams open the door:

LINDA
...Divorce!

This everyone hears. Jon and Frank scatter as she juggernauts right up to Ann, looking like she might just hit her.

LINDA
There's no such thing as a sure thing-

Her punch. Both accusation and warning. Without a second look, she lifts a shell-shocked Nick into her arms. And storms out. Rocked by this sudden turn of events, Bruce confronts Carl.

BRUCE
I was wrong about the record, I admit it deserves to go up. But I can't possibly take this to committee now.

CARL
My personal life has nothing to do with this message, Bruce.

BRUCE
It does when it turns into a scandal. For better or worse, you're the public face of NASA. Our reputation is more important than this record.

CARL
The record's bigger than any of us.

BRUCE
And you sabotaged it. I'm sorry Carl.

CARL
Don't be sorry, Bruce. Be a leader. Stand up for what you believe in.

Bruce shakes his head, turns to go. But Ann blocks him.

ANN
I joined this mission to be part of something greater than myself. I can't be the reason it falls apart.

She takes Bruce's hands. Pins him impassioned, doesn't let go.

ANN
There is no scandal. What happened between Carl and I... it's over now.

Carl knows she doesn't mean this, still it breaks his heart.

CARL
Don't do this, Ann.

But she has to.

ANN
And no one has to know if I was never on the team at all. You understand?

Bruce nods, floored. Ann releases his hands. Turns to Carl.

CARL
I won't let you go.

ANN
The record is bigger than us, you said it yourself.

Eyes filling now, she bolts for the door. Only Carl stops her. Steps in close. Kisses her slowly on her forehead. Her right eye. Her left cheek. As much as it hurts her, Ann breaks away.

It hurts Carl more to watch her go.

EXT. NASA HEADQUARTERS - AUGUST 18, 1977

A too-hot summer sun beats down on Frank and Jon, sweating uncomfortably in suits as they awkwardly fix each other's off center ties. Together they stride through heavy doors into--

INT. NASA APPROVAL COMMITTEE - DAY

Where Carl is seated at cross-examination microphones before a long table of straight-faced NASA brass. Bruce takes a seat front and center as Jon and Frank join Sagan-- 3 chairs conspicuously empty beside them.

A narrow whip of a man, the NASA CHAIRMAN, leans forward.

CHAIRMAN
No mission at NASA is undertaken lightly. We are tasked with a tremendous responsibility: to broaden human understanding, advance science and technology, and push the boundaries of what's possible further. For the betterment of man.

He holds up the Golden Record like a false idol.

CHAIRMAN
Before this committee makes our final decision we want to know how a "gold record" conforms to those demands.

Jon and Frank rise to speak in defense but Carl takes the mic.

CARL
It doesn't.

Off the stir this causes through the committee and his team--

CARL
If you're looking for scientific justification, you'll find none. We set out on an impossible task: to define what it means to be alive here and now. We used no set logic, no calculated plan. The only compass we followed was our hearts.

Snickers through the committee; Bruce conflicted among them. But Carl doesn't care. He looks to Ann's empty chair.

CARL
And maybe that was foolish. Maybe we failed. But if our responsibility is to better understand ourselves, I ***believe*** what is etched in the thin grooves of that record before you is something precious and profound: a representation of all we are.

His conviction fills every corner of the room. Silences it.

CARL
Even if it's nothing more than a sliver, isn't that worth it? To share a tiny piece of our soul.

CHAIRMAN
Your passion is plain, Dr. Sagan. But what qualifies you to represent our "soul"?

His words like shots. This isn't a jury, it's a firing squad. And all guns aim at Carl.

CHAIRMAN
You chose to capture an experience of life on earth; an experience that, in your words, is impossible to define. You assembled a team that is, to put it mildly, unorthodox. And all to reach out to an alien civilization who may not exist or may never receive your call.

He shakes his head, the decision already made.

CHAIRMAN
I'm sorry, but I don't see the point in sending such a pointless message.

LINDA (O.S.)
Which is exactly why we send it--

Everyone turns as Linda and Tim enter the hall together, Nick in tow. The mission transcending any personal heartbreak.

LINDA
Because the act of sending, in spite of the odds, is the most revealing message of all. If nothing else, it's a symbol for ***US*** more than THEM. And is it a perfect representation? No. But we are not a perfect species. We are messy and mean, full of contradictions and uncertainty and--
(aimed at Carl)
Unimaginable cruelty...

There's anger in her voice, and pain. And a newfound strength.

LINDA
But also resilience and forgiveness.

TIM
And hope.

They take their seats, joining their team in solidarity.

TIM
And isn't that, more than anything else, what it means to be human? That however small we are, however primitive we seem, something in us was large enough to reach out. To say we too once lived in this house of stars. And we thought of you.

The temperature in the room shifts. Warming to them.

CHAIRMAN
While that may be true, even if we wanted to, I'm afraid the record doesn't meet approved regulations.

FRANK
(jumping to his feet)
What are you talking about, we met every quality control specification!

The Chairman clicks a projector and a magnified image of the record's takeout grooves appears: "*To the makers of music...*"

CHAIRMAN
Size, weight and composition of your record passed, but this inscription was made without official clearance.

JON
(up now too, outraged)
You're rejecting on a technicality?

Carl stares at Bruce, the true architect of this decision and the only one who can turn it around. Bruce avoids Carl's eyes.

CHAIRMAN
I believe we are ready to vote...

Here it is. The end of the line; project dead. And then--

BRUCE
I wrote it.

To everyone's surprise, Bruce rises. Takes the mic.

BRUCE
The inscription. It's our only example of human handwriting. Which I believe makes it immensely valuable.

CHAIRMAN
You're in favor of sending a record?

BRUCE
It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

He winks at Carl as the committee erupts.

BRUCE
I'm in favor. Who supports my vote?

One-by-one all committee members but the chairman raise a forest of hands. Linda leans in as Bruce ratifies the vote.

LINDA
I did this for Nick. Like Ann did for you. Don't lose them to your stars.

The camera becomes unhinged, SPINNING ROUND the room, transforming as it circles a full 360 degrees around--

INT. NASA AMPHITHEATER - PRESENT DAY

--Till we find ourselves back on that opening stage. Framed in black. With the same older woman from page 1. Standing at a podium bearing NASA's iconic logo. And we know everything we need to about her: she's beautiful, impassioned, eloquent.

WOMAN
We can't circle back but we remember: everything we made everything we lost-

She looks right at us, then beyond. And finally we see who she's been addressing all along: a room of young engineers; the new generation of NASA. A banner reads: *Voyager: 35 years!*

WOMAN
People think to be a scientist means to lose your joy of discovery, your passion, the great romance of life. Yet 35 years ago the Voyagers left the pale blue dot of our world. And on them still is our golden record. Which today leaves our solar system to join the cosmos beyond.

She smiles into frame.

WOMAN
And what could be more romantic than casting yourself into the unknown?

Her wrinkles fade, her face turns young once more. And we realize who she is now: The real-life ANN DRUYAN (65).

AS WE MORPH BACK TO:

INT. MUSEUM OF MODERN ART - DAY

Young Ann. Back in uniform, failing to explain to a Korean family how to use the audio guide. Carl steps up behind.

CARL
Tell them forget the words. If it's a masterpiece, it will move you in ways words never can.

ANN
Carl, you know we can't--

CARL
They approved the record.

A tornado of emotions tear through Ann.

CARL
But I told them we can't send it without one missing piece.

Before she can say anything more... HE KISSES HER.

The Korean family snap photos as Ann throws her arms around Carl, kissing back. The haunting notes of ***Iziel je Delyo Hagdutin* (track 21)** the record's final song strike up--

FADE TO:

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - CAPE CANAVERAL, FLORIDA - 1977

Technicians bolt the Golden Record to the Voyager spaceship.

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL - NYC - NIGHT

Ann stares into Carl's eyes while EEG nodes are placed across her scalp, their web of thin wires running to a tape recorder that translates her thoughts into a fierce electric pulse.

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY

The Voyager's rocket is wheeled and locked to the launchpad.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ann reclines now on an MRI bed. As it slides her under scan--

INT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - MISSION CONTROL

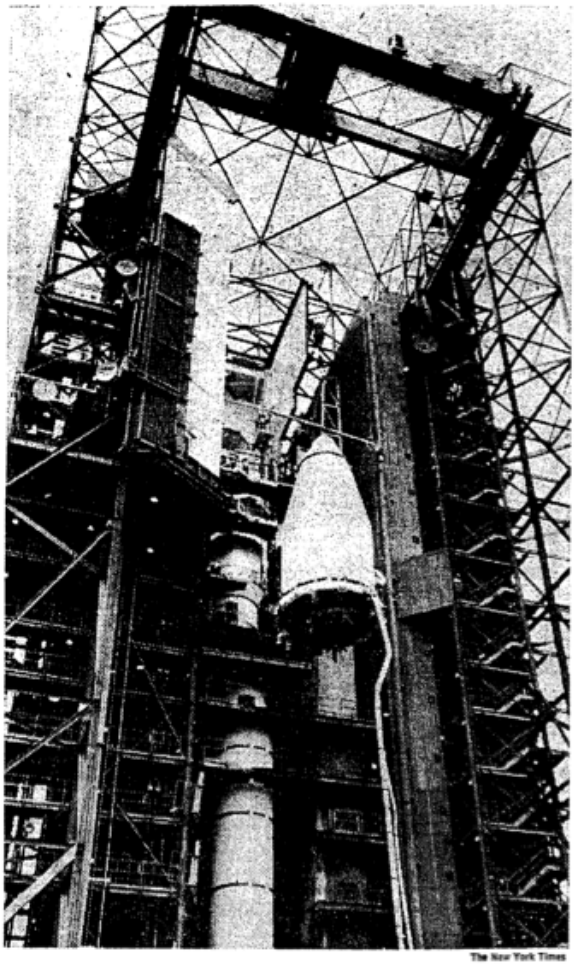
A flight director counts down the go-no-go for launch. 10-9-8--

EXT. SATELLITE BEACH - SIMULTANEOUS

Watching on the shore, Nick shouts out the launch sequence with his dad. 7-6-5--

Spacecraft to Be Launched Today Will Carry a Message From Earth

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD
Special to The New York Times



The New York Times

CARRYING A MESSAGE: The Voyager spacecraft being lifted onto the Titan-Centaur booster rocket in preparation for today's launching to outer planets of solar system. Craft will carry recorded message from earth. Page 8.

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., Aug. 19—The Voyager spacecraft scheduled for launching tomorrow to scout Jupiter, Saturn and possibly Uranus will be carrying a message from the Earth on the off chance that extraterrestrial beings will come upon the craft centuries from now, somewhere on its endless journey beyond the solar system.

The message is in the form of a recording, called "Sounds of Earth." It is a 12-inch copper phonograph record inserted in an aluminum protective jacket that is attached to the outside of the 1,820-pound spacecraft.

Dr. Carl Sagan, the Cornell University astronomer who conceived the idea, calls the recorded message a "bottle cast into the cosmic ocean."

Languages and Nature

Inscribed on the record are nearly two hours of greetings in dozens of human languages, samples of music of various cultures and times, natural sounds such as the wind and surf and animals and birds, and a message from President Carter.

The New York Times
Published: August 20, 1977

INT. MRI BRAIN-SCAN MACHINE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the white cocoon of the MRI, the sound of Ann's HEARTBEAT echoes in time to the lights slowly filling the space around her, taking form; pulsing brighter and brighter--

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - LAUNCHPAD

Boosters IGNITE in a cloud of fire, Ann's heartbeat BLENDING now with the steady countdown 4-3-2-1! As Voyager blazes gloriously to life, breaking its mooring lines and launching--

EXT. SATELLITE BEACH - 5 MILES OUT

Into a cloudless blue sky. As it rises, our entire team, all gathered on the shore opposite the launch-site, burst into wild, emotional celebration. Carl raises Nick into the air.

A VOICE (CARL'S)
Are we alone in the universe?

INT. MRI - MINDSCAPE

All around Ann now: her <u>thoughts form into images</u>. PROJECTED on the MRI walls; flashing by in rhythm to her pulsing heart:

EXT. YULONG RIVER

The Chinese chin player smiles in color-saturated CLOSE-UP.

CHIN PLAYER
Ni hao.

EXT. TAJ MAHAL

The Indian singer presses palms together before the Taj Mahal.

INDIAN SINGER
Namaste.

EXT. MACHU PICCHU

The Incan girl bows shyly as sunset haloes her in gold light.

INCAN GIRL
Hola.

EXT. SATELLITE BEACH

Nick holds out an open hand full of sparkling grains of sand.

NICK
Hello from the children of planet earth.

He throws them into the sky, where they become so many stars.

THE VOICE
We are one world but we contain many.

EXT. SATELLITE BEACH - DAY

Voyager's glory trail rockets higher and higher to the cosmos as Ann slips her hand into Carl's. And squeezes. No words.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Outside the MRI, Carl takes Ann's hand in his. Squeezes. As the EEG of her thoughts register like an seismic earthquake, the tape recorder emits a sound like a string of fireworks.

INT. MRI - MINDSCAPE

Ann's thoughts intensify as the grand sweep of Planet Earth cycles before her eyes in a **rotating triptych (photos #10-20):**

SCREEN 1--*Nature's Glory: mountains, deserts, oceans, forests.*

SCREEN 2--*Animal Kingdom: gorillas, dolphins, reptiles, birds.*

SCREEN 3--*Human History: from hunter-gatherers to astronauts.*

THE VOICE
We are a way for the cosmos to know itself.

EXT. SPACE - ANGLE ON THE VOYAGER ROCKET

High above the blue skin of the earth, Voyager detaches from its booster, our gold record gleaming in the rays of the sun.

INT. MRI - MINDSCAPE

Every emotion washes over Ann as one by one the images MERGE--

UNTIL THERE IS ONLY CARL:

--smiling under the stars on the balcony at Nora Ephron's.

--Carl squeezing her hand under the full moon in Ithaca.

--Carl running with her through the rain outside Taj Mahal.

--Carl kissing her on the stone bridge over Ithaca Falls.

All the moments they've shared together in our story FLASH BY up till NOW. And then something completely unexpected happens--

THEY CONTINUE ON...

--To Carl and Ann's wedding. Kissing under grape vines in '81.

--Carl and Ann navigating the set of his famous show: COSMOS.

--Carl and Ann bringing home their first; then second child.

--Carl and Ann swimming with dolphins and grown kids in Hawaii

--Carl and Ann proudly hugging Nick, now in cap 'n gown.

--Carl and Ann side-by-side writing <u>CONTACT</u>. Their great story

--Old Carl and Ann kissing on the same bridge at Ithaca Falls.

--Carl sick, dying in a hospital, squeezing Ann's hand tight.

CARL
For keeps.

ANN
For keeps.

INT. NASA AMPHITHEATER - PRESENT DAY

Real life older Ann opens her eyes, full of tears in CLOSE-UP.

ANN
Time is not a wheel it's a heartbeat. We can't circle back. 15 times around the sun now we've gone without Carl--

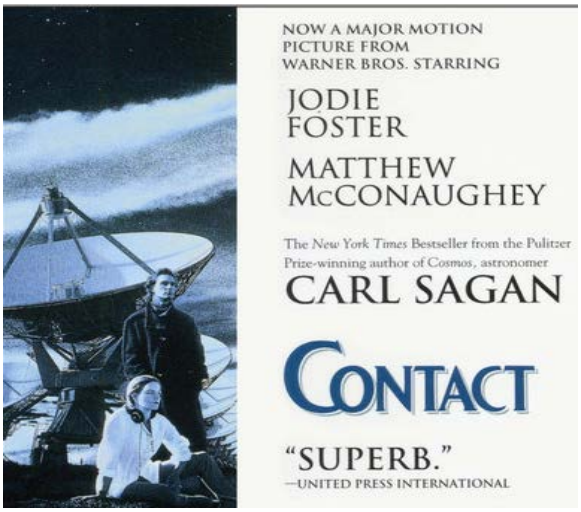
In the front row, flush with emotion, sit the REAL-LIFE MEMBERS of our team: Tim, Frank, Bruce, Jon. In between an aged Linda and grown-up Nick is<u> one empty seat.</u>

ANN
But Voyager lives on. Carrying our song forever toward the heart of the universe. And with it, the memories of a young girl in love.

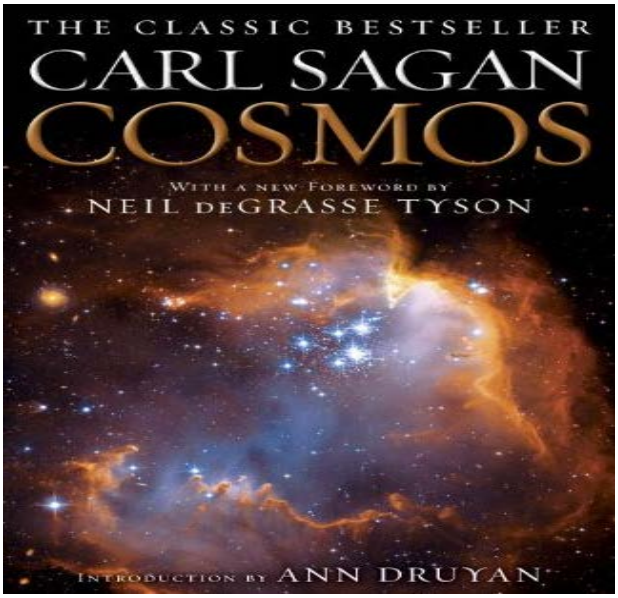
And now Carl's in that seat. Smiling at Ann. No one else in the theater but him and her. And as she smiles back--

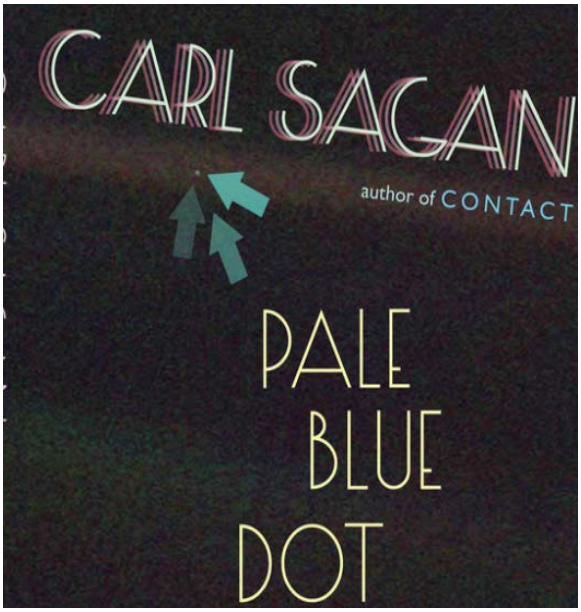


Carl and Ann getting married in 1981



"Contact" was based on a book they wrote together





http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4PN5JJDh78I

Carl and Ann wrote the 1980 bestselling book and PBS miniseries seen by over 1 billion people. Ann is remaking the series with Seth Macfarlane and Neil DeGrasse Tyson premiering spring 2014: http://www.deadline.com/2013/10/tv-trailer-seth-macfarlanes-cosmos/

Carl wrote his most famous speech inspired by the famous Voyager photo above.

SAGAN'S VOICE
(the real man not actor)
Consider again that dot...

FADE TO:

PROFOUND DARKNESS

punctuated by ten thousand pinpoints of light. A sprawling kaleidoscope of suns, worlds, stars, at the center of which--

OUR PALE BLUE DOT

glimmers like a precious jewel. 4 billion miles out it hangs like a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam. Our entire world nothing more than a sapphire speck on the vast cosmic ocean.

SAGAN'S VOICE
On it everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives--

And now we see Voyager adrift in the darkness, its golden record gleaming as it sails further and further from home.

CARD #1: ON AUGUST 20, 1977, VOYAGER II ROCKETED INTO SPACE CARRYING A MIXTAPE OF HUMANITY; A GOLDEN RECORD OF EARTH.

Angle on the spaceship as side-thrusters now fire, turning it.

SAGAN'S VOICE
Every hero and coward. Every king and peasant. Every young couple in love--

CARD #2: TWO YEARS LATER TIMOTHY FERRIS MET HIS GREAT LOVE CAROLYN, TO WHOM HE'S BEEN HAPPILY MARRIED EVER SINCE. HE IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE BEST SCIENCE WRITERS OF HIS GENERATION.

SAGAN'S VOICE
Every mother, father, hopeful child.

CARD #3: LINDA STILL LIVES IN ITHACA WHERE SHE CONTINUES TO PAINT. NICK SAGAN BECAME A POPULAR SCIENCE-FICTION WRITER.

The far sun flares off the record as Voyager slowly rotates.

SAGAN'S VOICE
Every inventor and explorer--

CARD #4: FRANK DRAKE REMAINS A PIONEER IN THE SEARCH FOR EXTRATERRESTRIAL INTELLIGENCE (SETI). HIS FAMOUS EQUATION IS STILL USED AS STATISTICAL PROOF OF LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS.

Our Solar System now comes into Voyagers view: 9 tiny marbles--

SAGAN'S VOICE
Every creator and destroyer--

CARD #5: JON LOMBERG REMAINED CARL AND ANN'S MAIN ARTISTIC COLLABORATOR FOR OVER 20 YEARS, ILLUSTRATING DRAGONS OF EDEN, FOR WHICH CARL RECEIVED THE PULITZER PRIZE. AND *COSMOS*: SAGAN'S PBS MINISERIES SEEN BY OVER 500 MILLION PEOPLE.

And now Voyager's camera aligns itself with our Pale Blue Dot--

SAGAN'S VOICE
Every teacher of morals--

CARD #6: BRUCE MURRAY WENT ON TO BECOME ONE OF CARL'S CLOSEST FRIENDS. TOGETHER THEY CO-FOUNDED THE PLANETARY SOCIETY THAT TODAY HAS OVER 100,000 MEMBERS.

Voyager snaps **PHOTO #19.** Arguably the most famous in history--

SAGAN'S VOICE
Everyone you love.

CARD #7: CARL AND ANN MARRIED AND SPENT TWO INSEPARABLE DECADES TOGETHER, CO-AUTHORING FOUR BOOKS AND TWO KIDS. UNTIL 1997 WHEN RARE BONE MARROW LEUKEMIA ROBBED CARL OF OUR WORLD.

With a final burst of power, Voyager rotates away from Earth.

SAGAN'S VOICE
Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. But we are not alone. We have each other.

CARD #8: THE VOYAGERS SAIL ON. IN 2014 THEY BECAME MAN'S FIRST EMISSARIES TO LEAVE OUR SOLAR SYSTEM, CARRYING THEIR MESSAGE INTO THE STARS. A MESSAGE OF LOVE.

The heart of the universe opens before Voyager. Which journeys onward into an endless kaleidoscope of distant pale blue dots.

FADE TO BLACK.

In a Breathtaking First, NASA's Voyager 1 Exits the Solar System

-The New York Times, *September 12, 2013*

"Since the launch of the Voyager spacecraft in 1977, Voyager 1 has traveled over 11.7 billion miles from the launchpad pictured here. That is equivalent to traveling to the moon and back almost 25,000 times.

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/13/science/in-a-breathtaking-first-nasa-craft-exits-the-solar-system.html

Voyager spacecraft: what will it teach the universe about mankind?

-The Telegraph, *September 13, 2013*

"Nasa has confirmed that mankind has left the solar system for the first time with its Voyager 1 spacecraft entering interstellar space after a 36 year journey."

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/space/10307179/Voyager-spacecraft-what-will-it-teach-the-universe-about-mankind.html

The Little Spacecraft That Could

-The Sydney Morning Herald, *September 14, 2013*

'This is historic stuff, a bit like the first exploration of Earth."

http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/the-little-spacecraft-that-could-20130913-2tq9c.html

Voyager 1 exits solar system; let's hope aliens don't bring it back

-Los Angeles Times, *September 12, 2013.*

"Voyager has boldly gone where no probe has gone before, marking one of the most significant technological achievements in the annals of the history of science."

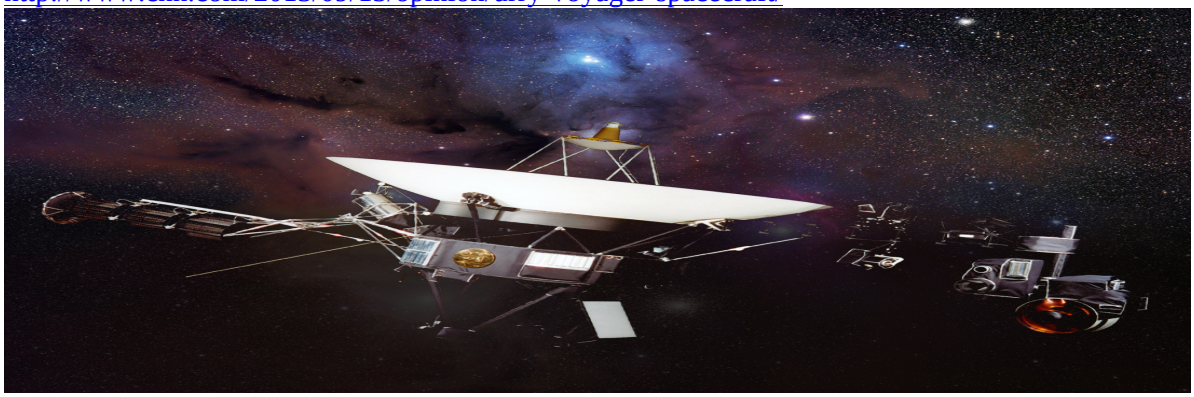
http://www.latimes.com/science/la-sci-voyager-20130913,0,7950328.story#axzz2iwkesn4p

If "E.T." finds Voyager 1, will it phone Earth?

-CNN, *September 23, 2013.*

"Like Magellan's voyage, Voyager's achievement is a major milestone in human exploration… Forty thousand years from now, after traversing 10 trillion miles or so of interstellar space, Voyager 1 will approach the then-closest star, AC +79 3888. At that point it will be a ghost ship, representing an old civilization, gone but enshrined forever in the golden record."

http://www.cnn.com/2013/09/13/opinion/urry-voyager-spacecraft/





Linda Salzman



Tim Ferris



Nick Sagan



Ann Druyan & Carl Sagan