

THEORY OF RELATIVITY

Written by

Jesse Schwartz

FADE IN:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - END OF SCHOOL DAY

JEFF, the senior captain of the varsity soccer team walks down the hallway with his friend, KEVIN (High school senior, male). They are both wearing soccer jerseys and backpacks. Kevin is dribbling a soccer ball as he walks. Jeff wears the big "Captain" armband on his jersey to indicate his stature, which is sewn on and a permanent homemade addition to the jersey. He also carries an oversized jug of water, which takes a considerable amount of effort to drink out of when full, as it is now.

JEFF

I'll catch you at practice, I gotta make up that physics test that I missed yesterday. Shouldn't take too long, didn't really study.

KEVIN

Man, that's on you. Aren't you struggling in that class?

JEFF

Whatever, Kev, it's physics! Not like it's changing! Besides, I have lots of "field experience."

Jeff imitates kicking a soccer ball. Kevin chuckles. Jeff takes a swig from his heavy water jug.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Plus, Layla's taking it too, so-

KEVIN

The Mathlete?! Ha! This is like your third time talking about her, just ask her out already!

JEFF

Shut up!

Jeff punches Kevin in the arm. They laugh and keep walking down the hallway.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM DOORWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff and Kevin arrive at the door at the same time as LAYLA, one of the top students in the grade and the captain of the mathletes. Layla is disappointed to see Jeff again.

LAYLA

Why are you even here, Jeff, you already have your big soccer scholarship.

JEFF

Hey, I don't want to be here either! But they still want me to graduate, so I guess you're stuck with me, Layla.

LAYLA

Please don't cheat off me again.

JEFF

They never found any proof. Plus, why would I cheat? I'm basically a physics god on the pitch, right Kev?

KEVIN

You know it, J!

Jeff and Kevin do a little fist-bump, Kevin walks off down the hallway.

Kevin fake swoons to Jeff as he walks past Layla, Jeff flips Kevin off. Layla looks behind her, but Kevin is already facing the other direction. Jeff and Layla redirect their attention to each other.

JEFF

Why are you even here, anyways. Don't you love school?

LAYLA

When the Mathletes call, I answer.

Jeff laughs.

LAYLA (CONT'D)

We had a meet yesterday, but you already knew that.

JEFF

Whatever.

Jeff heads into the physics classroom. Layla follows him.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeff and Layla pick out desks. Jeff picks one in the middle of the room and Layla picks one behind him. Jeff lets go of his jug, which slams into the ground.

MR. KEZUR, the bald, thirty-something physics teacher sits behind the desk at the front of the classroom. His attention is focused the tests he is grading.

LAYLA

Afternoon, Mr. Kezur!

MR. KEZUR

Layla! How'd you do at the math meet? And please don't sit behind Jeff. I don't want to deal with another academic integrity investigation.

LAYLA

But we both know it wasn't me-

Mr. Kezur gives Layla a soul piercing stare. Layla gets up from her desk and moves a couple desks to the left of Jeff.

LAYLA (CONT'D)

We finished third.

Mr. Kezur puts down the tests he is grading, grabs two fresh tests, and hands them to the two students.

MR. KEZUR

The time is currently... 3:32. You have until 4:17 to have this on my desk. Please put down at least something for every question, Jeff, I want you to graduate as much as you do. Layla, please don't rewrite the textbook. Good luck!

Mr. Kezur writes a big "45 minutes left" on the board and then returns to grading tests at his desk.

INT. JEFF'S DESK - CONTINUOUS

Jeff looks down at his test and quickly glances at all 10 questions on the test. Layla starts furiously scribbling away on her test.

JEFF

(V.O.)

Why do I even have to take physics?

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)
It's not like any of this will make
me a better player.

Jeff tries to glance at Layla's test, but she is too far
away.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Whatever, I'm sure I can pull out a
C on this.

Layla looks up from her test to see Jeff has not written
anything yet, not even his name. She sneers and returns to
writing.

Jeff reads the first question.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
"A train is heading east at 35
kilometers per hour, another
train," yada yada yada, this is
just math. 35 times 3 plus 22 times
3, that's 105 + 66 is 171
kilometers. One down.

Jeff writes down his first answer.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
"Explain the difference between
alternating and direct current"

Jeff starts writing.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Alternating current. That's AC,
right? AC is when... AC Milan plays
Man United this week! Gotta make
sure to watch that. If AC Milan
were electricity, then they'd be
the... electrons? That go back and
forth a bunch... Yeah, that sounds
right? Like how one soccer ball is
all you need for a game because it
keeps getting passed around. DC is
more like a drill, because everyone
needs their own ball. The electrons
move from positive to negative and-

The lights shut off. Mr. Kezur looks up from his papers and
gets up to open the blinds.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Mr. Kezur, I can't take tests in the dark, I have a rare condition called day-vision-itus, I can only read when-

Mr. Kezur opens the blinds, sunlight pours into the room. Mr. Kezur returns to his desk.

MR. KEZUR

You're fine, Jeffrey.

JEFF

Whatever.

Jeff returns his attention to his test. There is more than enough sunlight coming in through the windows to take the test.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

No, they flow negative to positive, like a defender clearing to the open space.

Jeff erases his answer and rewrites his new one. The lights turn back on. Layla does not react.

Jeff's hair blows a little bit in the wind. He looks around but nothing is there except empty desks.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

Bunch of ghosts in this school.

Jeff grabs his jug and takes a swig.

INT. JEFF'S DESK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jeff looks up from his test. The board says "20 Minutes Remaining." Mr. Kezur is focused on grading tests.

JEFF

(V.O.)

40 minutes already? Damn, time to do the hard questions... First up is... Friction. Man, I'd kill for a big dose of correct answer right about now.

Jeff purposefully knocks his pencil off his desk. It rolls right next to Layla's desk.

Layla bends down to pick up the pencil.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Oh, don't worry about it, Layla, I wouldn't want to distract you from your test!

Jeff springs up from his desk and moves towards the pencil. Layla bends down to grab the pencil and stands up from her desk.

LAYLA

No, no, Jeff, I insist!

Layla hands Jeff his pencil. The pair hold eye contact for a beat. Jeff looks towards Mr. Kezur, who is still grading tests, then towards Layla's test for a moment, then back to Layla.

Mr. Kezur looks up from his desk.

MR. KEZUR

Everyone in their desks, please!
Layla, Jeff can get his own pencil next time.

Everyone returns to their desks.

JEFF

(V.O)

God, I hate her... I think I saw a .1 on her paper? Or was it a .7? What even is a "coefficient of friction"?

Jeff answers 0.1. His pencil slips out of his hand. Jeff stands up to get it and slips a bit as he stands, but regains his balance.

Layla looks at Jeff before looking back down at her test.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O)

Might as well take this opportunity to get another serving of answer.

Jeff walks past Layla's desk, trying to eye her test. Layla covers it with her arm.

MR. KEZUR

Jeffrey? May I ask why you're out of your seat again?

JEFF
I'm just sharpening my pencil!

Jeff walks over to the pencil sharpener and sharpens his pencil. On his way back to his desk he gets a clear view of a number: 9.81.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Gravity!

Jeff rushes back to his desk. He slips again, but catches himself before he falls. He flips through his test to a question about gravity.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Gravity is 9.81... What did Kezur always say? Prosecco Prosecco? I'd kill for some wine right now.... Focus! Per second! "9.81 feet per second per second".

Jeff writes down the answer on his test.

Jeff grabs his water jug again. He lifts the jug so quickly that he hits himself in the face. Layla laughs at Jeff.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Huh?

Jeff looks at the jug. It is still mostly full, but he can move it around with ease, as if it were 1/3 its original weight.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
Something weird is going on... First the lights, then this... It almost feels like...

Jeff goes to the next question, about the speed of sound.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(V.O.)
No. No way. This is stupid. There's no way. But maybe... I guess there's only one way to find out.

Jeff writes the speed of sound to be 0. The room goes silent, as if in outer space.

Jeff erases the 0 but the room stays silent. He takes a breath. It is silent. He opens his mouth again, as if to scream. We hear nothing.

Jeff looks out the window. We see an airplane flying over head. Jeff perks up and writes "737 MPH" on his test. Sound returns.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

"I'm a physics god!?" You big dumb idiot. Lotta good being good at soccer will do to help me graduate. Let alone fix all this. It's OK. I just have to put something down for each question and Kezur will find a way to get me the points. I'll find a way to fix everything later.

Jeff clacks his pencil against his desk a few times, listening closely for deviations from the norm. He notices nothing. All sound is a little lower in frequency/pitch. (The real speed of sound is 767 MPH. By my understanding, this would cause all sound to be pitched just a little bit lower)

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

What's next... Light? Oh no...

Jeff reads the question: What is the wavelength of visible light spectrum?

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

What wavelengths of light are visible to humans? How am I supposed to know that?

Jeff looks over at Layla's test. We can make out the phrase "700 nanometers".

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

700 nanometers. 700 to what? Good for nothing, Layla. At least I know 700 is right. Might as well try...

Jeff writes his answer. The light in the room all shifts to red. Neither Layla nor Mr. Kezur seem to notice. Writing on the whiteboard states "5 Minutes Remaining."

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

5 minutes?!? Fuck.

(MORE)

JEFF (CONT'D)

I don't even know how to fix this.
Or any of this, really. At least I
can still see... There's only one
question left and it's for extra
credit, which I'm definitely gonna
need. "Einstein's theory of
relativity states that that...
While $F(r)$ states that.. What is a
typical value of r ?" This is total
nonsense. I don't know? R squared?

Jeff writes down his answer. Immediately the room fills with
spacetime anomalies: basketball sized floating holes in time
that show a different dimension of spacetime. Inside each of
them is the same physics classroom, but at a different moment
in time.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(V.O.)

What the...

Jeff looks into an anomaly near his desk in the same way one
would look at a globe, or crystal ball.

INT. SPACETIME ANOMALY - CLASSROOM - THE NEAR FUTURE

Jeff is turning in his test.

JEFF

(V.O.)

That's me! How is this happening?

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Jeff investigates another anomaly.

INT. SPACETIME ANOMALY - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

The physics classroom is empty.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Jeff probes a third anomaly.

INT. SPACETIME ANOMALY - CLASSROOM - 15 MINUTES AGO

Jeff and Layla both quietly work on their tests.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Jeff looks deeply into the third anomaly, trying to copy the answers off of Layla's test. He squints, trying to get a better look.

JEFF

(V.O)

Oh, come on, I can't see anything!

Jeff repositions himself closer to the anomaly, but gets too close. Jeff is sucked into the anomaly and disappears from the classroom.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - A FEW MINUTES EARLIER

Jeff falls to the floor. He gets up and dusts himself off. No one in the past version of the classroom seems to notice his presence. The past versions of Layla, Mr. Kezur, and Jeff all sit quietly taking their tests. The whiteboard reads "20 minutes left."

JEFF

Hello?

No one hears him. Jeff waves his hand towards the past version of Jeff (Past Jeff), but Past Jeff does not respond or acknowledge Jeff's presence.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Fucker. Look at me!

Past Jeff does not react.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Stop answering questions!

Jeff looks at the white board.

JEFF (CONT'D)

20 minutes? That means I only have
a few before things start-

Past Jeff answers a question. Jeff slips a little as the friction in the room is reduced.

Past Jeff drops his pencil, gets up, and walks towards Layla's desk the exact same way it happened earlier.

MR. KEZUR

Jeffrey? May I ask why you're out
of your seat again?

PAST JEFF
I'm just sharpening my pencil!

Jeff watches Past Jeff eye Layla's test.

JEFF
Layla?

Layla does not respond.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Can anyone hear me?

No responses. Jeff looks at his test, then at Layla's test.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Go time.

Jeff takes a seat next to Layla, copying down her answers as quickly as he can. He erases his old answers as he copies her answers on to his test.

JEFF (CONT'D)
(Cheating off Layla)
Jeez, how can you write so much
about such simple questions?
(Mocking himself)
"If they're so simple, why do you
have to cheat?" Good point, Jeff,
let's just get this done and get
out of here. Gravity is 9.81...
Meters per second per second. I was
so close.

Past Jeff inputs his answer for gravity. The room gets a
little floatier as gravity is reduced by about 2/3s.

JEFF (CONT'D)
The speed of sound is... Come on
Layla, uncover that answer... 343
meters per second. How was I
supposed to know that?

Past Jeff inputs his answer for the speed of sound, causing
the room to go silent. After a beat, sound returns to the
room.

JEFF (CONT'D)
And the visible spectrum of light
is... 700 nanometers to.. No, about
400-700 nanometers.

Past Jeff answers the light spectrum question wrong again,
causing all the light to shift red.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Almost done... change that friction
answer to a 1, that's a 15... how
did I get negative 37 for that?

Jeff looks up. The whiteboard says "5 Minutes Remaining"

JEFF (CONT'D)
And... that's all of them. Now, how
do I get back out of here?

Past Jeff writes down his answer for the extra credit question. The room fills again with spacetime anomalies, the same basketball sized time holes as before.

Jeff looks around, trying to find the same anomaly that brought him here.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Where are you... where are you...
No, this can't be happening.

Jeff looks around in a panic. He moves to the middle of the room. Jeff closes his eyes and starts to hyperventilate. Past Jeff, continuing to repeat the same actions as before, gets too close to an anomaly and gets sucked in.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jeff stands in the center of the classroom with his eyes closed and breathing heavily.

MR. KEZUR
Jeff? Everything alright? It's just
a physics test. It's not the end of
the world.

Jeff opens his eyes. The room has returned to normal. He looks down at his test, which has his copied answers.

JEFF
(Composing himself)
Yeah...? I'm good, I think. I think
I'm done.

Jeff takes a deep breath. A cocky smile creeps onto Jeff's face.

MR. KEZUR
Put it on my desk and I'll grade it
right away. Layla, you too.
(MORE)

MR. KEZUR (CONT'D)
You have nothing to prove and I
want to go home.

Layla looks up from her test. Dejectedly, she stands up and
hands in her test to Mr. Kezur.

JEFF
See you at graduation, Kezur!

MR. KEZUR
Here's hoping.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM DOORWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff and Layla exit the physics classroom at the same time.

LAYLA
Was that too hard for you, leg boy?

JEFF
Are you bullying me? I did some
last minute studying. And like I
said, I'm something of a physics
god.

Jeff chuckles and walks off.

INT. PHYSICS CLASSROOM, MR KEZUR'S DESK - MOMENTS LATER

Jeff's test sits on top of Mr. Kezur's desk. Mr. Kezur writes
a big red 100 at the top and "Well Done!" beneath.

We see the first question that Jeff answered. There is a
simple math mistake. Jeff has forever changed the laws of
physics.

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

A bunch of high school boys are running practice drills on
the field.

Jeff tightens his cleats and lines up to shoot a ball. He
winds up, kicks, and then misses the net by a large margin.
Other players on the field stop and watch the ball soar.

The cocky smile on Jeff's face fades.

FADE OUT: