You can't bring back the past, no matter how hard you try. It's in the past and all you can do is learn lessons from it.

Such utter bullshit, that's what they told me during all of my years in High School and College. The past is gone. Just learn from it, and move forward. Well you know what I did? I set out to prove them wrong.

Oh no you didn't, you think. Oh but I did! I took every since one of those lectures and put them to the test. If you don't believe me, just look at yesterday's newspaper, I've changed it. Changed it beyond your wildest imagination. You wouldn't believe me though. You're too far into the mindset that what is written is written and what's in stone is in stone. There's no going back and you can't change the past. Blah blah blah, I've heard it before.

It's total bullshit.

The past can be manipulated like a stream. If you don't like where it comes from, you change it. Change the source of the water and it's not the same anymore. It leads a different path. Don't even start in on, well the past is what makes up who you are, if you change yourself you won't be the same. More bullshit. Whoever told you that was an idiot as well.

I look at the past like it's ripples in a wine glass. Red wine that is, the white stuff, well it can be a tad on the sweet side if you know what I mean. Yes, the past is important. I get that. But, if you don't enjoy what you saw, change it. It won't have a problem with it. It won't have a problem with any of it… it's just time. It doesn't have a say in how things are changed.

Allow me to illustrate.

Just this morning, the world was ending. Ending I tell you! Asteroids were falling out of nowhere. Entire cities were being destroyed. I realized at what moment the Earth got in the way, and managed to go back in time. I pushed the comet to a different direction and the asteroids never hit Earth. You all woke up without a problem and went on about your day worrying if your coffee was going to be too cold.

Still don't believe me do you?

What if I told you… I stopped them from killing JFK? Would you believe me then? Yes, I was reading through world events and came upon the JFK assassination. A thought struck me, what happened if it just never happened? So I went back in time and stopped the CIA from killing him. Oh, I'm sorry you thought it was Oswald didn't you? Yeah… sorry about that. He didn't have a thing to do with it. His gun was filled with blanks.

When I came back for lunch, I saw the world in a different light. It was pure evil. Worse than it had been before. It was so terrible… so helping JFK survive was not a good thing. I had to go back in time and kill myself before I stopped the assassination. That was a rush, killing yourself to prevent you from doing something you've already done.

Yeah I know, I get a headache just thinking about it too.

Well that's what time travel is all about. Changing events so they don't end up being the same later on. Of course such power can cause people to go mad or crazy with the thought of simply changing whatever they want to change. We call these people trippers in the profession.

Yes, people are evil. It's a trait they just have. So we deal with those evil people and bring them to justice. Of course we can't always cure them of whatever caused them to trip in the first place. So they're put down. Quietly. Gently. At least we try to put them down quietly and gently. Doesn't always happen that way though, a shame really. Some of my best friends are trippers. I've yet to catch them though, somehow they're always one step ahead of me.

Oh my, how rude of me. I haven't introduced myself. My name is Thomas. I'd like to say I didn't have a name, but that would be lying now wouldn't it? Yes, that's exactly what I was thinking. Wouldn't want to be lying to you, or them, or anyone else around for that matter. It's difficult to change history if you go by different aliases. So I keep to myself and don't try to disrupt the timeline more than I have to.

Well I suppose I'm not the one disrupting it. I'm the one fixing it. The boys upstairs are working on ways to destroy the different parallel universes created by time travel. What's that? Oh yes, they exist. Everytime you go back and change something, a different universe pops up and you have to deal with it. For now, we have the cleaners. They're not as efficient as we'd like them to be. So yeah, they're a work in progress kind of thing.

There's one thing I've never done and I mean never. It's one of those cardinal sins you just don't do. No matter how hard your own life gets, you cannot change your own life. Your timeline must not be tampered with. People have tried, oh how they have tried. But in trying, they tend to destroy themselves. It's a sad state when someone ends up fucking their own life over. They didn't mean to, no one ever means to. Just a small change here, a twist of reality over there. It never turns out good. Never.

It's one of the first rules of time travel. Don't change your past. Your past is in stone. If you attempt to change your own past, you will die. That's all there is to it.

The people who have attempted to change their own past, who were on the force? I had to go back and kill them. Do you know how difficult it is to undertake a mission like that? You have to go and kill your own buddy. Someone you've known for years. It takes dedication. A kind of dedication that you just don't easily take.

Once they're dead, you don't remember them anymore and are brought back to the present. So that gets better, until you end up watching the tape at the review to see how well you did on the assignment. The first time I watched the tape, I was shocked. Here was someone I knew and I killed them. They were taken from me by my own hand. I suppose that's how the higher ups keep order around here. I'm not so sure about that. The whole keeping order kinda gives me the creeps.

Oh well, what are you going to do about it? You can't go back and change the higher ups mind. Hell, you can't even go back in time and prevent yourself from killing your buddy to begin with. The Time Travel Patrol Agency, or TTPA for short, lock down the coordinates of that section of time. To unlock it and go back to when you killed another time traveler is prohibited. No ifs ands or buts about it.

It's a simple rule. Most of us keep our hands clean of it. There have been a few people, who again are on a power hunger trip, and decide they need to change the past by preventing such a killing. Well they're taken care of. It's all nice, tidy, and orderly. Nothing too bizarre.

Then we come to Frank. Now let me tell you a bit about him. You see, Frank is the kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back. He's almost too kind and polite for his own good. Frank came to the TTPA a few years back, his first assignment was with me. We had to track down some unknown who was climbing Mount Everest. In the original timeline, this unknown caused quite an avalanche that killed a bunch of people. Being the good hearted guys that we were, Frank and I fixed the timeline. Everything was peachy.

Well peachy until Frank decided to cheat the system. You see, he went back after the fact and placed another random guy on that mountain. Said someone had to reach the top that year to keep things in order. Well that dumb fuck ended up dying which caused a ripple throughout history. When we got back from our little excursion through history, Frank was nowhere to be found. Some blonde bitch was in his place.

That's right, the random guy on the mountain? It was one of Frank's ancestors. We didn't know it at the time of course. Poor Frank, I miss the bastard. Oh well, I suppose he should have known better.

Whenever something wrong happens, it's referred to as pulling a Frank. True it's not the most nicest way to remember someone, but it sure as hell is effective. Haven't had an incident like that in a while. I just hope it stays that way.

It was raining, dark, depressing. People were indoors. The news had told them not to leave their houses due to the bad weather. I suppose it wasn't everyday the heavens decided to pour acid down on you. It wasn't their fault a mad man from the future had changed the weather patterns and fucked over the rest of the world. Not their fault at all.

I was sent to grab the man and bring him to justice. The only kind of justice I know about. Hard cold truth against a hard cold criminal. My orders were simple. Go in, grab Jerome and get the hell out before worse things happened. Simple, right, nothing was ever simple. The chief never understood the concept. He figured everything was simple. When you sit on the other side of a desk for twenty-five plus years, I suppose it would seem rather simple to you.

The chief hadn't been on a mission himself for ever. Ages had passed and he just laughed away putting the money in the bank. Chief started the whole time travel business. As I recall, the way he tells the story at least, Chief was trying to build a device that would generate clean energy. Instead he was thrown back in time a month. He changed some things and came back to the present. Those stock tips were gold. He literally became rich in the blink of an eye.

So he sent me along this ride. I could do without the acid rain, trust me on that. Rumor has it, the man I was searching for was a long time friend of Chief. Must be hard to put an old friend down. Like you were putting down your dog. I wouldn't know, I didn't own a dog.

My umbrella didn't last very long in the acid. One would think being from the future would have it's advantages. Nope. Acid was still acid. I ducked into an alleyway to help avoid further burning. Fortunately it was a covered alleyway. The brick looked brand new. Either someone had remodeled recently or they were just lucky not to have damaged the walls. Either way, I was safe for the moment.

Taking in my surroundings, I looked at the ghost town. Shops were boarded up. No one was on the street. At least this pickup would be an easy one, I hoped. With no one out and about, the perp should be easy to apprehend. I just kept telling that to myself. No use in negative thinking at this point in the game.

My eyes shifted to a man. He was walking down the middle of the street screaming. The acid was eating the clothes from him. What an idiot, I thought, who on earth would be doing that? I ran out to the man in order to see if I could help.

"What in the hell?" He said, "Where did this fucking acid come from?"

As I reached the man he was out of breath. "Come along now." I said. "No need in you getting caught up in this any longer than you have to.

We ran for cover. A broken down tire shop was nearby. Ducking into the shop we sat down.

"Should be safe in here for a bit" I said "Hopefully the rain will stop soon."

The man nodded. "Yes yes, good thinking. Thank you." He paused for a moment. "How rude of me, I haven't introduced myself."

I was hoping he would say his name was Jerome and be the man I was looking for. It wasn't that simple, the man's name was Lucius. He was an escaped mental patient. A volatile one at that. Great, just great. I was sitting with a crazy man. That's all this acid trip needed.

It was tempting to taze Lucius but as luck would have it, I didn't bring my taazer on this trip. I made a mental note to remember to bring it on the next trip for sure. Time travel had its benefits and its side effects for sure.

He tried to make small talk. I didn't care about what Lucius had to say. He was as understandable as a coma patient in the middle of June. Only difference was, the coma patient could still have use of his mind.

"I've got got got issues man." Lucius said. "So many issues beyond the issues you couldn't believe. I was born with them issues and they just won't leave."

I rubbed my face in disbelief. The night was getting worse. It was almost worth it to just go running back out into the acid rain. Yes that would have been a better situation than listening to this damn fuck. Poor bastard probably didn't have a place to sleep let alone a place to live.

Handing him forty dollars, I told Lucius to go find a place to stay. He was grateful for the money. As he left, Lucius started singing a song.He stopped abruptly as the acid rain hit him again. Lucius ran off as quickly as possible.

I was glad he left, it gave me an opportunity to plan my next move. The tracking device on my arm started to beep quietly. The acid rain was letting up. As soon as the rain let up people started walking back out into the street. There was yelling and dancing, music started playing. They were glad to be alive and well.

Making my way out into the street, I danced with a gal named Gina. She had pretty red hair and the face of an angel. I figured she would be a good lay, but didn't want to get into it. To be specific, I didn't have time for such trivial things. I had a mission to complete.

I circled through the crowd for a bit until I came upon a man. He looked out of place. As soon as he saw me, he ran. It had to be Jerome. I chased after him.