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As this team of time travelers makes their way to the past, so they can travel back to the future to prevent several deaths of their loved ones. Anderson “keeps the reader guessing what will happen next.”

By Michael J. Kiser  
Author of  
A World Bridger from a Distant World



SOUTH  
STAR

Z.O. Anderson

**DragonEye Publishing**

SOUTH STAR  
By Z.O. Anderson

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To JACKIE

"A South Star is a Nova. A Nova is a star that suddenly increases greatly in brightness, then within a few years, or a few months, grows dim again. A South Star is also a person who only gets fifteen minutes of fame. Or like a Rock Group or Singer with a single hit, or a One-Hit-Wonder. South Star is also used to describe the short-lived Confederacy of the 1860's."

--Frank Zachary

## PROLOGUE

They all met while they were attending college at the University of Colorado in Boulder. They became better acquainted at their favorite watering hole, that tavern across from their favorite gambling casino.

It was in the tavern that they began to discuss their time travel theories and plans. Of course, the drunker they became, the more ingenious, and oft times absurd, their fabulous ideas became.

Eventually, they acquired funding for their experiments and their Time Travel Project. But, when they were finally successful, the government moved in and took control. Even so, they still managed to do things their own way.

# SOUTH STAR

"We can record the animals in the valley from that sun dial rock at the edge of the plateau." Frank explains to the others.

The Cameraman, Bill Clark, filming with video cameras in both hands, follows Frank. The Monitor, Steve Johnson, carrying recording equipment, checks his chronometer and yells out alarmed:

"Frank! We traveled too far back in time. It should be five million years B.C. This is more like fifty million years B.C."

Team leader Frank Zachary, in his early forties, seeming much huskier in new khaki coveralls than his usual wiry appearance, checks his own chronometer.

"Yeah, yeah. It's that negative accelerator...I can fix that." He shrugs his shoulders then tells them, "Let's take a look anyway."

The three men, all dressed in coveralls and loaded down with scientific equipment, move cautiously

toward the sun dial-shaped rock at the edge of the plateau.

That was how they had arrived, all geared down, in a clearing on this prehistoric plateau, exiting from a silky gossamer-like spiraling vertical vortex that suddenly materialized out of nowhere. They had stepped out of this portal and looked around in awe. The animals, birds and other prehistoric life forms were gargantuan. This very calm, clear and peaceful day was disrupted only by the strange and unusual sounds emanating from the valley below which was overgrown with gigantic vegetation and blanketed with an eerie mist.

Cameraman Bill Clark, filming a large bird circling ominously above them, shouts out, "Frank, look out! That giant bird is diving at you!"

Frank drops to the ground, puts a whistle in his mouth and blows hard. The shrill whistle startles the huge bird and makes it veer off.

Then Monitor Steve Johnson alerts Cameraman Bill Clark, "Look out, yourself! There's a small Raptor right behind you."

The Raptor charges Cameraman Clark, who screams and runs away.

Frank cries out to him. "Don't run! It's only a baby raptor. Blow your whistle and scare it off, or use your stun gun."

Bill tries to blow the whistle as he runs, but he trips and falls. Then he starts kicking at the little raptor. The raptor chomps down on Bill's leg and lifts him up in the air.

Frank blows his whistle and throws rocks at the raptor. One rock hits the raptor on the nose and it lets out a roar, opening its mouth and dropping the

Cameraman. Then the raptor quickly turns to face Frank. Frank charges, waving his arms and yelling as the little raptor backs away. Frank stops and whistles again. The raptor eyes him cautiously then begins to circle him. Frank circles with it until he's between the raptor and Cameraman Clark. Steve Johnson moves over to help Bill as Frank keeps the young raptor at bay.

"Oh, oh! Here comes the Momma!" Steve yells as he points past the small raptor.

A much larger raptor comes running and roaring toward them.

"Activate the wormhole! Frank commands. "Hurry!"

Monitor Steve Johnson pulls out a remote device and clicks it. That silky gossamer-like spiraling vertical vortex re-appears behind them.

Frank and Steve pick up the Cameraman Clark and run for the vortex. The three men disappear into the wormhole just as the large raptor charges at them.

Frank, Steve and Bill come flying out of the wormhole into a laboratory and land on a platform surrounded by huge humming accelerators.

"Shut it down!" Frank commands the Technicians. "Quick, shut it down!"

Head Technician Stephanie Andrea Valerie immediately throws emergency switches and the wormhole begins to fade just as the big Raptor sticks its head into the laboratory. As the wormhole disappears, the big Raptor disappears with it.

A large wall calendar in the background reads, "**May 2000**".

"Medic!" yells Frank. " We have a medical

emergency!"

The squirming Cameraman Clark holds his leg as the Medics come charging over and begin cleaning and dressing his wounds. They bring a stretcher and as they start to carry him out, he grabs Frank by the arm and says, "It looks like you'll need a new Cameraman, Frank."

"He'll need a new Monitor, too... I quit!" Steve Johnson exclaims as he hands his equipment to a lab assistant and heads for the exit.

Frank chases after him. "Wait! Wait!"

Steve Johnson exits the building almost at a run with Frank right on his heels.

This modern scientific laboratory building made of steel and glass glistens in the sunlight as men and women dressed in white laboratory coats stroll in and out of the entrances.

A sign in front reads: "PROJECT TX-7, WATERTON CANYON, COLORADO."

Frank grabs Johnson by the arm and spins him around. "Listen! Don't you dare tell those people at the Synergist Syndicate about this space-time mix-up. Do you hear me!" Frank warns.

Johnson says nothing. He just turns and walks away.

Frank turns around and heads back to the building. As he starts to re-enter the building, his daughter Patricia, a lovely sweet-sixteen, wearing a jogging suit and carrying a gym bag, bounds out the door.

"Hi, daddy!" she chirps as she throws her arms around his neck and gives him a big hug and a kiss. He hugs and kisses her in return.

"Patty, what are you doing here?" he asks.

"I came to see Momma and Auntie Audra about that Synergist party. Mom is a guest speaker and she said I could go if my karate instructor, Samurai Sam, accompanies me." She tells him.

Frank slaps his forehead as he exclaims, "Patty, that's not a party. It's a protest rally and they are protesting against us!"

Patty argues, "I don't understand why. The Synergist Syndicate was such a big part of this project. Auntie Audra dearly loved them for putting up all that money."

"Aw, sweetie" Frank explains, "The government cancelled their TX-7 Monitor contract, so now they're protesting against us to try and get it back."

"I still want to go. Nathan Janelle is going to be there!" Patty squeals excitedly as she jumps up and down clapping her hands.

"Nathan the Rock Star!" Frank feigns being shocked. "We're doomed!"

"Daddy, quit being silly." She chides him. "Nathan is so gorgeous! His music is so fantastic! He always gets involved in political causes and he's talked with the President and the Pope...and he's so gorgeous!"

Frank checks his wristwatch with the facility clock tower. "It's time for your karate class, princess."

"I'm on my way, bye!" Patty skips down the street.

Frank looks after her lovingly then turns to enter the building and bumps into someone in a white laboratory coat. Papers fly everywhere.

The box containing the papers reads: "SYNERGIST SYNDICATE."

Frank slaps his forehead again.

In Littleton, Colorado, the twenty-story, white granite-faced building contrasts sharply with the less pretentious structures of this Rocky Mountain seat of power and money. All the other buildings in this luxurious office complex are dark brown in color.

A very tasteful sign over the entrance reads: "SYNERGIST SYNDICATE."

Another tasteful sign below that reads: "HOME OF NUTRIONICS."

Inside, caterers dressed in white jackets busily put the finishing touches on several tables that are lavishly adorned with a variety of luscious foods and beverages. One table, centrally located, displays a variety of Nutrionics products. Over this table is an elaborate sign reading, "Nutrionics — Our New Fountain Of Youth".

Ryan Terrance Michaels, a stately looking man in his early-forties, impeccably dressed in an Armani business suit, enters and goes directly to the center table to check the Nutrionics displays.

Frank Zachary and Ryan ("Rye") Michaels had been college roommates at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Frank and Rye were the best of friends at one time. Since Frank was such a hothead and Rye was cool, calm and collected, they were known as "Frank and Sense" around the campus. Rye Michaels was the "Star from the South". Frank was the cowboy.

Satisfied with the Nutrionics display, Michaels turns and addresses the caterers with a very charming and mellow Southern accent, "Caterers! If y'all please..."

The caterers stop what they're doing and gather around him.

He continues, "There will be celebrities as well as political figures here today, along with our regular

supporters. Please, keep the champagne glasses filled at all times." He pauses and moves toward the food and beverage tables with the caterers following him.

"Also, we're having a guest speaker from Project TX-7. Do not allow anyone to harass her. We have our own professional interview team who will ask her very specific questions to elicit the information we need. Should anyone else try to butt in, quickly fill their glass, or offer them something else."

The caterers all nod to show they understand. Two of the caterers, gruff-looking men with unbuttoned jackets, appear suspiciously out-of-place. Rye glares at them. They quickly button up their jackets and try to look busy.

A white-haired ex-Senator comes in and makes a fuss. "Rye Michaels, we need to discuss this little shindig of yours!" former Senator Nick Genna harangues. Senator Genna, after his term in the Senate, started lobbying for the Synergist Syndicate, was hired by them and then gained a seat on their Board of Directors.

Rye stops him abruptly. "Please, Senator, I'm giving these caterers last minute instructions before our guests begin arriving."

Senator Genna won't be put off. "As a member of the Synergist Board of Directors, it is my job to keep an eye on this protest rally crap you're trying to pull. You don't know what's at stake here."

"I know perfectly well what's at stake." Rye replies curtly. "We are trying to get our contract with Project TX-7 re-instated." Rye picks up and examines a Nutronic sample as he continues, "And if I'm successful, I'll be joining you on that Board Of

Directors because of a very generous stock option."

Senator Genna continues to object. "Well, I don't think throwing a protest rally will work. In fact, it could screw up everything. Our plan is..."

Rye cuts him off. "I know the plan, Senator. I was a TX-7 Monitor before the government terminated our contract."

Frank Zachary's Monitor, Steve Johnson, from TX-7 pokes his head in the door, motions to Rye then ducts back out. Rye quickly brushes off the Senator.

"Senator, please, one of my informants has just arrived. This is very important.

"Very well." The Senator backs off, but as he starts to leave, "Let me say this.. If this little scheme of yours fails, your ass is mine!"

Senator Genna walks out leaving Rye to ponder his fate if his plan fails, but Rye just sneers at the exiting Senator. Then Rye quickly goes to meet with Steve Johnson.

Johnson enters and explains in a lowered voice what happened at TX-7. "...And then I told them I quit..." he says.

Rye goes ballistic when he hears this. "No! Don't quit! I need you there!"

Johnson tries to object, "But, I thought I'd come here..."

Rye cuts him off. "No! Go back! I need to know everything... everything that they are doing at all times. Now go back there and pick up where you left off."

Johnson shrugs his shoulders, nods his head and leaves.