

Black Mirror - "Company" (Spec)

By

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INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY - FLASHBACK

A gangly, nervous boy - BRENNAN (19) - sits at a small table, fiddling with his car keys. His eyes dart around the room.

He checks his watch. 2:02 pm. Brennan releases a shaky breath. Has he been stood up?

But then the bell above the door JINGLES and Brennan freezes. DAMIAN (20) steps inside. He stops in the threshold, looking around until he finally spots Brennan.

A small, kind grin curls Damian's mouth. Confident, cool and devilishly-handsome, Damian makes his way over. Brennan snaps out of it and bursts out of his chair, knocking it over. Brennan's face goes beat red as he scoops it up, feeling eyes on him everywhere.

Brennan turns back to Damian and they lock eyes.

DAMIAN

Hey Brennan.

BRENNAN

Hi.

DAMIAN

It's nice to finally meet you.

He extends his hand and Brennan takes it. Just as their hands meet -

CUT TO:

INT. BRENNAN'S ROOM - MORNING

Brennan (28) awakens, the dream still lingering in his mind. He's on his side, spooning a pillow. A phone alarm goes off in the background.

Brennan pulls the pillow in even tighter.

BRENNAN

I need fifty more buckets...

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Brennan showers.

It's clear just how much he's grown into his looks. He's more handsome than before - but certainly not a model; signs of a

receding hairline don't bode well.

Brennan discovers a small lump - a cyst - on his abdomen.

BRENNAN

Another one? Fucks sake...

LATER.

Towel wrapped around his waist, Brennan finishes applying a face mask. He lets it sit, taking a long sip of water from a large bottle.

A FEW MINUTES LATER, Brennan peels the mask off.

LATER.

Brennan tries to do his hair. It's not working out. He takes a step back, looks at the finished product.

BRENNAN

Disaster.

But it's really not that bad.

EXT. VANCOUVER - DAY

An extreme high angle view of the downtown core, which is undeniably Vancouver, British Columbia. It's a little overcast, but the sun's fighting to push through the clouds.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

The living room/kitchen are adjoined in the open-space condo. It's a quaint, well-decorated unit. An impressive starter-home, with a beautiful view of the ocean.

Fully dressed now, Brennan stands hovering over his desk, setting up his computer while a pot of coffee PERCOLATES in the kitchen. He opens final draft and then moves into the kitchen.

Brennan watches the pot of coffee brew for what seems like an eternity, and finally turns to the window, just as the sun breaks through, casting blinding light throughout the room. Brennan closes his eyes as the sun washes over him.

IT STIRS A MEMORY.

INT. DAMIAN'S CAR - DAY - FLASHBACK

Same timeline as opening. Brennan's in the passenger seat as the two drive off together. The sun hits them the same way.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

The coffee GURGLES, nearly done. Still lost in thought, Brennan absentmindedly grabs two mugs out of the cupboard and pours into both.

He carries them towards the desk but stops half-way, realizing what he's done.

BRENNAN

Fuck.

Brennan doubles back and pours one mug back into the pot.

LATER.

Brennan sits at his computer, staring at a blank page.

From his POV, he has a brief moment of blurriness.

Brennan peeks over at his Emmy award.

BRENNAN

It was never this hard before you came along.

LATER.

Having given up, Brennan's in full couch-potato mode - gaming.

SUPER: COMPANY

LATER.

Back at his desk, Brennan leans back in his chair, spinning in circles.

HIS PHONE RINGS.

PHONE VOICE

You have an incoming call from: Queen of the World.

Brennan lurches to a stop and quickly grabs his phone. A photo of a pretty girl, SHEENA (mid 20s), is on screen. Brennan snorts with laughter as he answers.

BRENNAN

Did you change your name in my phone?

SHEENA (V.O.)

Maybe.

BRENNAN

You sassy bitch! How is that even possible? I live on this thing.

SHEENA (V.O.)

Believe me - I know. So when are we going for lunch?

BRENNAN

But that would mean I'd have to leave my condo. And be around other people. You see the predicament.

SHEENA (V.O.)

Oh my gawd - you're actually the worst.

BRENNAN

Studies say that fresh air isn't actually good for you.

SHEENA (V.O.)

According to who - the University of Bullshit? At least tell me you're writing something.

He hesitates a moment too long.

BRENNAN

Yes.

SHEENA (V.O.)

Liar. I guess I'll go be one of those losers who eats alone in public.

BRENNAN

I'm sorry.

SHEENA (V.O.)

No you're not. K, love you - bye.

She hangs up. Brennan's smile slowly fades. ANOTHER MEMORY.

INT. SHEENA'S KITCHEN - FLASHBACK

The sound is muted. Damian and Sheena sing 'Happy Birthday' to Brennan. A cupcake, complete with a sparkler, is in front of him.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Any sliver of happiness Brennan had is now gone. He takes another sip of his water, but it's empty.

Brennan moves to the kitchen for a refill. His phone rings again.

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)

You have an incoming call from: Devil Woman.

Brennan rolls his eyes.

BRENNAN

Noooo!

PHONE VOICE (V.O.)

You have missed her last four calls. Maybe you should answer it?

BRENNAN

But I don't want to!

The phone keeps ringing until Brennan finally answers.

BRENNAN

Hi mom.

MOM (V.O.)

Well there you are. Finally!

BRENNAN

Yes, I'm here. I'm alive.

MOM (V.O.)

Well how was I to know? You ignore my calls, you don't visit.

BRENNAN

I thought that's how you liked it.

MOM (V.O.)
What a horrible thing to say!

BRENNAN
Why are you calling, mom?

MOM (V.O.)
Well, that's just it - I want you to
come and visit. We miss you.

BRENNAN
We?

MOM (V.O.)
I miss you. You know, you're welcome
any time.

BRENNAN
Really? Anytime? Or is that just
because Damian's gonzo?

A long pause.

MOM (V.O.)
Come home. Please.

BRENNAN
Yeah, I'll think about it. Listen,
I've gotta go... get some fresh air.
Call you later.

He hangs up. Once again, the MEMORIES win over.

INT. BRENNAN'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Again, sound muted.

Brennan - in tears - gets an earful from his father, who has
completely lost it. Brennan looks to his mother, who avoids
his gaze at all cost.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Grim-faced, Brennan grabs his coat. As he slips on/laces up
his expensive white high-tops:

BRENNAN (V.O.)
What's this for?

DAMIAN (V.O.)

It's a... 'Happy Wednesday' present.

BRENNAN (V.O.)

Are you serious? These are like \$200!

I don't deserve this.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

You deserve a lot more than shoes.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Brennan stands in front of the mirror - all dolled up and ready to go. He makes one final inspection and slicks back a loose strand of hair.

EXT. LONSDALE AVE - DAY

PEOPLE are out and about as BRENNAN walks alone.

He spots an ATTRACTIVE GUY approaching and the two make eye contact. Brennan forces a smile, but the guy remains completely stone faced and looks away.

It's a completely harmless exchange - but Brennan takes it the absolute wrong way: *rejection*. He picks up the pace as he hurries into a supermarket.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - LATER

Carrying a few bags of groceries, Brennan comes to a stop at a crosswalk, next to a RANDOM MAN who's clearly not all there.

RANDOM MAN

Speaking of idiots...

Brandon realizes the man's giving him a disapproving once-over. Brandon's outfit is "eye-catching."

BRENNAN

Wow, clever.

The crosswalk light illuminates and Brennan takes off, leaving the man in the dust.

BRENNAN

Say hi to your mom for me.

RANDOM MAN

Say hi to your boyfriend.

There's no way the man could know. But still - *ouch*. Brennan realizes he's stopped in the middle of the street and keeps walking.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - DAY

Brennan enters and sets the groceries down. As he takes his gloves off, he lets out a SMALL CRY of pain. He grips his right hand, gently flexing it.

He tests the feeling in his fingers (right hand). Nothing.

BRENNAN
What the hell...

But Brennan pays it no real mind, shaking it off and unpacking the food.

LATER - NIGHT.

Brennan lies on the couch, typing away on his laptop. he writes:

Eve has one of her PREMONITIONS. The study falls away around her, exposing the world for what it truly is:

He stops. He can't fill in the blanks. As he stares at the page, Brennan grabs the plate beside him and takes a few bites, followed by a long drink of water from his trusty bottle.

Just then - a KNOCK at the door. Brennan opens it to find SHEENA on the other side, toting a bottle of wine.

SHEENA
Eating alone was just as pathetic as I
though it'd be.

BRENNAN
First you hijack my phone and then you
break in without buzzing.

SHEENA
It's my secret CIA training. Can you
please get out of the way so I can
come in.

Brennan smiles and steps aside. Sheena enters and makes herself at home - like she's done countless times before.

SHEENA

As I was out today, I had an epiphany:
surely I'm not the reason Brennan
didn't come out. It's just everyone
else he hates. So I decided, I'd grace
you with my presence.

BRENNAN

How generous of you, your majesty. I'm
glad you came.

SHEENA

You're just glad I brought the wine.
Get us some glasses, would you?

BRENNAN

Get it yourself.

They make eye contact and instantly knows what the other is
thinking. They make a mad-dash for the couch, but Sheena gets
there first.

SHEENA

While you're up...

Brennan knows he's been beat, and grabs two glasses. He joins
Sheena and pours.

SHEENA

What are you doing these days?
Anything fun?

BRENNAN

(biting)
Sure you didn't mean 'who' are you
doing?

SHEENA

No, Brennan, because if I'd meant it I
would have said it. Don't get snappy
with me.

BRENNAN

Sorry.

SHEENA

Not everything's an attack. I'm your
friend remember. Your only friend...

BRENNAN

It's not my fault I hate everyone.

It's genetic, like hating cilantro or being a ginger.

SHEENA

The point is you've totally disappeared.

Brennan's somber now. Knows it's true.

SHEENA

We used to have fun.

BRENNAN

I'm not really in a 'fun' mood right now.

SHEENA

So instead you just barricade yourself in here? This place is a haunted house, for Christ's sake. But instead of cobwebs, there's shitty, heartbreaking memories. Why are you putting yourself through that?

BRENNAN

Because even halfway across the world I'd still be miserable.

SHEENA

I think you *think* that. But what if you actually got off your ass and tried it!?

She has him there. Sheena grabs Brennan's laptop and opens the internet.

BRENNAN

What are you doing?

SHEENA

I want to show you something.

She slides the laptop over just as

A PROMOTIONAL VIDEO STARTS TO PLAY.

Various images (the globe/different cultures/technology) compliment a voice-over:

VOICE

Even today, travel is considered one

of the most fulfilling experiences of a lifetime. But between rising fuel costs and expensive hotel rates, world travel remains just a daydream for many. At *MeTime*, we're proud to make your dream a reality. Forget crowded airports and overbooked accommodations. Now, globetrotting is as simple as a click of a button. Developed by the world's most sought-after minds, *MeTime* allows travel-enthusiasts to instantly swap bodies with other individuals from virtually anywhere in the world. Desperate to escape a cold winter? Chances are there's someone in Hawaii who's never seen snow. By completing a comprehensive questionnaire, we'll match you with a member residing in your desired destination. An escape has never been so simple. Call or email to setup a free consultation. *MeTime*: It's all about you.

The ad ends.

BRENNAN

Wow.

SHEENA

Right?

BRENNAN

So much production value packed into one little scam.

SHEENA

It's not a scam. It's an opportunity - to put your life back together.

BRENNAN

Back together?

SHEENA

Start a new life then - whatever. Something to wake you the hell up.

BRENNAN

Sheena. I'm not asleep - I'm fucking depressed.

SHEENA

Then get help! If you're actually *clinically* depressed, you need to see someone about it.

Brennan has no comeback.

SHEENA

I've looked into it. MeTime is legit, and the only reason I'm not doing it right now is that I don't have a pile of money lying around waiting to be spent.

Sheena can tell she's getting through to him.

SHEENA

Wasn't that your plan - back when twelve hour flights and lost luggage were things?

BRENNAN

It was. *Back then.*

SHEENA

So the rest of your life is suddenly cancelled because Damian's gone?

She's gone too far. Brennan's eyes are dark.

BRENNAN

You don't get it, do you? *Nothing* is worth doing anymore. Sitting in complete silence is a fucking chore. It's pointless, all of it!

SHEENA

But at least you could be around other people.

BRENNAN

People are shit, Sheena. I don't say it all the time as a joke - I say it because it's the truth. You and Damian were the only good people I've ever met and now half of them is gone.

SHEENA

What about the other half?

BRENNAN

All I want to do is live my miserable
life until it's over.

Sheena's about to explode but manages to keep it together.
She grabs her coat.

SHEENA

Then why don't you just die already.

She slams the door behind her. Brennan lets out a BIG SIGH.

LATER.

It's full dark now. Brennan sits at his desk, looking out at
the night sky. A MEMORY sneaks up on him.

INT. LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Brennan sits at his computer, typing like a madman.

DAMIAN (O.S.)

Come to bed!

Brennan quickly types his last few sentences.

BRENNAN

Okayyyyyyy - yes. I'm coming.

He closes his laptop and hurries into the

BEDROOM.

Brennan leaps onto the bed and immediately cuddles up to
Damian.

DAMIAN

I need like two thousand buckets of
sleep tonight.

BRENNAN

Well shut up then and close your eyes.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brennan sits at the foot of the bed, as if he's just been
watching the memory play out live. He looks over to the
bookshelf and pulls out a travel-themed photo album.

He opens it up. It's empty - except for two plane tickets to Amsterdam on the first page. Unused tickets.

BRENNAN

Okay.

INT. METIME - LOBBY - DAY

Brennan sits nervously in the lobby, totally distracted. He notices a HANDSOME MAN sitting across from him. As if sensing eyes on him, the man looks up from his digital newspaper and exchanges a quick, unamused glance with Brennan.

AT THE FRONT DESK, a cute male CLIENT checks in with the SECRETARY, who multi-tasks like a pro.

CLIENT

I'm here for my consultation. Last name 'Donovan.'

SECRETARY

(types)

There you are. Have a seat, Mr. Donovan.

Donovan stops just short of Brennan.

DONOVAN

Mind if I grab that seat.

Brennan just shakes his head and Donovan sits. A bead of sweat forms on Brennan's brow - his mind going a mile-a-minute as he plots his next move. But before he can act, Donovan and the handsome man make eye contact.

It's ELECTRIC. So much chemistry. And Brennan sees it.

Just then, a RECRUITER walks up.

RECRUITER

Brennan?

Brennan bolts out of his seat.

BRENNAN

Yep, that's me.

RECRUITER

Right this way.

As the recruiter leads the way, Brennan peeks over his

shoulder. The handsome man nabs Brennan's empty seat and begins chatting up Donovan.

INT. CONSULTATION OFFICE - DAY

Brennan stands in front of a large screen in a boardroom-style office. On the screen is an image of a happy male/female couple in winter gear, ski slopes in the background. Suddenly the background changes, and the same couple is now on a beautiful beach in swim suits.

This continues, with different, diverse couples until finally - a male couple appears. Brennan watches with longing.

Just then, the recruiter enters with a small binder.

RECRUITER

Okay. Thank you for waiting, Brennan.

Brennan snaps out of it and turns to face the recruiter.

RECRUITER

I'm Beth. Very nice to meet you.

They shake hands and sit at the table.

BETH

Is everything alright?

BRENNAN

Sorry, just a little nervous.

BETH

I understand. For a lot of people, the notion of instantaneous travel may seem like a bit -

BRENNAN

- Of a scam?

Beth smiles politely, very much a businesswoman.

BETH

I was going to say 'far-fetched.'

BRENNAN

I just have a million questions is all.

BETH

Well, instead of me going through my

standard pitch, why don't you ask me them instead?

BRENNAN

Okay. Well, for starters, how the hell does this even work?

BETH

In theory, it's actually quite simple. Think of the brain as one big library. But instead of books, there's memories.

BRENNAN

So you're going to 'borrow' my memories?

BETH

Precisely. You're the librarian. And we always return our books on time.

Brennan's yet to be won over, despite Beth's charm.

BRENNAN

So my brain's not actually going anywhere?

BETH

No no, there's no mad science involved here. All we do is replace your books with ones you haven't read yet. It's exactly like Air B&B - except instead of swapping homes, you're swapping bodies.

BRENNAN

Do you scan my brain?

BETH

That's exactly it. We start by making a detailed map of your brain, isolating the specific areas in which your memories reside.

BRENNAN

And then you swap them with someone else's?

BETH

Not quite. You're still thinking of things spatially. What we're dealing

with is data.

Beth reads Brennan's face - sees that he's more overwhelmed than when they started.

BETH

Let me show you where your memories go.

INT. SERVER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beth tours Brennan through an expansive server room full of high-tech equipment.

BETH

Our company has thousands of server rooms throughout the world, just like this one. These are where your memories live. It's important that you understand - we don't steal your memories. We replicate them. Billions of memories exist here, including mine.

BRENNAN

But what if the server explodes or something. What happens if you lose all the memories?

BETH

Completely impossible, I assure you. Once they're in the system, they're here forever. Still not convinced? Come.

Beth leads him out.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The hallway is filled wall-to-wall with testimonials, complete with head shots.

BETH

These are our members - satisfied customers. This one here had never seen snow, and this one had seen enough of it for a lifetime. Neither could afford the cost of traditional travel, so we gave them the best Christmas of their lives. That's what we have to offer, Brennan. Sunsets on

Hawaiian beaches and sleigh rides
through winter wonderlands.

Brennan's starting to let his guard down.

BETH

In my experience, no one comes here
for a consultation without a dream
destination in mind. So tell me - what
is it you dream of?

Brennan thinks.

BRENNAN

Okay.

BETH

Okay?

BRENNAN

I'm in. Sign me up.

Beth smiles.

INT. BETH'S OFFICE - DAY

The two are now in Beth's office - much more cozy and
personal. For serious candidates only.

Beth slides a tablet across the table.

BETH

Paperwork. One thing that all the tech
in the world won't erase. What you're
looking at is a personal
questionnaire.

BRENNAN

Fifty pages!?

BETH

It's definitely thorough. This will
help us determine what kind of
adventures you're looking to embark
on, as well as set specific guidelines
for your body.

Brennan scans the questionnaire.

BRENNAN

(reading)

Do I consent for all clients to use my
body for sexual intercourse!?

BETH

And that's only part A of the
question. This process is very tit-
for-tat.

BRENNAN

Pun intended...

BETH

We want to know exactly what kind of
experience you're looking for so that
we can match you with a candidate who
matches your preferences. If you're
not okay with someone engaging in sex
while they inhabit your body, that
would narrow your pool of possible
clients to those who also chose the
same.

BRENNAN

I guess that's fair.

BETH

You'll find it quite detailed at
first, but I believe that you'll come
to appreciate its thoroughness by the
time you're finished.

BRENNAN

(reading)

Do I consent to engage in an
experience with the opposite gender?

BETH

An important question that can
potentially narrow your pool by half.

Beth meets Brennan's worried gaze.

BETH

Are you concerned with how others see
you?

Brennan thinks a moment before answering.

BRENNAN

Is that one of the questions or off the record?

Beth just smiles again.

BETH

Try and pivot your way of thinking here. Think about what you want to see. That's what you'll remember 50 years from now.

They pause.

BETH

You best get started. After this, we'll have you fill out a standard release form, which will allow us to complete a criminal record check and access your recent medical documentation.

BRENNAN

Isn't that a little "Big Brother" of you?

BETH

Before we can accept you as a client, we must be certain that you are healthy and of sound mind. Understand that there is a risk here - like everything else.

BRENNAN

What kind of risk?

BETH

With infinite possibilities come infinite variables. A complete stranger is willingly renting out their physical self to you. You're a guest in their home, so to speak - as they are in yours - and we must be sure your intent here is to do no harm.

Brennan's mind is racing again with said possibilities, and panic sets in.

BRENNAN

Oh my god. What if someone runs away

with my body - or tries to kill me!

Beth takes his hand, trying to steady him.

BETH

There is no need to worry, Brennan. These are the very questions we have asked ourselves over and over - from every possible angle. Which leads me to my next point - software. Upon acceptance to MeTime, we install a program into your brain that does two things. First, it allows us to extract and overwrite your memories. Secondly - and most importantly - it allows us to monitor your brain activity.

Brennan's nearly hyperventilating.

BRENNAN

This is too much.

BETH

We can't read minds, rest assured -

BRENNAN

- No, you'll just spy on me instead!

BETH

It's important that you understand the difference between spying and monitoring. What we will be looking for is unusual activity. A normal, healthy brain gives off a specific type of reading. Anything that drastically falls off this scale is captured in real time.

BRENNAN

And then you stop them?

BETH

With the push of a button. Instant unconsciousness.

BRENNAN

What if they're so quick you can't stop them!? Has anyone ever died?

BETH

Not possible, and no - they haven't.

We employ the brightest minds in the world. Everything has been accounted for, including the medical examinations that are also required.

Brennan's inches away from full-meltdown-mode.

BETH

You have the option of being examined by a professional here, or supplying documentation no older than six months.

A deep exhale from Brennan.

BETH

Listen, Brennan. Just between you and I, you seem like a perfectly nice, normal human being. Many of the clients I've recruited have been so eager to take advantage of this program that they sign the paperwork and call it a day. The fact that you're asking these kinds of questions puts my mind at ease, if that counts for anything.

Brennan believes her - starts to relax again.

BETH

I'd be lying to you if I said there was no risk. And you have no obligation to me. You could leave right now, go home - only to choke on your dinner later tonight and die from asphyxiation.

An epiphany from Brennan.

BRENNAN

That is equally horrifying and plausible.

BETH

But there's a reason you came here today. Maybe it was simply curiosity - some free time.

Their eyes meet again. Beth reads him cover to cover in an instant.

BETH

But perhaps there's more.

Brennan weighs the options.

A BRIEF FLASH OF A MEMORY - Brennan uncovers his eyes to find Damien fanning the plane tickets in front of his face.

BRENNAN

Do you have a pen?

EXT. STREETS/BUS STOP - DAY

Brennan walks to the bus stop - lost in thought. Soon after a bus arrives. Brennan sees his reflection in the mirror - fixes his hair before getting on.

INT. BRENNAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brennan lies on the couch, reading. He puts the book aside and slides his feet under the cushion at the far end.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

Jesus! Your feet are blocks of ice!

ANOTHER MEMORY FLOODS IN - Damian sits where the pillow was moments before, with Brennan's feet under his bum.

BRENNAN

It's not my fault - cold heart, cold feet!

Damian smiles at the joke.

DAMIAN

It's because all the blood's here.

He touches Brennan's head.

DAMIAN

Always thinking. Sometimes I'd like to live in that brain - just for a day.

Brennan takes Damian's hand lovingly.

BRENNAN

No you wouldn't.

BRENNAN RETURNS TO REALITY as the last of the memory plays out in his head.

DAMIAN (V.O.)
Okay, bed time. I need at least fifty
more buckets of sleep than last night.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

In his PJs, Brennan climbs into bed. He lies on his back, his
mind completely elsewhere. Sleep is far off.

FADE TO: BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Some time later. Brennan's got a hair cut since.

He types away at his computer when his PHONE RINGS.

BRENNAN
Hello?

BETH (V.O.)
Brennan? It's Beth, from MeTime. I
have some great news for you.