

Jay Mercer — including Older Jay

Scenes 01–02 · Vantage lab — pushing back on Ethan

Jay tries to get Ethan to leave work, then pushes back when a warning sends Ethan searching for Emily.

The excerpt includes the other characters' reader lines and the original action.

Published screenplay: PDF pages 2-5 (including title page).

Exact excerpt: source lines 10-156 | Screenplay by Adrian Humphrey

SCRIPT EXCERPT

INT. VANTAGE LAB - NIGHT

Close up: A mechanical keyboard and someone typing fast and with precision.

ETHAN, early 30s, glasses, black beanie on, button up shirt on even though it is night time, works alone at a desk arranged with unnatural precision. Laptop square to the table. Phone parallel to the laptop. Coffee centered on its coaster.

He moves the coffee half an inch.

We see a close up of Ethan, serious, focused, undistracted.

JAY, early 30s, smart, funny, and very human, drops a backpack on Ethan's perfect desk.

ETHAN

There are twelve other surfaces in here.

JAY

None of them made you react.

Jay reaches for Ethan's coffee. Ethan moves it first.

JAY (CONT'D)

You know the building shuts down even if you refuse to.

ETHAN

The Briar model drifted point-eight percent.

JAY

It's a model. With past data. It missed live traffic by eight-tenths of one percent. Cars, ambulances, school buses, Ubers, Taco trucks -- everything. What exactly are you complaining about?

There is a monitor that is showing the status of the Models current simulation controls. The Model is Mara. Mara is only predicting traffic, Mara has no control over traffic. On a monitor:

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SCRIPT EXCERPT

BRIAR CONNECTED CORRIDOR

READ-ONLY SIMULATION

A neutral synthetic voice, MARA, comes from the speakers.

MARA (V.O.)

Variance remains within tolerance.

JAY

Thank you Mara! That little variance or whatever you're seeing, tolerable, you know what tolerable is means g;Ethan ? Means you can clock out.

ETHAN

It isn't exact. We need it exact.

MARA (V.O.)

Exact prediction is currently both unachievable and operationally unnecessary.

Jay starts switching off monitors.

JAY

Investors gave you millions of dollars to build a better Jarvis than Iron man, and you still don't listen to it.

MARA

My pronouns are she/her.

The lights CUT OUT.

BLACK.

A generator coughs somewhere below.

Then --

The iPhone text alert.

Ethan's phone blooms in the dark, cold light across his face.

ON THE PHONE:

EMILY HART DIES IN 47 DAYS.

ETHAN

Mara, who the fuck is Emily?

Another alert.

YOU MEET HER TOMORROW.

Another.

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SCRIPT EXCERPT

THIS TIME... STAY.

Jay is no longer joking.

JAY

Did you give her access to your phone?

ETHAN

No.

The backup power returns. Every monitor wakes at once.

On the central screen:

MODEL STATUS: ACTIVE

Below it, a clock begins.

47 DAYS 00:00:00

CHAPTER ONE - REMINDER

INT. VANTAGE LAB - CONTINUOUS

Ethan searches.

EMILY HART. San Diego. He types in again but with different spellings, different close cities, nothing.

Wrong faces. Dead links. Nothing.

JAY

I'm checking how that message got onto your phone.

ETHAN

Find who Emily is instead.

JAY

No. I'm not stalking a stranger because your laptop had a bad dream.

ETHAN

It reached a device I never authorized. We need to get ahead of this before she starts doing some other things we can't control.

JAY

Which is why I'm checking the computer for the causes of this "unauthorized privacy invasion". My girlfriend does this a lot too.

Ethan opens another search window.

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SCRIPT EXCERPT

ETHAN

Or the message came from real data some where in the traffic simulation. But that doesn't makes sense, they didn't provide names in the training data. You know a Emily?

JAY

I know a couple Emilys. Ya Feel me!

Ethan doesn't take the joke well. His anxiety is getting to him, he's unnecessarily panicking. Jay studies him. Sees the spiral accelerating. His beanie is now a dark blue, instead of black.

JAY

Go outside. Walk it off. Call me when you realize your anxiety is sometimes irrational. And brother your very rational.

Ethan grabs his laptop and charger. And walks out.

JAY (CONT'D)

And call me before you knock on a stranger's door.