

‘Black Mirror’ Creator Had ChatGPT Write an Episode and It Was ‘S—’: ‘There’s Not Any Real Original Thought Here’

“Black Mirror” creator Charlie Brooker revealed to Empire magazine that he went full “Black Mirror” by asking the artificial intelligence chatbot known as ChatGPT to write an episode of his beloved anthology series. The final results were “shit,” according to Brooker.

“I’ve toyed around with ChatGPT a bit,” Brooker said. “The first thing I did was type ‘generate ‘Black Mirror’ episode’ and it comes up with something that, at first glance, reads plausibly, but on second glance, is shit. Because all it’s done is look up all the synopses of ‘Black Mirror’ episodes, and sort of mush them together.”

While the ChatGPT-scripted “Black Mirror” episode was unusable, it did prove helpful for Brooker in pointing out several “Black Mirror” clichés.

“I was aware that I had written lots of episodes where someone goes, ‘Oh, I was inside a computer the whole time!’” Brooker said. “So I thought, ‘I’m just going to chuck out any sense of what I think a ‘Black Mirror’ episode is.’ There’s no point in having an anthology show if you can’t break your own rules. Just a sort of nice, cold glass of water in the face.”

“Black Mirror” is gearing up to debut its sixth season, which will consist of five new episodes.

Brooker has assembled an all-star cast for the new season that includes Aaron Paul, Annie Murphy, Ben Barnes, Danny Ramirez, Himesh Patel, Josh Hartnett, Kate Mara, Michael Cera, Paapa Essiedu, Rob Delaney, Rory Culkin, Salma Hayek Pinault and Zazie Beetz, among others.

Hartnett, Mara and Paul star in an episode titled “Beyond the Sea,” which is set in an alternative 1969 and follows two men on a perilous high-tech mission.

“[It’s] sort of dystopian past, present and future,” Brooker told Empire about the installment. “I had the plot idea first and then, at one point, I thought what if I set this in the late ’60s? That’d be, like, disruptive and cool! And then when you actually come to write it, you realize, ‘Oh, hang on, if this is a different time and everyone in it is from that time, that actually informs how the characters are thinking and behaving.’ But I don’t think there was a deliberate rejection of nostalgia, so much as it was just a fun thing to do.”

Zack Sharf, *variety.com*, June 6, 2023