



ON-SET EXCLUSIVE  
BLACK MIRROR  
OUT TBC  
NETFLIX

# FOSTER SCARE

**Empire meets Black Mirror guest director Jodie Foster to find out what drew her to the dark side**

WORDS JOHN NUGENT

EVERY THANKSGIVING, WHILE family members whipped up a turkey dinner in the kitchen, Jodie Foster would sit in front of the TV and watch *The Twilight Zone*. “Every single year,” she recalls. “It was like a 48-hour marathon. Non-stop *Twilight Zone*. It was my favourite thing.” Today, when *Empire* meets her on an appropriately bleak January morning in an appropriately bleak part of west London, she’s finishing post-production work on *Black Mirror* — the Netflix show routinely described as *The Twilight Zone*’s spiritual successor — for which she’s directed a new episode.

Foster’s ‘Arkangel’ is one of the entries in the latest anthology and, following a shoot in Hamilton, Ontario, she’s now in Twickenham, where *Empire*’s been invited to see some raw footage. Together we watch Rosemarie DeWitt fretting over her missing child and running down

a grim-looking street in the Canadian steel town. In stark contrast to another new-season episode which riffs on *Star Trek* (‘USS Callister’), Foster describes her episode as “raw and real, like an indie movie”. There’s certainly a grey, muted feel to the footage we’re shown, despite the typically near-future technology at the episode’s heart — which here enables Hola (DeWitt) to monitor her daughter (Sarah Abbott) in a truly unsettling way. Think Ken Loach by way of Philip K. Dick.

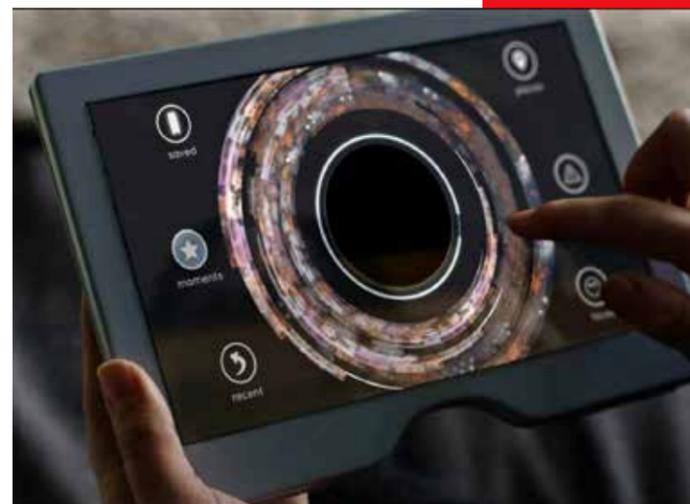
It was Foster’s love of *The Twilight Zone* that brought her to *Black Mirror*. Last year, she had lunch with a Netflix executive (Foster had previously directed episodes of *Orange Is The New Black* for the streaming service) and found herself complaining that Hollywood doesn’t make “short features” anymore. “I think the short story is the most perfect art form,” she says. “Today, they’re all about the big, epic franchise movies, or television made in eight seasons.”

Following that, Netflix put her in touch with Charlie Brooker, *Black Mirror*’s writer and creator, and within days she had joined the show’s roster of guest directors (including Joe Wright and John Hillcoat). “What’s interesting working with Jodie Foster,” says Brooker, speaking to *Empire* later, “is that

you have to stop your brain screaming ‘It’s Jodie Foster!’ every two minutes. I think I managed to mask it.”

Brooker describes ‘Arkangel’ as “a mother-daughter story, but not as boring as that sounds”, and Foster admits part of the appeal was the definitely-not-boring mother-daughter relationship she experienced herself. “It’s hard to describe it,” Foster says. “My mom was a single parent, she was my manager, she was my work life. It was... unusual.” This feeds into a key theme of ‘Arkangel’: learning to loosen a tight parental leash. “It’s all about the struggle between mother and daughter — wanting to create a woman who doesn’t have the fears you have, yet still wanting control over her. It means you sometimes have to kick your parents in the teeth.”

Having found herself frustrated with the studio system (“there’s a lot of dumb notes and dumb ideas...”), Foster’s relishing the creative freedom that comes with a Netflix gig. Though she’d like you to treat her episode like you’d treat one of her films. “I make movies that require people to pay attention,” she says, “so I always prefer it when people aren’t looking at their phone. Or cooking dinner.” Maybe not one for a Thanksgiving marathon, then.



Clockwise from above: Director Jodie Foster with her team on the *Black Mirror* episode ‘Arkangel’; Mother Rosemarie DeWitt is on the look out; Jodie Foster behind the camera on set shooting a scene with DeWitt and onscreen daughter Sara (Sarah Abbott); The technological device that creates a living hell for mother and daughter.

Ryan Gosling’s K suffers the standard *Blade Runner* climate.

SPOILER WARNING

## MORE TEARS, MORE RAIN

Things to look for in a possible *Blade Runner 2049* sequel

WORDS IAN NATHAN

WITH THE NUCLEAR dust settling on *Blade Runner*’s resurrection, thoughts can now turn to the next one. “Ridley and Hampton Fancher, who co-wrote our screenplay, had ideas they have been kicking around for a couple of decades,” says producer Andrew Kosove. Enough material to form “a trilogy” of sequels. Here’s what *Empire*’s man in the know thinks that could entail.

### A Replicant Uprising

What began with Roy Batty’s gang looks set to continue with the one-eyed Freysa (Hiam Abbass) and her revolutionary group taking on humanity with the replicant child as their figurehead.

### Return of the Blade Runner

Deckard could be coming out of retirement. Fancher told the *LA Times* that Deckard originally died at the end. With that changed, his mind returned to 1986 when he came up with an idea for Deckard’s next case. “It’s kind of horrifying what happens,” he teased. “Now Deckard lives, that idea is back in my head.”

### A comeback for K

Presumably, Gosling’s lonesome replicant ‘tec actually ‘retired’, his free will expressed. Still, replicants can always be replicated, with whichever memories the story may require. So don’t rule out a return.

### Deckard’s Dilemma

The existential status of Deckard — Nexus 7 with indefinite lifespan or plain old human? — remains unconfirmed. Even Ford seems to be enjoying the ambiguity, never having counted on “the poetic potential” of not knowing whether he was a replicant or not. Yet, Sylvia Hoeks’ Luv informs Deckard she is taking him “home”. Could she mean the lab where he was created?