

THE DAY THE WIFI DIED

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN CITY - MIDDAY

Chaos.

Cars honk. A man in a suit weeps openly on a curb. Teens wander in circles, holding dead phones up like divining rods.

A GIANT BILLBOARD blinks one horrifying word: "NO SIGNAL."

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

JASON (30s), pale, pajama-clad, clutches his phone like a newborn. He hits refresh. Nothing. Again. Still nothing.

JASON

(gasping)

It's gone. She's... she's gone.

SANDRA (30s), his roommate—sharp, unflappable, hair in rollers—sips coffee.

SANDRA

Jason, the WiFi is not a person.

JASON

(panic rising)

It's oxygen. It's rent. It's... it's my
two-step verification!

He collapses dramatically onto the sofa.

SANDRA

Go outside. Touch grass.

JASON

I Googled that once. It sounded itchy.

A beat. Jason's phone shows a single bar... then nothing. He SCREAMS.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

A frazzled ANCHOR stares into camera. Behind her: a graphic of a sad router with angel wings.

ANCHOR

...and reports are coming in from around
the world. Shops closed. Productivity
cratered. Families... making eye contact.
We now go live to the White House.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT WAR ROOM - DAY

The PRESIDENT (60s, theatrical), flanked by sweaty aides. A TECH ADVISOR clutches a tangle of cables like rosary beads.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans... we are disconnected.

TECH ADVISOR

Engagement is down 4000 percent. People are talking. To each other. In person.

Everyone GASPS.

PRESIDENT

Summon the brightest minds. The meme lords. The streamers. The one they call... "Todd from IT."

CUE MILITARY MARCH... that sputters when the Bluetooth speaker dies.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUPERMARKET - AFTERNOON

A war zone. Shopping carts collide. A guy barter toilet paper for a hotspot. Someone hugs a router like a baby.

Jason and Sandra push a cart filled with Doritos, batteries, and an inflatable flamingo.

SANDRA

Explain the flamingo.

JASON

(dead serious)

Flamingos attract signal. It's science.

A WOMAN sprints past, clutching a printer.

WOMAN

(to the sky)

WHY WON'T YOU PRINT WITHOUT WI-FI?!

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK - DUSK

HUNDREDS gather by torchlight like medieval peasants. Jason stands on a picnic table holding the flamingo like Excalibur.

JASON

Citizens! Lend me your routers!

The crowd CHEERS. Sandra pinches the bridge of her nose.

SANDRA

He's started a cult.

KAI (20s)

(barista, earnest)

We're a community.

GUS (40s)

(doomsday-prepper vibe)

I brought a Faraday cage. And jerky.

LUNA (20s)

(influencer-yogi)

I'll lead a breathing exercise to reset
the city's chakras. Exhale your 5G trauma.

TY (17, meme savant)

I have a cached folder of 3,000 memes.
We can rebuild civilization.

NORA (20s, pro gamer)

My raid night is ruined. I'm in.

DIMITRI (50s, pigeon enthusiast)

My birds can carry USB sticks.

Sandra stares at the forming militia. Then pulls out... a LANDLINE
PHONE.

SANDRA

(to herself)

Unbelievable.

She DIALS. It RINGS.

SANDRA (INTO PHONE)

Hi, Mom? Yeah, we're fine. No, the WiFi's
out. No, I can't just— Yes, I am eating.
Tell the President to chill.

CUT TO:

INT. WAR ROOM - NIGHT

A wall of dead dashboards. TODD FROM IT (50s, cardigan) stands. Calm.
Holy.

TODD

Have you tried turning it off and on again?

Silence. The room considers revelation.

PRESIDENT

(awed)

This... this Todd. He speaks prophecy.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Jason's "Signal Seekers" assemble atop a mid-rise. The inflatable
flamingo flaps sadly.

JASON

Operation Hotspot is go.

They point five mismatched routers toward the horizon like artillery cannons.

NORA

That's not how any of this works.

JASON

(whispers)

Believe.

Lightning crackles. Jason's phone shows three bars—then zero.

The crowd WAILS.

GUS

EMP. Definitely an EMP.

LUNA

Or Mercury's in retrograde.

KAI

Or corporate monopolies.

Sandra leans on a TV antenna.

SANDRA

Or you're all winging it and hoping for
a montage.

Beat. They all eye the skyline.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - "OPERATION RECONNECT"

- Ty tapes printed memes to poles. "Motivation bandwidth."
- Gus wears a tinfoil helmet shaped like a router.
- Luna leads rooftop sun salutations with routers on yoga mats.
- Dimitri releases pigeons carrying tiny USB drives.
- Kai chalks "PASSWORD: HOPE" on sidewalks.
- Jason salutes the flamingo like Captain Ahab.
- Sandra plugs an ETHERNET CABLE into a switch. Lights flicker alive on a dusty router.

END MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - LATER

A POP-UP "ANALOG FEST." Board games. Polaroids. A ZINE TABLE. People laugh-like, for real.

MS. ROSA (70s, queen of the block) slaps down a rotary phone.

MS. ROSA

When we lost the internet, we found our
neighbors. Eat a tamal, mi vida.

She hands Jason a plate. He smiles... then sees a blinking light in a storefront.

JASON

(gasps)

Sandra. Is that... Ethernet?

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dusty cubicles. A blinking switch. Thick orange CAT-6 cable snakes under a door.

SANDRA

The backbone. They left it when they
moved out.

JASON

We can... we can wire the city.

SANDRA

Not "we." Electricians. IT pros. People
who don't think birds are USB devices.

DIMITRI

(offended)

They are multi-talented.

CUT TO:

INT. WAR ROOM - SAME

The Tech Advisor waves a chart. Todd sips a tea.

TECH ADVISOR

If the nation remains offline for 24 hours,
GDP drops three percent and dads start
fixing sinks for fun.

PRESIDENT

Fun? Fixing? No. Deploy Operation Reconnect.

TODD

We could try... community mesh networks.

PRESIDENT

Mesh... like a... bag?

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Jason addresses his ragtag army. A crudely drawn diagram on a pizza box: "CITYWIDE HUMAN ROUTER."

JASON

We become the network. One ethernet hub
at a time. We daisy-chain hope.

NORA

That's not how it works.

SANDRA

But it could get us close enough to a backbone
for an actual fix. If we don't, you know,
electrocute ourselves.

GUS

I'll ground the rig. I have... grounding rods.

LUNA

I'll ground our breath.

KAI

I'll ground... the coffee.

TY

I'll livestream— oh wait.

DIMITRI

My birds will scout. They do not fear heights.
Or customer service.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - "BUILD THE MESH"

- Orange CAT-6 unfurls across streets like spaghetti.
- Teens with headlamps clip cables to balconies.
- Ms. Rosa knits a cable cozy.
- A COP stops them, then hands over zip ties. "For the public good."
- Window dwellers cheer, passing routers hand to hand. "FOR THE PACKET!"
- Gus hammers grounding rods, getting zapped lightly. He smiles, delighted.
- Sandra labels switches like a surgeon. "Don't touch this. Seriously."
- Jason inspires a block: "We are the progress bar!"

END MONTAGE.

CUT TO:

EXT. ISP DATA CENTER - NIGHT

A hulking building. Fences. Cameras. The logo: MEGACARRIER.

JASON

This is it. The boss level.

SANDRA

We are not breaking into a data center.

NORA

Correction: We're asking politely at the door.

They approach a bored SECURITY GUARD watching a battery-powered TV.

SECURITY GUARD

No public allowed.

SANDRA

(producing landline handset)

We have wired half the city back to your
front lawn. We need five minutes and Todd
from IT.

SECURITY GUARD

Todd. The cardigan guy?

SANDRA

The prophet.

SECURITY GUARD

(into walkie)

Uh... we got some... citizens? With a prophet request?

A beat. The gate BUZZES open.

CUT TO:

INT. MEGACARRIER LOBBY - NIGHT

Todd stands by a giant breaker labeled INTERNET-ish STUFF.

TODD

Anyone ever told you the internet is a
miracle of private and public cooperation
and also held together by zip ties?

JASON

Zip ties are the backbone of society.

TODD

Good. Because you'll need this.

He hands Jason a single, battered TOOLBOX with a sticker: "Have you
tried unplugging it?"

CUT TO:

INT. DATA CENTER - CONTINUOUS

A cathedral of racks. LED constellations. The sound: a thousand tiny hurricanes.

TODD

This cluster's hung. We need a hard reset.

TECH ADVISOR (ON TABLET)

Unacceptable risk. The memescape could be permanently destabilized.

TODD

Sometimes you have to turn it off and on again.

He flips a cover. A big red switch. Everyone holds their breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - SAME

Rain begins. The city glows with torches and cable lights. People clasp hands in anticipation.

Ms. Rosa says a prayer in Spanish. Dimitri whispers to his pigeons. Ty opens a flipbook of memes.

Sandra squeezes Jason's arm.

SANDRA

If this works, it's because of the people.
Not the flamingo.

The inflatable flamingo, tied to a railing, nods solemnly.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. DATA CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Todd looks to Jason.

TODD

You started the movement. You do the honors.

Jason swallows. Places his hand on the switch.

JASON

(to everyone, to no one)

For bars... for brunch reservations... for all of us.

He PULLS the switch down.

Everything goes DARK.

Beat.

JASON

Did I just delete the internet?

Silence. Then—a HUM building. Lights flicker, wave by wave, blooming across racks.

TODD

Count to ten, then up.

EVERYONE

One... two... three...

TECH ADVISOR

(whispering along)

Four... five...

PRESIDENT (ON SPEAKER)

Six! Seven! Eight! Go team! Nine! Ten!

Todd flips the switch UP. Systems whirr. LEDs come alive like a galaxy.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - CONTINUOUS

The orange cables THRUM. Modems spark to life. Windows glow. A tidal wave of "CONNECTED" notifications.

Jason's phone BUZZES. Three bars. Four. Five.

The crowd ERUPTS. Strangers hug. Some cry. A saxophonist plays a triumphant riff.

Sandra's phone buzzes too. She smiles despite herself.

SANDRA

We did it.

JASON

(teary)

I can check my email.

SANDRA

Choose your first words wisely.

Jason looks at the cheering city.

JASON

(into phone)

Hey, Mom? We did it.

He hangs up. Turns to the crowd.

JASON (CONT'D)

Okay everybody— let's not immediately
stop talking to each other, okay?

Beat. People freeze with phones halfway up. Guilty smiles. Then laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LATER

Calm. The inflatable flamingo sits like a war hero. Jason opens the fridge. A sticky note beneath a magnet reads:

"WiFi: PrettyFlyForAWiFi / Password: 12345678 - Love, Landlord"

Jason and Sandra stare.

JASON

We had WiFi the whole time?

SANDRA

It's the world's worst password.

JASON

The real WiFi... was the friends we made along
the way.

SANDRA

Never say that again.

They chuckle. Jason closes the fridge.

JASON

Board game?

SANDRA

One round. Then memes.

He nods. They sit at the table. Phones face-down.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - DAWN

Sunlight washes the skyline. The orange cable spaghetti glows like confetti after a parade. People drink coffee on stoops, TALKING.

A digital billboard lights up:

"YOU ARE NOW CONNECTED.

DON'T FORGET TO BE."

A PIGEON lands on the sign. It poops on the word "FORGET."

DIMITRI (O.S.)

He is an artist.

FADE OUT.

TITLE OVER BLACK:

"BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS*"

(*Probably.)

THE END