



## â€™Westworldâ€™™ Creators Pull Elaborate Prank with â€™Spoiler Videoâ€™™

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There's a fine line between fan theories and spoilers.

So said Jonathan Nolan and Lisa Joy-creators of HBO's mystery-riddled Westworld -in a very convincing Reddit AMA post explaining a "difficult (and potentially highly controversial) decision" to reveal all the secrets of season two before the April 22 premiere.

"Everything," Nolan wrote Monday night. "The whole sordid thing."

With support from fans, of course.

The catch was the post had to reach 1,000 upvotes for them to "deliver the goods"-and it did so quickly-only to reveal the real catch is further confirmation that the Westworld creators are just as good at deception in real life as they are on the show.

The "spoiler video" starts out strong, showcasing new footage of Bernard (Jeffrey Wright) waking up on a beach with no memory of his past, before segueing into Rick Astley's infamous "Never Gonna Give You Up" as sung by star Evan Rachel Wood with cast member Angela Sarafyan on piano. It then

transitions into roughly 20 minutes of a dog sitting at a piano as the show's theme song plays in the background.

It's safe to say, it's not quite the reveal Reddit followers were expecting. Rather, it's a sucker punch to the gut; the ultimate rickroll-but done in a way that expertly does "deliver the goods"-playing up the reasons many fans love the show by keeping them thinking and guessing, but never quite knowing.

Because while the show itself is full of secrets, the fact that those behind it are masters of misdirection is not one.

Westworld's marketing thus far has leaned into viewers' desires to solve puzzles and unravel deeply embedded clues-like a line of code hidden on the horizon of the Westworld key art as part of a digital scavenger hunt on social media-that takes them further and further into the show's universe.

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In terms of Nolan and Joy's plans to spoil their own show, the key, perhaps, comes down to perceived authenticity.

The logic behind their decision seems genuine. Nolan points to Game of Thrones as an example, explaining that when the show was still following the books up through season five, fans "rallied around and protected the secrets of the narrative in part because they already knew those secrets."

By laying out the twists and turns of season two of Westworld, those who want the season spoiled could watch the video, and then help shield the rest of the community from that knowledge.

It's reasonable. It makes sense. Yet, like the show itself, it's a reminder that things are usually not what they seem.

It's also an effective strategy to engage fans, taking them along for the ride and keeping them on their toes, while building emotional connections and immersing them in the show.

Along that same vein, in his Reddit post Nolan touches on a truth of television today:

"It's a new age, and a new world in terms of the relationship between the folks making shows and the community watching them," he writes. "And trust is a big part of that."

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