

Wayne Alan Brenner

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[THERE IS A PAUSE]

Surely playwright [Mickle Maher](#) wasn't approached by producers of the [Black Mirror](#) anthology series a couple of years ago. Two youngish people – one male, one female, both in stylish suits, the woman with deep red [Warby Parkers](#) riding her nose's pale bridge – didn't meet him at Chicago's [Big Shoulders Coffee](#) and treat him to an espresso while they presented their pitch.

They didn't say, these two producers, "Okay, Mickle, we're willing to pay you five times whatever you usually make for a script if you'll write an episode for us. We've seen a few of your plays, and we're really fucking impressed, and, well, this is for the betterment of media fare in general, you dig?"

And Maher didn't raise one eyebrow and reply, "I suppose I ... 'dig' ... so far, yes."

And the producers didn't continue, saying, "But it's gotta be a piece for just three actors, okay? And it's got to fit in with the general Black Mirror feel, too, but it's also got to be an homage to American poet [Walt Whitman](#). You know? Like how your 'There Is a Happiness That Morning Is' was all about invoking the brilliance of weird visionary [William Blake](#) even while it concerned itself with the heart-wracking love story of three passionate academics, are we right?"

[Note: They speak simultaneously, these two producers who never said this, as if they were of one mind, a sort of show-biz Borg in midrange Armani.]

And Mickle Maher, draining the last of that fine espresso down his gullet, didn't say, there on a comfortable seat in Big Shoulders, "That sounds like an excellent idea, actually. And I could use the money. I'll get to it soon."

Surely none of that happened. Right?

But you'd BELIEVE that it had happened, because it would handily explain the new Mickie Maher play, "Song About Himself," that's currently playing at Austin's [Hyde Park Theatre](#), directed by [Mark Pickell](#) and starring [Katherine Catmull](#) & [Jason Phelps](#) & [Ken Webster](#). And even if you don't enjoy Black Mirror or Walt Whitman, particularly; if you'd ... dig ... a creepy, heartrending evocation of human yearning and attempts at connection in our increasingly mediated world, one that's expertly performed on a minimal set & complemented by a subtle (also creepy) sound design by [Lowell Bartholomee](#) ... then you should see "Song About Himself."

Because it's so damn good.

HERE: <http://capitalt.org/wp/now-playing>

