Key:

Ryan – Interview in a park or by the sea

Maddy – Interview takes place on a busy street, lots of traffic

Jasmine – Interview in an office or university building, moderately busy, lots of phones going

Nathan – Interview takes place in a pub

Michael (Interviewer) – opinionated but looking for answers – some of his lines are alone in a quiet room, others are on location with those he is interviewing. If Michael asks a question: e.g. tell me more about what happened. He is asking that on location of whoever is the first response, in this situation it is Maddy.

News Reporter – news reports will have a static feel, they must feel archived throughout all of the appearances,

The Script:

Broken news intro. Archive footage. News pips.

News Reporter: News just in from Parliament. The Prime Minister has confirmed that all internet serves have failed. The Prime Minister has asked people to stay calm and said that everything is being done as fast as possible to resolve the issue. We will bring you updates from our Reporters at Westminster as soon as possible.

Sounds of rioting. Error sound effects. System failure.

Maddy: If your supports gone, like, it makes everything a bit more scary.

Michael: Everyone remembers where they were on that day…. But the stories were still untold. So, my Producer and I made it our mission to get the stories from the generation that have never known a world without it. I felt like I lost something that day and I need to know what else was lost or gained. My name is Michael Johnson, and this is The Day the Internet Stood Still.

Queue Titles- The Day the Internet Stood Still, By Max Barrett

Static. Energetic music kicks in. It's modern but slow – Lofi, chill, r&b mix.

Maddy: My name is Maddy. I'm 19 and I work in retail. (*Pause*) At first, we thought it was just a joke, it's just bad signal, it's just bad broadband. People are like, "Ah yeah I should switch from O2." (*Laughs nervously*.) But then when we got to the station, the station started messing up. Like really going wrong. Then people started pushing and shoving. Then someone got pushed on the tracks.

News Reporter: Scenes live from London St Pancras suggest someone has fallen on the train tracks on Platform 12. Police are urging people in the area to stay inside and keep away from congested areas and to not attempt to travel. The police are unsure if this is a terrorist attack. More updates as they come.

Train goes past. Train horn. Groups of people shouting.

Ryan: My name is Ryan. I'm 18 and I'm a disabled University student. (*Pause*) I felt um, just panic. Isolation. Um, I um… well, I couldn't really get out because I'm disabled, (*Heart rate monitor)* and I couldn't contact my carer's. I was there for hours and hours, no food, no people and eventually I, um had to try, try to get out.

News Reporter: The Home Office has asked if you know of someone who cares for somebody or someone who requires care, that you endeavour to ensure they are well as many hospitals and people who require care rely heavily on the internet.

Jasmine: My name is Jasmine. I'm 22 and I am a University student who works in an office. (*Pause*) The whole thing is, I'm not very social, and the first thing I did was grab a book and sit in a corner and just read it. Like I still wasn't social, but that's me as a person.

Nathan: My name is Nathan. I'm 20 and I make websites. (*Pause*) I'm thinking, this, this could be (*long pause*) aliens. (*Unsettling alien sounds.*)

News Reporter: According to the Police, mass groups of people are all merging into major city centres around the country with signs and messages. It is the largest cluster of people ever seen in London's history. The army have been contacted to go in and calm the situation. Other city centres effected so far include Bath, Manchester, Southampton and Canterbury.

Static. News broadcast. Music gets louder and then becomes the bed under Michael dialogue.

Michael: I am just old enough to remember a time before the internet. Before dependency. I always thought it was brainwashing young people, but in that moment, I felt just as lost as them. I have a desk job in journalism and without the internet I could barely do my job. I was sent home. With all that time, all I could think about was who was affected most.

Train goes past. Busy London streets. "Panic on the Streets of London." Concert music playing in background.

Michael: Tell me more about what happened.

Maddy: By the time I'd got there, the trains had gone. Um, I was nervous that my parents were worried where I was. I knew my Mum would do something stupid. Obviously with all the… um, attacks and everything that's been happening in the last few years, if they're not able to hear me on my phone and hearing London's in panic… it was difficult for them. They didn't know where I was. They wouldn't have known I was safe at the time. But there was a bit of a mass panic. It was quite bad. The subways and the underground were rammed, people were running down stairs. (*mass group running*.)

Electric wheel chair. Call out for help. Running. Doors opening.

Ryan: Yeah so I was pretty much trapped there until somebody came along - I could have died there. There's all these long corridors with the really heavy doors in between each section to sound proof. Somebody let me through one door, a woman. Then she just shut the door and went on her way. (*Door slams shut*) Everyone was rushing. So I was just trapped between these two doors and I couldn't open either of them myself. Immediately I panicked er… I couldn't contact anybody at all. I was stuck in my wheelchair. After an hour I rammed my chair against the door (*crash! Cry of pain*) I bruised my spine. (*Heavy breathing*) And just waited, hoping someone would come.

Social media notification.

Jasmine: Everybody was… I wanna say… confused. But then it - everyone got angry because they couldn't check any social media. (*Social media notification*) They couldn't check their emails. (*Email notification*) No nobody knows- no nobody knew what was going on. Erm, but I saw some people talking about it and (*sighs*) I don't know how I went up to them. I just put my book down and kind of started to talk to them.

Alien sound effect. Generator. Engine taking off. Pub setting.

Nathan: Maybe the aliens want… maybe they want to stop the internet to have a look themselves without us knowing about it. Like, they could get in, have a little nose around, learn as much as they want and learn all like the languages and stuff. Get it all downloaded on some, er, er flashy sci fi, er alien USB stick (*download sound*) and we'd have no idea what they're doing here. I mean. I'm just glad people know the truth ya know. But when people started theorising what happened, you should'a seen it.

Static sound. Music fades out.

Michael: Dependency undocked. Unplugged from sanity. A disaster for a moment. An orphaned generation disconnected from her mothership. An endless eye shut. 30 years wiped for 1 day. Like age we regressed. And Paranoia. Everyone felt paranoia.

Ryan: So my back is throbbing. The, the fact I couldn't reach the medication in my bag was one thing. Then - then all I could think about was the hospitals.

News Reporter: We are unable to get reports from hospitals as to how they are affected. But the Police and NHS urge anyone within walking distance of a local hospital to go and see how you can help.

Ryan: The fact I can't order any more medication. I can't order any more. What if. What if it goes down again? I can't get my medication? (*heavy breathing and panic*.) If it goes down… like again what will I do? Yeah so you think I had it bad… people probably died in the hospital you know.

Flatline. Static sound. Music fades in.

Michael: What was the first thing you did when it went down?

Nathan: Honestly, I went down the pub. (*pub ambience*) I mean I didn't know what to do, so I was like - hmm I'm just gonna go down the pub. Bumped into my mate Tony.

Jasmine: At first, I was a bit annoyed because that's how I escaped reality. But then afterwards I kind of liked how it drew me away from my phone to actually interacting with

real people who were also hiding behind online presences. So, in the end that was all stripped away and we were just able to talk to each other. Just as humans really.

Static sound.

Michael: What do you think about our use of the internet?

Maddy: Yeah, your phone is sort of a uh… backup, like a support, so it's like your supports gone. If your supports gone, like, it makes everything a bit more scary. Especially if you're on your own.

News Reporter: As viewed from helicopter footage, people are wandering the streets, unsure what is going on. Large clusters of people have formed in almost every city centre. If you are near a major city centre, the Police… excuse me, the Police have issued a caution that you should only travel to a city centre if absolutely necessary and if you must, go in a group of people you trust as there have been reports of increased crime in most areas; looting, fighting. The Police urge nobody to travel alone. Our thoughts are with all those effected. More to come throughout the day. (*element of fear from news reporter throughout interview*)

Ryan: Yeah, I suppose, yeah. The internet massively relaxes me. It just feels like you can speak to anybody at any time but without that I'd go back to my isolation. Yeah it gives me

independence really from the care team that I have. Without the internet I would have to be with them at all times. Without the internet I hardly get to interact with people really.

Static sound.

Michael: What has this experience taught you?

Jasmine: Erm, I think for me it was a good experience. Because if that didn't happen then I wouldn't have hung out with them. Erm, so, in a way, I am glad it happened because it gave me the opportunity to meet these people.

Maddy: Um… I think all the pictures you've ever uploaded somewhere. (*camera clicking*) People don't have a copy of that. They're all online. So it taught me to… So, I mean a lot of my life wouldn't exist. But then it exists in as much as I've lived it so I dunno I think a lot of people post things not for attention or anything, we all post things, um - I don't, I don't tend to care about how many people have liked it after this experience, I do use social media as more of a memory thing for me now. Coz like when it uh, it first went the first thing I lost was my memories.

Static sound.

Michael: So, Nathan, you made this video about your theory that it was aliens and it went viral. People view your words as a gospel truth. A second bible. How did that happen?

Nathan: I started making the video after I got back in from the pub, me and my mate Tony talked about theories, course I couldn't post it anywhere coz I didn't have no internet anywhere, but you know what I thought if it ever comes back online I'd put it up you know. Send it off. And put it on my YouTube channel. Rest is history.

Michael: You are basically a celebrity now, how does that make you feel?

Nathan: Honestly, I'm down with it, it makes much more sense than any of this other baloney big organisations come up with to explain what's going on nowadays. It, it's just, it just seems more realistic in a way, you know. I mean… I dunno how, how governments gonna react you know towards - towards these commercial people long-term but hopefully they'll sort them out you know, regular people with opinions.

Static sound.

Michael: Here is the audio from that viral video. The Internet Armageddon by Nathan Blackstock.

Nathan: (*Distorted*) It sounds crazy but stick with me on this. Since watching War of the Worlds, not the crappy one with Tom Cruise, the original, I've always had this mad idea that humans were put on this plant to be harvested. It's not our blood and guts they want, it's the product of our minds, our knowledge, my knowledge. I reckon the internet was some secret alien invention, a way to trick everyone into slapping everything they know into one place. Then, bam, at a time of their choosing, they flip the switch, crash the network, swoop in with their giant alien USB stick and rob us of everything we have ever learned. A one-day outage would be long enough, providing just the cover they needed. For all I know these slimy little things are flogging my thoughts on some sort of intergalactic hacking forum. It's true you know, true.

Video cuts off.

Michael: But Nathan, did you think of the repercussions of this? What was the public reaction?

Nathan: Mad. People responded instantly. Some dudes went straight for, like their underground bunkers. My mate Pete started rioting. Heard one dude through himself in front of a train. But no, that was gonna happen anyway. If I hadn't said nothing, the next guy would've. It was always gonna happen.

News Reporter: Hostels in and around London are being made available for those stuck in the city. The Police continue to urge anyone who is stuck in a city centre to find refuge and

for those who have the space, to give up room on a sofa or spare bedroom for someone in need.

Static sound. Rebooting.

Michael: And what was it like the moment it came back up and you saw your loved ones again?

Ryan: Relief, just relief that you are with them, I just wanted to hug my family. Just tell them how much I cared. As we weren't in contact for that short time it really, really made me realise so much. And just being free again and outside… so yeah just relief.

Maddy: Um… I think for me and my Mum it was like a sense of belonging. A sense of, uh, feeling that um you know, you, you'd get a time space that shows you just how short the time we have on this planet really is, how much of it we actually spend looking at phones, um, how we can easily lose people and how big distance actually is and how it seems smaller because of how we, easily are connected these days. Yeah… you'd have to like I dunno like just have to tell your family like every time you leave them that you love them like ya know don't leave hateful words before you leave coz you don't know if you're coming back. And its, it was quite emotional for all of us. My Mum went and called the neighbours, couldn't find anything so like she drove all the way to London. When I got home she wasn't even there… I was so worried about her and what could have happened to her. She cares you know. My Dad cried (*laughs*). Even my Dad cried and he's a hard bloke you know. (*laughs*).

Soft indistinguishable sound of a family together talking and crying of happiness.

Jasmine: I feel, like… I mean, now that it's up and running again, we're still friends and I don't speak to them as much anymore. I would like to. But, like, I feel just a bit awkward on social media and how do you message someone saying - "Hey let's meet up". Because, like, you wanna message someone but you can't say… It's so weird to just say: "Hey, let's meet up" because they could easily just say no, and you can't read the tone of it. Whereas, when you meet with them, you could say, you could actually see in their face what they feel and stuff.

Static sound.

Michael: And for many people we interviewed, this was a sensitive subject and generated emotion that clearly was cultivated before the internet went down. A dependency had already formed even in the early days of the internet. Real experiences.

Jasmine: A few years ago I had a friend who I actually had a Snapchat streak with, and it was - it was fine at first, but then it just got to the point where we were just taking pictures of a black screen and then saying "Streak" to just make aware that we were just doing it for the streak. And it just kind of lost its value then. It's fun at first when you're like: "Oh, we've been talking to each other for five days straight on Snapchat", but then after a while, there's

no purpose to it. You're just filling in time to get a reward that's not really rewarding, it's just a number.

Michael: I'd never really heard of a Snapchat streak before this. But it was just an irrelevant number you got for talking to someone every day. Like Facebook likes, its just a number. A meaningless number. But the dopamine hit is like nothing I've seen for a number on a screen. Is it too late to go back?

Static sound.

Michael: Is there anything you would change about how we use the internet now?

Maddy: Not the internet but I think it's because the world is a bit more of a scarier place these days. Uh than it was then for my parents. Um… obviously they were like… you know they were born after the war, after all of that went, and everything was just thriving. Um, there were less people, there were less crime, there were less, uh, er there was more freedom to go outside and stay out late and not worry about someone taking you off the street. Uh, yeah I just feel like there was a lot more freedom back then, so there was a lot more faith. There was no online media or posting about all these tragic and dark events. People weren't as scared. It's a lot easier to be scared these days. And run and hide, and hide behind a phone, or check a phone, to make sure where you're going is safe while they would go off and do whatever, no worry. People would normally come back, so you know.

Michael: Can we really say no to social media or is the damage already done?

Jasmine: I think no one can really say no to social media, because it's such a big part of our lifestyle. But it would be great if people would just, you know for a couple of hours a day, would use them less than they would normally, I guess um, so people can keep themselves busy with something else other than their phones. That would be good, umm but I don't think we can completely control it, it depends on the person and what they're doing. Um, so yeah. I don't know.

Michael: Like you, we are all relieved. But we are also fearful that this may happen again. So, put into place your own infrastructure for next time this happens. This year, 2019 is the 30-year anniversary of the internet. What a poignant reminder we have all had that we are in fact completely dependent, as a species, on something that didn't even exist 30 years ago. Where do we go from here?

News Reporter: News just in, the Prime Minister has announced a full return of all internet servers approximately 24 hours after they went down. The police are assessing levels of damage and top industry professionals are trying to work out the cause of this problem. All service providers have issued apology statements. Psychologists are coming forward now with the effects the internet has had on our lives and what this means for the future. More to come. (*said in a slightly relieved way*.)

Music fades up, Luke Hill – Long Way Home. **END**.

Written by Max Barrett

Michael was played by Tom Glenister

News Reader was played by Karen Ascoe

Maddy was played by Amy Sutton

Nathan was played by Tim Jennings

Ryan was played by Samuel Morgan-Davies

Jasmine was played by Abi McLoughlin

It was Produced by Daniel Johnson