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# 2020 Predictions



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# It's The End of the World As We Know It

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A scene on Aaron Sorkin's *The Newsroom* recently struck me, at first, as simply an astute and amusing commentary on global warming... until the real world chimed in with one of those life-imitating-art occasions suggesting that [R.E.M.'s apocalyptic song](#) is destined to be the soundtrack of our future.

First, [the HBO moment](#): Anchor Will McAvoy (Jeff Daniels) interviews an EPA administrator (Paul Lieberstein, who will always be Toby Flenderson from *The Office* no matter what role he's playing) about a report that carbon dioxide levels have hit extremely dangerous new highs.

McAvoy begins in the usual mode for this sort of story, poised to emphasize the urgent threat of climate change while reinforcing the conventional platitudes that people need to take this seriously and work hard to remediate the problem.

His conversation, though, quickly goes off the rails.

"If you were the doctor and we were the patient," the anchor asks, "what's your prognosis? A thousand years, two thousand years?" The scientist's response takes him aback: "A person has already been born who will die due to catastrophic failure of the planet."



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