

'Humans' star William Hurt says AI sentience is 'inevitable'

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In this June 22, 2015 photo, actor William Hurt, star of the new AMC series "Humans" poses for a portrait on Monday, June 22, 2015 in New York. (Photo by Amy Sussman/Invision/AP)

For William Hurt it isn't a question of whether someone will invent a robot with feelings, it's a matter of when.

"I think I may be pretty good at saying if this and this is true then this and this are true," says Hurt. "So from the moment I took a look at it, it was all absolutely inevitable."

The Oscar-winning actor says he's been "riveted" by the idea of [artificial intelligence](#) since his early teens. He surmises that's partly why he landed roles about the subject in the 2001 film "A.I. Artificial Intelligence" and in the new sci-fi drama "Humans," which airs Sundays on AMC at 9 p.m. EDT.

"If when you walk in the room and the topic lights you up, they see that and they hire you sometimes," Hurt said in a recent interview.

"Humans" takes place in a parallel present day where eerily human-like androids are as common in homes as iPads and smartphones are in real life. Whereas most of these so-called "Synths" are merely mechanical, a few newer models have emotions and think for themselves.

Hurt plays Dr. George Millican, a mechanical engineer who worked on the project that developed the original Synths who lives with and protects his outdated android named Odi.

"He gets sick and loses some of his memory," says Hurt, who reveals that after George's wife dies, "you have this fascinating relationship that he has with a clearly anthropomorphized robotic who is the repository of the memories of his life with his wife."

Hurt not only sees a future with sentient robots, he says he believes it

won't be long before cellphones are injected under people's skin like the GPS microchips subcutaneously put in pets. He even imagines that one day there will be a way to preserve people's memories in a mechanical vessel so their consciousness can live on forever.

"I think that that is natural in evolution."

Online: www.amc.com/shows/humans

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