

Severance

Season 1 Recap



Main Cast



Adam Scott

Innie: Mark S, Macrodata Refinement (2 yrs)
Outie: Mark Scout, widowed alcoholic



Britt Lower

Innie: Helly R, Macrodata Refinement (new)
Outie: Helena Eagan, daughter of Lumon CEO



Zach Cherry

Innie: Dylan G, Macrodata Refinement (< 2 yrs)
Outie: Dylan George, married dad of 3



John Turturro

Innie: Irving B, Macrodata Refinement (9 yrs)
Outie: Irving Bailiff, painter/ex-Army man



Patricia Arquette

Unsevered.
Harmony Cobel: Head of the severed floor
Mrs. Selvig: Outie neighbor to Mark S.



Tramell Tillman

Unsevered.
Seth Milchick: Severed floor supervisor,
works closely within MDR and O&D

Who are you?

Who are you?

Hello?

I'm sorry, I got ahead of myself. Hi there, you on the table. I wonder if you'd mind taking a brief survey.

Who is that?

Five questions.

Now, I know you're sleepy, but I just bet it'll make you feel right as rain.

Who's speaking?

Oh, God.

Hey! Open the door!

I'd be just thrilled to chat once we've run the survey. Shall we begin with question one?

I'm not taking your survey.

Shall we begin with question one?

Let me out of here.

Hey!

Open the door!

Fuck.

Hey! Let me out!

Hey.

Hello.

Five questions?

Five questions.

Lumon Industries



Partially Generated by Chat GPT

Lumon Industries is a mysterious and powerful corporation at the center of the TV show *Severance*. Known for its extensive history and cult-like corporate culture, Lumon operates in an unsettlingly opaque manner, with much of its work shrouded in secrecy. The company's headquarters, located in the fictional town of Kier, PE, houses a vast labyrinth of sterile, windowless offices where employees carry out enigmatic tasks with little understanding of their purpose.

distinct identities: their "Innie" (work self) and their "Outie" (personal self). This process ensures that when an employee is at work, they have no memories or awareness of their outside life, and vice versa. While marketed as a way to achieve a perfect work-life balance, the procedure raises significant ethical concerns, effectively trapping the Innie in a perpetual cycle of labor with no escape.

Under the leadership of the elusive Lumon executives, employees in departments like **Macrodata Refinement** and **Optics & Design** perform abstract, seemingly meaningless tasks, all while being subjected to the company's rigid rules and cryptic corporate ideology. As the show unfolds, it becomes increasingly clear that Lumon's true motives

extend far beyond standard business operations, hinting at a much larger and more sinister agenda.

Employees

The main cast of *Severance* consists of four Lumon workers: Mark S, Dylan G, Irving B, and newcomer Helly R. These employees are constantly monitored by strict managers like Harmony Cobel, an unsevered boss who enforces the company's rigid policies with a near-fanatical zeal. Assisting Ms. Cobel is Mr. Milchick, another unsevered employee who oversees the severed Macrodata Refinement (MDR) and Optics & Design (O&D) workers, and helps reward compliance with the company's policies by offering bizarre incentives, such as finger traps, waffle parties, and company-approved dance breaks, all meant to maintain morale in a strictly controlled environment.

"The Work Is Mysterious And Important"

One of Lumon's most controversial practices is the Severance procedure, a surgical operation that splits an employee's consciousness into two



Who is Mark?



Hi, My Name Is:
Mark S.

Naturally, Mark S. becomes attached to his coworkers, throughout the show, as they are his only sources of socialization. But as he begins to get to know Helly R. more, they develop what appears to be more than a friendship. [SPOILER: before leaving MDR for the last time in episode 10, they kiss].

By the latter half of the season, Mark S. begins actively working

Mark is the main character of Severance, and is indeed severed. His Innie is characterized by his happy attitude and **supportiveness** for his fellow colleagues. He starts as an ordinary member of the Macrodata Refinement (MDR) department, but is soon promoted to department head, which he takes very **seriously**, despite not fully understanding the true nature of his work. Mark S. is a relatively compliant worker, performing his duties without questioning the system too deeply. However, as the season progresses, his curiosity and skepticism grow, especially after Helly R. repeatedly tries to escape and is unable to leave.



Pictured: Helly R.



Pictured: Ms. Casey/Gemma

Outie Mark on the other hand, is very depressed after the passing of his wife, **Gemma** (who we later learn is alive and working at Lumon as Ms. Casey). Mark cries in his car before work, and uses severance as the chance to escape his painful past for 8 hours a day. He lives a quiet, almost monotonous life outside of work, spending time alone at home or having awkward interactions with neighbors. His main social connection is his

against Lumon, joining forces with Dylan and Irving to uncover the truth. His turning point is catalyzed by Helly's struggles and the realization that Lumon may be lying about the nature of severance, as well as a need to know what exactly they do in MDR.



Hi, My Name Is:
Mark Scout

sister, **Devon**, and her husband, **Ricken**, though he often struggles to engage meaningfully with them.

Initially, Mark **defends** Lumon and the severance process, arguing that it helps people. However, as the season progresses, he starts **questioning** Lumon's ethics, especially after meeting **Petey**, his former severed coworker who claims Lumon is hiding dark secrets after reintegrating his two personalities back into one, and thus regaining all of his memories.

Later, Mark begins investigating Lumon, despite the risks, and his doubts deepen with the series after discovering multiple secrets.

Your outie listens to music while shaving, but not when showering ... Your outie prefers two scoops of ice cream in a serving, but they must be the same flavor ... Your outie pays all of his gas and electric bills within 3 business days

How Healthy Is The Severance Work-Life Balance?

Partially Generated by Chat GPT

The concept of work-life balance in the **real world** is often about finding a sustainable way to meet professional responsibilities while maintaining personal well-being. Ideally, it means having enough time for rest, relationships, hobbies, and self-care while still being productive and fulfilled at work. However, in reality, many people struggle with long hours, stress, and the blurred boundaries between their professional and personal lives—especially with the rise of remote work and the expectation to be available beyond office hours.



Severance takes the idea of work-life balance to an extreme, presenting a fictional dystopian solution: a complete psychological separation between work and personal life. Outies, who never have to work yet get paid high salaries, campaign for the severance procedure because of their perfect outside lives.

"Every time you find yourself here, it's because you chose to come back"

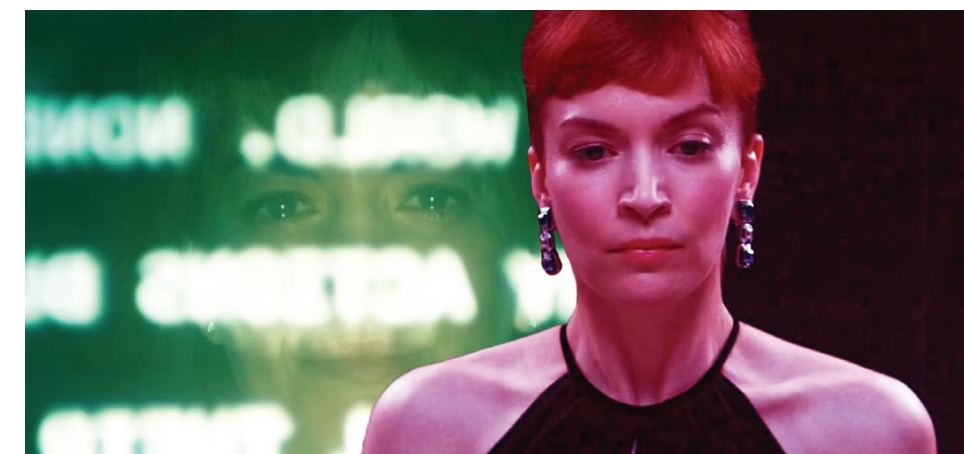
fillment, leisure, or personal identity outside of their job. Since the work persona never experiences time outside of the office, they are constantly stuck in a professional environment, unable to rest or grow beyond their tasks.

However, this system is **deeply unhealthy**. The "innie" essentially becomes trapped in an endless cycle of work with no sense of fulfillment, leisure, or personal identity outside of their job. Since the work persona never experiences time outside of the office, they are constantly stuck in a professional environment, unable to rest or grow beyond their tasks.

Additionally, due to the Innie's lack of connection with the outside world and real relationships, they begin to form new ones inside the

workplace despite it being forbidden. Examples of this include Burt and Irving's secret, intimate relationship, which flourishes until Burt's outie is forced to retire; or Mark's attraction to the new recruit Helly R., even though his outside heart will always belong to his "deceased" wife Gemma. Because the innies try to make meaning out of their work in this way, and the innies are also known to rebel against the horrible working conditions they face, it creates chaos for the outies who live completely different lives and are forced to retire or are fired for reasons beyond their control.

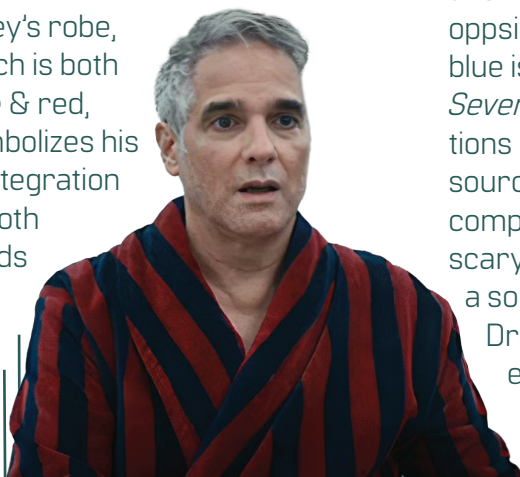
In comparison to real-world struggles with work-life balance, Severance serves as a cautionary tale. While many people wish they could leave work stress behind at the office, completely severing work and life creates an ethical dilemma. A truly healthy balance requires more than just separating the two- it involves setting boundaries, ensuring fair working conditions, and fostering an environment where employees are valued as whole individuals.



The color red can be seen all throughout *Severance*, and holds a hidden meaning. While the color blue is often seen representing Lumon Industries and surrounding those on the severed floor, red is primarily seen on the outside world in clothes, food, and decor.

Red, which represents **freedom and knowledge**, is first worn by Outie Mark at the dinner party with his sister and her friends. At this party, viewers begin learning a lot about Outie Mark, who also drinks a lot of red wine. Red also be seen on the inside world during the "ball game" where a red ball is passed around to someone who must reveal a personal fact.

Petey's robe, which is both blue & red, symbolizes his reintegration of both minds



Some more examples of the usage of red include the envelope Petey gives Outie Mark, which includes knowledge about Lumon and the address to where he can access it; as well as during the dance party where Dylan breaks his cool and bites Mr. Milchick's arm out of anger for withholding knowledge about his Outie's family. Red is also the main color of Ricken's radicalizing book, and last but not least, all of Lumon turns red and alarms sound if someone tries to escape or bring any type of paraphenalia back to the outside world (notes, files, etc.).

Blue Theories

While red represents freedom and knowledge with blue as an oppsite to it, it's also theorized that blue is something else entirely. In *Severance*, there are many mentions of **water** or water-based sources. The file names on Lumon computers (you know, with the scary numbers) are all related to a source of water - Tumwater, Dranesville, and Kingsport, for example. The Lumon logo is also a teardrop, and the Kier Chronicles includes an

The Significance of RED

article on CEO Jame Eagan creating a new department to develop solutions to the clean water crisis. Additionally, there are many easter eggs of water throughout the show, like Outie Mark's fishtank with one blue and one red fish, the water glasses at the food-less dinner party, and the painting "Kier Invites You To Drink Of His Water" on the severed floor.

And Green?

While red and blue hold much known significance, it is unclear what the significance of green is. Some speculate that green is meant to represent **both worlds** (as with Ms. Casey/Gemma's candle), or **isolation** (as seen from the cubicle walls). Others believe the opposite is true and that green is only used in the office to bring feelings of **nature**/outside since the Innies cannot leave and see such things. While frustrating that there is no clear answer, it is likely that the significance of green will be revealed with Season 2.



What's Next For Severance?



Charna Flam, People Magazine

The acclaimed Apple TV+ series deployed an unlikely marketing tactic ahead of its second season, which returns on Friday, Jan. 17. The series cast all gathered as their respective characters at Grand Central Station on Tuesday, Jan. 14.

Several social media users posted videos of the installment and documented the cast portraying their characters in their makeshift office space in the center of the train station.

AppleTV+ also shared a series of photos of the event to the official Instagram and TikTok accounts.

Along with the cast appearing at the NYC station, series director and executive producer Ben Stiller supported the event. There, the Emmy winner, 59, took photos and videos of the cast in the enclosed office space as onlookers watched.

Several fans commented on the setup; one wrote: "THIS is amazing marketing." Another added, "kinda insane they got the real actors to do this." One user commented, "Top tier marketing. Someone is getting a promotion. No. Not the Severance characters."

Another commented on Stiller's presence, "not to mention Ben Stiller proudly watching and filming clips for hours."



S2: What Answers Can We Expect?

Where is Ms. Casey?

What is Ms. Cobel's plan?

What's in Salt Neck?

Where is Kier, PE?

Who's on "the board"?

What's Natalie's deal?

Why does Lumon want from Ricken?

Wtf are the goats?!

Will anyone else be reintegrated?

Will everyone be able to return to Lumon?

All of these are fantastic questions, and we can expect most of them to be answered in season 2. Ms. Casey's return is *the* enigma

driving season two, and all main characters have been asked to return for the second season. The goats also make a return, and while we may not understand their purpose, it will give us a chance to interact with other departments. Ms. Cobel's is also set to return in episodes 1 and 2 titled "Hello, Ms. Cobel" and "Goodbye, Ms. Selvig" which will answer questions of her whereabouts. Lastly, it is unclear what Ricken and Lumon's relationship is, but it is sure to be sinister.

Season 2 of *Severance* is set to run weekly on Fridays from

January 17th, 2025 to March 21st, 2025.

It is unclear if Apple will renew for a third season.

A dark, industrial-looking tunnel with a grid floor and a light source at the end. The light source is a vertical beam of light that is brighter at the top and bottom, with a red glow at the bottom. The floor has a grid pattern that recedes into the distance.

LUMON

"Don't live to work, work to live"