

Oxymoron

Definition: a phrase that contradicts itself. Example: "Hank's stylish clothes"

Von Indy

Before Eden Club

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"You'll have to get rid of that fancy CyberLife jacket if we want any chance to go undercover at that sex club," Hank called out from the shower that Connor had just put him under. The android inspected the broken window he had graciously gifted his partner with, because it miiight have looked like his life was in danger. Hank hadn't seen this house warming gift yet. And Connor would do his damned best to stir him out of the flat without coming across this corner of the kitchenette. Strictly to save time, of course. They were on a schedule: There was a murderous deviant on the loose at Eden Club and if Hank took another twenty minutes to yell at Connor for breaking and entering, then that would interfere with his mission. No, it was definitely the more logical option to let the Lieutenant discover this fresh-air-dispenser when Connor was already far, far away and Hank too tired to do anything about it. After a good night's sleep, he'd probably be more amenable and agree that his flat had a kind of pungent stink to it and needed the fresh air anyway.

"Connor, did you hear me?"

"I can hear you just fine, Lieutenant," Connor called in the direction of the bathroom, without ever turning his head.

"Do you have a spare set of clothes?" Hank asked over the sound of the shower spray. "Of course," Connor informed him. "CyberLife equips every official uniformed unit that is likely to engage in activity that might damage its clothing with a spare set."

There was a pause. "Is that fancy talk for saying that your spare set of clothes also has those stupid 'Hey, look at me, I'm 10 grand worth of walking junk-metal'-signs on it?" There was another addition to this statement of Hank. It was muffled and probably not meant for Connor, but his keen audio receptors could clearly make out a mumbled "not that people wouldn't be able to tell from the stick up your ass, anyway". He decided to ignore that, since all he knew about Hank so far indicated, that he wouldn't appreciate Connor drawing attention to something he wasn't meant to hear.

So instead he just said: "There is mandatory identification as an android by CyberLife on all my available clothing, as is legally required."

There was another pause in which Connor could faintly make out a deep exhale inside the bathroom. Maybe the Lieutenant had some trouble breathing from being

inebriated or ingesting as much cholesterol as he had this afternoon. Finally, Hank seemed to come up with a solution for whatever problem he seemed to have encountered: "Grab me some fresh clothes and get yourself something out of my closet, too, so not every Tom, Dick or Harry and their dog can see that you're a plastic asshole before you even open your goofy sounding mouth."

"I'm quite sure that dogs are not able to read the insignia on my jacket," Connor countered, but went to open Hank's closet anyway. "But if it makes you feel any better, I am willing to change." If it made his human partner more amenable to having him around, then it was the best choice for him to cooperate, for the sake of the investigation. Connor was – to his knowledge – the only android that CyberLife had programmed to occasionally break the law, if it served his mission. And making Hank... more pliable, Connor decided, was one of these occasions.

Or, that is, until he actually opened Hank's closet. Door in hand, eyes glued to an ...unexpected assortment of shirts, his LED-indicator started spinning yellow. Inside his head, an array of animal documentaries about zebras, leopards and tigers fought for Connor's attention.

"Hey!" Hank's voice suddenly shoved all those videos into the background. The human's words were also no longer overlaid by the sounds of the shower, or muffled by a door between them. "Where the fuck are my clothes?"

"Coming!" Connor's answer was just a little too hasty. And as he turned around with a random choice of shirt and pants he grabbed out of the closet, Hank was right there at the door. One eyebrow raised. He had noticed.

Holding the towel around his waist in place with one hand, the Lieutenant extended the other and made a grabbing motion. "Give it here, or do you want me to go naked?"

"That would certainly draw more attention to your person than my android-identification," Connor said.

"Did you bastard just smirk at me?"

"No?," Connor tried. He held out black jeans and a shirt that looked like the manufacturer had had an accident with four different kinds of dye on it. Hank took it and something in Connor must have short-circuited because the next sentence was out of his mouth before his manner-programming could stop himself: "But if you're gonna wear THAT, then you might as well go naked, in regards to conspicuousness."

Hank's eyes narrowed at him and for a moment, he just stood there, holding his ridiculous shirt and pursing his lips like he was physically chewing on Connor's insolence. Conceived insolence. All Connor had done was state a fact. Objectively. If Hank hadn't been inebriated, he would have seen that. Surely.

But as things were... "Have you been so busy coming up with a new way to annoy the fuck out of me that you had no time to change?" ... he did not. See that.

Connor looked down at himself as if he hadn't realized he hadn't already obeyed Hank's orders and changed out of his CyberLife get-up. "I..." He hesitated, and looked to the side. No need for Hank to see his LED-indicator blinking yellow. Several choices of words flashed in front of Connor's eyes and none of them were appropriate for what he wanted to express. Why hadn't he just changed into Hank's clothes? "I...", he tried again. "I don't think your dress size would look as inconspicuous on me as would be appropriate for the kind of investigation you're planning to conduct, Lieutenant."

The human just raised another eyebrow and pulled up one corner of his mouth. Connor's processors told him that this indicated incredulity. Hank proceeded in awkwardly trying to pull the offered shirt over his head while also holding on to the towel around his waist. "You telling me that a guy wearing a thrifted outfit that's not

tailored to his oh-so-perfect body-shape is the same as wearing an LED-triangle with the all capital-lettered word 'android' above it," came his voice through the fabric. It didn't sound like a question. Connor decided that Hank wanted an answer anyway: "No, but I don't see why people recognizing me as an android would be in any way detrimental to our investigation."

One arm stuck out of the sleeve of the shirt now and held onto the towel; the other arm, Hank had stuck through the collar, while his head was still buried somewhere inside the fabric. Connor's memory processing unit drew up an old wildlife documentary about a baby panda stuck in a swing for comparison. Huh. That was weirdly unrelated. Maybe Connor should ask Amanda to run a maintenance-algorithm to determine if there was some kind of error with his association-processing-unit.

Hank finally managed to accomplish what human children usually learned around age four: He struggled into his shirt. The panda recording was replaced with that of a particularly disgruntled looking cat. Definitely a software error. Absolutely no relation to Hank at all.

"You had no qualms about putting on some different stuff two minutes ago," Hank said as he took the pants that Connor was still holding out to him.

Connor looked at him unblinking, trying to formulate an answer that would satisfy Hank but also would not result in him being dressed like a prehistoric human that had just killed its first tiger and wanted the world to know about this achievement at first glance.

Hank suddenly made an exaggerated gesture at Connor and said: "Do you mind?!" in a tone of voice that indicated he was annoyed by something that the android had done. Connor guessed that this wasn't about the clothes anymore. When he didn't react, Hank added: "Don't just stand there with that loading spinner tootling on, on your temple. I need to change!"

Oh, that was it! Right. Humans usually got uncomfortable if somebody stripped in front of them, didn't they? "Of course, Lieutenant," Connor tried to placate his human. "I assure you that, as an android, I do not feel any invasion of privacy if you strip in front of me."

There was half a second of silence. And then Hank's face contorted in a way that told Connor, very clearly, that he had absolutely not, in any way, shape or form, even in the slightest, placated Hank's concerns in this matter.

"GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY BEDROOM!"

A bruising grip on his shoulder, a shove that would even make the sturdiest android loose its footing and a door being slammed in Connor's face later, the RK-prototype found itself blinking confusedly at said door and waited for the processing unit that was designed to crack even the most complicated criminal cases, to catch up and tell him what in humanity's name had gone wrong during that interaction. When the LED spun back to blue, Connor had decided that Hank was just being what humans referred to as "cranky". This was probably not going to get better when Hank saw the broken window. Ugh.

After a couple of minutes, Hank opened the door again, fully clothed. In a children's-coloring-book-turned-clothing-item. Connor turned down his color-contrast-sensitivity.

"Okay, Peeping Tom," Hank grunted. His grumbling tone of voice indicated that he had calmed down again. Connor still decided to not bring up the window. Ever. Maybe Hank wouldn't even notice – his apartment was a mess anyway! "Let's loop back to where you're refusing to put on my clothes," Hank continued.

"I could probably try on a pair of your black trousers," Connor placated without hesitation.

The police Lieutenant's eyes narrowed suspiciously: "Wearing pants three sizes too big is way more obvious than a shirt. Huge shirt's a fashion choice."

"That is correct, but-"

Hank cut him off: "You refuse to put on one of my shirts, specifically." His eyes narrowed even more. Connor was immediately reminded that this man's day-job was to interrogate criminals and poke holes in their stories spun from lies.

"So now you decided to sober up," Connor noted, absolutely not accusingly, and definitely only for the sake of the case.

"You," Hank continued slowly, but unperturbed, "hate my shirts."

Once again, Connor stopped, blinked, and the little LED spun around and around.

The corners of Hank's mouth twitched upwards for a moment. "And now, you're taken aback."

"I-," Connor forced himself to say something before the human saw a chance to keep going. "I just calculated that the probability to catch someone's eye while wearing the pattern of an apex predator-"

But once again, that was as far as Hank was willing to let him get. "You have a taste!"

"That's impossible," the android rebutted calmly. "I am a machine. I was not programmed to show a preference for one item of clothing over another."

"And yet," Hank grinned and let that hang in the air as if it was a complete sentence.

After a while, he added: "You know, hating a shirt is probably a sign of deviancy." Despite the gravity of his accusation, he had said it strangely good-humoredly. With what humans would probably interpret as "wonder", Connor realized that Hank was smiling.

"Normally," Connor said, careful. "Yes. But in this case, it is not a question of preference. In case of this particular wardrobe, it's simply, objectively, the wrong choice to wear any of it."

A beat. Then: "Did you little fucker just call my fashion sense 'objectively bad'!?"

"I would never insinuate such a thing," Connor claimed and decided to move in the direction of the front door, to distract the human from this pointless discussion (that Hank was clearly in the wrong about). "Shall we?," he asked, as he opened the front door. He was pleased to notice that the Lieutenant had followed him into the hallway. "Fine," Hank huffed. "No covert investigation, then."

Connor nodded and finally stepped out of the door and into the night. He got away without putting on the atrocity that Hank seemed to think was fashion. Mission successful!

"Wait a second," he heard from behind himself, just as the other man was about to follow him to the car. "What the fuck happened to my window!?"

How would Hank put this, if he were in Connor's situation...? Oh right: Fuck.