

= Awake (TV series) =

Awake is an American television police procedural fantasy drama that originally aired on NBC for one season from March 1 to May 24 , 2012 . The pilot episode had an early release on Hulu on February 16 , 2012 , two weeks before the series ' premiere on television . The show 's central character is Michael Britten (Jason Isaacs) , a detective who works for the Los Angeles Police Department . Kyle Killen , the series ' creator , was primarily responsible for the program 's concept ; although he served as a writer , he avowed that writing episode scripts was difficult . Killen also served as an executive producer (with David Slade) of the pilot episode . Jeffrey Reiner and Howard Gordon then continued producing (with Killen) for Gordon 's Teakwood Lane Productions .

Michael lives in two separate realities after a car accident . In one reality (where he wears a red wristband) , his wife Hannah (Laura Allen) survives the accident ; in the other reality (where he wears a green wristband) , his son Rex (Dylan Minnette) survives . Michael does not know which reality is " real " and uses the wristbands to differentiate between the two . He sees two therapists : Dr. Jonathan Lee (BD Wong) in the " red reality " and Dr. Judith Evans (Cherry Jones) in the " green reality " . At work , Michael 's erratic behavior triggers clashes with his team ; they do not know about Michael 's uncanny ability to solve crimes using details from both realities .

Awake averaged 4 @. @ 8 million viewers per episode , ranking 125th in viewership for the 2011 ? 12 season . A critical success , Awake 's cast was praised (particularly Isaacs ' performance as Michael) . On May 11 , after 11 of the 13 produced episodes had aired , the show was canceled due to low ratings , although NBC aired the remaining episodes in the series ' original time slot . Fans of the show created a " Save Awake " campaign to convince networks to revive the show , which was unsuccessful . Awake has been nominated for one award .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception = = =

Killen (the series ' creator) devised the concept of the program , described as a " police procedural about the life of a detective experiencing a parallel universe after a car accident involving his family . " NBC picked up the pilot episode of Awake in February 2011 , and green @- @ lit production of the show (originally entitled REM) in May .

Killen previously created the American television drama Lone Star (2010) for the Fox network ; it was canceled by the network (due to low ratings) after two episodes had aired . Jennifer Salke , president of the NBC entertainment division , encouraged Killen to develop a concept for a future television series after the cancellation of Lone Star . Killen said that the duality concept of Lone Star provided him with a good platform to explore new ideas for a potential television show . He felt that Awake had a concept similar to that of Lone Star , and wanted to continue the idea of living in " two spaces " .

Killen drew inspiration from the dreaming process : " The concept of the way your dreams feel real , the way you seem to experience them as something that you don 't blink at until something crazy happens that sort of bursts that balloon . I think I became interested in the question of what if nothing ever popped that balloon ? What if you couldn 't tell the difference between when you were awake and when you were asleep ? And then I started looking for a way to marry those two ideas up , and a few months later we had Awake . "

Within a few weeks Killen sent a rough draft of the script to his agent , Marc Korman . Korman phoned Salke , calling the script " remarkable " and praising Killen : " ... for a guy who has never written a procedural show in his life " , he was " making two cases work . " Initially , Salke and Korman hoped to sell acquisition rights to other networks (including Fox) . Although it successfully made its way into the lower executive branches of the company , the script was ultimately declined by Fox entertainment president Kevin Reilly . Gary Newman , chairman of 20th Century Fox Television , opted not to develop a deal with cable @- @ television networks . Believing it should be

a broadcast @-@ network show , he did not accept the idea that the difference between cable and network dramas was their degree of intelligence .

Killen described *Awake* as neither supernatural drama nor science fiction . He contrasted it with the Fox television series *Fringe* , claiming that *Fringe* " asks you to delve into sci @-@ fi " ; *Awake* was described as a " human story " , with the crimes on the show emphasizing that level . In addition , Killen made the version of Michael 's reality the viewer is watching obvious with a subtle visual device ; in the reality where his son is alive (the " green reality ") , the background is layered with a watery blue filter (Michael often wears blue in the series) . In the reality where his wife is alive (the " red reality ") , the background is infused with a brighter , golden hue .

= = = Production team = = =

Awake is a co @-@ production of Letter Eleven and Howard Gordon 's Teakwood Lane Productions , in association with 20th Century Fox Television . Gordon was chosen as showrunner for the series by Killen , and commended the pilot script at first glance on a flight to New York . " I read the pilot , and once I got past my envy , I was struck by the voice , " he stated . " So few writers have real voices . Kyle is disarmingly self @-@ effacing ; and at the same time , he 's disarmingly confident . It 's that duality thing : On the one hand , he 's open ; on the other , he 's closed . " Gordon later compared the television series to *The Good Wife* : " *The Good Wife* has so many procedural aspects that they have to decide which format to use each week ... Why is this an *Awake* episode ? " He and Killen served as executive producers (with David Slade and Jeffrey Reiner) for the pilot episode .

The series ' episodes were written by Killen , Gordon , Evan Katz , Lisa Zwerling , Noelle Valdivia , Leonard Chang , Davey Holmes and David Graziano . Episodes were directed by Slade , Reiner , Sarah Pia Anderson , Aaron Lipstadt , Scott Winant , Adam Davidson , Michael Waxman , Nick Gomez , Laura Innes , Milan Cheylov and Miguel Sapochnik . Jason Isaacs , Keith Redmon , Ed Milkovich and Michael Klick produced the show . Feliks Parnell was the show 's primary cinematographer . Editors of the show were Paul Trejo and Nikc Berrisford ; principal photography for the pilot was completed at Fox Studios in Los Angeles , California .

= = = Casting = = =

In February 2011 , Isaacs was cast in the role of Michael Britten , the central character of the series . Gordon summarized the character : " He 's a guy who goes to sleep , wakes up , he 's with his wife , goes to sleep , wakes up , and he 's with his son . And so ? and he 's a cop who sees clues and details that crossover [sic] from one world to the next , and he uses that insight to solve crimes . " " [The main character] was somebody that you couldn 't decide if you liked or hated , and I think that [Michael] 's dilemma is something that we 're not only sympathetic for , but somehow we want him to win . " Producers of the show initially approached Michaela McManus to play Hannah Britten . However , Laura Allen was cast instead ; McManus obtained the role of Tara (for which Allen originally auditioned) .

In March 2011 , six roles were cast (including Dylan Minnette as Rex Britten , Michael 's son) . Minnette commended the series ' script , and noted that auditioning was quick . He stated , " The process of getting the job actually went by really fast because the first audition Kyle Killen [...] was in the room , Jason [Isaacs] was in the room , the cast director was in the room and the director was in the room . David Slade . And they were all there , for the first audition and I was like ' Wow ! Okay . ' " Minnette received the role two weeks after his audition . Other cast members included Wilmer Valderrama and Steve Harris as Michael 's partner in each reality , while Cherry Jones and BD Wong 's characters were cast as Michael 's therapists in separate realities . Wong chose the role in lieu of his part on the police @-@ procedural television drama *Law & Order : Special Victims Unit* . In September 2011 , Innes garnered a recurring role in the series as Tricia Harper , Michael 's commanding officer . In January 2012 , Kevin Weisman was cast in a recurring role as Ed Hawkins , a detective in a separate division of the LAPD .

= = = Writing = = =

Killen said that writing the pilot episode 's script was one of the more @-@ difficult components of creating the show . He and his writing team would often get confused with exchanging and executing ideas for the script ; as a result they created outlines , distinguishing the separate realities with green or red ink . Slade edited the language to better separate the ideas . Stating that things are " initially confusing to us when we are just trying to break story , " he hoped that when viewers watched the pilot episode , they would be immediately oriented in the reality on screen at the time .

The complexity of the pilot 's script (and the show 's concept) was cited as a potential issue for the series . Salke considered that viewers enjoyed the series ' mythology as it affected the characters , despite the show 's Sliding Doors ? like script . Upon reading the script , Isaacs felt that the show was complicated ; knowing which reality you are in was a " gift . " He stated that work for Awake was hard , but enjoyable . Isaacs later suggested that it might be too brooding for mainstream American television , and that it could potentially be the " U @-@ bend of scripts . " Despite such concerns , Gordon asserted that the concept of Awake was understandable if the viewer was attentive .

= = Series overview = =

Michael Britten , a detective with the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) , and his family are involved in a car accident . After the crash , Michael is confronted with two separate realities . His wife Hannah has (apparently) survived the accident ; however , in a second " reality " , his son Rex survives instead . To distinguish the two realities for the viewer , Michael wears a red wristband in the first reality and a green one in the second . Michael does not know which " reality " is real ; he has therapy sessions with Dr. Jonathan Lee in the " red reality " and Dr. Judith Evans in the " green " , both of whom attempt to diagnose what is happening to Michael . Each therapist sees it as a coping mechanism , insisting that the other reality is a dream . Dr. Lee is confrontational about the accident , while Dr. Evans is more nurturing . In the " red reality " Hannah plans to move to Portland , Oregon , but later decides against it (partly due to Michael 's objections) .

Before the crash Michael worked with his long @-@ time partner , Detective Isaiah Freeman (known to his LAPD team as " Bird) " . After the accident , Michael is assigned to Detective Efrem Vega in the " red reality . " Vega was previously an officer , when Bird was transferred to the western division to work with Detective Ed Hawkins . In the " green reality , " Michael stays with Bird and Efrem remains an officer . While working on cases in both realities , Michael begins to realize that the details of one case can help him with another case in the other reality . Due to this , he often clashes with his partners (who are unaware of this) . Rex and Hannah grieve each other 's death after the accident , coping in different ways : In the " red reality " Hannah begins to redecorate the house , while in the " green reality " Rex begins to play tennis with Hannah 's former partner Tara . In " Turtles All the Way Down " , in a dream Michael sees Hannah at a restaurant . He was " dreaming while he was dreaming " , and Hannah told Michael to give her " one last kiss goodbye " . This causes Dr. Evans to note that Michael realizes the " green reality " is life . However , soon afterwards Michael sees Rex and Hannah together and is happy .

Details surrounding the accident are slowly revealed as the series progresses . Shortly after the crash , Michael 's commanding officers (Tricia Harper and Carl Kessel) meet to talk about the accident and how they set up a " short " guy . Later a microphone at Ricky 's Tacos speaks to Michael , claiming that if he moved to Portland he would " never know the truth " . Michael slowly begins to remember what happened in the accident ; after realizing that Ed caused it , he speaks with Dr. Evans and Dr. Lee . His therapists insist that he is imagining it all to help cope with the pain . However , when Michael later breaks into Ed 's house Ed admits that he and an accomplice were hiding heroin at the Westfield Distribution Center ; " they decided he had to go " , after Michael began to uncover it . Michael does not know who " they " are , demanding that Ed tell him . Ed asks for protection before telling him , and attacks Michael when he is distracted . During the struggle Michael kills Ed , and Bird comes into the house after speaking to Dr. Evans . Michael later

discovers that Carl and Tricia are involved in the setup . Tricia shoots Carl in the " green reality " (in an attempt to hide her involvement in the accident) , but is later imprisoned . At the end of the series finale (" Turtles All the Way Down ") , Michael sees Hannah and Rex together . Concerned about his odd behavior , they ask if he is all right . Michael replies , " I 'm perfect , " and closes his eyes .

Killen has said that he has seen interesting theories about the finale 's meaning . He says no theory is " wrong " except those which compared Awake 's finale to Dallas (an American television soap opera) or Newhart (an American television sitcom) . He supposed that there was the " überpossibility " that Michael was in a coma , or had a new third reality created , but it was not interpreted as " He woke up and his family was fine . He 'd just been having two nightmares . " Killen said " we actively fought against " the idea that the series was Michael 's dream ; what seeing his wife and son together " really represents is a further fracturing of his psyche " . A second season , Killen said , would have explored the idea of Michael 's wife and son both living but not (necessarily) a third reality . Another season also raised the possibility of Tara and Michael beginning a romantic relationship . Since the finale was written before the show 's cancellation , it was written so either reality could have been the " real " one : " [the writers] didn 't intend to have that mystery sewn up in [' Turtles All the Way Down '] " .

= = Characters and story arcs = =

= = = Main characters = = =

There are four main characters in each reality , totaling eight . Michael Britten (the lead character) is an LAPD detective who lives in both realities . Since he does not know which reality is " real " , he has routines to help him maintain the illusion of control ; however , he is also disorganized and sometimes behaves oddly . Michael is often confused , suffers from a sleep disorder and dislikes heights . He refuses treatment because he does not want closure for his family . Hannah Britten is Michael 's wife , who is grieving her son 's death . She was planned to have an unexpected pregnancy in the show 's second season . Rex Britten is Michael 's son , a teenage student who had previously been kidnapped . After school Rex often works on a motorbike with his best friend , Cole , at Cole 's house . He is emotional and angry over his mother 's death , keeping a tennis racket to deal with his grief . When Cole accidentally breaks it , Rex is enraged ; later , he apologizes .

Efrem Vega (a detective in the " red reality ") and Michael often argue about their cases , and is concerned about Michael 's erratic behavior . In " The Little Guy " , Vega and Michael are arguing about a case involving a short person when Captain Tricia Harper calls Michael into her office . Shortly afterwards , Michael puts Vega on the lead of a new case and the two become friends . Michael had previously worked with Bird in the " red reality , " but Bird is reassigned to a new division . Vega remains an officer in the " green reality " Bird and Michael now only work with each other as partners in the " green reality . " Michael sees two therapists : Dr. Jonathan Lee and Dr. Judith Evans . Dr. Lee claims that Michael 's two realities are problematic , and Dr. Evans states that they are " remarkable " . Rex 's tennis coach , Tara , only appeared in three episodes of the series . The character was planned as a potential love interest for Michael in the " green reality " near the end of the first season , but the writers abandoned that storyline ; Killen explained they would have explored this storyline during the second season .

= = = Recurring characters = = =

There are five recurring characters , all appearing in both realities . Captain Tricia Harper , Michael 's commanding officer at the precinct , was a co @-@ conspirator in Michael 's car accident ; however , it is hinted that her involvement was reluctant . Captain Carl Kessel (commanding officer at Hawkins ' precinct) hid heroin in a storage unit for himself and Harper , and was behind Michael 's car accident . For the crash the two used Ed Hawkins , on orders from Kessel .

Other recurring characters include Emma (Daniela Bobadilla) , Rex 's girlfriend . Pregnant with Rex 's baby , she was originally told to give it up for adoption ; however , after a talk with her father Joaquin (Carlos Lacámara) she is allowed to keep it . Cole , Rex 's best friend , is another recurring character . The two work on a motorbike together ; Cole lets Hannah ride it in the " red reality " , after she convinces him to finish it .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Awake received generally @-@ favorable reviews from critics . At Metacritic (which assigns a weighted mean ? out of 100 ? based on reviews from mainstream critics) the show received a weighted mean score of 75 from 29 reviews . It was the number @-@ two best @-@ reviewed show by Metacritic users for the 2011 ? 12 season , with a user score of 8 @.@ 0 (behind Revenge) . TVLine called Awake in their review of 2012 the " most ambitious ill @-@ fated show " . Rachel Ray of The Daily Telegraph called the premiere episode " impressive " , while Tierney Bricker of E ! Online commented that he enjoyed the idea of a man living in two separate realities to stay in touch with the people he loves . NPR 's Linda Holmes said that the pilot laid the foundation for several emotional storylines , evaluating it among the strongest shows in recent memory and very engaging (compared with similar shows) .

James Poniewozik of Time noted that while its concept seemed melodramatic , the episode " focuses unflinchingly on the subject of loss , yet manages to be not a downer or painful to watch , but moving , absorbing and even hopeful . " He affirmed that the program effectively resolved the issues raised about the series , writing " Awake handles the confusion problem well : yes , it takes more concentration than a Law & Order , but it 's no Inception in its twistiness . Michael himself needs to hold on to markers to anchor his sense of reality ? for instance , he wears a red and a green wristband in the existences in which his wife and his son are alive , respectively ? and those help us follow along too . " Reuters ' Tim Molloy avouched that the episode was the " best new show of the season " : " Despite the most complicated narrative since ABC 's Lost kept skipping through time , Awake makes a fast , emotional connection that gives viewers an almost immediate stake in the lives of its compelling characters . "

RedEye journalist Curt Wagner stated that the series was smartly @-@ written , and praised its actors . BuddyTV writer Laurel Brown called the pilot a " great episode " . In his " A " -grade review , Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club said that the episode was a " great piece of televised art " , describing the script as " witty , warm , and soulful " . He praised Slade 's directing , calling the pilot episode " unique " and " wonderful " . " Pilot " was highly anticipated by Los Angeles Times journalist Robert Lloyd , who observed that " it promised to be one of the year 's best and most interesting new series . " In a pre @-@ broadcast review , Matt Fowler from IGN gave the pilot a 10 out of 10 , classifying it as a " masterpiece " . Writing for the New York Post , Michael Starr called Awake " compelling " .

Critics lauded the cast 's acting , specifically Isaacs ' performance . VanDerWerff concluded that the cast 's performances were " delicate and almost perfect " , while Wagner felt that Isaacs was well @-@ suited for the lead role and could easily captivate the audience ; " his touching , solid work grounds everything . He shows viewers what lengths one man in pain might go to hold onto those he loves . And it 's heartbreaking . " Denise Duguay of the Montreal Gazette thought that Isaacs evoked a " reservedness " and ambiguity which attracted viewers to his character . Tim Goodman of The Hollywood Reporter echoed this sentiment , writing , " He perfectly conveys a man struggling with two horrible options . " Poniewozik considered Isaacs " utterly compelling " , calling him " mature " , " soulful " , and " wearied " . Although Stuever felt that Isaacs failed to engage the audience , he praised the performances of Wong and Jones ; " Jones and Wong [...] are excellent and even vaguely sinister as the dueling shrinks . "

Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly was keen on Isaacs ' acting in the series . " It helps

enormously to have Isaacs playing the lead . This actor knows how to convey a gravity that contrasts well with the series ' airy concept , but he avoids becoming heavy and morose . " Fowler stated that Isaacs " delivers a graceful and subdued performance as a man who , on a daily basis , must taste both heaven and hell . A man full of guilt , but also gratitude . " Fowler noted that Allen and Minnette 's acting in the series deserved praise for playing characters dealing with loss without closure , while Starr called the casting " fine all @-@ around " . Critics from IGN and Paste contended that Isaacs ' performance deserved an Emmy Award . After Awake 's cancellation , Mareen Ryan of The Huffington Post hoped that new dramas on NBC would " achieve the kind of visual and emotional poetry that Awake did . " Robert Bianco from USA Today thought that Awake could become one of the season 's best new shows . As the series progressed , " Say Hello to My Little Friend " was generally considered the best episode since " Pilot " .

Some critics were less enthusiastic . Writing for The Washington Post , Hank Stuever felt that despite high ambitions the pilot episode was slow and drowsy . David Hinckley , in the New York Daily News , claimed that Awake " requires more work [to understand] than the average viewer is likely to put in " and described it as a show which would not fit into prime @-@ time television . " Game Day " , in contrast , received mixed reviews from IGN and The A.V. Club ; the publications gave it their lowest scores of the season . Zack Handlen , an A.V. Club critic , described the mysteries of " Game Day " " childishly simple " . In addition , " Ricky 's Tacos " was criticized for being too much like Law & Order : Special Victims Unit . Despite this , recurring guest star Dr. Banks (Chris McGarry) was well received by Handlen , who thought that he " [was] becoming [his] favorite secondary character on the show " . " Nightswimming " also received mixed reviews from critics . That episode 's " red reality " storylines were praised ; those for the " green reality " were considered " boring " . Handlen thought that if the " red reality " storyline was not featured in " Nightswimming " , it would not work as an episode ; Sepinwall thought the episode should not have gone into detail about the guest stars .

= = = U.S. television ratings = = =

Awake had low viewership and ratings throughout its original run . The premiere episode , which was originally broadcast on March 1 , 2012 , was watched 6 @. @ 2 million viewers (the most @-@ viewed program in its time slot for NBC since April 2010 and an improvement over its lead @-@ in show , Up All Night) . NBC also won the hour for the 18 ? 49 audience , nearly doubling its numbers with those viewers over The Firm . Awake debuted slightly better than the previous drama occupying the slot in fall 2011 , Prime Suspect , which premiered with 6 @. @ 05 million total viewers and a 1 @. @ 8 / 5 @-@ percent share in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

The second episode fell by 2 million viewers , running against The Mentalist on CBS and a rerun of GCB on ABC . Awake had its series low with the episode " Two Birds " , which premiered on May 17 , 2012 against the season finales of the ABC political drama Scandal and The Mentalist on CBS . Awake averaged 4 @. @ 81 million viewers per episode , ranking 125th in viewership for the 2011 ? 12 season .

= = = Awards and accolades = = =

In June 2011 Awake was honored , along with seven others , with the Critics ' Choice Television Award for Most Exciting New Series , chosen by journalists who had seen the pilots . ET Online chose Isaacs as its first actor in their annual Emmy Preview , which predicts winners of particular Emmy Awards . ET Online reviewer Jarett Wieselman noted that Isaacs could snag an Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series nomination ; however , Isaacs was not on the list of nominees announced July 19 , 2012 . In 2013 , Zap2it included the show on their list of 22 great one @-@ season television shows .

= = = Fan base = = =

Awake generated viewer loyalty during its original three @-@ month broadcast run on NBC , with fans organizing to try and save the series from cancellation . Their efforts included a campaign entitled " Save Awake " , holding a " sleep blackout " (fans wearing red and green wristbands with posters saying " Save Awake ") outside major television networks in the United States , a letter @-@ writing campaign to networks such as Fox and CBS and a YouTube fan @-@ made video .

= = Distribution = =

Awake episodes premiered in March 2012 on NBC in the United States and the Global Television Network in Canada (which had identical schedules) . However , Global aired the series finale a day before its American premiere because the Canadian series Rookie Blue was broadcast in Awake 's time slot . It premiered on April 11 in Australia on W , and on May 4 in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky Atlantic . Fox picked up the rights to air the series in Asia , and debuted Awake on June 11 .

Episodes of the show are also available online at Netflix , Amazon Video , and the iTunes Store (which offer all 13 episodes for purchase ? with episodes originally appearing the day after their live airing ? in standard @-@ definition and high @-@ definition) . As of September 2012 , the final five episodes are available in streaming video on NBC 's official Awake webpage and Hulu . The first episode was made available two weeks before the series ' broadcast premiere (on February 16 , 2012) on Hulu , YouTube (its first seven minutes) , and the iTunes Store .

= = Broadcast history = =

Awake consists of thirteen one @-@ hour episodes . The series originally aired in the United States at 10 : 00 pm (EST) Thursdays on NBC from March 1 to May 24 , 2012 (although it was originally scheduled to premiere in fall 2011) . Awake debuted as a mid @-@ season replacement for The Firm , which moved to Saturday nights in the U.S. and Canada . The series ' final episode , " Turtles All the Way Down " , aired outside the television season on May 24 , 2012 . Low ratings resulted in NBC 's cancelling the show on May 11 , 2012 (after eleven of the thirteen produced episodes were aired) , although the network finished airing the remaining episodes in the series ' original time slot .

The A.V. Club opined that Awake 's slot (opposite the hit drama The Mentalist) contributed to the show 's failure . Film.com 's Gretchen Alice observed that Awake was in a " tough timeslot " , and NBC 's previous shows in that slot also fared poorly .