

= Turtles All the Way Down =

" Turtles All the Way Down " is the thirteenth and final episode of the American television police procedural fantasy drama *Awake* . It premiered on May 23 , 2012 in Canada on Global , and on May 24 , 2012 in the United States on NBC . " Turtles All the Way Down " was scheduled to air on May 17 , 2012 , as part two of a two @-@ hour finale . NBC had changed the order , and moved it to the following week . The teleplay of the episode was written by series creator Kyle Killen , from a story by Killen , and staff writers Leonard Chang and Noelle Valdivia . It was directed by Miguel Sapochnik . " Turtles All the Way Down " was well received by television critics , who praised its storylines . Commentators noted that the script was well @-@ written . Upon airing , " Turtles All the Way Down " obtained 2 @.@ 87 million viewers in the United States and 0 @.@ 9 million in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings .

The show centers on Michael Britten (Jason Isaacs) a police detective living in two separate realities after a car accident . In the episode , Michael Britten finds out the truth about the car accident that caused his split realities , and seeks out those responsible for it . He finds out that Captain Tricia Harper (Laura Innes) caused the accident , alongside Ed Hawkins (Kevin Weisman) and Captain Carl Kessel (Mark Harelik) .

= = Plot = =

In his " green reality " (where his son is alive and his wife is dead) , Detective Michael Britten (Jason Isaacs) sits in a prison cell temporary for killing Detective Ed Hawkins (Kevin Weisman) , who caused Michael 's car accident . Meanwhile , his partner in the " green reality " , Detective Isaiah " Bird " Freeman (Steve Harris) finds heroin that Hawkins , under orders from Captain Kessel (Mark Harelik) , had placed in a self storage unit . Meanwhile , Captain Tricia Harper (Laura Innes) shoots Carl Kessel in a hotel room , making it look like a suicide to cover up her involvement in Michael 's accident . Michael is freed from the cell and Kessel 's body is found .

Michael regains consciousness (after having passed out from a gunshot wound when Ed Hawkins was chasing after him) near a dumpster in the " red reality " (where his wife is alive and son is dead) . The still @-@ alive Detective Hawkins takes Michael to his car , but Michael flees after attacking Hawkins and causes a car accident . Michael finds his therapist in the " red reality " , Dr. John Lee (BD Wong) , forces him to sew up the bullet wound , and takes him to the self @-@ storage unit to show him the heroin stash . Seeing no heroin , Michael then locks Lee in the containment center and contacts his partner in the " red reality " , detective Efrem Vega (Wilmer Valderrama) . Vega secretly takes Britten to his house but , upon returning to the police station , is convinced that Michael is unstable and allows Michael to be captured . Michael is first taken to the hospital to receive medical treatment and then goes to jail .

Harper visits Michael in jail . When Michael notices the caller ID of an incoming call matching Kessel 's hotel room pseudonym , he realizes Harper is part of the conspiracy and attempts to strangle her . Later , Michael is visited by himself from the " green reality " who leads him to the jail door . Past the door , Michael first witnesses Kessel 's murder and Detective Vega , in a penguin suit , shows Harper 's heel breaking in the process hinting that this can be used as hard evidence to place Harper at Kessel 's murder . Next Michael briefly meets his wife , Hannah (Laura Allen) in a restaurant before he finds his " green reality " self sleeping in his bedroom . He ? his " red reality " self ? lays down in bed as well and merges with his " green reality " self before waking up in said " green reality " .

In Harper 's office , Michael confronts her about her involvement in his accident , pulling out his gun to shoot her . However , he instead lets Bird and another detective arrest her . Later , Dr. Evans applauds Michael 's apparent rejection of the " red reality " and , when Michael suggests his fantastic experiences may have simply been a dream of the " red reality " , Dr. Evans warns him not to create a third reality . She suddenly goes still . Michael , confused , goes through her office door and finds himself in his bedroom . He goes downstairs and finds both his son , Rex (Dylan Minnette) , and wife alive . Concerned about Michael 's odd behavior , Hannah asks if he is okay . He replies

, " I 'm perfect , " and closes his eyes .

= = Production = =

The episode 's teleplay was written by series creator and executive producer Kyle Killen , from a story by Killen , and staff writers Leonard Chang and Noelle Valdivia ; it was Killen 's seventh writing credit , and Chang and Valdivia 's third writing credit each . It was directed by Miguel Sapochnik , his first directing credit for the series .

In January 2012 , it was announced that Kevin Weisman would appear in multiple episodes of *Awake* . The actor was later cast as Ed Hawkins , a cop who took over Michael 's spot at the police department after his crash . This is his third appearance on the series , with the first being " Say Hello to My Little Friend " , the eleven episode . Other guest stars included Laura Innes as Tricia Harper and Mark Harelik as Carl Kessel . The episode is rated TV @-@ 14 on television in the United States .

The episode featured the song " Montana " by Youth Lagoon during the final scene . Many viewers wondered if the series creator had changed the ending for the last episode , due to the cancellation of the series . This caused series creator and executive producer Killen to assure viewers that the episode would have been " exactly the same " if it had been renewed for a second season . In a pre @-@ broadcast interview by *Entertainment Weekly* with Killen and actor Jason Isaacs , Isaacs claimed that he found it " strangely ironic and amusing " to be promoting the series finale of the *Awake* series . Killen claimed that " When we wrote the episode , we didn 't know it would be the end of the series " . He stated that it had a " satisfying conclusion " , " and I think it will be a satisfying way to leave the show " .

" *Turtles All the Way Down* " was scheduled to air as part two of the scheduled two @-@ hour finale . NBC had changed the order , and aired it the following week .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" *Turtles All the Way Down* " first premiered a day early in Canada on May 23 , 2012 on Global between 10 : 00 p.m. and 11 : 00 p.m. , due to the season premiere of the Canadian series *Rookie Blue* , which aired in *Awake* 's regular time slot on Thursdays at 10 : 00 p.m. The episode premiered on May 24 , 2012 in the United States on NBC between 10 : 00 p.m. and 11 : 00 p.m. Upon airing , " *Turtles All the Way Down* " obtained 2 @. @ 87 million viewers in the United States despite airing simultaneously with a rerun of *The Mentalist* on CBS and *Rookie Blue* on ABC . It acquired a 0 @. @ 9 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings , meaning that it was seen by 0 @. @ 9 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds . The episode marked the series ' highest ratings since the fifth episode " *Oregon* " which aired on March 29 , 2012 .

= = = Critical response = = =

" *Turtles All the Way Down* " was well received by television commentators . Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* gave the episode a positive review . He also noted that parts of the episode were " surprising " , and that " the show embraced some final insanity before the end , it ? s more the illusion of depth than actual depth " . Handlen wrote that " it ? s hard to ask for more from an hour of television " , despite noting that he was " glad the series got cancelled " . Handlen noted that he would " look forward to their next projects " . Handlen concluded his review by giving the episode a grade of " B " . Matt Fowler of *IGN* gave the episode a positive review and claimed that there were some " gut @-@ wrenching " scenes in the episode . Fowler also opined that the episode was " thrilling " , " frustrating " , " fascinating " , and " terrible " to see Hannah " crying over an arrested Britten " . Fowler wrote that he " love [d] the open ending " . Noting that *Awake* was " one of the

good ones " , Fowler concluded his review by giving the episode a " 9 @. @ 5 out of 10 " classifying it as " amazing " . Nick McHatton of TV Fanatic gave the episode a positive review . He opined that Michael " has a unique ability to dream in a way that feels real , why not recreate what was once lost " . McHatton found it " fitting that the show ended with Michael closing his eyes . Despite the fact that he did not know what the phrase " turtles all the way down " meant , he concluded his review by giving the episode a score " 5 @. @ 0 out of 5 @. @ 0 " .

Ross Bonaime of Paste magazine gave the episode a complimentary review . He started by claiming that Awake was " the best drama to come out the 2011 ? 12 season on television , and one of the finest NBC dramas in years " . He also wondered " what Awake would be like in a Michael Britten @-@ like alternate reality where the show lasted five seasons , or 10 , or even just one more year " , Could Awake maintain this story for long and still be compelling ? " Bonaime wrote that it was " better to have one great season and be remembered fondly " . Bonaime claimed that the " ending is quite smart , given that it never truly clarifies if Michael was dreaming the whole time , or if Dr. Lee was right and that he was on the verge of completely snapping , which makes much more sense " . He was also grateful that " Awake decided to just go completely nuts with the last half of this episode " . He claimed that the episode and series was " different , a rare move , especially on network television " . He claimed that " Once Awake arrives on Netflix and DVD , people will rush through in a matter of days and will say they enjoyed their experience with this short yet sweet treasure " . He claimed that works with Awake should be " rewarded " and " praised " . Bonaime concluded his review by giving the episode a " 9 @. @ 0 out of 10 " .

Screen Rant 's Kevin Yeoman , gave much praise in the episode . Like Paste magazine and other critics reviews , Yeoman claimed that " there was certainly disappointment in finding out that Awake wouldn 't see a second season , and would instead be looked at as a 13 @-@ episode miniseries " . He claimed that the episode has the puzzling and high points that are similar to " That 's Not My Penguin " and " Say Hello to My Little Friend " . Again , Screen Crush 's Kevin Fitzpatrick was also disappointed that there would not be a second season . Verne Gay of Newsday gave the episode a complimenting review . He called it " promising " . He noted that he could see " why Awake was canceled " . He blessed " the show for at least trying " . He called it " challenging " and " original " . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix called the episode " fascinating " , " puzzling " and " moving " . Carl Cortez of Assignment X , again , enjoyed the episode . In his " B + " grade review , he noted that " you can view it as another missed opportunity " . He claimed that parts of the episode were " confusing " . He stated that he would " prefer to have more questions than answers " . He argued that the episode felt more like a " Series Finale , than Season Finale " , which he called " a good thing " , " Too many good shows go off into the sunset without a single resolution and this one at least strives for something more " . He also argued that NBC should have " put a little more promotional push " . He called it " challenging " and " interesting " .