

= Pilot (Awake) =

" Pilot " is the pilot episode of the American television police procedural fantasy drama Awake , which originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) on March 1 , 2012 . Written by series creator Kyle Killen , " Pilot " earned a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @ 0 , being watched by 6 @. @ 247 million viewers upon its initial broadcast . Directed by David Slade , it became the highest @- @ rated non @- @ sports program in its respective time slot on NBC in over a year . The episode has generally received positive reviews , with many critics commenting on the episode 's unique script , and the cast members , particularly Jason Isaacs ' performance as Michael Britten , who they felt effectively embodied the characteristics of the lead role . It was one of eight honorees at the Critics ' Choice Television Awards .

The pilot introduced the main character , Michael Britten , a detective who works for the Los Angeles Police Department . He is involved in a fatal accident with his family . Michael is conflicted with two parallel realities ; in one reality , in which he wears a red wristband , his wife Hannah Britten (Laura Allen) survived the accident , and in another reality , in which he wears a green wristband , his son Rex Britten (Dylan Minnette) survived . Michael does not know which reality is real , and sees two separate therapists : Dr. John Lee (BD Wong) in the " red reality " , and Dr. Judith Evans (Cherry Jones) in the " green reality " . Michael deals with a kidnapping in the " green reality " , and a murder in the " red reality " .

The concept of Awake was devised by Killen , who previously created the American television drama Lone Star for the Fox network . NBC encouraged Killen to conceive a concept for a future television series after Lone Star 's cancellation . Although it was inspired by the processes of dreaming , its script was cited as potentially being too complex for mainstream American television .

= = Plot = =

Detective Michael Britten (Jason Isaacs) is at therapy sessions with Dr. John Lee (BD Wong) and Dr. Judith Evans (Cherry Jones) . Having fully recovered from his injuries , Michael recalls the night that he and his family were involved in a serious car accident . He reveals that every time he goes to sleep , he is conflicted between two realities ; In one reality , his wife Hannah Britten (Laura Allen) survived the accident , but his son Rex Britten (Dylan Minnette) is pronounced dead at the scene , while in the second reality , Hannah died in the accident instead of Rex .

Michael is trying to juggle his lives in the two realities , and wears a red wristband on his wrist in the reality where Hannah is alive and a green one in the reality where Rex is alive . In the Rex , or green , reality , Michael has noticed that Rex has focused a lot on tennis lately , as it was his mother 's sport . Rex 's tennis coach Tara (Michaela McManus) has been talking with Rex lately about his feelings . In the Hannah , or red , reality , Hannah is trying to write the late Rex out of their lives , wanting to move and try for another child .

Michael has a different partner in each reality . In the " green reality " , his partner is Isaiah " Bird " Freeman (Steve Harris) , while Efrem Vega (Wilmer Valderrama) is a uniformed officer . In the " red reality " , Efrem is his newly promoted partner , while Isaiah has been transferred to a different precinct . Michael starts to realize that things can transfer from reality to reality , as the clue " 611 Waverly , " pertaining to a case , is shown to Michael in one reality before it helps him save a girl from being murdered by a quick change serial killer in the other .

Both Dr. Lee and Dr. Evans attempt to diagnose what is going on with Michael . They both see it as a coping mechanism , and both insist that the other reality is a dream . To try to prove this to Michael , Dr. Evans has Michael read a part of the United States Constitution , as if that reality was a dream , Michael could not have done so , unless he had memorized the Constitution . Michael learned that he had alcohol in his system the night of the car accident , with Dr. Lee hypothesizing that Michael has this dream because he feels guilty for killing his son .

At the end of the episode , Michael comes to the conclusion that he wants to live with both of his family members . As he goes to sleep in the red reality , Hannah (who Michael has told about the " green reality ") tells Michael to enjoy Rex , and to tell him she loves him for her . Then , Michael

goes to sleep , transferring to the " green reality " .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception = = =

Kyle Killen , the series ' creator , devised the concept of the series , which was originally titled REM until the episode was green @-@ lit by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) , in May 2011 . It was described as a procedural mixture that is based on the life of a detective experiencing a parallel universe after a car accident with his family . NBC picked up the pilot episode of Awake in February 2011 . Killen previously created the American television drama Lone Star (2010) for the Fox network , which was canceled shortly after airing two episodes due to low ratings . Killen stated that the cancellation of Lone Star was a good platform to explore new ideas for a potential television show . He felt that Awake had a similar concept to Lone Star , and he wanted to continue the idea of living in " two spaces " . In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter , he further elaborated on the conception of the series :

My wife is an ER doctor and she once had a patient whose chief complaint was that they were covered in worms . And she went in to to [sic] see him [and] it was a 23 @-@ year @-@ old guy who seemed completely sane , who remembered his name , what year it was but was totally convinced he was covered in worms and couldn 't understand why other people weren 't reacting to that . It stuck with me how reliant you are on this little piece of material between your ears and what it tells you is real is what you think is real . I had the idea and been interested in someone who couldn 't tell the difference between their dreams and reality . And I think I had a lot of stuff I was still playing with when Lone Star went down .

Killen sought inspiration from the dreaming process , adding : " 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 . "

Jennifer Salke , the president of the entertainment division of NBC , encouraged Killen to conceive a concept for a future television series after the cancellation of Lone Star . Within a few weeks , Killen sent a rough draft of the script to his agent Marc Korman . Korman was so impressed by the script that , though it was after midnight , he went into the room where his sick wife was sleeping , and got into bed with her . Korman phoned Salke , and stated that the script was " remarkable " , and praised Killen claiming that " for a guy who has never written a procedural show in his life " , he is " making two cases work " . Initially , Salke and Korman looked to sell acquisition rights to the Fox Broadcasting Company . Although it successfully made its way into the lower executive branches of the company , the script was declined by entertainment president Kevin Reilly , who felt apprehensive upon reading it . Gary Newman , chairman of 20th Century Fox Television , opted not to develop a deal with cable television networks . Newman believed that it should be a network show , and did not accept that the difference between cable and network dramas was their degree of intelligence .

Gordon was chosen as the showrunner for the series by Killen . Gordon commended the pilot script at first glance . Gordon originally read the script 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 . He said that The Good Wife has so many procedural aspects that you have to decide which format to use each week . He compared it to Awake , saying , then , " What makes an Awake episode ? " " Pilot " was written by Killen , and directed by David Slade .

== Casting ==

In February 2011 , Jason Isaacs obtained the role of Michael Britten , the central character of the series . Gordon summated the premise of 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 from one world to the next , and he uses that insight to solve crimes . " Killen thought that the premise behind the series would be relatable to audiences , making it easier to expand his fanbase . " I think there were aspects of Lone Star that were more difficult to get a wider , broader audience interested in , " he articulated . " [The main character] was somebody that you couldn 't decide if you liked or hated , and I think that Britten 's dilemma is something that we 're not only sympathetic for , but somehow we want him to win . " The following month , producers approached Laura Allen to play Hannah Britten . Michaela McManus initially received the role of Hannah , but later received the role of Tara instead , whom Allen originally auditioned to play .

In March 2011 , Dylan Minnette was cast as Rex Britten , the son of Michael Britten , alongside five other cast members . Minnette commended the series ' script , and noted the auditioning sequence was fast . 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 include Wilmer Valderrama and Steve Harris , who each play Britten 's partner in one reality , while Cherry Jones and BD Wong each serve as his therapist in one reality . Wong chose the role in lieu of his position on the police procedural television drama Law & Order : Special Victims Unit .

== Writing ==

Killen avouched that writing the episode 's script was one of the more difficult processes of creating the series . He and his writing team would often get confused with exchanging and executing ideas for the script ; as a result , they created outlines and distinguished them in green and red ink . Slade edited the language to better separate the ideas . " So the things that are initially confusing to us when we are just trying to break story , I think by the time they reach an audience , so much attention has been paid to how to make it clear where you are that all of the little tricks that we needed sort of go away . And hopefully when you see it on the screen , you are pretty instantly oriented as to which world you are in . "

The complexity of the script of the pilot episode and the show 's concept was cited as a potential issue for the series . Salke evaluated that viewers will enjoy the " clever mythology that overlap and affect each other in very interesting ways " , despite the series ' Sliding Doors @-@ like script . Upon reading the script , Isaacs felt that it was " incredibly hard " and complicated to comprehend . " Do you always know what reality you 're in ? [...] That 's become a [gift] . It was hard but I quite like hard work . " Isaacs later suggested that it might be too brooding for mainstream American television , and that it could potentially be the " U @-@ bend of scripts " . He stated that every pilot comes from people who have " amazing prestige " , and that there are lots of " talented people , but the head of the network chooses only one . " Despite such concerns , Gordon asserted that the concept of Awake was a concept that you could understand if you sat down and paid attention to it properly .

== Broadcast and reception ==

" Pilot " originally aired on NBC on March 1 , 2012 . It debuted as a midseason replacement for The Firm , which moved to Saturdays shortly before Awake 's premiere . The episode 's initial broadcast was viewed by approximately 6 @. @ 247 million viewers . " Pilot " earned a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @

0 , with a 5 share , meaning that roughly 2 @. @ 0 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 5 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode .

The episode debuted on the Global network in Canada simultaneously with the NBC broadcast . It garnered 1 @. @ 2 million viewers , making it the twenty @- @ eighth most watching program of the week , according to BBM Canada . In the United Kingdom , the episode was first broadcast on Sky Atlantic on May 4 , 2012 , and obtained 334 @, @ 000 million viewers , making it the third most @- @ viewed program for the channel behind Game of Thrones and Blue Bloods . In June 2011 , Awake 's pilot was one of eight honorees in the " Most Exciting New Series " category at the Critics ' Choice Television Awards , voted by journalists who had seen the pilots .

The pilot episode has generally received positive reviews from television critics , who praised its storylines . Rachel Ray of The Telegraph called the premiere episode " impressive " , while Tierney Bricker of E ! Online commented that he " instantly fell in love with the storyline of one man living in two realities in order to stay with the people he loves . " NPR 's Linda Holmes asserted that " Pilot " laid the foundation for several emotional storylines , ultimately evaluating it as amongst the strongest showings in recent memory ; " This is a richly interesting narrative , and it 's worth watching closely , and if you do that , it 's entirely digestible . It 's also beautifully acted and written , packed with genuinely vexing questions about grief and dreaming , and ? of all things ? thoughtful . " Holmes added that it was very engaging in contrast to similar television 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 . " Poniewozik affirmed that the telecast effectively solved the issues that were raised about the series . He wrote , " 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 " well acted and smartly written " . 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 wrote , " David Slade 's direction conveys the emotional world of the show so well that you could watch it on mute and grasp most of what 's going on , " " At the end of the episode , you 'll leave feeling like you 've seen something unique and wonderful , something worth watching every week in an increasingly crowded television landscape . " " 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 " . Some commentators were less enthusiastic than the general consensus . Writing for The Washington Post , Hank Stuever felt that despite having high ambitions , the pilot episode was slow and drowsy .

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 to 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 that attracted viewers to his character . Tim Goodman of The Hollywood Reporter echoed analogous sentiment , writing , " He perfectly conveys a man struggling with two horrible options . " Poniewozik iterated : " Isaacs is utterly compelling : mature , soulful and wearied . Literally , he never gets a rest , and must deal in one reality with a son acting out from rage , in other other with a spouse who is moving on at a different pace , and in different ways , from him . " Although Stuever opined 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 to 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 ' performance " 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 performances in the series " deserve some praise for having to play characters who are also dealing with loss , but without the benefit of being able to see their lost loved one like Britten can . "