

FALLING AWAKE

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAR (MOVING) -- NIGHT

GREG SANDUSKY (late 30s) is at the wheel of a compact NETWORK CAR, struggling to keep his eyes open. THE BIG CITY flows past his side window. Greg brakes for a red light just as PEDESTRIANS stream into the crosswalk.

Greg's eyelids droop and then close. A LAST PEDESTRIAN runs across the street and the TRAFFIC LIGHT turns green. Greg's hand slips from the wheel. He's fast asleep.

The car just begins driving itself: It accelerates, signals, makes a turn. Greg dozes on.

The car enters a PARKING GARAGE, winds down through the ramped levels and finds a space. A hand reaches over from the passenger seat and touches a button on the dashboard, turning off the engine.

WIDER

ALLISON SANDUSKY (late 30s) opens her door and looks back at her husband. She looks as if she'd like to say something weightier to him, but settles for:

ALLISON
Greg. We're here.

Greg opens his eyes and looks out the windshield, dazed.

OUTSIDE THE CAR

Greg joins Allison and their 13-year-old daughter, EMILY, who pulls some homemade PROTEST SIGNS from the car's back seat. Every now and then we hear the ECHOING CHEERS of a distant crowd.

EXT. PUBLIC PLAZA -- NIGHT

A SEA OF PEOPLE, restless with anticipation.

Some wear T-shirts sporting animations of sunlight reflected to Earth from an UNGAINLY SATELLITE. Plastic models of the same satellite bob from a few heads. A placard reads *Here Comes the Sun*. Kids toss GLOWING TOYS into the air.

Greg, carrying the protest signs, leads Allison and Emily through the crowd

Emily talks to her friend SHAUNA (also 13) on her VIDPHAN, a portable computer/phone with a flexible screen that opens like a paper fan.

SHAUNA
 (filtered, over the vidphan)
 . . . near the waffle stand. Why
 don't you come over here with us?

EMILY
 Can't. I have to go to my Dad's stupid
 protest.

Emily looks toward

THE EMPTY STAGE

ablaze with light at the center of the huge crowd. Several
 huge FLOATING SCREENS frame the space.

On one, A FATHER plays catch with his son. On another, three
 MODEL COUPLES at a restaurant share a laugh. On the third, A
 WIDE-EYED GRANDMOTHER para-sails over a tropical beach. The
 caption is always the same. *Exsom: Time to Live Your Life.*

THE SANDUSKYS

work their way through the crowd. Emily lets go of her mom's
 hand and falls a little behind.

SHAUNA (O.S.)
 What are you protesting?

EMILY
 Everything. Fun. Anything to do with
 the Switch.

GREG
 There they are!

He points to a cluster of PROTEST SIGNS. One reads *PALS:*
*People **A**gainst **L**osing **S**leep.* Others read *We have a right to*
night and *Not everyone is turned on by the Switch!*

Greg reaches

THE PROTESTERS

ahead of Allison and Emily. The group is composed of men and
 women of various ages. Not quite threadbare, but no \$50
 haircuts either.

They've set up in front of a party of REDNECKS, some
 shirtless, some seated in lawn chairs, drinking beer.

Greg trades a few quick greetings with the protesters, hands
 out a few extra signs, then clears his throat.

GREG
 (barely audible)
 Thanks for coming, everyone. So I
 just want to remind you all, this is
 a peaceful protest. . .

Almost everyone in the group glances at THEO COLLINS (30s) who looks a little rougher around the edges than the rest. He wears a faded T-shirt reading "I [heart] COBOL."

GREG
 We are the face of PALS in this city.
 And as such, it's not our place to--

But the opening BASS-GUITAR NOTES and the rolling SNARE-DRUM march of Jefferson Airplane's *White Rabbit* soon drown him out.

Everyone's attention is now on

THE STAGE

A MAN IN A WHITE SUIT strides through the crowd, growing in size as he approaches the stage. He's soon 15 feet tall.

A MURMUR rises around the plaza as the crowd recognizes the HOLOGRAM of DR. THOMAS CALDER, CEO of Kuhn-Addison Pharmaceuticals and inventor of Exsom. His Marv the Martian necktie stands in contrast to the perfect white suit.

A CHEER erupts when he takes the stage. Calder is now 40 feet tall. He reaches down and plucks the mike, tiny in his huge hand, from the podium. He taps it.

CALDER
 FEE. . . FI. . . FO. . . FUM!
 (after the cheer dies)
 Sorry. Couldn't resist. They're always
 calling Kuhn-Addison "the
 pharmaceutical giant" so I finally
 decided what the hell, I'm just going
 with it.

GREG

glances back to see he's lost both Emily and Allison to the spectacle.

THE GIANT CALDER

drops the tiny mike, also a hologram.

CALDER
 Well, I guess I won't be needing
 that.

Indeed, Calder's voice continues with uncanny fidelity. He sounds as if he's standing right next to us.

CALDER

Thank you all for coming. In the nine years since Kuhn-Addison brought Exsom to market, we've had more than a few milestones to celebrate, including our one billionth customer worldwide.

(more cheers)

We are no longer slaves to sleep. Even as we struggled with that first prototype, I knew that if enough of you took this journey with me, Exsom would return America to being the most productive nation on Earth. That our cities and our highways would be safer places. Our children better educated. . .

Above Calder's head, a hologram of A HUGE MIRROR in orbit around the Earth appears, turning slowly into position.

CALDER

Tonight, the downtown cores of six North American cities will be illuminated by mirrors capturing clean, natural sunlight. And as we take this next step in the evolution of human kind, we realize an age-old dream. . .

(he looks skyward)

. . . to banish the night.

Calder's image fades. In his place, GIANT NUMERALS count down from fifteen. The crowd soon joins in.

CROWD

Eleven. . . 10. . . 9. . . 8. . .

GREG AND THE PROTESTERS

Greg begins leading the PALS in a chant "*Night is our right!*"

AT THE HORIZON

A VAST SQUARE OF LIGHT crawls over the mountains toward them.

EMILY

counts down with the crowd. One of the rednecks holds a LIGHTER over his head and flicks it on.

CROWD

. . . 3. . . 2. . . 1. . .

As the countdown reaches zero, the crowd falls silent. AN EERIE LIGHT spills over them and everyone looks up at

A DAZZLING STAR

in the night sky. It's breathtaking. Even

THE PROTESTERS

take a moment to admire it. Then, taking Greg's lead, they resume their chanting--quietly at first, then growing louder: *Night is our right! Night is our right!*

A REDNECK WEARING A TOQUE turns toward the PALS.

REDNECK IN TOQUE

And we have a right to enjoy this,
so why don't you shut the hell up!

Emily tries to stifle a laugh. Greg looks over at the rednecks in time to see one of them offer a can to Emily. Before she can react, Greg pushes his way over to them, then knocks the beer out of his hand.

GREG

She's thirteen.

REDNECK IN TOQUE

And how would I know that?

EMILY

I wasn't going to drink it, Dad!

GREG

It's all a fucking spectacle for
your entertainment, isn't it?

ALLISON

Let's just drop it, Greg.

REDNECK IN LAWN CHAIR

Look, why don't you just take your
Sombie pals and go back to your caves.

REDNECK IN TOQUE

You can leave the girl, though. It's
pretty obvious what she wants--

Greg punches the man. The other rednecks rush to their friend's aid. Theo pushes through the crowd to help Greg.

As the fight spreads, POLICE positioned atop the RIOT CONTAINMENT VEHICLES swivel nozzles toward the brawl. They cover them with an AEROGEL. Greg gets

A GLIMPSE OF ALLISON AND EMILY

as she hustles her daughter through the melee.

GREG AND THEO

are enveloped by the aerogel. The moment it hits them, the SOUND of the RIOT is muffled to a DISTANT MURMUR. They try to crawl through the foam but it congeals around them. In seconds, they're immobilized.

INT. CITY JAIL CELL -- NIGHT

A PROTESTOR looks up from his hand-held computer.

ACROSS THE JAIL CELL

Greg and Theo sit in one corner, subdued. There's a BLOODY SPLOTCH on Greg's shirt. He feeds an equally bloody tissue into one nostril.

THE PROTESTORS share the cell with FANS of the space mirror rollout.

One of those fans, GORDON (20s), is having what looks like a MILD SEIZURE. Now and then his pupils cast an eerie glint, like roadside reflectors picking up headlights. This is EYESHINE.

His brother, PETER (20s), goes to the bars of the cell and calls out:

PETER

Hey! My brother needs his rush!

A COP (50s) approaches their cell.

PETER

(to the cop)

You got a man in here who hasn't had his dream rush in almost three days. He's going into subsleep.

COP

I'll get to him. Tina Waterman, Aaron Simpson, Susan Carruthers, Jeff Lucero: Your bail has been posted.

GREG

What about Greg Sandusky? Or Theo Collins? They on that list?

COP

Of course they are. I was going to call them later for dramatic effect.

The bailed prisoners file out. No one's looking back. Theo eyes the cop who leads the catatonic Gordon from the cell.

THEO

(under his breath)

Asshole. What this campaign needs is some more direct action. I say we start with their precious dream pods. Pull them all out by the roots.

GREG

What. . . ?

THEO

I did one last week. Just looped my winch cable around the whole thing and gunned it. I dumped it down by the river.

GREG

Keep it down, will you?

INT. ADMISSIONS DESK CITY JAIL -- NIGHT

The DESK SERGEANT returns Greg's personal effects. Allison's mother, JUNE (60s), well put together, initials a last form.

Allison stands by, looking intensely uncomfortable. But not as uncomfortable as Greg.

GREG

(to June)

Thanks for putting up my bond.

JUNE

Well we can't very well have Emily's father languishing in prison.

GREG

I don't know how much actual languishing was going on.

June takes no notice of the attempted joke. Gordon wanders around THE WAITING AREA behind them and approaches the desk, almost catatonic.

The desk sergeant glances up at him.

DESK SERGEANT

Hey! You're free to go. Go on. Get your rush.

Gordon looks around as if he's heard a voice but can't quite pinpoint where it came from.

EXT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT (MIRROR LIGHT)

Allison and June walk out of the station. Greg comes behind them guiding Gordon by the arm.

Greg looks around, getting his first look at the world under the orbital mirror's PALE AND EERIE LIGHT. It's not nearly as bright as full sunshine, yet objects still cast distinct shadows.

ON THE SIDEWALK

Greg, Allison and Gordon come to A GLOSSY WHITE STRUCTURE about twice the size of a photo booth. On it is the LOGO for Kuhn-Addison Pharmaceuticals. This is a DREAM POD.

ALLISON
Greg, Emily's waiting.

GREG
It'll just take a minute.

Greg guides Gordon over to the dream pod, searches Gordon's pockets. Coming up empty, he then turns to June.

JUNE
Of course.

June takes A CARD from her purse and waves it over the door. It slides open. Greg helps Gordon into the seat inside the pod.

The door closes. A GREEN LIGHT on the pod changes to RED. Greg resumes walking. As he catches up to Allison and June, Allison links an arm through his, takes his hand.

ALLISON
You're a good man, Greg Sandusky.
For an ex con.

GREG
A stretch in the Big House gives a man time to reflect on his ways. As the days roll into weeks, the weeks into months, the months--

JUNE
It was six hours.

GREG
(glancing back at the pod)
Six hours. Six years.
(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

I still can't imagine tying myself to one of those things for the rest of my life.

JUNE

It's two minutes a day. It takes me longer to find a bathroom in this city.

GREG

Your brain doesn't seize up if you can't find a bathroom.

ALLISON

Speak for yourself.

INT. JUNE'S CAR (PARKED) -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON Emily slumped in the back seat, sleeping, wearing a muddy soccer uniform. From O.S. comes the MUFFLED SOUND of GIRLS GIGGLING. A FLASH from a camera illuminates Emily.

OUTSIDE THE CAR - THREE GIRLS EMILY'S AGE

huddle around the display screen of a phan. They wear the same soccer uniform as Emily. One of them has drawn something on the car's window with a felt pen.

ALLISON, GREG AND JUNE

approach the car and Allison recognizes one of the girls.

ALLISON

Oh hi Shauna.

SHAUNA(13) looks up from the display. Busted.

SHAUNA

Hi Mrs. Sandusky.

The two other girls cast guilty glances at June's car. Then Allison looks

THROUGH THE CAR WINDOW

where Emily lies sleeping. The girls have drawn A PACIFIER on the glass in felt pen.

FROM THE ANGLE THEY TOOK THE PHOTO it looks as if Emily's sucking on it, eyes closed, contented.

BACK TO SCENE

Allison gives Shauna a dark look then goes to the window and starts rubbing off the drawing using her shirt cuff.

She tries to open the passenger-side door but it's locked.

June unlocks the car and gets into the driver's seat.

Greg walks to the car's back door, passing close by the girls, who stare at Greg's bloody shirt. It's a proud day for the Sanduskys.

GREG

Girls.

Shauna looks ashamed, but the other two barely try to stifle their amusement.

INSIDE THE CAR

June turns to Allison and gives her an I-told-you-so look.

GREG

Not one word, June.

JUNE

Did I say anything?

Allison is mortified, almost to the point of tears. Emily, still half asleep, just snuggles up to her dad, who puts an arm around her.

Greg looks over at A KNOCK ON HIS WINDOW. Gordon stands there looking refreshed and alert. Greg rolls down the window

GORDON

Hey, was that you who--

GREG

Yeah.

GORDON

Thanks, man. You didn't have to do that.

GREG

Well somebody did.

Gordon begins digging in his pocket.

GORDON

Here, let me pay you back.

GREG

(dismissing it)
It's what? Two bucks?

June starts the car.