

Awake

By

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BLACK

RAY (V.O.)

Statistically every human spends one third of their life sleeping. For every three hours you live, you give one back to live it. As the human race, we aspired to improve upon that concept. Take back the time we waste dreaming when we could be building. The first REM Sleep Machine was created by a European Company called SERN. SERN drastically reduced the amount of sleep we needed. But as an ironic twist, we soon discovered we could no longer sleep without these machines. Without the natural ability to sleep, SERN toppled world governments within a matter of days. Those who can afford sleep do so peacefully. The rest of us scrape by desperately.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Brad is sitting on the bench. He has dark bags underneath his eyes. He is holding a bank loan application. On the bottom of the application, it says "declined."

Ray enters eating a bag of popcorn and sits next to Brad.

Beat

RAY

What's ya got there buddy?

BRAD

Nothing important.

Brad puts the letter in his pocket. Ray acts like he doesn't care then quickly steals it from Brad.

BRAD

Hey! give that back.

Brad reaches for the letter but Ray pushes him back. Ray reads the letter.

RAY

A bank loan! What do you need a bank loan for? I thought you were selling those fancy vehicles.

(CONTINUED)

BRAD

Actually I haven't sold any in a month.

RAY

So how are you managing to pay for your sleep?

BRAD

I'm not. I'm down to my last three points which leaves just enough for my family tonight.

RAY

So that explains the bank loan.

BRAD

Yeah.

Ray holds up the letter.

RAY

Why did they decline it then?

Brad takes the letter back and stuffs it in his pocket.

BRAD

The bank won't let you take one if you're skipping sleep.

(looks at Ray, desperate)

Ray, I haven't slept in weeks. I've been saving my points for my family. If I can get this loan, it'll buy me more time to make this deal with this potential client which should last me at least a month.

RAY

I think I can help you out. I know this place just within walking distance where you can sleep for the night.

BRAD

Ray, I will not sleep outside a SERN registered machine.

RAY

But it'll still get you rested enough to take out that bank loan--

(CONTINUED)

BRAD

It's illegal. I'm not doing it.

RAY

Think about your family. This will be their last time to sleep.

Ray gets up from his seat.

RAY

Your loss

Ray walks away.

Brad sits and thinks.

BRAD

Ray!

Ray stops and turns around to look at Brad.

BRAD

Within walking distance?

RAY

Right around the corner.

Both get up and walk down the sidewalk with Ray.

EXT. SIDEWALK. DAY

Brad and Ray walk down sidewalk.

BRAD

It's a shame SERN has to charge so much to use those machines.

RAY

Yeah?

BRAD

The time we gain, people used to spend those hours unconscious. wasted. I can't imagine having to waste so much time. That's no way to live.

RAY

You call this living?

BRAD

I must confess, I would be better if everyone could afford sleep, but

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BRAD (cont'd)  
SERN...SERN has improved the lives  
of so many people including my  
family.

Ray observes Brad playing with his ring on his finger.

RAY  
Those Sleep Machines SERN built to  
improve our lives shattered the  
lives of millions.

BRAD  
Sleep enhancement technology offers  
us more strength  
as homo-sapiens than we've ever had  
in history. We can go for days with  
as little as 30mins of sleep in  
those machines.

RAY:  
Those 30mins gives SERN the ability  
to make us what they choose.  
They've taken away our natural  
ability to sleep, to recover on our  
own. Without sleep, we lose every  
cognitive function that makes us  
human. We can't make aspire, love,  
or make moral choices. Without  
sleep, we are not human, and  
without SERN, we don't sleep.

EXT. FONTAINE'S LAB- DAY

Ray and Brad stop at the front door.

BRAD  
Wait, I think I should call Sally.

RAY  
Make it quick.

Ray goes inside.

Brad takes out his cellphone and dials.

BRAD  
Hey Sally. I'm calling to let you  
know I'm not going to be home  
tonight. I'll be spending the night  
with Ray....to work out some of our  
plans. I'll be back tomorrow  
morning in time to take Jake to his  
baseball game. Love you.

Brad hangs up phone and enters.

INT. FONTAINE'S LAB - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ray is watching a propaganda advertisement for SERN.

Brad walks inside and watch ad with Ray.

RAY  
Fontaine's office is right down  
here.

Brad follows Ray up to the door. A Security Guard stands by the door.

GUARD  
Anything you'd like to declare?

Brad and Ray shake their heads. The security Guard pats them down. Guard lets them through.

INT. FONTAINE'S LAB - OFFICE - NIGHT

FONTAINE, a mid-aged woman, sits behind his desk drinking a glass of scotch. He sets it aside and stands up.

RAY  
I brought you another customer.

FONTAINE  
Ah I see. Take a seat.

They all sit down.

FONTAINE  
Good. You have the cash deposit  
too?

BRAD AND RAY  
Deposit?

FONTAINE  
Of course. Do you see bright  
colored balloons anywhere? Did you  
see a giant "free sleep here" sign  
when you walked in? I'm charging  
ahead of time now, this is not a  
charity!

BRAD  
If it's a matter of payment, I will  
pay you back in just a few days---

(CONTINUED)

FONTAINE:

Get out!

Ray looks a little confused, but he stops Brad.

RAY

How much do you want?

Ray sees Brad nervously playing with his ring.

RAY

How about that ring?

FONTAINE

Looks to me like its worth something.

BRAD

I will not give up my wedding ring!  
This is ridiculous. Thank you for  
this complete and utter waste of  
time.

Brad starts to leave again.

RAY

Think about your kids! How will you  
get sleep for them if you can't get  
any yourself?

Brad hesitates at the mention of his kids.

FONTAINE

If it's your kids that you're  
worried about, take my advice and  
keep the ring. Leave. Let them  
become a number on the daily death  
count. It's a new world we live in,  
and there is no place for family.

Brad is hesitant but gives the ring to Fontaine.

BRAD

It's yours.

INT. FONTAINE'S LAB - SLEEP ROOM - DAY

Brad lies on the bed. Ray hooks the machine up to Brad.

BRAD

Ray, I owe you big time.

Ray looks away.

(CONTINUED)

Brad grabs Ray's hands. Ray looks at Brad again.

BRAD

Because of you, my family has a chance now. Thank you.

Ray places an oxygen mask on Brad. Brad falls asleep.

INT. FONTAINE'S LAB - OFFICE - NIGHT

RAY

You took quite the risk asking for payment like that.

FONTAINE

It gets boring to have everything you want. When SERN made the sleep machines they realized the power it gave them over people. They realized that if you control when a person sleeps, you control their soul. We make careless, thoughtless decisions when we're most tired. Sometimes having that power isn't enough though.

Ray fiddles with his watch.

RAY

I have to admit you do seem to have everything. It's a shame though that your men don't feel the same way.

At this pulls out a stun grenade dropping it to the floor and quickly covering his eyes. Before Fontaine can react, a blinding white light fills the room followed by a deafening ring.

Three REBELS dressed in black and heavily armed rush into the room.

REBEL LEADER

Get down! On your knees!

The Rebels circle around and secure Fontaine's hands behind her back before leading her away. Brad sinks to the floor along the wall, relieved of the outcome.



EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Ray is sitting with Brad. Brad is desperately calling his wife on his phone, but she does not pick up.

RAY

And that's why I couldn't tell you about the plan. We needed someone to give us a convincing performance.

Brad hangs up the phone.

BRAD

A normal person doesn't do this.

RAY

A normal person doesn't need a machine to sleep. Obtaining Fontaine's lab gives us a chance to fight back against SERN. You were never were in any real danger.

Ray hands Brad his ring. Brad takes it from Ray.

BRAD

You do whatever you want Ray! That's what you've always done. But if you come anywhere near Sally or my kids again, I'm calling the cops on you.

Brad gets up and walks away leaving Ray alone at the bus stop. Ray looks off into the distance away from where his friend left. Then slowly he lets his head sink down. Looking at his hands, he stifles a sob.

RAY (V.O.)

A great scientist once said, Technological progress is like an axe in the hands of a pathological criminal. Taking shortcuts often come with their own price. Without the ability to sleep on our own, we lose what makes us human, our ability to love, to aspire and make moral choices. When someone controls when you sleep, they control who you are.