

# WAKING UP

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**CAST:** Two middle aged men  
SELF: dressed in gray casual clothes  
OTHER: dressed in a hooded black monk robe

**SET:** Stage is blank except for a board center stage tilted upstage on a 30 degree angle from perpendicular.

SELF is standing/reclining against the board. SELF remains with arms at sides, rigid from neck down thruout. OTHER stands in semi-darkness behind self. OTHER can walk around as director chooses.

**AT RISE,** a spotlight slowly illuminates SELF This spotlight is the only light used thruout.

[SELF awakens groggily.]

**SELF**

Now what? [pause] Is anybody there? [pause]  
Is anything anywhere?

**OTHER**

How are you? [pause] I said, how are you?

**SELF**

Lousy.

**OTHER**

Aww... Why do you always say that?

**SELF**

Why do you always ask that?

**OTHER**

It's polite.

**SELF**

You're an idiot.

**OTHER**

Do you want me to go away?

**SELF**

Is there anybody else out there?

**OTHER**

Only more idiots.

**SELF**

Oh... I remember this. It's that dream again.  
Why are we doing this again?

**OTHER**

You asked for it.

**SELF**

I didn't ask for this.

**OTHER**

You asked for answers.

**SELF**

You have answers?

**OTHER**

Some.

**SELF**

Why is it like this?

**OTHER**

Like what?

**SELF**

This. This nothing. Shouldn't there be something?

**OTHER**

What would you like there to be?

**SELF**

Something!

**OTHER**

What?

**SELF**

Some reason.

**OTHER**

For God so loved the world

**SELF**

*Don't give me that.*

**OTHER**

What would you prefer?

**SELF**

Sense. Make sense or don't bother me.

**OTHER**

What would make sense to you?

**SELF**

I don't know. That's why I'm asking you.

**OTHER**

Apparently you don't like my answer.

**SELF**

Because it doesn't make sense. God so loved the world that He'll roast your ass in hell if you don't believe in Jesus? Gimme a break.

**OTHER**

That's not how it goes.

**SELF**

*That is how it goes.* Read the fucking book. And I'm supposed to respect this guy? If it's false, he's a liar; if it's true, he's even worse.

**OTHER**

And you think the world would be a better place without that lie?

**SELF**

You admit it's a lie?

**OTHER**

No. I'm just asking if you think it's socially beneficial?

**SELF**

*Screw that!* Is it a lie or not?

**OTHER**

I said I had *some* answers.

**SELF**

Right. The easy ones.

**OTHER**

And you think you can handle the hard ones?

**SELF**

I can handle *that* one.

**OTHER**

Yes, you can. [softly] But you can't be trusted with it. You're a blabber mouth.

**SELF**

In other words, you have something to hide.

**OTHER**

I know you don't believe in parental controls. But the fact is, some people are not ready to deal with some pieces of information. It's not an adult conspiracy. It's really for the protection of the children.

**SELF**

Yeah right. That and national security.

**OTHER**

It's an easily abused argument. But we're all stuck with it. All of us.

**SELF**

What? All the way up the line?

**OTHER**

As far up as I'm aware of.

**SELF**

Doesn't that tend to make you a bit suspicious?

**OTHER**

The just shall live by faith.

**SELF**

*Wrong!* The just live by justice. Faith has nothing to do with it. You morons keep mushing the categories together.

**OTHER**

Why do the just behave justly? Huh?  
Because they have faith that it will pay off.

**SELF**

Oh. ... Well then why didn't they just say that?

**OTHER**

Unfortunately, they didn't have you to advise them.

**SELF**

Okay, but you're saying there's information being withheld from you, and you don't care. And you're holding out on us, and you want us to hold out on the kiddies?

**OTHER**

It's not exactly holding out.  
Just revealing things in the right order.

**SELF**

But what it boils down to is, you're censoring me, and telling me it's for my own good.

**OTHER**

More specifically, for the good of those around you.

**SELF**

I don't buy it.

**OTHER**

Okay. Then I assume you think you don't need such protection. Unlike the rest of us mental midgets, you can handle any truth that's out there.

**SELF**

I'm trying.

**OTHER**

Yes, you are. How are you doing? How are you feeling? How is it going? How are you? Why do you hate that question? Why don't you just say, "*Fine thank you. How are you?*" You're a miserable... neurotic... truth junkie. And you've O D'd.

**SELF**

"You shall know the truth.  
And the truth shall make you free."

**OTHER**

Oh, *that* part you believe.

**SELF**

It resonates.

**OTHER**

But the parts about patience and humility are just pious ramblings.

**SELF**

I been patient long enough. And screw humility. It's not even a virtue; it's a social ploy to hide what you really think. I do *integrity*. *That's* a virtue.

**OTHER**

You do arrogance.

**SELF**

Yes, and without apology. But I'm really big on integrity. Is there anyone in your crowd who even knows what that word means?

**OTHER**

You'd be surprised.

**SELF**

Yeah, well surprise me any time you like. Meanwhile, if you don't mind, I'd like to get the true and false part straight before we talk about attitudes.

**OTHER**

Okay. Don't say we didn't warn you. There is a certain order to the way things should be learned. If you learn things in the wrong order, it can mess you up. There's also an optimum rate of intake. You've been an indiscriminate glutton, and now you're reaping the results of it. But, if you want more, just say so.

**SELF**

Damn, I hate this shit.

**OTHER**

We're not exactly thrilled with you either. You know, you can always go back to being an atheist.

**SELF**

I wish.

**OTHER**

Do you really?

**SELF**

*Yes, goddamnit!* It was better than this.

**OTHER**

Then go ahead.

**SELF**

I can't. [pause] I know too much.

**OTHER**

And now you want to know more, don't you?

**SELF**

Yes.

**OTHER**

If you can't handle what you know, why do you want to know more?

**SELF**

I don't know.

**OTHER**

But you *want* to know, don't you?

**SELF**

*Stop it!*

**OTHER**

I'd be glad to. Stop asking questions.

**SELF**

What about, "*Seek and you shall find*"?



**OTHER**

You found it. Have a nice day.

**SELF**

*What!?*

**OTHER**

There's nothing more to find in the places you've been looking.

**SELF**

Well, where the hell should I look?

**OTHER**

Nowhere. Stop looking. Enjoy what's available. Go do your precious American dream.

**SELF**

*You cheating bastard! First you say, "Don't worry about money, just seek first the kingdom of God", so I waste my life on it, and there's nothing there. And then you say, go chase dollars, have kids, and pass on the crazy to another generation of poor dumb suckers.*

**OTHER**

You could always go back to patience and humility.

**SELF**

I did that for decades! It damn near wrecked my nerves!

**OTHER**

Ready for death?

**SELF**

*Duuh!*

**OTHER**

So you think you're ready for the next step?

**SELF**

Don't you give me that next step shit. I don't want any next. You *terminate* my ass, goddamn it!

**OTHER**

We would really prefer not to do that.

**SELF**

I don't care.

[OTHER steps into the light where SELF can see him.]

**OTHER**

But we do. That's why I'm here.

**SELF**

Protecting your investment?

**OTHER**

Among other things.

**SELF**

Who are you?

**OTHER**

Does it matter?

**SELF**

It might. You God?

**OTHER**

No.

**SELF**

Sent by God?

**OTHER**

If I said yes, would it make any difference?

**SELF**

Not really.

**OTHER**

Then it doesn't matter, does it?

**SELF**

I don't know. You tell me.

**OTHER**

Are you willing to pay the price of knowing?

**SELF**

*God damn you!*

**OTHER**

You'd like to kill me, wouldn't you?

**SELF**

Yes.

**OTHER**

Why don't you?

**SELF**

You untie me, and I'll give it a try.

**OTHER**

You're not tied.

**SELF**

I can't move.

**OTHER**

True. But you're not tied.

**SELF**

You're doing this.

**OTHER**

It really doesn't matter who is doing it. The point is, if you were not bound, you would try to kill us. You're a very dangerous animal. Still, you have the potential to be of great value. Does that begin to make sense?

**SELF**

Some. But nowhere near enough.

**OTHER**

How about this? Your life sucks because you can't do what you were designed to do. You can't do what you were designed to do because you are under restraints, because if you were not restrained, you would do, or at least say, destructive things. Also, if you recall, you asked for our guidance. Does that make enough sense for you?

**SELF**

Well isn't there some way to do this that doesn't drive me crazy?

**OTHER**

You are not being driven crazy. You are being driven sane. That's the whole point.

**SELF**

For what purpose?

[OTHER raises his eyebrows.]

Shit.

**OTHER**

Oh come now. Is Christianity really so hard to handle?

**SELF**

*Yes, goddamnit!* It's full of bullshit.

**OTHER**

Then why did you choose it?

**SELF**

[sigh] It comes closer than anything else out there.

**OTHER**

Then think of it as a game of horseshoes.

**SELF**

Oh fuck you!

**OTHER**

Well seriously folks, if you can't handle the truth, what do you expect us to do?

**SELF**

I would expect you to either make me able to handle it, or terminate my goddamn existence!

**OTHER**

We're working on that.

**SELF**

Which?

**OTHER**

Making you able to handle it. And in case you haven't noticed, we're making progress.

**SELF**

Great. So you beat the shit out of my brain, so I can live forever in idiots' heaven with a bunch of fucking assholes.

**OTHER**

There are plenty of intelligent people on our side. Some of them even understand critical thinking.

**SELF**

I know. I've met them. Spin doctors, sell outs, and sycophants.

**OTHER**

At least they're logical.

**SELF**

Sure, if you buy their premises. Garbage in; garbage out.

**OTHER**

If you wanted to communicate ultimate reality to the human race, would you not dumb it down? [pause] And if you finally came up with a system that works, flawed as it may be, would you not try to preserve it from loose cannons who think they have a divine mandate to point out how dumb it is? [pause] Especially when they have no alternative to offer?

**SELF**

The system is overdue for an upgrade.

**OTHER**

Would you like a piece of that?

**SELF**

What?

**OTHER**

I said, would you like a piece of that?

**SELF**

What do you mean?

**OTHER**

Like you haven't thought about it.

**SELF**

What? You mean write some counter bullshit like Muhammad or Joseph Smith?

**OTHER**

Oh, you know that to be bullshit, do you?

**SELF**

Well *some* of it has to be bullshit.

**OTHER**

But you don't know which, do you? And you don't claim to know what you don't know, do you? [pause] Because then you're just like all the rest of them, aren't you? And then you can't despise them, can you? [pause] Let's talk about system upgrades. Not creating another counter-system, but taking what's already there, and making sense of it.

**SELF**

Like Rudy Bultmann? That's been done too. After you make sense of it, there's no reason to believe it.

**OTHER**

Isn't there? Are you sure you've made enough sense?

**SELF**

[pause] What kind of sense are you talking about?

**OTHER**

There has been a sea change. Obedience to God used to be seen as the right way to go. Now that whole concept has taken a big hit. But it's still true, simply because atheism offers no justification for ethics. Unfortunately, the written word has been allowed to supersede your God given sense of justice and morality. And we need to cut thru all that "*My written word is better than your written word*" hogwash, because any written word, taken to its logical conclusion, is illogical to say the least.

**SELF**

What then? The pope?

**OTHER**

Heh. Good one. No seriously, you're about ready for direct communication.

**SELF**

Oh, I get ya. I'm supposed to listen to you, and you'll keep me straight.

**OTHER**

Thank you. That's flattering, but actually that sort of thing can lead to the same pitfalls. The fact is, your planet is ready for common sense morality.

**SELF**

Common sense?

**OTHER**

Yes. You have *written-word* whacos, and *voice-in-the-head* whacos, but there are no common sense whacos. Unlike the written word, it changes with the times, and unlike voices in the head, you don't have to worry about where it's coming from.

**SELF**

Then why didn't you put us onto it centuries ago?

**OTHER**

Because it only works in a democracy.

**SELF**

Oh bullshit.

**OTHER**

I'm serious. When people live under a despotic government, the majority tend to let it make their moral decisions for them. When they elect their rulers, they have to make moral judgments.

**SELF**

Athens was a democracy. But it wasn't known for morality.

**OTHER**

No, but it was known for innovative thinking. Unfortunately the majority still voted for Zeus, and Zeus was amoral. First you need voters who care about morality. Then you can trust them to figure out what exactly is moral.

**SELF**

Yeah but why do we need God for that?



**OTHER**

Well, operationally you don't, but technically it is a God given faculty, and you still need the old fear of Judgment Day for motivation. Without that, you're pigs. So. You want to help us?

**SELF**

[pause] What would it require?

**OTHER**

The kind of stuff you're good at. But it would also require a lot of restraint. We need an upgrade, not a virus.

**SELF**

What's in it for me?

[LIGHT begins to dim.]

**OTHER**

Hold that thought.

**SELF**

What? Wait a minute. Oh no. I'm waking up, aren't I?

**OTHER**

Yes, you are.

**SELF**

Shit.

Blackout.