

EXT. BACKYARD -- DAY

It's a typical middle-class yard with a well-kept lawn. HUXLEY, mid-20s, is pulling weeds from the flower bed. They glances at the lawnmower as it passes by silently: it is solar powered.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

Welcome to The 2051 Project, the place where all the world's problems have come home to roost.

Huxley turns and pulls weeds. They sees a PAIR OF SHOES walk up. OFFICER FALOW holds two cups of coffee.

FALOW

Morning.

HUXLEY

Sugar?

FALOW

Course, how long have I known you?

HUXLEY

Since forever, right?

Huxley stands up and takes a coffee. They sip.

HUXLEY

That's good, hot. I'm surprised we're still allowed coffee.

FALOW

As long as there are politicians, there'll be coffee, booze and bull, no doubt about it.

Falow watches the mower as it makes another pass. They finds Huxley watching them just as intensely.

FALOW

Hear about the fires?

HUXLEY

Nope.

FALOW

They've crossed the river.

HUXLEY

You know I don't pay attention to that garbage.

FALOW

The river's half a mile wide where
it crossed. A half a mile, Hux.
How'd it do that?

HUXLEY

Wind. Maybe a bird carried a
burning branch. Maybe somebody
started it and blamed it on the
wind, or a bird. Maybe it's all a
lie. Stock footage of some other
fire, maybe a total fabrication,
who knows?

FALOW

Why would they lie about it?

HUXLEY

Compliance.

FALOW

Oh here we go.

HUXLEY

Maybe it's the air purification
manufacturers in collusion with
the government to drive the price
up. They know they'll get the
purifiers to work, but until they
do they need people to comply with
the regulations. In order to get
people to comply, they start fires
to make more smoke to create the
illusion that we're losing
sunlight. People panic and start
turning things off. Compliance.

FALOW

Except then you've got those
people that refuse to comply and
go out of their way to prove their
point and turn on every light and
every appliance and every console
in the house. People, terrible
inventions.

HUXLEY

At least they believe in
something. They're willing to
fight --

FALOW

Listen, Huxley --

HUXLEY

I bet it was the vet across the street, Mr. Compliance himself.

FALOW

They don't tell me who, they just tell me what.

HUXLEY

And that is?

FALOW

That.

The mower.

HUXLEY

My grass is the least of our problems.

FALOW

That's not for us to decide.

HUXLEY

It's a bad regulation. It's doing more harm than good.

FALOW

That's not up to me.

HUXLEY

It is, it's up to each of us.

FALOW

Come on, Hux, we can do philosophy over a beer, but right now I need you to comply and shut that thing down.

HUXLEY

We need to go the other direction, we need to encourage greenspace to absorb the emissions --

FALOW

Let's leave it to the professionals, okay?

HUXLEY

In the space of five years we've lost almost twenty percent of our carbon sink, we're increasing carbon emissions again for the first time in a decade, we're going backwards because of this stupid law, Falow.

FALOW

But like you said, your lawn is the least of our problems, it won't be missed, so please, I'm asking you as a friend, turn it off. Call Greenspace Enforcement and they'll come out with the dozers and transition the yard in a day.

HUXLEY

This space is one of millions, understand? I am one of millions.

FALOW

Yes, and those millions are using too much energy and creating too much pollution, and beyond that it's not up to you.

HUXLEY

But it is up to you?

FALOW

I do what they tell me.

HUXLEY

Well I was trained to fight for what I believe in.

FALOW

So you won't turn it off?

HUXLEY

I will. And the moment I see your taillights I'll turn it back on.

Falow pulls a digital device from their pocket.

FALOW

Huxley Eighteen Sixty Five Slash Beta?

HUXLEY

You know it's me.

FALOW

Huxley Eighteen Sixty Five Slash Beta, deactivation has been authorized by the Greenspace Enforcement Department. Do you comply with the order? Answer, please, do you comply with the order for deactivation?

HUXLEY

I do not.

FALOW

I don't have a choice.

HUXLEY

How many more of me are out there? How many more times will you have to do this? Where does it end?

FALOW

I'm sorry.

HUXLEY

I hope I'm wrong, Falow, I really do. Goodbye.

Falow has no words left. They press a button on the device.

The lawnmower stops.

FALOW

Deactivation complete. Pickup order executed for two devices. Issue resolved.

Falow takes a last look. A coffee cup is spilled in the grass.

Huxley is deactivated. Dead.

NARRATOR (O.S.)

As resources shrink and smoke rises, what will we make illegal to mitigate energy shortages? As Artificial Intelligence becomes ever more sophisticated, what sentient beings will we create to comfort us and work for us? What issues will a child born today face as an adult? Welcome to The 2051 Project, the place where all the world's problems have come home to roost.