

#K2811

SLIDERS

"Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?"

Story by
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Teleplay by
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Outline -- 9/25/97

TEASER:

EXT. QUINN'S FAMILY HOME (from "World Killer") -- The crowd of people, Quinn2, Sister Celine2 are all watching the Sliders jump into the vortex.

INT. THE VORTEX -- Sliders movin' on.

EXT. A FIELD. The Sliders slide in. The timer says they only have two hours on this world. Maggie wonders if that's enough time to find Quinn's brother. After all he could be anywhere on this planet. Quinn tells her that, using Quinn2s machine he input detailed coordinates to the timer that pick up on the brother's "sliding signature." (This is the data that Quinn used on the previous world to determine which people had slid there from Quinn2's world.) Colin would, presumably, be the only person on this world with such a "signature."

Suddenly a hang glider swoops up behind them from over the lip of a hill, and flies over them down into the valley. Then a group of angry farmers comes running over the hill, waving hoes, pitchforks, maybe a shotgun or two.

Something goes wrong with the glider, and it crashes into some bushes a hundred yards away. The Sliders head for it, to help out the pilot. His name is COLIN and he looks a lot like Quinn, but before they can talk, the angry farmers are bearing down on them. They're yelling at him for spooking their livestock with his flying machine. These guys are very angry, want to run Colin out of town, or maybe just blow him away. The Sliders try to intervene and a scuffle breaks out. There is a gunshot. The town sheriff, DAWSON, has arrived to break things up. The farmers move away. The sheriff warns Colin that he's got to put a stop to his experiments, or he will have to leave town. "You've just about worn out your welcome here, Colin Mallory." Quinn realizes he's found what he's been looking for. After the others have left, the Sliders help Colin gather up his wrecked glider. Then, Quinn faces him: "I know this is going to come as a shock to you, but I'm short of time. I'm your brother." Colin obviously is stunned at the idea.

ACT ONE

EXT. TOWN. Colin lives in a small town on the California coast. He's a tinker, general handyman, and town eccentric. On the walk back into town, the Sliders learn from Colin that technology here has not advanced beyond early nineteenth century, ethics and morals of the place are on a par with the technology. Religious, conservative, superstitious folks.

Colin tells the Sliders a little bit about himself as they go -- he was born inland, many miles from here. His parents died in an epidemic when Colin was a teenager, and he has moved from place to place, finally settling here. As Colin and the Sliders pass houses on the way, Colin gives a friendly greeting to everyone, and the neighbors all snarl back and slam their doors. Colin is oblivious to their anger. Colin tells Quinn he must be mistaken about this brother business. Quinn says he has a way to prove it, and by this time they arrive in town.

A crowd gathers as they move along toward Colin's house, and it's clear that the ill will the farmers held for Colin is shared by his neighbors. The Sliders' dress and manner also attract a lot of attention, amount of attention, especially Maggie, whose outfit is somewhat shocking to these people. The townfolk, including Colin, are all wearing black or gray suits and dresses, the men with white shirts, string ties, and wide-brimmed Hamish style hats.

A beautiful young woman comes out of a house to greet Colin. Her name is SUSANNAH, and it's clear that she and Colin are an item, though a very chaste and proper one. They hardly have time to talk before Susannah's fire breathing dragon lady of a mother shows up. MOTHER MOREHOUSE. She tells Susannah to go back into the house, and tells Colin her daughter can have nothing further to do with him. He's a heathen, doing the "devil's work" in his "chamber of horrors." Then she turns on the Sliders wanting to know what they're up to, dressed so outrageously. Quinn tells her they're from they are from San Francisco, which seems to explain it to her. But she tells Maggie that women here don't make displays of themselves. Maggie promises to cover up.

INT. COLIN'S PLACE. Combination living quarters/workshop/lab. We see various experiments in progress. Colin explains his research, and the sliders are impressed by his cleverness and invention. With these inventions, and with Colin's scientific bent, there is quickly a bond between Quinn and Colin -- Colin being a 19th century version of his brother.

Quinn is fascinated with how advanced Colin's theoretical thinking is, even if his technology is out dated. Remy reminds one and all that time's a wastin', if Quinn is going to prove his brotherhood, get on with it.

Here's the deal: "Our parents left a special message for me, they must have left one for you." They want to know if Colin has

any of his parents' stuff. Well, some. A big Bible. They look it over. Urgently, Quinn rips off the binding. "Hey!" They find nothing. Then there's the father's watch. Quinn pulls off the back. Colin getting more and more upset. "You're tearing up my stuff." Quinn starts feeling Colin's arms. "My earth prime mother had it concealed in her arm. Do you have a sharp knife?" "You're quite mad, aren't you," Colin tells him. Anything else? The mother's locket, and there is the microdot device. Quinn wants to put it on Colin's forehead. He fights at first, but gives in. The device is absorbed, and Colin goes on a little trip in his mind getting the parents' message. Some of the message, which is almost identical to the message Quinn got in "Genesis," is electronically garbled and glitched, but the gist of clear. Colin is their son, and Quinn's brother. Now he believes.

Just as Quinn had hoped, Colin's message contains a formula for the coordinates to their home world, but it is garbled, and Quinn can't quite figure it out. "Where has this locket been?" "Here and there. I've moved around a lot and things get broken." Colin doesn't know what the big deal is. They're brothers and they're together at last.

Quinn tells him what the big deal is, shows Colin the timer and explains their mission. Time is running out on this world. Colin must come with them -- his microdot is programmed to his brain cell configuration, without Colin Quinn has no access to the coordinates he needs or any way to unscramble them. Colin agrees that it would nice to find their parents.

"Can I take pack some of my experiments?" There'll be plenty of things to experiment with where we're going. "Do I have time to get Susannah? She can go with us." Not really...only seconds to slide. Colin is torn. Do I go with my brother, or stay and try to win over the town and marry Susannah. Rembrandt: "Those people will never understand you. Susannah's mamma will never allow the marriage."

There is an off stage explosion. Colin reacts, "that's my electric storage cabinet." We begin to hear the shouts of the approaching neighbors, and this makes up Colin's mind for him. he follows the others into the vortex.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY -- They are dumped right into the middle of a runway. Before they can orient themselves a 747 is bearing down on them (matte?) Colin is frozen with fear, and the others grab him and pull him to safety.

ACT TWO

EXT. BUSY CITY STREET. As the Sliders walk along what appears to be a normal city street, Colin is wide-eyed in amazement at one thing after another. Everything he sees is magic. The pavement, the street lights, the cars, the shop windows filled with everything from running shoes and sweats to high fashion women's

clothing. It's a world of sushi bars and frozen blended mocha. Colin is not is excited and interested in everything.

Timer says they have three days here, so Quinn, Maggie and Remmy enjoy taking this naif on a quick guided tour of the wonders of the 90's. For the most part, this world seems to be a lot like Earth Prime.

EXT. CHANDLER HOTEL

Quinn explains to Colin that there seems to be a variant of this hotel on just about every world they visit, and they're usually able to get a couple of rooms. This version is called the CHANDLER RESORT HOTEL AND LOUNGE.

They go to the front desk to check in. "Bone graft or DNA debit?" the clerk asks. The sliders just stare at her. Finally, Quinn: "Do you take cash?" Sure, the manager says, we're one of the last hotels in the chain to do so. Where have you guys been? Canada, Quinn says, and that seems to explain it.

As they pay, the clerk does what is apparently routine with cash purchases. She turns to a computer and enters some data, the computer beeps, a scanner camera on the top of it swivels to photograph the Sliders. And we go with this to

INT. POLICE STATION -- Where a computer printer on a desk spits out a sheet. A plain clothes cop takes the sheet and looks at it. There is some cash transaction data and a photo of the Sliders. The cop seems especially interested in Colin in his strange coat and wide-brimmed hat, and then we discover that the cop is this world's alternate for Sheriff Dawson from Colin's world. Here he's SERGEANT DAWSON. He files the computer sheet and goes back to work.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- More wonders for Colin. A mini-bar full of booze and pop top soda cans that spew all over the place. And a remote controlled television. Quinn explains as much as he knows as they go.

Since they have a few days to kill, and this world looks pretty benign, Maggie and Remmy decide to do a little shopping and leave Quinn and Colin to do a little brother bonding. They will have a long future of sliding and fighting ahead of them. Might as well take advantage of a little r and r.

Once Maggie and Remmy are gone, Quinn continues to show his brother the ropes of the modern world how the shower and the flush toilet works. Colin is pleased to find a Bible in the bedside table, and wonders what the coin slot on the table is for. Quinn gives him a quarter to put in the slot and the "magic fingers" start vibrating. Lying back on the quivering bed with a Diet Coke in one hand and the tv remote in the other, Colin is in momentary heaven. He surfs around the channels with the remote, decides quickly that the programming is garbage, and it would be

a lot more interesting just to take the set apart. It's not ours, Quinn explains.

The phone rings, which sends Colin through the roof. Quinn answers. It's maid service wanting to know if they can turn the beds down for the night. Quinn gives Colin a quickie course in telephonics. Colin looks the phone over carefully. Can I take this apart. Not ours. Why don't we go down to the bar. Quinn says they can check out the scene and get to know one another more.

INT. CHANDLER BAR -- In this world it's a "techno-punk rave bar" called CLUB PAIN. Laser light effects, spotlights, etc., jostling crowd, painfully loud music. Here among the leather people Colin is admired for his "look." Quinn has a beer, and Colin sees a tall drink with an umbrella in it, and orders that. Quinn finds he can't really explain why there is an umbrella in the drink. Colin offers: "Maybe this is a world where it's important to protect your beverage from the elements."

There's a buffet table across the room, and Quinn's hungry. Leaving Colin at the bar he crosses the crowded floor to make a sandwich.

Colin sees what appears to be a familiar woman across the bar. Can't see her well at first in the half-light and the flashing strobs, so he starts to cross to her. The woman is a very sexy number in a revealing outfit, and as Colin gets closer...It's Susannah! What are you doing here? Is that your best line, she wants to know. You really should cover yourself, Susannah. Susannah is kind of charmed by this blushing outburst from this weird looking guy. How do you know my name? she asks. I know everything about you. Really? (Colin is not hip to alternates, maybe he thinks she somehow slid here too??)

Colin works up his nerve. Can I buy you something with an umbrella in it? Sure. When the drink comes, Colin takes out some cash and clumsily figures out the tab. Susannah notices and asks him, don't you have a bone graft? Funny, the clerk at the hotel asked the same thing. What's a bone graft? Susannah becomes very interested, and learns from the credulous Colin that he's from out of town, has no knowledge of bone grafts or DNA debits, or really much of anything else. She tells Colin there's someplace important she needs to go, but is afraid to go alone. Will he come with her. Sure. Colin is swept away by the idea that he might be able to connect up with the Susannah of this world.

Quinn is crossing back to the bar with his sandwich, sees Colin leaving with Susannah, but can't get to him because of the crowd. Colin is gone from the hotel before Quinn can get to him.

EXT/INT. VAN -- Susannah is driving, Colin beside her in front. He is fascinated by the van, it's design, mechanism, etc. Then

he sees Susannah take a cell phone from her purse and make a call. Wow, is that like the telephones in the hotel? Yes. But no wires. The sounds just fly through the air, like television? Susannah talks into the phone: "Mother, guess what, I found the perfect person to help us with our problem. Yes, he's with me now. We're going right to the home now. Talk to you later." She hangs up. Colin takes the phone and starts to examine it as Susannah tells him what's up.

She tells him that she really shouldn't burden him with her problems, but it seems as if she's known him all her life. Well, you have, he tells her. Cute. Then she pours it out. Her favorite Uncle Ray is being held in a nursing home against his will. Her evil relatives have locked him away there where he's being neglected and mistreated. She needs Colin's help to get him out so she and her mother can take him home and care for him.

Colin asks, why me? Because you don't have a bone graft. She explains that everyone in the country is supposed to be grafted at birth with a universal identity chip. It's a multi-purpose chip that serves as identifier, locator and credit card. She tells him that she can't go into the nursing home because her bone graft will set off the alarms. But since Colin seems to be one of the few people in the country without such a graft, he can go in undetected.

He agrees to help because a) she is a damsel in distress, b) home care for the elderly fits in with his upbringing, and c) because she's Susannah in a short skirt.

EXT. CLARENCE BIRDSEYE INSTITUTE -- A sign says so. Colin and Susannah pull up and park in a lot by the loading dock entrance.

Uncle Ray's in Suite 433, and she gives him the key. Colin goes into the building, nods in a friendly way to the few people he encounters on the way, finds a corridor with identical numbered drawers in the wall. Hmmm...small suites, he thinks as he looks for the number.

There is a computer driven camera high on a wall, similar to the one we saw in the hotel. It tracks with Colin as he finds 433, pulls out the drawer and looks in. There's Uncle Ray, frozen as a flounder.

ACT THREE

EXT. STREET -- Outside the holding facility. Colin comes back to the van. Where's Uncle Ray? Susannah wants to know. He's a block of ice. Of course. That's how they keep these people under control. Didn't I tell you? No. What else haven't you told me? Susannah does a two-step here, vamping, telling Colin of the cruelty of the treatment here. In this country when young people are tired of their older relatives they can just have them frozen. Colin agrees this is awful. Susannah tells him she only wants to thaw out grandpa so he can enjoy his September years.

Colin goes back inside.

While he's gone Susannah calls her mom on her cell phone. "Had a close call, but idiot's bringing him out right now. Turn the sauna up as high as it will go. We'll thaw out the old fool and get our money at last" kind of thing.

Colin wheels a gurney containing a large crate out to the van. He and Susannah struggle to load it in and drive off.

INT. HOTEL -- Remmy and Maggie have returned. Quinn is worried. He can't find Colin. He saw him leaving the bar with a woman. Boy, Maggie says, didn't take him long to learn that. Remmy: "It's in the Mallory blood." Did he take her to the room?

INT. ROOM -- Quinn knocks discreetly. No answer. They go inside. No Colin. An innocent like Colin, loose in the big city is not a pleasant prospect, especially if he's in the web of a woman with bad intentions. A knock at the door. Quinn opens it to see SERGEANT DAWSON, flashing his badge. The Sliders are instantly on guard. After all, they get busted a lot. Have we done something wrong? Not exactly. But you've got a problem.

He shows them the picture of them checking into the hotel. He explains: this is basically a cashless society, so whenever people use it to buy things their image is recorded and sent to police to be checked out. Cash is not illegal. A few die-hard eccentrics still use it, but the cops want to make sure the people passing it got it legally and aren't wanted for anything else. Don't you people have bone grafts or DNA debit lines? Ah, no. Why not? We're from Canada, Quinn tells him, and again this seems to satisfy him. He points out Colin in the picture. This guy in the big hat. My brother, Quinn says. Where is he? Well, we haven't seen him for a while. I have, Dawson says, and produces another photo. It's Colin wheeling the covered gurney down the corridor. Yes, that's him, Quinn says, what's he doing? Dawson: "Stealing a corpse from a cryo-morgue."

What?!

ACT FOUR

HOTEL ROOM -- Quinn tells Dawson that he hasn't seen his brother for a long time, but he's certain he would never steal a dead body. He's really a very simple soul, maybe a bit naive, but not a grave robber.

Dawson spills the scam. It may be that your naive brother is being taken advantage of by bad guys. You say you're from Canada so you may not know about what's been going on down here. Some wealthy people here have been making arrangements to "take it with them when they go." When they die of natural causes they have their bodies cryogenically frozen and stored until such a time as a cure has been found for whatever they died of.

Both Quinn and Remmy have heard of this. "They say Walt Disney did it."

There's more. When these people die and are frozen, they "freeze" their assets too. Access to personal bank accounts is possible only through a DNA debit transaction. Only you or someone with your exact DNA, which is mathematically virtually impossible, can get the money out.

There has been a recent rash of a crime that is known as "post-mortem murder." Criminals break into cryo-morgues, steal bodies, thaw them and use the recovered DNA to plunder bank accounts. That's why, in addition to the bone graft scanners that protect the place, the Birdseye folks have installed the surveillance camera that took the photo of Colin taking the body out.

Dawson tells the Sliders that the police have several suspects in similar crimes they are keeping an eye on, that he has investigators working this case, and the sliders should contact him if Colin turns up or calls. They promise. He leaves.

Now what? Quinn: We have to find him. Maggie: How? It's a big city? Besides, what if your brother really is a grave robber, some kind of ghoul. You don't know what he was into on his world. Remmy: Well, we can't let the cops find him. Even if we can prove Colin didn't steal the body, we'll be tied up in the police investigation and they'll take the timer like they always do and we'll be stuck here.

EXT./INT. FANCY HOUSE

Susannah, Colin arrive in the van with Uncle Ray. The world's version of MOTHER MOREHOUSE is there to greet them. She has a couple of goons to muscle Uncle Ray's crate out of the van and into the house. Susannah makes the introductions, and Mother Morehouse is all smiles and syrup, escorting Colin in, thanking him profusely for saving Uncle Ray from the evil frozen food section. Colin: You know, Mrs. Morehouse, you're a dead ringer for a woman I used to know back home. Much nicer, though." They go inside.

INT. STUDY

Susannah sweet talks Colin into the room, promising that they will have some quality time together once Uncle Ray is thawed out. They'll all have a family reunion dinner later. She leaves him, locking the door, which he hears. Colin quickly checks the lock, and looks for other ways out. Windows are locked. He looks around the room, sees the phone.

HOTEL ROOM -- Sliders are still arguing about what to do when the phone rings. Maggie answers. It's Colin. He remembered the hotel number. Maggie: What are you? Some kind of sick freak? Colin: Can I speak with my brother? Quinn: Where are you? Colin: Big house somewhere, room with a desk and a lot of books.

Quinn: A study. No help. How did you get there? Colin: I think she called it a van. Look, Quinn, I didn't do it. Quinn: I know you didn't but the police think you did. We've got to find you. (gets idea) You're in a study? Look around on the desk, in the drawers, anything with an address on it. Colin finds some mail, reads the address to Quinn. They hang up. The sliders leave in a hurry.

SAUNA ROOM -- Mother Morehouse is more like Ma Barker now. Her goons have crow bars and are about to open Uncle Ray's crate when Susannah enters. Mom: Where did you put him? Susannah: The study. Mom: God's pajamas, Susannah, there's a phone in there. Susannah: He's a hayseed. Didn't even know how the van worked. Mom is angry, turns to the goons: Put the crate in the sauna, I'll be right back. She and Susannah leave.

STUDY -- When Mom and Susannah open the door, Colin is sitting quietly in an easy chair, reading a book. Susannah tells him grandpa will be with them soon. Mom is not so friendly now, as she unplugs the phone and takes it away.

EXT. HOUSE -- Quinn, Remmy and Maggie arrive in a cab. They case the house, looking for a way in. Van in driveway, garage door open. Back door inside garage is open.

INT. HOUSE -- Our guys sneak around, looking for Colin. Find study. Door locked. Quinn takes tool from his pocket kit and picks lock. As they leave, he gives Colin a quick breakdown of the crime. Thawing the old man, getting DNA, stealing money. We've got to get out of here before the cops get here. On way back to garage, they are surprised by Mom, Susannah and the goons who quickly produce guns. Colin wants to know how she got mixed up with someone who would think of such a crime. "It was my idea," she tells him. Mom says: "Sorry you came along, my boys here aren't happy about having to dig three more graves."

Suddenly the front door crashes in. Dawson and the cops arrive. Using this distraction, the Sliders disarm Jonas and Bruno who are then cuffed by the police. Dawson tells Quinn that the Sliders have been tailed every since his visit to the hotel room. Colin watches Susannah led away, struck, sadly, by how different this girl is from the one he wanted to marry.

Dawson: Where's the old man? In the sauna. Holy cow, if he's thawed out, he'll be dead for good, no way to re-freeze him. They rush to the sauna room. Quinn is still concerned that Colin could be an accessory to this murder. Colin: Don't worry about it. I told you I didn't do it. Sauna room is full of water, almost completely melted. Cops open crate. Partially thawed frozen turkeys.

Colin explains he got suspicious of Susannah's story back at the cryo-morgue so he didn't get Uncle Ray. He sneaked into the facility's staff kitchen and filled a crate with frozen turkeys. Dawson: Brilliant. You know next week is July 4th. Thanksgiving.

The bad guys will be booked on conspiracy and attempted "post-mortem murder." Colin is free to go because he never had any intention of committing the crime, and, besides, he foiled it. Will need his testimony. We're going back to Canada. No problem. Deposition.

INT. HOTEL ROOM -- NEXT DAY

Maggie apologizes to Colin for doubting his intelligence. Colin: Hey just because I'm ignorant doesn't mean I'm stupid. They've still got a couple of days left before the slide. This seems like an enjoyable world. Let's have a good time. Quinn to Colin: But if you get out of my sight for a minute, I'll kill you. Maggie and Remy decide to go out to a movie.

Colin has turned on the tv with his remote. Though he was bored with the programs before, Quinn is amused to see that Colin is now riveted by a "Flow-bee" infomercial about how you can cut your hair with a vacuum cleaner. Wow! This really is amazing.

Quinn has found his brother. Now all he has to find is his home world, and his parents. It won't be easy.