

= The Day We Died =

" The Day We Died " is the third season finale of the Fox science fiction drama television series *Fringe* . It is the season 's 22nd episode and the series ' 65th episode overall . The finale follows the aftermath of Peter Bishop entering and activating the doomsday device , events which took place in the previous episode . He finds himself 15 years in the future ; though the device has destroyed the parallel universe , his universe is nevertheless gradually disintegrating . Peter comes to realize the background of the doomsday device and wakes up in 2011 . After getting the two universes to agree to work together , he inexplicably disappears .

The episode 's teleplay was co @-@ written by Jeff Pinkner and J.H. Wyman , while Pinkner and Wyman co @-@ wrote the story with consulting producer Akiva Goldsman . Executive producer Joe Chappelle served as director . The writers wrote the script without knowing if the series was going to be renewed for a fourth season ; Fox 's renewal announcement came in late March , but no changes were made to the storyline . They designed the episode as a set @-@ up for the following season , equating it to a book chapter that " propels " the reader forward . Unlike previous season finales , " The Day We Died " was one hour long and was linked to the previous two episodes in one continuous story arc . " The Day We Died " featured one @-@ time guest actors Brad Dourif and Emily Meade .

" The Day We Died " aired on May 6 , 2011 in the United States to an estimated 3 @.@ 0 million viewers , though this number almost doubled once time @-@ shifted views were taken into account . While its 1 @.@ 4 ratings share among adults 18 to 49 was an eight percent decrease from the previous episode , it helped Fox tie for first place that night . Reviews of the episode have been generally positive , with many critics writing that Peter 's disappearance was a good direction for the series . Multiple reviewers ranked it as one of the best episodes of the television season , including *The Futon Critic* and *TV.com*. The cast were also receptive to the episode , and actor John Noble submitted his performance for consideration at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards .

= = Plot = =

From the previous episode , Peter (Joshua Jackson) has stepped into the doomsday device to attempt to stop it after Walternate (John Noble) had activated the version in the parallel universe . He regains consciousness in the future , after a singularity appears near the One World Trade Center .

In 2026 , the prime universe is suffering from the same singularities that have already destroyed the parallel universe , as a result of the two universes being inextricably linked together . Though the *Fringe* Division that developed in this universe has been able to use amber to contain these vortices , a group called the " End of Days " , led by a man named Moreau (Brad Dourif) , attempts to breach the fabric of reality at soft spots and create more vortices . After one such incident at a theater , Peter and Olivia (Anna Torv) , now married , along with Astrid (Jasika Nicole) and Ella (Emily Meade) , Olivia 's niece and now a rookie *Fringe* agent , find an unactivated container that they believe the End of Days used to trigger the breach . *Fringe* is unable to determine how the container works , and Peter convinces Broyles (Lance Reddick) , now a senator , to allow him to release his father Walter (Noble) , currently in maximum security prison as punishment for activating the doomsday device , to help identify its workings .

After tearfully reuniting with his son and new daughter @-@ in @-@ law , Walter discovers the device uses a unique radioactive signature that they can track . The strongest source points to a used campground , where Peter discovers a key . He recognizes the key as from Walter 's old home near Reiden Lake and travels there alone , and finds his biological father , Walternate , present . Walternate admits to being behind the End of Days group , as his revenge for Peter activating the doomsday device and destroying the parallel world that was his home . Walternate promises that Peter will face the same pain and suffering he has faced since crossing to the prime universe on a mission of mercy , one piece at a time . Peter realizes that Walternate is implying a threat to Olivia , and finds that Walternate was speaking to him remotely through a holographic simulation . In

Central Park , where Moreau has set off another breach to expose an existing wormhole , Olivia is helping to cordon off the breach when Walternate approaches and shoots her . Peter and the rest of Fringe division struggle with her death at her funeral .

Walter continues to study the Central Park wormhole and discovers that it links to the past , approximately 250 million years ago . He comes to realize a temporal paradox (a Bootstrap paradox) : he will have sent the doomsday device piece by piece into the past , effectively becoming the " First People " mythos , and convinces Peter that they can influence Peter in the past by having him experience the end of days himself and make a different decision when he enters the machine .

Peter suddenly wakes up to find himself in the machine in 2011 , only one minute since he entered it , and Olivia waiting by his side ; concurrently , in the parallel universe , Walternate attempts to convince Fauxlivia to help stop the machine . Peter recalls the memories from the future , and uses the machine to merge the machine rooms from both universes into one thus creating a bridge . While Olivia and Walter and their doppelgangers stare each other down , Peter convinces the two sides to work together to try to repair the damage to save both universes , then suddenly disappears . The Olivias and Walters cautiously agree that they need to put aside their differences to save both worlds , apparently unaware of Peter 's disappearance . Outside on Liberty Island in the prime universe , the Observers watch as September (Michael Cerveris) notes to December (Eugene Lipinski) that Peter has already been forgotten by his friends , his purpose having been served , and explains that Peter now never existed .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting = = =

Despite the show not yet being officially renewed for a fourth season , Fringe began casting in mid @-@ March for a " green FBI agent ... to come aboard for the finale and possibly recur next year " , as reported by E ! Online . TVLine 's Michael Ausiello announced later in the month that actress Emily Meade has been cast for the role , describing her character as " a wide @-@ eyed and eager rookie who ? s ready to face all of the challenges in front of her " , and that she would make her first appearance in the finale . In the months leading up to the finale , Wyman responded to reports the character would be recurring by calling her casting more of a " safety net " ; much like Seth Gabel 's casting , he did not want to commit himself to her character yet , saying , " We always protect ourselves by saying that because you never know " . The actress was later revealed to be playing a grown up version of Olivia 's niece , Ella .

Another casting call for the finale was released , as the show began looking for a " well @-@ known male Japanese actor in his late 40s to late 50s who speaks English " to appear as a new character called " Moreau " . Despite the casting call 's description , they later cast American actor Brad Dourif for the part . On whether Dourif would be returning , executive producer J.H. Wyman commented in a May 2011 interview , " Brad is such a fantastic actor . We are keeping our options open " .

= = = Writing = = =

Co @-@ showrunners Jeff Pinkner and J.H. Wyman co @-@ wrote the episode 's teleplay , while Pinkner , Wyman , and consulting producer Akiva Goldsman co @-@ wrote the story . Executive producer Joe Chappelle served as director . A full season renewal of Fringe was announced on March 24 , 2011 . They had written the finale without knowing if there would be another season , but decided not to make any changes to the script even after hearing of its renewal . Pinkner explained that " we wrote the episode , perhaps foolishly , assuming that we would be on for Season 4 . We never for one second entertained that it would be the end of the series . So therefore , we didn 't have to change a word ! " In an interview with the New York Post , Pinkner warned that events in the finale will " unfurl in a very unexpected way for the characters and the audience " . He also commented that the finale " hopefully will make you sort of revisit and look at everything that 's

happened all year through a fresh pair of glasses " .

Pinkner stated in another interview that it " will be as much as anything about setting up next season , " and Wyman agreed , writing " It ' s like when you read a great novel and you finish a chapter , you ' re like , ' Oh my gosh , something happened that ' s going to propel me forward ! ' That ' s something we desire to emulate . " In March 2011 , Pinkner confirmed with TVLine that unlike previous Fringe season finales , the third season 's finale would not be two hours long . He did however note that " the last three episodes will be linked in one continuous story arc . "

The cast was receptive to the finale storyline . In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , actor John Noble noted he liked how the story ultimately ended with having the two Walters " perhaps negotiate a truce and put their minds together " through a " very inventive intervention by Peter , who basically took control of destiny and forced his two fathers to look each other in the eye , as if telling them : Sort it out , gentlemen . ' " He later noted , " We finish [the finale] in a very dramatic place . " Joshua Jackson praised the role @-@ reversal of his character with Walter 's , " You had Peter wracked with guilt over the circumstances tied to the decision he made [to activate The First People 's so @-@ called " doomsday " machine] and clinging to hope that there might be some way out . I can ' t have made a cosmically bad decision ! There must be some way to put this right ! Which is fascinating , because that ' s basically been Walter for as long as we ' ve known him . So I loved how Peter ceases to be so stubborn when it comes to Walter , comes to understand him and even begins to see things the way he does . "

The finale contained a new , grey credit sequence that was meant to reflect the new timeline . It contained new scientific words such as " Thought Extraction " and " Dual Maternity " , as well as " Water " and " Hope " . Wyman explained their reasoning for the change , " [The credits] weren ' t so much pertinent to the finale but for the introduction of the future of the show . In the past , we used words in the credit sequence as signposts for the episode . But this is a new paradigm . "

After the finale aired , Pinkner stated in an interview that " one of the things we love to play with is the notion of choice versus fate / synchronicity . Clearly , what Peter did at the end of that episode is that he fundamentally changed the future . Our team is [now] on a separate path . It is unlikely that we ' ll get to that specific outcome in 2026 . But are events like what happened in Detroit inevitable in any version of the future ? TBD . "

== Marketing ==

Leading up to the episode 's broadcast , Fox released a promotional trailer that recapped relevant scenes and previewed events in the finale . Fox had previously produced similar trailers for " Entrada " , " Marionette " , and " Bloodline " , three episodes from earlier in the season . As with other Fringe episodes , Fox released a science lesson plan in collaboration with Science Olympiad for grade school children , focusing on the science seen in " The Day We Died " , with the intention of having " students learn about reverse engineering and disassembling devices . "

== Reception ==

== Ratings ==

The finale first aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 6 , 2011 . It was watched by an estimated 3 @. @ 0 million viewers . It scored a 1 @. @ 2 / 4 ratings share among viewers 18 ? 49 , an 8 percent decrease from the previous week 's episode . The finale and its lead @-@ in , Kitchen Nightmares , did however help Fox tie for first place in that demographic with ABC and CBS . The rating for this episode almost doubled when DVR time shifted viewing was taken into account . Because of its comparatively low live ratings , SFScope columnist Sarah Stegall speculated that only " the core of the core audience " watched the episode , as " no outsiders could have possibly fathomed what went on in that 45 minutes . "

== Reviews ==

" The Day We Died " has generally received positive reviews from television critics . Sam McPherson from TV Overmind graded the finale with an A , writing " From a show known for its mindbending episodes came the most mindbending episode of all . ' The Day We Died ' ... not only reinvigorated the show 's fantastic (but inevitably aging) premise , but gave the show a breath of life that has me waiting -- no , begging -- for the show 's fourth season . " Though he wouldn't call the finale the best Fringe episode yet , McPherson referred to the season as the best of the three and " probably the best season of television that 's aired in recent years " . Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker lauded the finale , commenting in his review 's conclusion " Consider about the whole arc of this season and tell me this wasn't one of the most moving , thrilling , funny , inspiring chunks of television you've watched . The performances by Noble , Torv , and Jackson were extraordinarily adroit , never showy or merely clever . I was so glad that , by season 's end , Jackson / Peter had once again taken center stage ' a central importance ' to a season that , by the nature of its design , needed to concentrate a lot on Walter (s) and Olivia (s) . "

IGN 's regular Fringe reviewer Ramsey Isler rated the episode 8 / 10 . He compared the plot to Lost , remarking " Apparently one thoroughly confusing and unnecessarily convoluted TV series wasn't enough ... But hey , I understand why J.J. and his Fringe collaborators ... might have done this . They had kind of written themselves into a corner where one of the universes had to go , and they couldn't stretch that storyline out forever . A restart like this is a good way to allow themselves room to write something new , even if it may require some clever thinking to explain themselves out of this situation adequately . " Isler had trouble rating the finale , noting that he had to see how the events are explained in the fourth season before he can make a complete judgment .

Noel Murray from The A.V. Club graded the finale with a B + ; he praised the writers " for once again introducing a new world that feels fully formed , with its own rich backstory that they could choose to explore if they have the time and the inclination . " Murray concluded his review , " It may be that Fringe has bitten off more than it can chew here , and the storytelling is about to get hopelessly convoluted , as it often does once time @-@ travel enters the picture . But for now , I'm going to enjoy living with and thinking over what I've seen so far . And I'm going to trust that no matter how crazy Fringe 's fourth season gets , the writers are going to keep bringing everything back to less mind @-@ bending questions " . Some reviewers questioned the logic of Peter having never existed , though others expressed their trust in the writers ' ability to make it work .

The Futon Critic and TV.com staff highlighted " The Day We Died " as one of the best television episodes of the 2010-11 United States network television schedule . Likewise , Give Me My Remote contributor Marisa Rothman ranked " The Day We Died " one of the best episodes of the year , explaining " Between Walter 's eventual reunion with his loved ones and Olivia 's tragic demise , few episodes were as heartbreaking as ' The Day We Died ' ... not to mention , no episode shocked me as much with a plot twist . (I literally bolted up in my seat when Peter vanished into thin air after creating a bridge between the universes .) " Entertainment Weekly included the episode 's ending in their list of television 's best cliffhangers of 2011 , and later named it the sixteenth best episode of the series . Time gave " The Day We Died " an honorable mention on their list of the best episodes of the season .

== Awards and nominations ==

At the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards , John Noble submitted " The Day We Died " , along with " Entrada " and " The Firefly " , for consideration in the Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Drama Series category , but did not receive a nomination . At the 2012 Golden Reel Awards , " The Day We Died " received nominations in the categories " Best Sound Editing : Short Form Sound Effects and Foley in Television " and " Best Sound Editing : Short Form Sound Effects and Foley in Television " from the Motion Picture Sound Editors . It lost in both categories , the former to the Raising Hope episode " Prodigy " , the latter to the pilot episode of the HBO television series Game of Thrones .