

= Pilot (Fringe) =

The pilot episode of the television series Fringe premiered on the Fox network on September 9 , 2008 . The pilot was written by series creators J.J. Abrams , Alex Kurtzman , and Roberto Orci , and directed by Alex Graves . The episode introduces the character Olivia Dunham , portrayed by Anna Torv , an FBI special agent drawn into the world of applied fringe science . John Noble portrays Dr. Walter Bishop , a scientist formerly incarcerated in a mental institution for over seventeen years . Joshua Jackson plays his son , Peter , who is hired by Olivia to assist with Walter 's work .

Although the pilot was set in and around Boston , filming occurred in Toronto , Canada . The episode cost \$ 10 million to produce , making it one of the most expensive pilots in television history . The pilot was leaked online three months prior to its broadcast on television . There was speculation that it was leaked deliberately to increase interest in the program ; however , this was denied by executive producer Bryan Burk . The episode was generally well received by critics , and was watched by 9 @. @ 13 million American viewers on its premiere . It is noted that the pilot is actually two episodes , running together for 81 minutes and counted as only one (episode) by the creators and fans .

= = Plot = =

A man on an international flight injects himself with an insulin pen , which releases a biological agent that quickly kills everyone aboard by causing their flesh to crystallize . The airplane 's autopilot system lands the plane at Boston 's Logan Airport , where various federal agencies create a task force to investigate what occurred during the flight . F.B.I. Special Agent Olivia Dunham (Torv) and her partner , Agent Scott (Mark Valley) , are together in bed at a motel , where Scott says that he loves her . Dunham receives a call from her boss Charlie Francis (Kirk Acevedo) , who tells her to head to the airport . Dunham is added to the interagency task force headed by Phillip Broyles (Lance Reddick) .

Following a tip , Dunham and Scott are sent to a storage facility where they uncover a biochemical laboratory , which explodes when detonated by a suspect they are chasing . Scott is affected by the chemicals released in the explosion , and is placed into an artificial coma to slow the progression of the chemical reaction . While investigating a possible cure to Scott 's condition , Dunham blackmails Peter Bishop (Jackson) to gain access to his father Dr. Walter Bishop (John Noble) , whose top @- @ secret work at Harvard in " fringe science " resulted in him being sent to a mental institution . Dunham manages to release Walter from the institution ; however , he becomes enraged when he discovers his laboratory in Harvard has been shut down . Broyles reopens the laboratory , where Dunham transfers Scott 's body . To identify the man from the storage facility , Walter synchronizes Dunham 's brainwaves with the comatose Scott 's so that she can read his mind . Walter claims that syncing brainwaves , and even reanimating the dead , can be accomplished up to six hours after death . With the help of Dunham 's assistant , federal agent Astrid Farnsworth (Jasika Nicole) , the experiment succeeds . Dunham identifies the man in Scott 's memory , Morgan Steig , as a passenger on the plane . The team learns Steig 's twin brother , Richard Steig , was an employee of Massive Dynamic , a company founded by William Bell , Walter 's old lab partner .

Dunham goes to Massive Dynamic headquarters and meets with executive director Nina Sharp (Blair Brown) , who agrees to give her all the information on Steig . The suspect is arrested and initially refuses to provide a list of the ingredients present in the toxin , but Peter 's threat of exposing him to the chemicals causes him to reveal the ingredients . The information provides a cure for Scott . The suspect reveals that he did not sell his chemicals , but was forced into what he did by someone from Dunham 's office . The suspect leads Dunham to a buried tape recording of his phone conversations about the chemicals and the attack , where Dunham realizes that Scott was involved with the attack from the beginning . While she races back to the hospital , Scott awakens and kills the suspect . He is chased by Dunham , but crashes his car and is mortally wounded . Before he dies , Scott asks Dunham why Broyles would send her to investigate the storage units in the first place . Dunham convinces the Bishops to stay and help her with her new work , which

Broyles describes as a task force to investigate events related to " the pattern " . Elsewhere , Scott 's dead body is brought to a Massive Dynamic high @-@ tech lab , where Sharp orders that Scott be interrogated , since he has only been dead for five hours .

= = Production = =

Co @-@ creator J.J. Abrams ' inspiration for Fringe came from a range of sources , including the writings of Michael Crichton , the Ken Russell film *Altered States* , and the television series *The X @-@ Files* and *The Twilight Zone* . The specific story for Fringe was developed during long conversations between series creators Abrams , Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman . The team was discussing several different options , and the idea behind Fringe appealed to them most because it contained a long @-@ term story and characters ' backstories which were not " evident but alluded to in the pilot " . The team spent a lot of time thinking about the " trifecta of characters " that they needed to have in the series , and why there were uniquely interesting . The creators decided on the idea of a father @-@ son story because it was compelling and accessible , " you don 't necessarily have to know anything about science , because everyone has a parent and everyone has issues with a parent . And I think for us it 's always about coming into it through character " . Orci stated that the series is a combination of a procedural and an " extremely serialized and very culty " series , quoting as examples of each , *Law & Order* and *Lost* .

The first actors cast in the pilot were Kirk Acevedo and Mark Valley in mid January 2008 . John Noble and Lance Reddick were next to be cast , although it was incorrectly believed that Tomas Arana had been cast in Reddick 's role . This was followed by the casting of Anna Torv , Blair Brown and Jasika Nicole . Abrams said that Torv was cast because she was a combination of " sophistication , great talent , amazing looks and a complexity that is the key to the character being an interesting central character " . Kurtzman felt that she was someone " you want to spend time with " , which was critical to a series about science . Joshua Jackson was the last series regular to be cast . Jackson auditioned for the role of James T. Kirk in Abrams ' *Star Trek* and believed this is what impressed the producer to cast him in his television project . According to Abrams , Jackson 's casting was " very last minute " .

While the pilot was set in and around Boston , production was set in Toronto , Canada . The episode cost \$ 10 million to produce , making it one of the most expensive pilots in television history . Following the pilot 's filming , production for the series moved to New York . The producers were forced to hire a new cow for the remainder of the season because they were not allowed to travel the original cow from Canada to New York . Production team members noted that they were prepared to paint new cows if viewers noted the differences in spots .

Three months prior to its broadcast , an incomplete version of the pilot was released through BitTorrent clients , fueling speculation that it was leaked deliberately to increase interest in the program . Executive producer Burk denied the claims , saying that " we hate putting anything out there until it 's done , and that 's really the reason why you guys didn 't get any advance copies " . Abrams said that while the production crew " freaked out " about the leak , he was pleased that the " response has been much more positive than not , especially for something that wasn 't completed yet " . The broadcast version of the pilot had new scenes added while other scenes were removed ; Abrams also said that there was " tightening and moving some moments here and there " , and the ending was entirely different . Burk also stated that the composer , Michael Giacchino , had not finished his score at the time of the leak , and the most of the featured music was temp music . A variation of a piece of Giacchino 's music called " Hollywood and Vines " used in the pilot was originally featured on *Lost* , as it was created for that show , also created by Abrams .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Pilot " was watched by 9 @. @ 13 million American viewers , with ratings improving over the course of the episode . The episode garnered a 3 @. @ 2 / 9 Nielsen ratings in the key 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ old demographic , and was the 12th most watched series of the week . The 3 @. @ 2 refers to 3 @. @ 2 % of all people of ages 18 ? 49 years old in the U.S. , and the 9 refers to 9 % of all people of ages 18 ? 49 years old watching television at the time of the broadcast in the U.S. The pilot officially premiered at the 2008 Television Critics Association tour , where it received mixed to positive reviews from critics .

= = = Reviews = = =

Metacritic gave the episode a Metascore ? a weighted average based on the impressions of a select 25 critical reviews ? of 67 , signifying generally favorable reviews . Barry Garron of Hollywood Reporter found it promising because " it is reminiscent of better @- @ of @- @ the @- @ sexes charm " . USA Today 's Robert Bianco said , " what Abrams brings to Fringe is a director 's eye for plot and pace , a fan 's love of sci @- @ fi excitement , and a story @- @ teller 's gift for investing absurd events with real emotions and relatable characters . " Travis Fickett of IGN gave the pilot 7 @. @ 6 out of 10 , calling it " a lackluster pilot that promises to be a pretty good series " . Tim Goodman of San Francisco Chronicle remarked that despite " some flaws in it ? mostly from a clash of tones ? it still overdelivers on creativity , creepiness , fine acting and burgeoning character development " . Chicago Sun @- @ Times ' Misha Davenport called it an " update of The X @- @ Files with the addition of terrorism and the office of Homeland Security .

John Doyle of The Globe and Mail called the pilot " splendidly made " . However , Doyle considered the instance of Torv stripping to a bikini " indulgent " , and questioned the wisdom of making " her body an object of scrutiny " in the first episode . Matthew Gilbert of Boston Globe wrote that " after the electrifying start , Fringe unfolds as an uneven , unwieldy piece of work that provides very few chills and thrills " . LA Weekly 's Robert Abele found Fringe is " a smorgasbord of a show , but one a little too synthetically engineered to allow you the chance to discover what it is " . John Leonard of New York was skeptical of the premise and storyline , but found Torv " wonderfully played " her character . Heather Havrilesky of Salon.com felt the plot was too over @- @ the @- @ top , and described Abrams as " the ultimate boyish idiot @- @ savant imaginator ... He can 't exercise a little self @- @ restraint " .

The pilot episode was negatively received by the conservative " family values " advocacy group Parents Television Council , who named the show the worst of the week and denounced the " excessive violence and gore " .