

= Black and Blue (Homicide : Life on the Street) =

" Black and Blue " is the third episode of the second season of the American police drama television series Homicide : Life on the Street , and the twelfth overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 20 , 1994 . In the episode , Pembleton aggressively investigates what he believes to be a police @-@ related shooting . Amid pressure from Gee to pursue civilian suspects , Pembleton elicits a successful confession from an innocent man , leaving Gee feeling conflicted . Directed by Chris Menaul , the episode 's teleplay was written by James Yoshimura based on a story by series executive producer Tom Fontana .

Yoshimura considered " Black and Blue " the favorite script he wrote for Homicide . Pembleton 's investigation was based on a real @-@ life investigation into a suspicious shooting featured in David Simon 's non @-@ fiction book Homicide : A Year on the Killing Streets , on which the Homicide series was based . However , fictional elements like Howard 's romantic interest in the perpetrator were added so more cast members could be part of the story . Detectives from the Baltimore Police Department wrote a letter of formal protest to executive producer Barry Levinson over the negative portrayal of police in the episode .

" Black and Blue " featured Julianna Margulies as a waitress who befriends Bolander and Isaiah Washington as an innocent man who Pembleton tricks into confessing to murder . Mel Proctor , home team sports announcer for the Washington Bullets , also reprised his recurring role as reporter Grant Besser . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode was seen by 10 @.@ 83 million household viewers , a drop from the previous episode " See No Evil " . It received generally positive reviews , with critics particularly praising the performance of Andre Braugher .

= = Plot summary = =

Pembleton (Andre Braugher) continues his investigation into the shooting death of small @-@ time drug peddler Charles Courtland Cox , who he suspects was killed by police during a botched crackhouse raid . As the involved police officers turn over their guns for testing , the press reports heavily on the story , which results in pressure from the department heads to solve the case . Pembleton aggressively questions several officers , but none are cooperative . Gee (Yaphet Kotto) is angry with Pembleton 's focus on the police and demands civilian suspects be pursued . Howard (Melissa Leo) and Bayliss (Kyle Secor) canvas the neighborhood of the shooting and find most residents do not trust the police , who they feel are responsible for the death of one of their own . However , one woman named Dale (June Thorne) tells Bayliss her grandson , Lane Staley (Isaiah Washington) witnessed the shooting . Staley is brought in to the station for questioning and , while Pembleton plans to question him as an eyewitness , Gee demands he be treated as a suspect .

Frustrated that Gee refuses to consider the possibility of a police shooting , Pembleton assures him he will get a confession out of Staley , whether he did it or not . Pembleton starts the interrogation calm and polite , but gradually becomes angrier , frightening Staley . Pembleton makes him feel responsible for allowing Cox to be at the crackhouse , and uses that guilt to break Staley down and confess , even though he is obviously innocent . Pembleton gives the confession to Gee , who is conflicted , especially when Pembleton compares it to past police practices of white detectives getting confessions from black suspects no matter what the cost . Ultimately , Gee tears up the confession and instead visits Staley at jail . Staley admits to Gee that Lt. Jimmy Tyron (Michael S. Kennedy) shot Cox in the back without warning while Cox was running away . Pembleton and Bayliss arrest Tyron at his home , where they confiscate a gun and bullets that appear to match those used against Cox . The arrest deeply saddens Howard , who had previously had an affair with Tyron . The affair ended because Tyron was married with children , but Howard continues to harbor romantic feelings for him .

Meanwhile , in a B story , Munch (Richard Belzer) repeatedly and loudly declares his love for his girlfriend Felicia , much to the annoyance of his lonely partner Bolander (Ned Beatty) . The two confiscate a live tropical fish from the murder scene of a dead drug dealer . Upon learning it will not be used as evidence , Munch decides to give it as a gift to Felicia , who loves fish . However , she

breaks up with Munch after the fish , a Jack Dempsey , ends up eating all her other fish . The now lonely Munch turns to Bolander for comfort , but finds the tables have turned and that Bolander has met a local waitress named Linda (Julianna Margulies) . The two get along very well and bond over their mutual love of music . The episode ends with Linda and Bolander getting together to play music : Linda plays the violin , while Bolander plays the cello .

= = Production = =

" Black and Blue " was written by James Yoshimura and directed by series executive producer Tom Fontana . Like the other three second season episodes , the script was already finished by the time the first season ended , but due to poor Nielsen ratings throughout the duration of the show , NBC executives asked for several refinements ? including fewer episode subplots and less camera movements and jump cuts ? before approving a second season . Although Yoshimura continued working on Homicide throughout the entire life of the show , he considered " Black and Blue " his favorite script . Braugher also complimented the writing , particularly during the interrogation scene with his character :

" I didn 't dare judge my character before I did that scene . Andre Braugher doesn 't judge Frank Pembleton about being right or wrong . It 's a way for me to remain blessedly free of conscience . But for me the beauty of that scene was that we really dared to get into it . Typically in TV shows we skim over the edges of issues like water spiders , spouting platitudes and spouting unearned ' clarifying ' emotions . But there were no violins strumming in ' Black and Blue ' . "

Pembleton 's investigation of fellow police officers for a suspicious shooting was based on a real @-@ life investigation chronicled in David Simon 's 1991 non @-@ fiction book Homicide : A Year on the Killing Streets , from which the Homicide series was adapted . Baltimore Police Department Detective Donald Worden , on whom the Bolander character is based , handled the actual real @-@ life investigation in 1988 . However , Howard 's affair with the perpetrator was not part of the real @-@ life incident , but rather was added by Yoshimura as part of the show 's efforts to ensure as many detectives were personally involved in the storylines as possible . Several members of the Baltimore Police Department publicly criticized Homicide for its negative portrayal of the police in the episode , and 22 detectives wrote a formal letter of protest to executive producer Barry Levinson over the matter . Cellist Zuill Bailey served as a body double for Ned Beatty in the scenes with Bolander playing cello . Bailey was studying at Baltimore 's Peabody Conservatory at the time , and his appearance on Homicide led to further collaborations with Tom Fontana , including a recurring guest appearance for Bailey on Fontana 's drama series Oz .

The episode featured guest appearances by Isaiah Washington , who went on to play Preston Burke on the medical drama series Grey 's Anatomy , and Julianna Margulies , who started her long @-@ running lead role as nurse Carol Hathaway on the medical drama series ER a few months after " Black and Blue " aired . She was cast in the part after having worked with Fontana on the unaired pilot of Philly Heat , an ABC miniseries he worked on about members of the Philadelphia Fire Department . Fontana offered Margulies a recurring role on Homicide , but she turned it down in favor of ER . Michael S. Kennedy , an actor from Richmond , Texas , reprised his role of Lt. Jimmy Tyron from the previous episode , " See No Evil " . A struggling actor , Kennedy received a call from a casting director he knew , in the middle of an all @-@ night Virginia Beach shoot for a small role in Assault at West Point : The Court @-@ Martial of Johnson Whittaker , giving him one day 's notice of the audition for Homicide . He so enjoyed working on the show that he wrote a Homicide script himself , with the Tyron character playing a major part , although it was ultimately never used . " Black and Blue " also featured the second of five guest appearances by Mel Proctor , then the home team sports announcer for the Washington Bullets , as Grant Besser , a recurring reporter character in Homicide .

The songs " Slow Fire " by Just Like Jane , and " Up on the Roof " by Gerry Goffin and Carole King , were featured in " Black and Blue " . During the final scene , Bolander and Linda perform a movement of " Passacaglia " , a classical music song composed by George Frideric Handel .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

While the season premiere episode , " Bop Gun " , opened with an extremely high rating due to a guest appearance by Robin Williams , the ratings had declined since then and Tom Fontana said a future decision about whether Homicide would be renewed depended heavily on the ratings performance of " Black and Blue " : " I hope the numbers level off now . This Thursday night is do @-@ or @-@ die . It will tell the tale . " In its original American broadcast on January 20 , 1994 , the episode was watched by 10 @.@ 83 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research , earning the episode an 11 @.@ 5 rating . That constituted a drop from the previous week 's episode , " See No Evil " , which was seen by 12 @.@ 53 million households . Although a drop from the previous episode , " Bop Gun " , which drew 16 @.@ 3 million household viewers and was the 31st highest @-@ rated show of the week . " Black and Blue " was the 47th highest rated show the week it aired , tying with the CBS drama series Picket Fences and the ABC comedy series Thea .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Black and Blue " received generally positive reviews , with critics particularly praising the performance of Andre Braugher . David P. Kalat , author of Homicide : Life on the Street - The Unofficial Companion , praised the script of " Black and Blue " , writing : " Yoshimura has written some of the series ' most memorable installments , but the scene of Pembleton extracting a ' confession ' from an innocent man is one of his greatest achievements . " Kalat also complimented the performance by Margulies , who he said " exhibits the same charm and charisma that made her a star on ER " . Kinney Littlefield of The Orange County Register praised Braugher , particularly during the " excruciating " interrogation scene , and wrote , " Unbelievably , ' Black and Blue ' didn 't earn Braugher an Emmy nomination . " Greg Paeth of Scripps Howard News Service called it an " exceptional cop drama " and complimented the dramatic tension between Pembleton and Gee . Chicago Sun @-@ Times writer Lon Grahne gave the episode four stars and said " Anyone who likes NYPD Blue should give Homicide a try . "

Tom Shales of The Washington Post strongly praised both " Black and Blue " and " See No Evil " in part because they showcased Braugher , who he called the finest actor in the ensemble cast . Shales said : " Braugher manages to be utterly compelling whether slamming doors and throwing chairs , reducing a murder suspect to quivering tears , having furious arguments with Lt. Giardello (rock @-@ solid Yaphet Kotto) or simply lurking about . " The Baltimore Sun writer David Bianculli called it a superb episode with a " lyrical , beautiful climax " , praising the Braugher 's performance , particularly during the intense interrogation scene with Isaiah Washington . " Black and Blue " " was among a 1999 Court TV marathon of the top 15 Homicide episodes , as voted on by 20 @,@ 000 visitors to the channels website .

= = DVD release = =

" Black and Blue " and the rest of the first and second season episodes were included in the four @-@ DVD box @-@ set " Homicide : Life on the Street : The Complete Seasons 1 & 2 " , which was released by A & E Home Video on May 27 , 2003 for \$ 69 @.@ 95 .