

= Amber 31422 =

" Amber 31422 " is the fifth episode of the third season of the American science fiction drama television series *Fringe* . It first aired on November 4 , 2010 in the United States . The third season spent its time alternating between the prime and parallel universes , and " Amber 31422 " was set in the latter . Olivia , still trapped in the Other Side and brainwashed , investigates the Rose brothers , who are able to do the seemingly impossible : escape from an amber @-@ like substance used to contain fringe events .

The episode was written by Josh Singer and Ethan Gross , and directed by David Straiton . An estimated 4 @.@ 97 million viewers watched " Amber 31422 " , which up to that point were the lowest ratings of the season . Critics were generally positive , and many praised the cast 's performances as well as the Rose brothers ' storyline .

= = Plot = =

Olivia is still trapped in the parallel universe , under Walternate 's ( a doppelgänger of Walter Bishop ) conditioning to believe she is her doppelgänger from Over There and part of its *Fringe* team . Throughout the episode , she willingly participates in Walternate 's tests in a sensory @-@ deprivation tank located on Liberty Island to stimulate her Cortexiphan abilities . One test is successful , as she temporarily finds herself in a gift shop on Liberty Island in the prime universe . Meanwhile , hallucinations of FBI consultant and colleague Peter continue to bother Olivia .

The *Fringe* team is alerted to an incident at a quarantine site , where the amber encasing the site has been cut into and a body has been removed . They identify the missing body as Joshua Rose , a former bank robber . Joshua had previously caught *Fringe* Division 's attention as he used a molecular destabilization device to break into banks , triggering quarantine @-@ level events . Colonel Broyles is privately cautioned by Walternate that those trapped in amber are still alive , a fact he does not want to be made public for fear of their outcry . Broyles relays this to his team , requesting they find Rose and bring him in as quickly as possible .

At Joshua 's apartment , they discover he has a twin brother Matthew and equipment used for a negative matter ring . Their investigation is cut short as they are forced to evacuate from a rigged bomb which destroys the apartment as they flee . Lee and Francis were unable to hear the bomb , but Olivia could , possibly indicating that she retains the enhanced hearing demonstrated in " Night of Desirable Objects . " They travel to Matthew 's home in the suburbs , meeting the brother , his wife , and their children . Matthew professes to no knowledge of the location of his brother . Olivia is suspicious of Matthew 's behavior but does not explore further . Olivia 's suspicion is shown to be correct as Matthew is revealed to have been the one trapped in the amber , having tried to come warn his brother about the quarantine . Joshua , having posed as Matthew for the last few years , was the one that freed him and spoke to *Fringe* . The brothers switch places again when Olivia requests a more detailed identity check from Matthew , which he passes successfully .

Believing Joshua will attempt another break @-@ in but will avoid putting innocents in danger , Olivia has *Fringe* Division statistician Astrid identify three remotely located banks and decides to investigate them . Olivia finds the bank that Joshua has targeted and discovers his device in a subway tunnel , but he knocks her out before she can investigate further . As he energizes the molecular destabilizer , *Fringe* Division detects the event and converges on the bank . Matthew eventually finds Joshua , again trying to warn him off , but quickly realizes Joshua has purposely entered the bank to be trapped in the amber . Joshua believes this to be the only way to force the *Fringe* team to end their investigation . Matthew escapes the quarantine while *Fringe* agents Charlie and Lincoln rescue Olivia in time before the amber sets in . Olivia returns to Matthew the next day and confirms the case is closed , but not before collecting a skin sample that , should she ever need it , conclusively proves that it was Matthew in the amber before .

As the episode ends , Olivia 's hallucination of Peter points out to her that there is a way to tell if she is from the prime universe : by confirming her memories of her niece Ella , who did not survive birth in the parallel universe . During Olivia 's final test in the tank , she is again able to cross over to

the gift shop in the prime universe . She is able to recall Ella 's phone number and calls her , but is brought back to the parallel universe shortly after Ella answers . As she is removed from the tank , she lies , telling Walternate the test did not work .

= = Production = =

Co @-@ executive producer Josh Singer and story editor Ethan Gross co @-@ wrote the episode , while David Straiton served as the director . The third season spent its time alternating between the prime and parallel universes , and " Amber 31422 " was set in the latter .

" Amber 31422 " was the first project guest actors and brothers Shawn Ashmore and Aaron Ashmore had worked on together in fifteen years . Shawn said in an interview that " it ? s usually because the stuff that came along is kind of hokey , but I think the quality of Fringe is really high and the episode is done well and our characters are intelligent . We ? re going to have some fun . " Holly Dignard guest starred as Danielle Rose , while recurring guest actors Amy Madigan and Ryan McDonald returned as Marilyn Dunham and Brandon Fayette , respectively . Seth Gabel and former series regular Kirk Acevedo reprised their characters Lincoln Lee and Charlie Francis , Fringe Division agents from the Other Side .

The episode was scheduled to air three weeks after the previous episode , as the Major League Baseball playoffs were underway until November 11 at the latest , though the lack of a sixth and seventh game at the World Series allowed the episode to air a week earlier , on November 4 . 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 " Amber 31422 " , with the intention of having " students learn about the process of fossilization and identification of species from incomplete information . "

= = Cultural references = =

In the parallel universe , Lincoln Lee mentions that it was Cary Grant , and not Humphrey Bogart , who starred in The Maltese Falcon . After Olivia arrives late to a crime scene , Lincoln chides her for driving on the " Nixon Parkway , " a reference to former president Richard Nixon . The tank Walternate uses to submerge Olivia has been noted by some critics to closely resemble a similar device in the 1980 science fiction film Altered States , which also starred Fringe actress Blair Brown . Walternate tells Broyles he first began the amber protocol on October 17 , 1989 , which was the same day as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in our side 's San Francisco Bay region .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Amber 31422 " was watched by an estimated 4 @.@ 97 million viewers in the United States . The episode had a season low rating of 1 @.@ 8 / 5 among viewers 18 ? 49 , which was down 10 % from the previous episode that aired on October 14 . Between Fringe and its lead @-@ in show Bones , Fox finished in third place for the night . The Fringe episode 's low ratings have been attributed by critics to the unexpected end to the 2010 World Series , which caused Fringe to air a week earlier than expected . Den of Geek columnist Billy Grifter attributed the low ratings to the parallel universe focus , commenting " if you weren 't a fan beforehand , you 'll not be able to follow what 's going on now . For those of us that did step onto the Fringe elevator early , it 's a great ride , but I can see that it 's a difficult proposition to attract new viewers . " Time shifted viewing increased the episode 's ratings by 44 percent among adults , resulting in a rise from 1 @.@ 8 to 2 @.@ 6 .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mostly positive reviews from television critics . Noel Murray of A.V. Club graded the episode with a B- , explaining that " after four solid weeks of good @-@ to @-@ great episodes , Fringe delivered its first semi @-@ dud of season three " because the case @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week was " dull " and " twistless " , and the dialogue was " too flat and too earnest " . Despite this , Murray thought the episode was " essential viewing " for Fringe fans due to certain revelations , such as how people are actually alive in the amber , and also because it moved the plot closer to an Olivia @-@ Altivia confrontation . Conversely , the Los Angeles Times ' Andrew Hanson thought it was a good episode , writing " This is what I love about Fringe . Not only do they have the cool science , they also have the moral questions that go along " . Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly thought the episode was " enthralling , " and he enjoyed the brothers ' " nice emotional story , " and praised Anna Torv 's acting . TV Squad reviewer Jason Hughes enjoyed the parallel universe , and in particular the character of Lincoln Lee , believing he was " too rich a character to just abandon " once the series stopped alternating between universes .

Fearnet 's Alyse Wax wrote , " I definitely think that this was the best " over there " episode they have had so far . They had an actual case , rather than still setting up who these doppelgangers are . " HitFix writer Ryan McGee thought the initial twist over the brothers ' identities " was fun " , though it " grew old quickly " . He praised the series for not " dragging out " Olivia discovering her true identity , explaining " While episodes set Over There are delicious fun , having Olivia unaware for a long stretch would have strained credibility and perhaps damaged audience opinion of her character 's integrity . " Writing for Den of Geek , Billy Grifter commented , " I have three words for the latest Fringe episode , and they 're all ' brilliant ' . Season three has moved gracefully , like a big cat stalking its prey , from the outset , playing a flipside game where we cleverly alternate between our universe and an alternate one where Olivia is currently resident . " Grifter praised the Ashmore brothers ' acting as well as their characters ' storylines , calling their switch " a nice twist that 's cleverly played " .