

= Bad Dreams ( Fringe ) =

" Bad Dreams " is the 17th episode of the first season of the American science fiction drama television series Fringe . It was written and directed by Academy Award @-@ winning screenwriter Akiva Goldsman , his first writing credit for a television show . In the episode , Olivia dreams she is causing people to either kill others or themselves , which leads her to meet Nick Lane , a man from her past that leads Olivia to discover their shared history as test subjects in a series of childhood drug trials .

The episode first aired on April 21 , 2009 in the United States on Fox to more than 9 @.@ 89 million viewers . It received generally positive reviews , with many critics praising the beginning dream sequence , the climax atop the building , and the final scene with Walter and the old footage of Olivia . Critics also enjoyed the further revelations about Olivia 's background ; the subject would later have an entire episode devoted to it in the third season .

= = Plot = =

Olivia ( Anna Torv ) dreams that she pushes a woman in front of a subway train at Grand Central Terminal , but assumes it was just in her head . In the morning however , the news reports that the woman killed herself with the train . Walter ( John Noble ) puts forth various theories , such as astral projection , while Peter ( Joshua Jackson ) thinks it was still just a dream . Olivia is unconvinced , and goes with the Fringe team to investigate . An NYPD officer ( April Grace ) escorts them to the crime scene , and Peter sees a red balloon floating and begins to believe her , as Olivia had described the balloon to him previously .

Olivia worries it will happen again , and though she attempts to ward off sleep , she next dreams that she helps a woman murder her husband at a restaurant . They interview the wife , who tells them she became so convinced her husband was going to leave her that she became angry and stabbed him . The team posits that while no one is actually causing the incidents , they are happening as Olivia has seen them . At the restaurant , the owner tells them a blond man with a scar named Nick Lane ( David Call ) was sitting in the same place as Olivia was in her dream , and was also seen in the video surveillance from the first crime scene . Walter posits that because she never sees him in her dreams , it was Lane , not Olivia , causing the people 's deaths . Olivia and Peter interview doctors at St. Jude 's Mental Hospital , who tell them Lane was a voluntary resident , but left after the visit of a mysterious man . The doctor described him as hyperemotive , meaning those near him adopt his emotions . Olivia and Peter soon learn that as a child , Lane was treated with the nootropic drug Cortexiphan in drug trials , and believes himself to be a recruit in the upcoming war between the two universes .

Walter tells Olivia that she may have been in the same drug trials as Lane , and that the bond they share stems from Walter and William Bell ( Leonard Nimoy ) pairing up the children in the " buddy system " . To find Lane , Walter uses this bond , putting Olivia under the effect of drugs so she experiences Lane 's emotions . She sees Lane sleep with a stripper , who then is influenced to kill herself in a mirror of Lane 's depressed thoughts ; afterwards , Olivia discovers where Lane lives . While they explore his apartment , a suicidal Lane walks down a sidewalk , influencing others to mirror his emotions , so that they follow him to the top of a building . Because of her past in the trials , Walter believes Olivia won 't be influenced by these suicidal thoughts , and she goes to encounter Lane alone . While Olivia does not remember him , he remembers her and the nickname he gave her : " Olive . " Olivia wounds him , breaking his mind @-@ control over the others , and he is placed in a medically @-@ induced longterm coma to control his emotions .

The episode ends with Walter watching a video of Olivia as a child , apparently taken while she was being administered Cortexiphan . Walter 's voice is heard on the tape , as is William Bell 's . Both are trying to calm little Olivia while she sits , huddled amidst a debris @-@ strewn room of equipment . It becomes clear Olivia has caused this chaos in Walter and Bell 's lab , presumably with her Cortexiphan @-@ induced abilities .

## == Production ==

The episode was written and directed by Academy Award @-@ winning screenwriter Akiva Goldsman . Goldsman was " attracted " to the series because he believed that at the time , Fringe 's " mythology was already really starting to hum " . " Bad Dreams " was his first writing credit for a television episode , and he wrote several hours of material before co @-@ executive producer Jeff Pinkner helped him condense it . Every episode since " Bad Dreams " , Goldsman has been credited as a consulting producer . It marked the first episode with previous Fringe director Brad Anderson now also credited as a producer .

The opening scene in the subway was initially going to be on top of a building so that the episode would begin and end the same , but co @-@ creator J.J. Abrams thought it would be better to start it underground and " move up throughout the episode " . The episode began the setup of Olivia 's backstory by revealing the Cortexiphan drug trials , which would be an ongoing plot point in continuing episodes . All the shots were chosen carefully to put the viewer in Olivia 's troubled frame of mind , and consequently the episode had many tight shots that were meant to give a " sense of unease " . The producers felt that shooting on the lab set was the " hardest set to shoot at on the planet " because it contained several levels that inhibited the crew 's ability to move cameras around . As Goldsman had an aversion to shooting in hospitals , they used a church for the mental hospital scenes . When Olivia , Peter , and Walter are en route to the climax at the building , the shots of them in the SUV were just shots of them driving back and forth on the 59th Street Bridge .

The climatic scene where Olivia encounters Nick and the group of people at the top of the building was shot at 902 Broadway in Manhattan . Though the actors appeared to be on the edge of a very tall building , there was in fact a hidden roof extending out that they would have fallen on instead . The visual and special effects departments worked in conjunction to simulate the woman jumping off the building . While the actress simply jumped onto a tarp several feet below her , the crew rigged the car with pneumatic rams , air cannons , and cables to implode under the " weight " of her body , and then CGI was used to make the woman appear to fall on the car .

Actress Anna Torv called the episode 's hotel scene her favorite of the show so far , explaining " I loved shooting that because it was the first time that Olivia really inched her way into that dynamic of Peter and Walter . She ? s been kind of on the outside , and wrangling them constantly , but this gave me a glimpse into realizing everything is a little bit entwined , and building more of that emotional conflict between them . I really loved shooting that . "

The final scene of the episode ended with a tape of a young Olivia in a fire @-@ damaged room , leading to rumors her character was a fire starter . Torv however discounted this soon after , explaining " I think it 's more than that ... I think what they got given or what they got taught is much bigger than just starting fire " . Jeff Pinkner agreed and elaborated further , " We saw the consequence . We saw that she started a fire at the end of the last episode , but I think it 's a mistake to assume that that 's her power . I think the truth is , it 's probably a consequence of her ability " . This particular scene , as well as the episode 's reference to experiments Walter performed on children , comprise the main plot of the season three episode " Subject 13 " .

## == Reception ==

### === Ratings ===

The episode was watched by more than 9 @.@ 89 million viewers in the United States , with a 5 @.@ 9 / 9 rating among all households .

### === Reviews ===

Noel Murray from A.V. Club graded the episode with an A- ; he praised the " fine job " of director / writer Akiva Goldsman , and thought the climax was " extraordinarily well @-@ shot and performed "

. IGN 's Ramsey Isler rated the episode 9 @. @ 2 / 10 , writing that it " is a classic example of a story you have to be patient with . This was an episode with a compelling , shocking start that kept us hooked well enough to deal with some slow points in the rest of the first half @-@ hour . But we were rewarded for our patience with one heck of a climax and epilogue . This was well @-@ executed TV " . Andrew Hanson from the Los Angeles Times thought that while the first half wasn 't very exciting , the second half had " plenty to keep up interest " as more was revealed about Olivia and Walter 's backgrounds .

Rhee Dee of Pinkraygun.com liked the scenes depicting Olivia and Broyles ' relationship , as well as the revelations behind the experimentation on a young Olivia , and thought the Fox promos made the episode look much lamer than it actually was. io9 's Annalee Newitz loved the " great , creepy " opening scene , the arc concerning Walter 's past experimentation on children , and the " well @-@ played , funny and strange " scene when " Olivia " goes to the strip club . Though a bit disappointed with the " conspiracy " story , Sfscope.com 's Sarah Stegall nevertheless called the episode " well @-@ crafted , " enjoyed the Peter @-@ Olivia moments , praised Torv 's performance , and said Akiva Goldsman " gave us an episode built like a slow fuse : tightly wound , coiling out of sight , and finishing big .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Director @-@ writer Akiva Goldsman submitted the episode for consideration in the Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series category at the 61st Primetime Emmy Awards , but did not receive a nomination .