

= Sacrament (Millennium) =

" ' Sacrament " is the fifteenth episode of the first season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on February 21 , 1997 . The episode was written by Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Michael W. Watkins . " Sacrament " featured guest appearances by Philip Anglim , Dylan Haggerty and Brian Markinson .

Millennium Group consultant Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) faces difficulty when his sister @-@ in @-@ law is abducted after her son 's baptism . Meanwhile , Black 's daughter Jordan begins to show signs of experiencing the same seemingly @-@ psychic visions that have plagued him .

Spotnitz 's script for " Sacrament " , which he has called his favourite of those written for Millennium , draws inspiration from real life serial killers John Wayne Gacy and Dennis Nilsen . The episode has received mostly positive reviews from critics , and was viewed by approximately 6 @. @ 81 million households during its original broadcast .

= = Plot = =

Millennium Group member Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) joins his brother Tom (Philip Anglim) and sister @-@ in @-@ law Helen (Liz Bryson) for their newborn son 's christening . After the child is baptized , Black joins his daughter Jordan (Brittany Tiplady) , finding her in hysterics . She claims to have seen a man hurting Helen ; when Black and his brother rush outside , they find the baby in the back of Tom 's car , but Helen is gone .

Black 's contact in the Seattle Police Department , Bob Bletcher (Bill Smitrovich) , insists that Black should not get involved in the case as he is too close to the victims . However , Black insists he can be of assistance , and reviews security footage of a stranger investigating Tom 's luggage after their flight . Bletcher reports that a stolen car has been found abandoned , with Helen 's blood inside . Fellow Millennium Group member Peter Watts (Terry O 'Quinn) helps Black identify the kidnapper from a set pictures of sex offenders in the Seattle area ? Black recognizes Richard Green (Dylan Haggerty) as the man from the airport footage .

Tom later searches Black 's office , stealing his gun and finding Green 's name and address . Tom confronts Green at his home , demanding to know where his wife is . The police , who have been watching Green 's house , intervene and take Tom home before anyone is harmed . Black apologizes for keeping information from Tom , but warns him that his outburst is exactly why he did so . Watts has meanwhile tracked forensic evidence from the abandoned car to a cabin in the woods ; blood found there matches both Green and Helen , and a ring is discovered which is identified as Helen 's wedding ring .

Meanwhile , a mysteriously ill Jordan continues to ask about Helen 's whereabouts , and her remarks about Helen 's conditions lead Black to believe she is starting to experience the seemingly @-@ psychic visions he is capable of seeing , which allow him to see the evil people are capable of . Elsewhere , Green is arrested . His property is searched but Helen is nowhere to be found ? although another corpse is dug up in the garden , evidently killed nine years before . Black deduces that Green could not have killed Helen at the cabin as his house was already being watched by the police . He sees a set of tools in Green 's home which he realizes were not used for murder or torture , but to immure Helen in the basement . Black and the police dismantle a newly finished plaster wall , finding Helen injured but alive ; it is at this point that Black realizes Green was simply a pawn , used by his father to lure victims to the house .

= = Production = =

" Sacrament " was written by Frank Spotnitz and directed by Michael W. Watkins . Spotnitz had previously written " Weeds " earlier in the first season , as well as penning " TEOTWAWKI " , " Antipas " and " Seven and One " in the series ' third season . Spotnitz was a prolific writer for Millennium 's sister show The X @-@ Files , receiving his first writing credit for that series for the episode " End Game " . Spotnitz has described " Sacrament " as his favourite script for the series ,

finding the character of Richard Green to be " creepy " and believing that " the solution to the mystery [was] sufficiently unexpected " .

" Sacramento " is the only episode of Millennium to have been directed by Watkins . Watkins ' work on the episode led to him becoming a director and executive producer for The X @-@ Files when that series moved production to Los Angeles . The episode features the last appearance in the series by Brian Markinson as Seattle police officer Teeple ; Markinson had previously portrayed the character in the earlier first season episodes " The Judge " and " Blood Relatives " .

The treatment of the two victims seen in " Sacramento " ? the immurement of Helen Black and the burial in the garden of the unidentified second victim ? appear to have been based on the methods used by real life serial killers John Wayne Gacy , Dennis Nilsen and Dorothea Puente to dispose of their victims . Both Gacy and Nilsen habitually murdered men they had taken home as lovers , with Gacy storing bodies in the crawl space of his home , and Nilsen keeping corpses in wardrobes and under the floorboards . Puente would kill her tenants for their money and bury their bodies in the gardens of the properties they were renting .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Sacramento " was first broadcast on the Fox Network on February 21 , 1997 . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 6 @.@ 4 during its original broadcast , meaning that 6 @.@ 4 percent of households in the United States viewed the episode . This represented approximately 6 @.@ 81 million households , and left the episode the seventy @-@ seventh most @-@ viewed broadcast that week .

The episode received mostly positive reviews from critics . The A.V. Club 's Zack Handlen rated the episode an A ? , noting that it " subvert [s] our expectations " when dealing with the fallibility of a protagonist . Handlen felt that the episode 's plot was somewhat inevitable following the introduction of Black 's family , but that it was handled well ; he also felt positively about the episode 's symbolism of the vulnerability of innocence . Bill Gibron , writing for DVD Talk , rated the episode 5 out of 5 , calling it " Millennium at its best " . Gibron felt that " Sacramento " was " a taut , well @-@ executed thriller " whose events " unfold with logic and authenticity " . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , rated " Sacramento " three stars out of five . Shearman felt that the plot was " a bit humdrum " , finding that some emotional development was simply treated as " padding " ; however , he praised guest star Philip Anglim for his performance .