

= Siren ( Millennium ) =

" ' Siren " is the seventeenth episode of the second season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on March 20 , 1998 . Millennium concerns offender profiler Frank Black ( Lance Henriksen ) as he investigates crimes for the Millennium Group . The episode was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong , and directed Allen Coulter . " Siren " featured guest appearances by Vivian Wu , Tzi Ma and Kristen Cloke .

When offender profiler Black investigates several deaths on a cargo ship , he encounters a mysterious woman who shows him visions of a life in which he had never joined the Millennium Group . Upon recovering , his experience leads him to doubt his role in the organisation . " Siren " was viewed by approximately 5 @.@ 68 million households during its original broadcast . The episode received positive critical reviews , with one reviewer drawing comparisons with the film It 's a Wonderful Life .

= = Plot synopsis = =

Frank Black ( Lance Henriksen ) is an offender profiler working for a private investigative firm called the Millennium Group , who consult with local or federal law enforcement on criminal cases . The Millennium Group , and Black , specialise in examining violent crimes or those of a millenarian nature .

As a cargo ship pulls into harbour , it is surrounded by Immigration and Naturalization Service agents . On board , the captain , Law ( Tzi Ma ) , sends two of his crew to kill a " monster " in the cargo hold . Before they can do so , the ship is boarded and the men arrested . Inside the hold , INS agents find a glamorous woman ( Vivian Wu ) bound in chains .

Black 's wife Catherine ( Megan Gallagher ) has brought their daughter Jordan to the hospital where she works ; there , Jordan sees the captive woman and is convinced she will be significant to her father . Black works for Catherine brings the woman 's file to Black , who becomes interested in the case . However , attempts to communicate with her fail , as a translator insists the woman is speaking a wholly unknown language .

Stymied , Black and fellow Group member Lara Means ( Kristen Cloke ) investigate the ship , finding several bodies hidden in a crate , all having died of exposure . Black then interviews Law and his crew individually , each time being given a contradicting story of how the woman came to be on board the ship . However , they all agree that after she boarded , crew were discovered daily , dead of exposure on the ship 's bow ; Law had the woman chained up in the belief she was responsible .

Black traces the woman 's fingerprints through a Millennium Group database , finding they belong to a Tamara Shui Fa Lee , who disappeared at sea near Hong Kong ten years prior ? and who Black believes is now dead . Black visits " Lee " at the hospital , where she speaks to him in perfect English , discussing personal events from his life of which she would have no knowledge . As he drives home , he sees her on the side of the highway and stops to investigate ; however , he finds no sign of her and returns home , where he shares an intimate dinner with Catherine and Jordan , later retiring to bed with Catherine ? despite their estrangement . Black gradually notices more differences from how his life had been , realizing he has never been a member of the Millennium Group and founded a private investigation firm after leaving the Federal Bureau of Investigation . Returning home again one day , he sees a demon holding Jordan 's lifeless body .

Back on the highway , an ambulance crew try to resuscitate Black , who has been outside his car through the night after his vision of Lee . After he comes to , he realizes this alternate reality was Lee showing him a life without the Millennium Group . However , he is left unsure whether his role within the Group is protecting his family from evil , or exposing them to it . Black seeks out Lee in a refugee camp ; meanwhile , Law and his crewmen are also tracking her , conspiring to kill her to avenge their fellow crew . Lee turns the men against each other with her visions , before Black arrives to rescue her . As Black questions her as to the Group 's influence , she resumes speaking in her unknown tongue , leaving Black without the answer he seeks .

= = Production = =

" Siren " was written by frequent collaborators Glen Morgan and James Wong . It was the fourteenth episode to have been written by the pair , who had penned several across the first and second seasons of the series . The pair had also taken the roles of co -@ executive producers during the second season . The episode was directed by Allen Coulter , in his third and final contribution to the series ; Coulter had previously helmed the earlier second season episodes " Beware of the Dog " and " The Pest House " .

= = Release and reception = =

" Siren " was first broadcast on the Fox Network on March 20 , 1998 . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 5 @. @ 8 during its original broadcast , meaning that 5 @. @ 8 percent of households in the United States viewed the episode . This represented approximately 5 @. @ 68 million households , and left the episode the eighty @-@ second most @-@ viewed broadcast that week .

The episode received mildly positive reviews from critics . The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode a " B " . He compared its central premise to the film *It 's A Wonderful Life* , and considered this a common trope in television ; VanDerWerff also felt that the plot structure , with a supernatural event being encountered during a criminal investigation , was overly reminiscent of *Millennium* 's sister show *The X @-@ Files* . However , he considered that the episode worked well overall , highlighting its alternate @-@ reality section and its decision not to answer every question raised . Bill Gibron , writing for *DVD Talk* , rated the episode 3 out of 5 , finding that its motif of temptation was an intriguing one , but that overall the episode 's spiritual themes were muddled by its reliance on a " routine cops and robbers " framework . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , rated " Siren " three stars out of five . Shearman found the episode 's alternate reality section to be " touching " but " not especially revelatory " , considering it and the episode as a whole to have been more interesting in premise than in execution . Shearman compared the episode to " *The Curse of Frank Black* " and " *Midnight of the Century* " , though finding that the immigration plot left it less focused and interesting than those installments .