

= Confidence Man (Lost) =

" Confidence Man " is the eighth episode of the first season of Lost . The episode was directed by Tucker Gates and written by Damon Lindelof . It first aired on November 10 , 2004 , on ABC . The character of James " Sawyer " Ford (Josh Holloway) is featured in the episode 's flashbacks . Sawyer is accused of stealing Shannon Rutherford 's (Maggie Grace) inhaler , and Sayid Jarrah (Naveen Andrews) tortures him in an attempt to find out where it is . In the flashbacks , Sawyer 's life before the crash is revealed , showing his scams as a confidence man .

The episode was intended to make Sawyer look like less of a belligerent , as he had generally acted as the antagonist in previous episodes . It also set the stage for the love triangle between Kate , Sawyer , and Jack . The episode was first broadcast in the United States on November 10 , 2004 , earning 18 @. @ 44 million viewers . It received mostly positive reviews , although a few reviewers discussed aspects of the episode that they felt did not blend in well with the rest of the episode and series .

= = Plot = =

= = = Flashbacks = = =

Sawyer is in bed with a young woman , Jessica (Kristin Richardson) . After he declares his love for her , she realizes he is late for a meeting . As he rushes to leave , his briefcase falls open , revealing thousands of dollars in cash he claims she was not supposed to have seen . Sawyer then informs her that he is meeting someone to get money for an investment that will triple his cash in two weeks , and Jessica tells him that she will get additional money from her husband , David (Michael DeLuise) , so that she and Sawyer can split the profit . Later , Sawyer is revealed to be a con artist in debt with a loan shark , Kilo (Billy Mayo) , who demands his money back , plus fifty percent , by the next day . Sawyer goes to Jessica 's house to finalize the deal , but reconsiders upon seeing a small boy (Jim Woitas) emerge from another room . He suddenly calls off the con , drops his briefcase of money , and rushes out of their house .

= = = On the island = = =

It is Day 9 , September 30 , 2004 . On the beach , Sawyer catches Boone Carlyle (Ian Somerhalder) searching through his stash of items he salvaged from the crash , and Jack Shephard (Matthew Fox) attends to a wound on the head of Sayid . Sayid reports his failure in triangulating the distress signal , and the destruction of the transceiver by his attacker . Shannon brings a bloody Boone to the caves , where he explains to Jack that Sawyer beat him , and that his sister Shannon 's asthma has become a problem . Many of the survivors become convinced that Sawyer is hoarding some inhalers from the wreck . Jack unsuccessfully demands the inhalers from Sawyer , and when Kate does the same , Sawyer says he will give up the inhaler if Kate kisses him . Kate calls his bluff and challenges him about the letter he often reads . Sawyer makes Kate read the letter aloud . The letter is addressed to " Mr. Sawyer " and explains that Mr. Sawyer had sex with the letter writer 's mother and stole all of the letter writer 's father 's money , resulting in the father killing his wife and himself .

As Sayid and John Locke (Terry O 'Quinn) discuss the attack on Sayid , Locke suggests that Sawyer is the culprit , since he is doing well for himself on the island , hoarding other people 's possessions , and also seems to dislike Sayid . Meanwhile , Shannon begins to have trouble breathing due to her lack of medication and panic resulting from this problem . Jack tries beating answers out of Sawyer by punching him , but stops when he sees others ' disapproval . Then with Jack 's approval , Sayid ties Sawyer to a tree and tortures him for answers , revealing that he has tortured people before .

Sawyer finally agrees to give up the inhalers , but only to Kate . He again says he will hand over the

medication if she kisses him , which she reluctantly does , only to be told by him that he does not have the medication after all . Kate elbows Sawyer , and an enraged Sayid attacks him , stabbing him in the arm and hitting an artery . Jack arrives to stop the bleeding and save Sawyer 's life .

Sawyer wakes up the next day , October 1 , 2004 , with his arm bandaged up , while Kate looks on . She tells Sawyer that she knows the letter was written when Sawyer was a kid , and also works out that the letter wasn 't written to Sawyer , but by him . He tells Kate that his real name isn 't Sawyer and that the letter was written to the real Sawyer , a con man , who ruined his family . He ended up becoming a con man himself , so he took the name Sawyer as an alias . He snatches the letter from Kate and tells her not to feel sorry for him and to leave .

Despite pleas from Kate , Sayid sets off to explore the island 's shoreline in self @-@ imposed isolation , needing time to come to terms with his actions in torturing Sawyer , while Sun @-@ Hwa Kwon (Yunjin Kim) helps Shannon by making a eucalyptus salve to clear her bronchial passages . Charlie Pace (Dominic Monaghan) convinces Claire Littleton (Emilie de Ravin) to move to the caves , because they made a deal that if Charlie found peanut butter , she would move ; Charlie shares an imaginary jar of peanut butter with her . Sawyer attempts to burn the letter he wrote , but he finds himself unable to go through with it .

= = Production = =

The episode was written to humanize Sawyer and set up the love triangle between him , Kate and Jack . Kate was meant to look at Sawyer in a new way , and , according to Lindelof , think , " wow , this guy is not just a belligerent . " The episode also shows the moral ambiguity of some characters by revealing more of their personalities , with the ones introduced as protagonists doing things that are generally not viewed as protagonist @-@ like ? an example being Jack beating Sawyer and eventually asking Sayid to torture him ; and an antagonistic character , Sawyer , proving not to be solely antagonist @-@ like ? an example being his backstory and flashback , which show that he is not exclusively evil . Lindelof explained that he wanted Sawyer to " come out of his shell a little , and say to the audience , ' you 're supposed to like this guy ' " , further explaining , " the root of him being an asshole is that these horrible things happened to him when he was a little kid , and he 's really really angry . "

Sawyer and Jin @-@ Soo Kwon (Daniel Dae Kim) were the least @-@ liked characters by viewers during the first few episodes , because , according to Lindelof , " they were just really obnoxious , bad guys " . In later episodes , however , Sawyer and Jin changed to be more likable . Towards the beginning of " Confidence Man " , Sawyer is seen reading the novel *Watership Down* by Richard Adams (this is the book that caused Boone to think that Sawyer took Shannon 's inhaler) . The novel has numerous similarities to *Lost* , including " letting go " , and building a society . Furthermore , the protagonists of *Watership Down* are rabbits ? a recurring motif in *Lost* . The episode ends with a montage of various characters performing different activities , featuring the song " I Shall Not Walk Alone " , written by Ben Harper and performed by The Blind Boys of Alabama . One lyric from the song is , " I just reach for mother Mary " ; Sawyer 's mother 's name is Mary , and , according to reviewer Therese Odell from the *Houston Chronicle* , the lyric may be alluding to this . Also , percussionist Ryan McKinnie of The Blind Boys of Alabama said of many members of the group 's blindness , " Our disability doesn 't have to be a handicap . It 's not about what you can 't do . It 's about what you do . And what we do is sing good gospel music . " This quotation is very similar to the oft @-@ repeated quotation by many characters (especially Locke) , " Don 't tell me what I can 't do . "

= = Reception = =

" Confidence Man " first aired in the United States on November 10 , 2004 . 18 @.@ 44 million people in America watched the episode live , a slight decrease from the previous episode , " The Moth " , which garnered 18 @.@ 73 million viewers . The episode received mixed @-@ to @-@ positive reviews . Chris Carabott of IGN gave the episode an 8 @.@ 4 / 10 and called it " a well

@-@ written , fascinating character piece that does an excellent job of bringing Sawyer into the spotlight " , later praising Josh Holloway 's performance , writing that " The success of this episode begins and ends with Josh Holloway . So far , we know that he 's good at playing Sawyer : The Tough Guy , but now he has to sell a multilayered fragment of a human being who hates himself for becoming the man who destroyed his family . Holloway succeeds in creating a character that quickly unravels throughout the episode as his terrible secret is revealed . " The website later ranked " Confidence Man " the 47th best episode of Lost , praising how it " change [d] your entire perspective of a character " in revealing how Sawyer came to be , which made a starting point for " one of the greatest character arcs not only in Lost , but in all of modern television . "

Ryan McGee of Zap2it also had a positive review of the episode , writing that " Confidence Man " was " A taut , tense , character @-@ based episode which excelled on the Island and paid off in the flashback as well . " Robin Pierson of The TV Critic gave the episode a 82 / 100 , praising Sawyer 's performance , and writing that it was a " a very well written story " , but criticized the music montage at the end as being a crutch , explaining that " It ? s as if the directors can ? t think of any other way to finish the show . " Myles McNutt of The A.V. Club gave " Confidence Man " a B and wrote that " Sawyer ? s flashback is really well done " , but adds that " Lost ? at least at this point in its run ? is not calibrated for one of its characters to torture another one . The episode simply doesn ? t do enough to get us to the point where we can understand why this event was necessary , and why cooler heads couldn ? t have prevailed . " Todd VanDerWerff of The Los Angeles Times ranked the episode as the 83rd best of Lost (excluding the finale) , writing the episode is " Not bad , but giving Sawyer a big , epic origin story feels kind of beside the point . "