

= Maranatha (Millennium) =

" ' Maranatha " is the twenty @-@ first episode of the first season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on May 9 , 1997 . The episode was written by Chip Johannessen , and directed by Peter Markle . " Maranatha " featured guest appearances by Bill Nunn , Boris Krutonog and Levani Outchaneichvili .

Millennium Group consultant Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) aids both the New York Police Department and a Russian investigator to track down the mysterious " Yaponchik " , a criminal from the Russian underworld who may be an incarnation of the biblical beast from the sea .

" Maranatha " , a title which translates from Aramaic as " our lord has come " , connects the 1986 Chernobyl disaster to biblical prophecies of the star of Wormwood . The episode features the first of two directorial contributions from Markle , and sees future guest star Brian Downey appear in a minor role .

= = Plot = =

In New York City , a man named Yaponchik (Levani Outchaneichvili) shoots a man in the face , preventing the victim 's identification ; this is the third such murder committed this way . Millennium Group consultant Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) is asked to aid the New York Police Department investigate the case . Black is joined by a Muscovite investigator , Yura Surova (Boris Krutonog) , and an undercover agent , Andrei Medikov (Dmitri Boudrine) . Examining the victim 's body , a symbol is found on the corpse resembling an inverted V , but its meaning is unknown .

Black , Medikov and Surova visit a Russian nightclub where the latter two are working undercover . As Surova and Black talk at one table , Medikov is approached by Yaponchik . Someone in the club recognizes Yaponchik , and the crowd stampede out of the building when they hear his name . After the crowd has dispersed , Black and Surova find Medikov 's body at a table , his face shot off .

Surova explains to Black that Yaponchik has come to be regarded by Russians as a sort of evil folkloric figure . Meanwhile , Group member Peter Watts (Terry O 'Quinn) determines that the " V " -like symbol found earlier is actually a fragment of the Chi Rho , a Christian symbol . Watts also informs Black that many Russians believe Yaponchik to have directly responsible for the Chernobyl disaster , a Soviet nuclear meltdown tied by some to Biblical prophecies of the apocalypse . Black researches the disaster , finding a picture of both Medikov and Surova at the Chernobyl nuclear plant , and realizes that both men have been tracking Yaponchik for revenge .

One of Yaponchik 's victims is identified as a restorer of Russian icons . Her home is searched , and it is found that she had uncovered Yaponchik 's identity and attempted to appease him by sending him several icons . Black feels Yaponchik is killing in order to perpetuate the legends surrounding him by instilling fear in those who believe them . Watts and Black visit the Russian Embassy to find the man the icons were being mailed to ? Sergei Stepanovich , identifiable as Yaponchik . Stepanovich is protected by diplomatic immunity ; however , it becomes clear that Surova , Medikov and an Orthodox priest who aided the investigation have all been stalking Stepanovich , who they believe to be the Antichrist .

Yaponchik murders another two men at a bathhouse , but is confronted by Surova . Yaponchik tells Surova he cannot be killed . Surova ignores this , and shoots him in the head . Yaponchik is then found and rushed to hospital . Black sees the crime scene at the bathhouse , and draws a connection between Yaponchik and the beast from the sea in the Biblical Book of Revelation , who is said to survive a fatal head wound ; fearing that Yaponchik will likewise survive , Black heads to the hospital . Surova beats him there , however , and confronts the recovered Yaponchik . As Surova is about to shoot his quarry again , he is convinced instead that Yaponchik is " not the one " he is thought to be . Surova helps Yaponchik make his way to the helipad on the hospital 's roof . Black and Watts arrive on the roof in time to see Yaponchik escorted onto a helicopter by several men , who take off before they can be apprehended .

= = Production = =

" Maranatha " was directed by Peter Markle , making his first contribution to the series . Markle would later return to helm the third season episode " Seven and One " . The episode was written by Chip Johannessen , who went on to write a total of twelve episodes across all three seasons , including the series ' final episode " Goodbye to All That " . After Millennium 's cancellation , Johannessen would also contribute an episode to its sister show The X @-@ Files , 1999 's " Orison " . Johannessen would also become one of the series ' executive producers during its third season , alongside Ken Horton .

The episode 's title , " Maranatha " , is an Aramaic language word translated as " our lord has come " or " come , our lord " ; the word is found in the biblical First Epistle to the Corinthians and is believed to have been used as a greeting among early Christians . During production , the episode used the working title " The Second Coming " .

The character Peter Watts makes mention of the origin of the name of Chernobyl , a city in Ukraine that was the location of the Chernobyl disaster , a 1986 nuclear meltdown . According to Watts , the name " Chernobyl " translates as " wormwood " , causing the disaster to be likened to the Biblical star of Wormwood prophesied in the Book of Revelation , which was said to cause death through poisoning the waters . However , the word " chernobyl " can be translated as " black grass " or " black myth " . Actor Brian Downey , who portrayed a medical examiner in the episode , later appeared in an unrelated role in the two @-@ part second season episodes " Owls " and " Roosters " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Maranatha " was first broadcast on the Fox Network on May 9 , 1997 . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 6 @.@ 7 during its original broadcast , meaning that 6 @.@ 7 percent of households in the United States viewed the episode . This represented 6 @.@ 5 million households , and left the episode the sixty @-@ fifth most @-@ viewed broadcast that week .

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from critics . The A.V. Club 's Zack Handlen rated the episode a B + , describing it as " a ho @-@ hum X @-@ Files knock @-@ off " . Handlen felt that the acting was strong , and that the references to both Chernobyl and apocalyptic prophecies formed a good basis for the episode ; however , he noted that the script 's uncertainty as to whether its villain really was the Antichrist caused it to lose impact . Bill Gibron , writing for DVD Talk , rated the episode 4 @.@ 5 out of 5 , praising its " incredibly tight script " and describing it as " one of the best examples of Millennium 's careful balancing act between reality and the otherworldly " .

However , Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , rated the episode two stars out of five , finding that its plot " gets lost in the mix " amidst the details and atmosphere of the setting . Shearman compared the folkloric feel of Yaponchik as a Russian incarnation of the devil to the American view of the devil as an invasion of the family unit , as personified by the character Lucy Butler in " Lamentation " , finding the two symbols to work well in contrast to each other . However , he was unsure that the increasingly eschatological direction the series was taking was a positive move , as it left the central character Frank Black " largely forgotten " .