

## = The Transformation =

" The Transformation " is the thirteenth episode of the first season of the American science fiction drama television series Fringe . Its storyline centers on the circumstances surrounding a deceased scientist ( Neal Huff ) , who was doped with a " designer virus " and transformed into a dangerous monster , causing his plane to crash . Fringe agent Olivia Dunham ( Anna Torv ) and FBI consultants Peter ( Joshua Jackson ) and Walter Bishop ( John Noble ) connect the event to an impending arms deal . Olivia must explore her mind for remaining memories of her former partner and lover , John Scott ( Mark Valley ) , in order to prevent the sale of the virus .

The episode was co - written by Zack Whedon and supervising producer J. R. Orci , while producer Brad Anderson served as the director . The creation of the monster took the crew approximately eleven days ? they took molds of guest actor Huff 's head and back and created eight sets of dentures in order to create the special effect of transformation . To create the plane crash set , the crew spent over a week strategically placing around 15 @ , @ 000 pounds worth of plane parts .

It was first screened at PaleyFest in November 2008 . On February 3 , 2009 , the episode was broadcast in the United States on Fox to an estimated 12 @ . @ 78 million viewers . The episode earned a 5 / 6 @ . @ 5 ratings share among adults aged 18 to 49 , finishing in eighth place for the week . It received generally positive reviews . Commentators have noted allusions to the pilot and a fourth season episode , in addition to the television series Lost and H.G. Wells ' novel The Island of Doctor Moreau .

## = = Plot = =

On an airplane in flight , scientist Marshall Bowman ( Neal Huff ) gets a nosebleed , and he tries to warn the crew to give him sedatives or use force against him . He transforms into a beast in the bathroom , and bursts out , causing the plane to crash in Scarsdale , New York . The Fringe team arrives on the scene and discover the beast 's body . Dr. Walter Bishop ( John Noble ) concludes that it started out as a human . Agent Olivia Dunham ( Anna Torv ) recognizes Bowman 's picture from John Scott 's ( Mark Valley ) memories , realizing that Bowman was flying to meet another man in the memories named Daniel Hicks ( Felix Solis ) . Back at the lab at Harvard , Walter finds a small crystalline disc implanted in the beast 's hand similar to one seen inside the woman killed in " The Ghost Network " , and thinks Marshall was dosed with a " designer virus " .

Hicks is brought in for questioning . After beginning to transform into a beast , he admits that " Conrad " dosed them before Peter Bishop ( Joshua Jackson ) pauses the process by administering a sedative and placing him in an induced coma . Walter develops an antidote , while Olivia finds another small disc in Hicks ' hand . Her demand to see Scott 's body leads her and Phillip Broyles ( Lance Reddick ) to Massive Dynamic , where Nina Sharp ( Blair Brown ) tells her that the information gleaned from Scott 's body implicates him in a bioterrorist cell with the other two .

French intelligence states that weapons manufacturer Conrad is involved in a sale , leading to Olivia returning to the sensory deprivation tank in order to find out more from Scott 's memories . In a motel room they used to share , Scott talks to Olivia , scaring her into shooting him . Olivia next appears in an alleyway , where she follows Scott into a memory of him almost killing Conrad . He reveals that he , Hicks , and Marshall are all undercover government agents for the NSA , and tells Olivia to ask Hicks where the meeting is going to happen . They awake Hicks , who tells them more about the weapons sale .

Being given details from a secret radio by Hicks , Olivia pretends to be the weapons buyer , and is accompanied by Peter . They successfully make contact , but the sellers become suspicious after Hicks ' transformation restarts , depriving Olivia of the necessary information . Conrad makes his appearance and realizes Olivia and Peter are lying ; just before he orders them killed , the FBI moves in and arrests the sellers .

The episode ends with Walter telling Olivia her brain waves are going back to normal , and that Scott 's memories are fading from her mind . Olivia requests to enter the tank regardless , and she

makes a last encounter with Scott , where he tells her he loved her and was going to marry her . She bids farewell to his consciousness , which has finally left her own .

= = Production = =

" The Transformation " was co @-@ written by Zack Whedon and supervising producer J.R. Orci . Whedon had last co @-@ written the season 's ninth episode , " The Dreamscape " , while Orci helped write " The Equation " , the season 's eighth episode . Producer Brad Anderson served as director , his latest Fringe work since directing " In Which We Meet Mr. Jones " six episodes earlier . The episode resolved the John Scott storyline and featured the last appearance of actor Mark Valley . Media outlets speculated that because Valley and Torv married over the holiday break , his departure " would eliminate any chances of the marriage conflicting with the show . " Co @-@ creator Roberto Orci called Scott 's final scene a " truly satisfactory conclusion to his story . "

The creation of the monster took the series special effects crew approximately eleven days to implement . They created molds of guest actor Neal Huff 's head and back , giving him " creature eye " contact lenses and covering the back foam mold with " backbarbs " . Eight different dentures were made of Huff 's mouth to depict the character gradually losing his teeth , " anything from simple teeth that match his own ... , to wiggling teeth that he can start to loosen up , to ones where he 's already started to lose a tooth , " explained Special Effects Makeup crewman Stephen Kelley . Each denture appliance took about a day to create . The final version of the creature , Kelley noted , was " very exaggerated ... He 's got the big giant quills coming off it like a porcupine . And it 's also got six nipples on it , which is part of us trying to investigate what this creature actually it is . "

Andrew Orloff , the Creative Director and Visual Effects Supervisor of Zoic Studios , considered the creature one of the most challenging effects his company helped make for the season . He explained that this and other designed monsters are " really super fantastical , they ? re really out there , the anatomy and the biology of them is so wild and crazy , that it really takes a lot to make it look real in the scene and make it a part of the actors are reacting to these things ? to get the audience to believe in it is kind of the biggest challenge we ? ve faced on the show so far . " During filming , the cast and crew referred to the monster as a " were @-@ upine " or " porcuman " . Lance Reddick commented on set , " When I first got here tonight , I was expecting zombies to come up out of the ground . And the actual creature looks so bizarre , I mean it really looks like something I wouldn 't want to be caught in the woods with . " The crew spent over a week collecting and placing the plane wreckage together . According to Set Dresser Russ Griffin , the set included approximately 15 @,@ 000 pounds worth of plane parts .

Though the episode first aired in February 2009 , " The Transformation " had an early screening at the November 2008 PaleyFest , where Fringe 's producers answered questions from the audience . When asked in an interview if the " giant germ " from " Bound " was the grossest thing of the season , executive producer Jeff Pinkner replied that " the huge porcupine man on the airplane [ from " The Transformation " ] was more shocking . It was so unexpected . " At the time " The Transformation " aired , Joshua Jackson considered it the series ' best episode . John Noble called it " grotesque " and " possibly one of the more gruesome ones we 've done . "

= = Analysis and legacy = =

In her 2011 book *Into the Looking Glass : Exploring the Worlds of Fringe* , author Sarah Clarke Stuart observed that two unrelated Fringe characters , Conrad Moreau of " The Transformation " and Moreau ( Brad Dourif ) of " The Day We Died " , are allusions to H.G. Wells ' 1896 novel *The Island of Doctor Moreau* . Both are " scientifically inspired men with questionable integrity , " while Wells ' Doctor Moreau is an " unethical researcher " who fell " under the overmastering spell of research , " in a vein similar to Walter .

Like the pilot episode , " The Transformation " begins on the passenger section of an airplane in flight . Actor Mark Valley was asked how the episode differed from the pilot , leading him to joke that " it 's a completely different airline this time . " His character , John Scott , was first seen in an

episode about a plane disaster ; accordingly , IGN expressed , it made sense thematically to have his last appearance be in an episode about a similar type of disaster . The Los Angeles Times viewed the flight number of 718 and its subsequent crash as a nod to co @-@ creator J.J. Abrams ' other series , Lost .

The episode also had an influence on the series ' fourth season , which featured parallel stories to those that occurred in earlier episodes . The season 's sixteenth episode , " Nothing As It Seems " , centers around the " designer virus " that had caused Marshall Bowman to transform , but this time he does so in the airport after his plane has safely landed . Peter recognizes the case from his own timeline , as seen in the events of " The Transformation " , and helps the Fringe team locate Daniel Hicks .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" The Transformation " first aired on February 3 , 2009 in the United States , and was watched by an estimated 12 @.@ 78 million viewers . The episode earned a 5 / 6 @.@ 5 ratings share among viewers aged 18 ? 49 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @.@ 0 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 6 @.@ 5 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of broadcast . This rating meant it ranked eighth for the week among all the major networks . Sarah Stegall of SFScope attributed this ratings success to its lead @-@ in show , the highly @-@ rated American Idol , and observed that " with episodes like this one , mixing action , horror , and a few tender moments , it looks like Fringe is hitting its stride with viewers . "

= = = Reviews = = =

" The Transformation " received generally positive reviews . Andrew Hanson from the Los Angeles Times gave the episode a positive review , opining that it " hit the perfect tone for Fringe [ and had ] the right mixture of science fiction , dark comedy , crime story and melodrama " . Hanson was however disappointed with the closure of the Olivia ? John Scott storyline , as he hoped that " she doesn 't carry this torch too long " because he preferred the " flirty " Olivia . Ramsey Isler of IGN gave the episode 9 @.@ 0 / 10 , an indication of an " amazing " installment . He was pleased with the absence of Sanford Harris and enjoyed the " brilliantly written and directed " undercover sting operation , particularly because Peter was properly utilized as Olivia 's " wingman . " Isler also criticized the monster 's special effects and believed there were still unanswered questions concerning Scott 's storyline .

Writing for The A.V. Club , Noel Murray thought it was the best " freak @-@ meet " of the series thus far , as well as one of its best episodes , which he would " eagerly show to Fringe @-@ doubters as evidence that the series has found its legs . " He consequently graded the episode an A ? , further attributing the success of the episode to " top @-@ tier " writers Orci and Whedon and " skilled " director Brad Anderson . Murray wrote , " I wouldn 't say that ' The Transformation ' broke any new ground . If anything , it recapitulated pretty much every previous Fringe element ? bio @-@ weapons sales , telepathic communication , Massive Dynamics , [ sic ] airplane crashes , etc . ? but did so in a way that was energetic , tense , and even a little emotional . " SFScope columnist Sarah Stegall had difficulty " suspend [ ing her ] disbelief " with the science behind Bowman 's rapid transformation . Though she thought it was " sweet " that Scott 's proposal " echo [ ed ] the real @-@ life recent marriage between Anna Torv and Mark Valley , " Stegall was pleased that the series could now move onto another storyline .