

= The 23rd Psalm =

" The 23rd Psalm " is the tenth episode of the second season of Lost , and the 35th episode overall . The episode was directed by Matt Earl Beesley , and written by Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof . It first aired on January 11 , 2006 , on ABC , and was watched by an average of 20 @. @ 56 million American viewers . The episode is centered on the character of Mr. Eko (Adewale Akinnuoye @- @ Agbaje) , who in flashbacks is revealed to be a former warlord in Nigeria , and in the present day events goes with Charlie Pace (Dominic Monaghan) to the Nigerian airplane which had crashed on the island .

The episode has an overall theme of redemption , and was written by drawing inspiration from " Deus Ex Machina " , the episode where the Nigerian airplane was first introduced . Reviews for " The 23rd Psalm " were positive , praising the flashback and Akinnuoye @- @ Agbaje 's performance as Eko . The episode 's script was later nominated for an Emmy Award .

= = Plot = =

= = = Flashbacks = = =

Nigerian guerrillas arrive at a small village , grab a young boy named Yemi and try to force him to shoot an old man . The boy hesitates and his older brother , Eko , takes the gun and shoots the man himself , thus saving his brother from the act . The guerrillas are pleased with this , and force him to join their group , tearing his Christian cross from his neck , which is then taken by Yemi .

Years later , Eko has become a powerful warlord . He meets with a drug dealer who is trying to get his heroin out of the country . Eko offers to do him a " favour , " buying the drugs at a low price and spiriting them out of the country . The drug runner agrees , but is killed after telling that he believed Eko had no soul . Later , Eko visits the church of his hometown , where Yemi has become a priest . Eko asks him for a plane , because only United Nations relief and missionary aircraft are allowed to fly out of Nigeria , saying he will fly the drugs away from the Nigerians and give his brother money for a polio vaccine . Yemi refuses to help . Later , Eko approaches his brother again , asking simply for Yemi to sign ordination papers that make Eko and two associates priests so that they can arrange the flight themselves . His brother refuses , but reluctantly signs after Eko says that his two friends will burn the church to the ground if Yemi does not collaborate . Eko also buys Virgin Mary statues to hide the heroin within .

Dressed as priests , Eko and two associates are loading drugs onto a Beechcraft airplane , when Yemi drives up and tells him not to leave . The Nigerian military arrives shortly thereafter , killing a henchman and shooting Yemi . Eko loads his brother onto the plane , but the pilot , who has a gold tooth , prevents Eko from boarding and flies away . Then the military approach and , mistaking Eko for a real priest , ask Eko , " Are you alright , Father ? "

= = = On the Island = = =

On the island , Claire Littleton (Emilie de Ravin) watches Eko whittling scripture into the head of his club , and mentions that Charlie Pace (Dominic Monaghan) carries a Virgin Mary statue . Eko immediately demands to see the statue , which he breaks open and shows Claire the heroin inside . Eko then goes to Charlie , demanding him to take him to the plane .

Meanwhile , Locke teaches Michael Dawson (Harold Perrineau) how to use a gun , and Michael then asks Kate Austen (Evangeline Lilly) to have her shift at the hatch computer . At the computer , Michael continues his conversation with his son Walt (Malcolm David Kelley) , which is interrupted by the arrival of Jack Shephard (Matthew Fox) , who remains unaware of it .

On the way to the Beechcraft , Eko and Charlie find a parachute in a tree , which leads to the corpse of a Nigerian man dressed as a priest that Boone Carlyle (Ian Somerhalder) and John Locke (Terry O 'Quinn) had previously found . When Eko sees the dead man 's gold tooth , he tells

Charlie that the man " saved his life . " Charlie loses his way , and Mr. Eko tells him to climb a tree . As he is above the tree , explosions and a cloud of black smoke emerge from the jungle . It confronts him whilst flashing images to him of his past . Mr. Eko stands his ground , despite Charlie telling him to run , and stares at the smoke before it pulls back and disappears . Eko and Charlie then find the plane , inside which Eko finds another corpse which Eko recognizes as Yemi . After taking the cross from Yemi 's body , Eko tells Charlie that it is his brother , gives Charlie a Virgin Mary statue " for the one [he] broke " and sets the plane on fire . Charlie asks Eko if he is a priest himself , and as Eko puts the cross around his neck he replies " Yes , I am . " The two then recite Psalm 23 from the Old Testament as the plane burns .

After arriving at the camp , Charlie apologizes to Claire , but Claire tells him to leave her and her son alone . Charlie then goes into the jungle , and opens a hiding place where he is keeping Virgin Mary statues to put the one Eko gave him .

= = Production = =

During the production of " Deus Ex Machina " , which introduced the Nigerian airplane , a corpse dressed as a priest with a gun , and Virgin Mary statues filled with heroin , the Lost writers decided that the story of the Beechcraft would coincide with one of the characters ' flashbacks . They decided to use one of the tail section characters to be introduced in season 2 , " essentially a bad guy who was forced to disguise himself as a priest , and how would that come about , and could he now be presenting himself as a priest " . Since Eko and Locke are both spiritual leaders on the island - but with Locke having a " paganistic , ritualistic appreciation " for the island 's powers and Eko , " pure religious faith " - writers Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof decided to write in this episode parallels with " Deus Ex Machina " , where Locke and Boone find the Beechcraft . The biggest similarity is Charlie unwillingly become Eko 's " acolyte " , just like Boone was being Locke 's follower in their expedition to the airplane .

The main theme of " The 23rd Psalm " was redemption , which both Eko and Charlie are seeking , with Eko eventually getting his upon finding his brother . Charlie was chosen to be Eko 's companion because the character did not have much screentime up to that point in the season , and the writers found similarities between Charlie and Eko , such as both having difficult relationships with their brothers . The writers accidentally transcribed Psalm 23 wrong , with " the shadow of the valley of death " instead of " the valley of the shadow of death , " but decided to keep the mistake , feeling it was appropriate as Eko was never a proper priest .

The flashbacks had the intent of showing that Eko was the opposite of his religious brother , but eventually ended up similar to Yemi . Nigeria 's depiction was described by art director Bill Matthews as a " very dusty @-@ dirty brown kind of Nigerian @-@ earth look " , with touches such as vendors on the street , and a square where children play soccer . The interior of the church was an actual location in Haleiwa , and a facade was built on the set to match it . While editing , the producers decided to separate a part of the final scene involving the airplane getting attacked and taking off , where a soldier confuses Eko for a priest , to juxtapose with Eko 's spiritual epiphany on the island and set up his next flashback on " ? " , where he is a priest in Australia . As the casting team was having trouble finding a Moroccan to play the drug dealer , set caterer Moumen El Hajji was selected for the role .

As the Monster had not yet appeared in the second season , the producers decided to expand on his mythology in " The 23rd Psalm " , as they thought Eko was a good character to confront the Monster because of his spirituality and " self @-@ awareness " . Visual effects supervisor Kevin Blank suggested on adding imagery representing Eko 's past on the smoke , such a cross and the man he shoots at the opening scene .

= = Reception = =

The original broadcast of " The 23rd Psalm " was on January 11 , 2006 on ABC , being preceded by a clip show titled " Lost : Revelations " . It was watched by approximately 20 @.@ 56 million

American viewers , being third in the weekly audience ranking , behind the AFC playoffs and Desperate Housewives .

Reviews for " The 23rd Psalm " were mostly positive . Entertainment Weekly 's Jeff Jensen gave the episode an A , describing it as a " wonderfully strange parable about redemption and fate " . Mac Slocum of Filmfodder.com considered the episode a worthy return after the two @-@ month break , saying that Eko 's " simple looks and simple phrases pummel the screen with gravitas and charisma " . Ryan McGee of Zap2it considered highlights of the episode the scene with the Monster , and the flashback , which in his opinion " [did] so great a job at explaining an entire character so succinctly " . IGN 's Chris Carabott gave the episode an 8 @.@ 3 out of 10 , praising the development of Eko 's character and the flashback .

Writers Carlton Cuse and Damon Lindelof 's script for " The 23rd Psalm " was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series . IGN ranked " The 23rd Psalm " 40th out of the 115 Lost episodes , calling the flashback " one of most action @-@ packed and ambitious on the series " . A similar list by Los Angeles Times ranked the episode at 49th , describing it as " a great first chapter that sadly never got a worthy follow @-@ up . "