

= Of Human Action =

" Of Human Action " is the seventh episode of the second season of the science fiction / crime series Fringe , and the 27th episode overall . The episode followed a case involving the apparent kidnapping of the son of a scientist working for biotechnology corporation Massive Dynamic , leading the Fringe team to deal with the repercussions of mind control .

The episode was written by the staff @-@ writing team of Glen Whitman and Robert Chiappetta , and was directed by executive producer Joe Chappelle . It first aired in the United States on November 12 , 2009 to an estimated 5 @.@ 89 million viewers . It received generally positive reviews , as multiple critics praised the story despite its characterization as a " standalone " episode .

= = Plot = =

In Queens , New York , police chase a sedan driven through a parking garage by two men keeping a teenage boy named Tyler Carson (Cameron Monaghan) in the backseat . Police officers surround the car and draw their weapons , demanding that the men exit the car . They do , and Tyler stays in his seat . Without explanation , one of the officers goes to the parking ramp and jumps to his death . Another officer shoots her two remaining co @-@ workers , then herself . The kidnappers ' crime spree continues on the road . One of them , Hickey (John Tench) , demands that a convenience store clerk hand over all his cash . Another customer tries to intervene , but then takes a pot of hot coffee , pours the coffee over his own head , and beats himself with the pot . The cashier then electrocutes himself .

Examining the policewoman who shot herself , Walter (John Noble) concludes that she was the victim of mind control rather than hypnosis . Theorizing that the mind control works on an auditory basis , he develops a method of combating the effects through the use of white noise . The tactical team led by Olivia (Anna Torv) traces the kidnappers ? both of them car salesmen with no serious criminal record ? to a warehouse . One of them drives the car through a large door , but is burnt in the explosion when the car flips . Olivia gets the drop on the surviving kidnapper , who points a gun at his own chin and begs for her help . Peter (Joshua Jackson) , wearing headphones that broadcast Walter 's white noise , follows the ransom payment . It leads him to Tyler , who says , " You can take off those stupid headphones . They won 't work . "

Peter is now forced into helping Tyler , who has mind control powers due to his father James (Andrew Airlie) working on thought @-@ controlled weapons systems for Massive Dynamic . Peter tries to get into Tyler 's head by sharing his own stories of his father not believing in him , but Tyler rejects the attempts to bond , as he only needs a driver . Their destination is the home of Tyler 's mother , whom Tyler had been told was dead . When the two of them meet , Tyler wants her to run off so that they can be together again . She refuses , and Tyler becomes enraged at her husband when he returns home .

Tyler tries to force Peter to shoot the husband , but changes the target to Agent Broyles (Lance Reddick) when he arrives at the house with Olivia . Peter is forced to shoot Broyles , but manages to pull the gun off @-@ center so that the agent is only hit in the shoulder . After Peter crashes the car that both he and Tyler are in , Tyler is brought unconscious into custody . Nina Sharp (Blair Brown) writes a message to the absent William Bell updating him on the status of the " Carson @-@ Penrose " experiments (Claus Penrose is a scientist seen caring for a genetically engineered killer in the much earlier episode " The Same Old Story ") . Tyler is one of many identical boys placed with foster families , and James was his assigned guardian , not his father .

= = Production = =

" Of Human Action " was written by frequent writing partners Glen Whitman and Robert Chiappetta , and was directed by executive producer Joe Chappelle . It was shot in Vancouver in September 2009 ; the crew wrapped up production during the middle of the month , and then immediately

moved on to the following episode , " August " .

To simulate the police officer falling in the opening scene , the special effects department had the stunt double fall 52 feet onto an 18x24 feet airbag , which they referred to as " old @-@ fashioned " because they used the airbag rather than wires . Trevor Jones , the stuntman doing the scene , commented during shooting that his fall had a small margin of error , because of the small airbag and cement walls surrounding the area , " if you land off center maybe three or four feet , then you 're going to get pitched in that direction " . To aid Jones , a large X was placed on the airbag . A scene later in the episode involves a car fleeing through a garage door , only to hit a concrete wall , flip over , and burst into flames . To create the scene , the crew used two externally identical cars ; one was drivable , and the other was a shell of car , and was hooked to a cable rig . After taking a week to get everything set up , the crew used a nitrogen cannon to launch the second , undrivable car through the garage door via wires .

The episode featured a guest performance by Cameron Monaghan as the mind controller Tyler Carson . The actor tweeted after the episode 's broadcast , " Fringe was cool . What person in the world doesn 't wish they had mind @-@ controll [sic] powers ! " " Of Human Action " also had guest appearances by Andrew Airlie , Peter Graham @-@ Gaudreau , John Tench , Vincent Gale , Jacqueline Ann Steuart , and Doron Bell Jr ..

= = Music and cultural references = =

" Of Human Action " featured two songs , " Subtle Duck " by Charles Bissell and " Angel Love " by Samantha James . In honor of The Simpsons 's 20th anniversary , several shows in Fox 's lineup contained references to the show . In " Of Human Action " , Tyler uses a Homer Simpson Pez dispenser to store his mind @-@ control drugs , and the town he and Peter journey to is Springfield , the same name of the town in The Simpsons ; when Springfield appears in the sky , no state is shown , just like the ambiguity concerning the home state of The Simpsons .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

On its initial November 12 , 2009 broadcast in the United States , " Of Human Action " was watched by an estimated 5 @.@ 89 million viewers , and earned a 2 @.@ 2 ratings share among adults 18 ? 49 , tying the season average . This was a 29 percent increase from the previous episode 's 1 @.@ 7 rating , though that episode 's low ratings have been attributed to the unexpected end to the 2009 World Series . Despite the ratings improvement , " Of Human Action " led Fringe to finish in fourth place for its timeslot .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Of Human Action " received a very positive reaction from MTV 's Josh Wigler , writing " As a stand @-@ alone episode with some interesting character insight , this week 's Fringe was a success . It might also be a mythological success , too , should the big reveal at the end ? the fact that Massive Dynamic has inundated multiple children with telepathic abilities ? pan out in future episodes . " Andrew Hanson of the Los Angeles Times enjoyed being able to see more of Massive Dynamic , and praised Astrid 's increased presence in the plot . Airlock Alpha writer Tiffany Vogt called it a " gripping story with much emotional resonance , " especially with the father @-@ son parallels between Peter and Tyler .

The A. V. Club 's Noel Murray had a more mixed reaction , giving the episode a rating of C + and criticizing lead guest actor Cameron Monaghan , " In this role , he was a drag , playing ' rebellious teen ' in a stock , wooden way , with no extra layers . Also , nobody ? not even Joshua Jackson , whom I 've come to appreciate more as an actor over the run of this show ? could make the ' My

mind is being controlled ! ' scenes look anything other than goofy . " Murray also said , " Yet for all my griping , I was quite taken with the theme of this episode , and the motifs that writers Robert Chiappetta and Glen Whitman and director Joe Chappelle used to support it . From the tinfoil Peter Pan hats that Walter and Astrid wear to Tyler popping the medication that grants him his powers out of a Pez dispenser , there 's a lot in ' Of Human Action ' about childish things . " Ramsey Isler from IGN graded the episode 8 @. @ 0 / 10 , explaining that despite it being a " standalone " episode , it was " a high @-@ intensity , action @-@ filled tale that kept the adrenaline flowing . Fringe is usually more of a cerebral show , but there 's nothing wrong with appealing to our love of action every now and then " . Also positive was Chanel Reeder of Newsarama , who believed Fringe " totally deliver [ed] in its most recent episode . The twists are back , along with the dramatic high intensity moments that the show is known for . " Reeder praised the plot twist of Tyler being the mind controller , and was pleased with the increased presence of Massive Dynamic .