

= A Single Blade of Grass =

" A Single Blade of Grass " is the fifth episode of the second season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on October 24 , 1997 . The episode was written by Kay Reindl and Erin Maher , and directed by Rodman Flender . " A Single Blade of Grass " featured guest appearances by Floyd Red Crow Westerman and Michael Greyeyes .

Millennium centers on offender profiler Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) , who investigates unusual crimes as part of the private investigative organisation the Millennium Group . In this episode , Black investigates the murder of a Native American man , finding a cult who wish to bring about the end of American civilization .

" A Single Blade of Grass " was the first episode of the series to have been penned by Reindl and Maher . It received mixed responses from critics , and was viewed by approximately 6 @.@ 57 million households upon its initial broadcast .

= = Plot = =

In New York City , a young Native American man is forced by several others to ingest snake venom . The venom causes him to hallucinate , and one of the men , Joe Reynard (Michael Greyeyes) asks him to describe his visions . However , the poisoned man screams in agony and dies . His body is later found when a construction site is being excavated by archaeologists . A mummified body from centuries earlier is also found ; when Millennium Group member Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) arrives to investigate , he notices similarities between both corpses . The archaeologist in charge of the dig , Liz Michaels (Amy Steel) is adamant that the site should stay intact for further excavation , but foreman Richard Powell (Garry Chalk) and his mostly Native American crew insist building must continue .

Black believes the killing took place in a hotel basement ; finding the crime scene , he consults Michaels , who notes that symbols painted on the walls come from several different native cultures but all concern communication with the spirit world . Black visits a bar frequented by the native construction workers and their elderly mentor (Floyd Red Crow Westerman) . Reynard is among their number ; Black asks him about one of the symbols , and is told by the old man that the symbol is an ominous warning . After Black leaves , Reynard tells the others that he " is the one " .

The dead man is autopsied ; his corpse had been dismembered and reconstructed . Michaels notes that this is a Seneca ritual aimed at reviving the dead to learn of spiritual matters . Later , Black and Michaels are called the construction site , where Powell is attempting to package and remove the ancient remains . Reynard and Powell begin fighting ; the latter soon dies of a heart attack . When Black returns to his car , he finds a native face mask placed inside ; Michaels explains that it represents the ability to cross from the material world into the spirit world . Black believes a secret native tribe is awaiting the downfall and apocalypse of the society of the white settlers ; he theorizes that they believe his abilities are key to their prophecies of the end of the world .

That night , Black is kidnapped by the group of natives . He is taken to the sewers and forced to consume snake venom ; he sees visions , but insists they are from his psychic gift rather than from the venom . He predicts that the native tribes will reunite and that the buffalo will return to New York . However , he is soon rescued by Michaels and a group of police , who place Reynard and his tribe under arrest . As the tribe ? now reunited in police custody ? are led away , a travelling rodeo loses track of four buffalo , which run free through the city streets .

= = Production = =

" A Single Blade of Grass " is the first episode of Millennium to have been written by Kay Reindl and Erin Maher ; the pair would pen two further episodes in the second season , and another in the third season . The episode was the only contribution to the series by director Rodman Flender .

The episode featured the return of Black 's near @-@ psychic visions ; a phenomenon which had

been used with much less frequency in the second season . Executive producer Glen Morgan begrudgingly allowed Maher and Reindl to show the ability in this episode , saying " I felt last year those visions were a cheat . The camera would go to a coffee cup and Frank would say , ' The murderer used a coffee cup . ' It drove me nuts . What we were trying to do this year was elevate Frank 's visions to a dream @-@ like state , so he would have to interpret what he 's seeing . There would be more mystical , symbolic imagery that might give him more of a sense of what 's going on . I had wanted to strip away the gift for a long time and see if the show really played without it . But we got back into that " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" A Single Blade of Grass " was first broadcast on the Fox network on October 24 , 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 approximately 6 @.@ 57 million households , and left the episode the sixty @-@ seventh most @-@ viewed broadcast that week .

" A Single Blade of Grass " received mixed reviews from critics . The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode a A ? , calling it " yet another adventure in weird , Native American mysticism from the folks at 1013 Productions " . VanDerWerff felt that although the episode contained several plot holes , it worked with " a kind of dream sense , following its own weird , nightmare logic " . Bill Gibron , writing for DVD Talk , rated the episode 3 @.@ 5 out of 5 . Gibron found that the episode contained several overly @-@ unbelievable moments but was overall " another great episode , even with some rather minor flaws " . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , rated " A Single Blade of Grass " one star out of five . Shearman felt that the episode was " tedious " , citing a lack of any real action and a " banal " ending which he described as having been poorly foreshadowed . However , Shearman felt positively about the episode 's attempt to stand on its own rather than imitating sister show *The X @-@ Files* , which he saw several prior episodes as having done .