

= The Plateau ( Fringe ) =

" The Plateau " is the third episode of the third season of the American science fiction drama television series Fringe , and the 46th episode overall . As one of the early Season 3 episodes that takes place entirely in the parallel universe , the episode centers on Olivia , conditioned to believe she is a member of the alternate Fringe team , trying to track down a mentally unstable man that can predict the team 's every move .

" The Plateau " was co -written by Monica Owusu Breen and Alison Schapker , and directed by Brad Anderson . It featured the only appearance of guest actor Michael Eklund , who played the episode 's antagonist Milo Stanfield . It first aired on October 7 , 2010 to an estimated 5 . 2 million viewers . Reviews of the episode were mostly positive , and many praised the storyline and Eklund 's performance .

= = Plot = =

Olivia ( Anna Torv ) , trapped in the parallel universe , has been conditioned with drugs to believe she is her doppelganger , " Fauxlivia " , by Walternate ( John Noble ) , and has been integrated into the alternate Fringe team , though she is haunted by images of Peter ( Joshua Jackson ) and Walter ( Noble ) from the prime universe .

She , Charlie ( Kirk Acevedo ) , and Lincoln ( Seth Gabel ) are called to the scene of an accident where a pedestrian has been run over by a bus , nearly duplicating events of a similar bus accident the day before , a statistical impossibility according to Astrid ( Jasika Nicole ) . Olivia finds a ballpoint pen at the scene , a rarity in the parallel universe because of the adoption of digital interfaces . Evidence suggests that the discovery of the pen by a bystander created a sequence of reactions that led to the victim 's death . The next day , another pedestrian is wounded in a bus accident . As the Fringe team investigates the scene , finding another pen , a bystander is struck and killed by an ambulance . Olivia spots a suspicious man in the crowds , but he uses a seemingly random series of happenstance events to get away .

Olivia discovers ties between the three victims and a medical center . At the center , Dr. Levin ( Malcolm Stewart ) explains they help mentally challenged patients with experimental processes to boost their intelligence ; Olivia observes one set of patients uses pens as they are unable to cope with digital devices . When Olivia and Charlie discuss the victims with Dr. Levin , he is able to identify their culprit as Milo ( Michael Eklund ) , a patient taking an experimental drug to boost his IQ exponentially . Though released to care of his sole remaining family member Madeline ( Kacey Rohl ) , he was scheduled to return to reverse the process for his own health and safety . Dr. Levin identifies all three victims as those charged to return Milo to the center , the last victim only having been selected the day before . They visit Madeline , who worries for the safety of her brother . She explains that Milo is able to predict the outcome of numerous events to the smallest detail , and only by showing him a toy horse , a connection to their deceased parents , can she break Milo 's concentration . She provides Olivia and Charlie the location of the hotel that Milo is staying at .

As they return to the city , Olivia and Charlie discuss plans with Astrid on how to capture Milo , but realize that since he can predict their every move , any plan would be futile , and approach the hotel directly . Milo leads Olivia on a chase through a construction area including a marked zone where the air is too thin , expecting to crush her under a load of cement bricks . Olivia , unaware of the warning signs for the zone , races through it instead of stopping to put on a respirator , nearly asphyxiating herself , and dodges the bricks in time to capture Milo . At the center , Dr. Levin notes that Milo 's condition is too far advanced to reverse , and only a computer is able to keep up with his thoughts . Madeline sadly leaves the toy horse at Milo 's side .

That evening , Olivia has a vision of Peter ; the vision tries to break Olivia from the conditioning , explaining that her lack of knowledge of the parallel universe saved her life .

= = Production = =

In late March 2010 , Brothers & Sisters showrunners Monica Owusu @-@ Breen and Alison Schapker were hired as co @-@ executive producers for Fringe . The two had previously worked with Fringe co @-@ creators Roberto Orci , J.J. Abrams , and Alex Kurtzman on Alias , and again with Abrams on Lost . " The Plateau " marked the first Fringe episode they co @-@ wrote . Editor Timothy A. Good also joined the series , making " The Plateau " his first Fringe episode . Good called the episode one of two parts ? the second half was the season 's eighteenth episode " Bloodline " , which Breen and Schapker also co @-@ wrote . The episode premise was inspired by executive producer J.H. Wyman 's son , who came up with the idea that a man could be smart enough to predict events . " The Plateau " marked the first appearance of a fringe case in the parallel universe .

The episode featured the return of guest stars Kirk Acevedo , Ryan McDonald , Seth Gabel , and Philip Winchester . New guest actors included Michael Eklund as the antagonist Milo Stanfield , Malcolm Stewart as Dr. Levin , and Kacey Rohl as Madeline . Eklund and other actors auditioned in Vancouver , and the producers reviewed tapes of their previous work . As executive producer Jeff Pinkner explains , " We got incredibly lucky casting Michael Eklund for this role ... he really created this character . " " The Plateau " was the first episode of the third season to feature " Alt @-@ Astrid " , the prime universe Astrid 's doppelganger . Actress Jasika Nicole depicted her to have autistic characteristics , as Nicole has a sister with the disorder . The producers decided this would be the one doppelganger to have actual genetic differences with their counterpart , with Nicole believing her two characters possessed the greatest contrast among all of the doppelgangers .

Former Fringe producer Brad Anderson served as the episodes director . The episode was shot in August 2010 , partly on Hastings Street in Vancouver . Anderson filmed the opening sequence in one day , which Owusu @-@ Bree praised as " unbelievable . " The crew employed a stunt double for some of Eklund 's more physical scenes , such as when he jumps onto a moving bus . Pinkner called the bus scene his favorite stunt on the series thus far . The hospital where Olivia and Charlie interview the drug trial doctor was filmed at the Toronto Public Library . There , the video the doctor showed them was added later by effects supervisor Jay Worth , forcing the actors to fake reactions to the images displayed .

As with other Fringe episodes , Fox released a science lesson plan in collaboration with Science Olympiad for grade school children focusing on the science seen in " The Plateau " , with the intention of having " students learn about chain reactions , where small changes result in additional changes , leading to a self @-@ propagating chain of events . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

On its first broadcast on October 7 , 2010 , " The Plateau " was watched by an estimated 5 @. @ 2 million viewers , earning a 2 @. @ 0 / 5 ratings share for adults between the ages 18 and 49 . Time shifting viewing increased the episode 's ratings by 39 percent , finishing with a 2 @. @ 8 rating among adults .

= = = Reviews = = =

Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker called the episode " at once cool @-@ looking , heart @-@ tugging , and pretty simple " , especially when compared to previous episodes like " White Tulip " . Writing for The A.V. Club , Noel Murray graded the episode with an A , explaining " I can 't really find anything to complain about here . The direction was effectively moody and snappy , the performances were sharp , and the case was cool . " Murray praised the subtle characteristics of the parallel universe , the action scenes , and the use of split @-@ screens to visually show Milo 's predictions . MTV 's Josh Wigler believed that the episode " demonstrated how the mystery @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week format can still be compelling : by taking everything familiar and applying a

stark new layer of paint . " Andrew Hanson of the Los Angeles Times wrote " The third season of Fringe continues to get better with each episode . Most importantly , it has momentum . It 's moving forward with a distinct destination , and even though I know Fringe is heading somewhere , I have no idea where that might be , or what 's going to happen when we get there . Boy , if you 're not watching Fringe , you 're missing out . "

SFScope contributor Sarah Stegall thought the episode was similar to Flowers for Algernon , but was skeptical of the premise that Milo could predict every event before they happened . She criticized the decision to make Milo " coldly calculating " , writing " This is but another version of the tired cliché of the stoic intellectual , the intelligent person who has no heart or emotions . Why are we so afraid of smart people ? ... It always annoys me when science fiction writers , of all people , diss their own audience with the idea that intellectuals are dangerous . " Stegall was pleased to have the first " standalone " episode of the season , explaining that it was the first where she could " relax and enjoy ... the tying together of a standalone with a mythology theme was absolutely brilliant . " Fearnnet contributor Alyse Wax enjoyed the episode , but also thought " the idea that [ drugs ] could turn someone into a cartoonish evil genius is pretty farfetched . "

Many critics praised Eklund and his character , with one calling Milo " spindly , intense , and nicely chilling " . In a January 2011 article , The Futon Critic rated " The Plateau " the twenty @-@ first best television episode of 2010 out of a list of fifty . The A.V. Club ranked Fringe the 15th best show of 2010 , in particular citing " The Plateau " as a justification . Jeff Jensen of Entertainment Weekly named " The Plateau " the thirteenth best episode of the series , explaining " The first half of Fringe 's celebrated third season alternated between episodes set in the over here and over there worlds . In a tough call , we say the best of the over there stand @-@ alones was this brainy thriller about a dude with a low I.Q. who got an intelligence boost via nootropic drugs , and found himself becoming smarter and smarter , and more and more humanly detached , and causing chaos and death by concocting intricate chain reaction events . " In a similar list , Den of Geek named it the eighth best episode of the series , explaining that " The Plateau " stood out as " the best of a good crop of episodes " among the parallel universe storylines because of its villain and its use of Lincoln Lee , Charlie , and Olivia in action . "