

= The Beginning of the End (Lost) =

" The Beginning of the End " is the fourth season premiere , and 73rd episode overall , of the American Broadcasting Company 's television drama series Lost . It was aired on ABC in the United States and CTV in Canada on January 31 , 2008 . Co -@-@ creator / executive producer Damon Lindelof and executive producer Carlton Cuse wrote the premiere in late July 2007 , with most of the episode directed on location in Oahu , Hawaii , in August and September by executive producer Jack Bender . With this premiere , Jeff Pinkner no longer serves as an executive producer and staff writer . The episode was watched by 18 million Americans , bringing in the best ratings for Lost in 17 episodes . According to Metacritic , " The Beginning of the End " garnered " universal acclaim " .

The narrative takes place over 90 days after the crash of Oceanic Flight 815 , on December 23 , 2004 . The stranded crash survivors make contact with associates of Naomi Dorrit (played by Marsha Thomason) on a nearby freighter , but the survivors divide when they hear that those on the freighter may not be coming to rescue the survivors . Flashforwards show the post @-@ island lives of Hugo " Hurley " Reyes (Jorge Garcia) and Jack Shephard (Matthew Fox) . They are lying to the public about their time on the island . In flashforwards , Hurley has visions of his deceased friend Charlie Pace (Dominic Monaghan) ; in the present , Hurley grieves over Charlie 's death on the island . Daniel Faraday (Jeremy Davies) makes his first appearance in " The Beginning of the End " .

= = Plot = =

After being knifed in the back by John Locke (Terry O 'Quinn) in the third season finale , Naomi uses her satellite phone to call George Minkowski (Fisher Stevens) on the freighter . Before she dies , she tells him that her injury was an accident and to give her love to her sister . Meanwhile , Hurley finds Jacob 's cabin . He looks through the window and sees an unidentified man in a rocking chair , before someone steps up to the glass , only the left eye visible . Hurley runs away , but finds the cabin again ? in a different location . He squeezes his eyes shut and when he opens them , the building is gone and Locke appears .

Desmond Hume (Henry Ian Cusick) returns from the Looking Glass , bearing Charlie 's final message that the freighter offshore is not owned by Penny Widmore (Sonya Walger) . The survivors reunite at 815 's cockpit . Jack knocks Locke to the ground , takes his gun and pulls the trigger , but finds that the gun is not loaded because Locke had no intention of killing Jack earlier that day . Locke tells the castaways that they are in great danger and leaves for the Barracks with Hurley , James " Sawyer " Ford (Josh Holloway) , Claire Littleton (Emilie de Ravin) and her baby Aaron , Danielle Rousseau (Mira Furlan) and her captive Ben Linus (Michael Emerson) , Alex (Tania Raymonde) and her boyfriend Karl (Blake Bashoff) , Vincent the dog (Pono) and four other survivors . Soon after , Jack and Kate see a helicopter and meet Daniel .

Flashforwards show that Hurley is famous as one of the " Oceanic Six " after his escape from the island and is keeping quiet about his time there . Hurley encounters an apparition of Charlie . Shocked , he speeds away in his Camaro and is apprehended by Los Angeles police . Hurley is interrogated by Ana Lucia Cortez 's (Michelle Rodriguez) former partner Detective " Big " Mike Walton (Michael Cudlitz) and he lies that he has no knowledge of Ana Lucia . Hurley , looking at the interrogation room 's mirror glass , imagines seeing Charlie swimming in water until he breaks the glass and floods the room . Hurley willingly returns to the Santa Rosa Mental Health Institution , where he is visited by Matthew Abaddon (Lance Reddick) , who claims to be an attorney for Oceanic Airlines . When Abaddon fails to supply a business card , he asks if they are still alive before stealthily exiting . An apparition of Charlie appears who tells Hurley that " they " need him . Finally , Hurley is visited by Jack , who is thinking of growing a beard . Jack confirms that Hurley will not reveal the Oceanic Six 's secrets . Hurley apologizes for going with Locke and insists that they return to the island , but Jack refuses (which shows that these flashforwards occur before Jack 's flashforwards) .

= = Production = =

During casting , fake names , occupations and scenes were temporarily assigned to limit the leak of spoilers . Lance Reddick was told that he was auditioning for the part of " Arthur Stevens " , a " ruthless corporate recruiter " , instead of Matthew Abaddon . " Matthew " and " Abaddon " were revealed as season 4 clue words in the alternate reality game Find 815 . The writers chose the character 's surname after they read the Wikipedia article on Abaddon , which states that it means " place of destruction " . The writer @-@ producers were originally interested in having Reddick play Mr. Eko during the second season , however , he was busy starring on HBO 's The Wire . Jeremy Davies was cast as Daniel because he is one of the writer @-@ producers ' favorite character actors , and they think that his " transformative quality [and] the tremendous intelligence that seems to emanate from him ... seemed perfect for [the part] " , which was originally planned to be a recurring role . When Davies met costume designer Roland Sanchez , he was wearing a thin black tie . Sanchez merged this " cool , edgy look " with his idea for the character 's clothes : a " nerdy " loosely woven dress shirt from J.Crew.

Several different titles were proposed for the episode . The ultimate title is a reference to a line in the previous episode when Ben warns Jack that contacting the freighter " is the beginning of the end " . Filming began on August 17 and ended on or just after September 7 , 2007 . Garcia felt " a little pressure " because he had the lead role in the episode , but " was really excited , too [because it] was a different direction for a season premiere [that he] felt the fans would probably dig " . In the mental institution , Hurley is seen painting a picture of an Inuit man and an igloo . This was painted by Garcia . When the episode was broadcast , Christian appeared in Jacob 's cabin ; however , the scene was shot with another Hurley inside . Additionally , when Garcia was filming his interrogation scene in an aquarium , he was unaware that Charlie would be swimming outside and breaking the glass in the finished product . Charlie 's swim was filmed weeks after the rest of the episode had been shot , alongside production of " Meet Kevin Johnson " and the Lost : Missing Pieces mobisodes in late November 2007 . The scene was filmed with stunt double Jake Kilfoyle at the Looking Glass set that was previously used for the third season episodes titled " Greatest Hits " and " Through the Looking Glass " .

Most Lost episodes feature crossovers and " Easter eggs " ? intentionally hidden clues and references to the show 's mythology ? and " The Beginning of the End " is no exception . Despite being dead , Christian appears for a couple of seconds in Jacob 's cabin with no dialogue . Big Mike , who appears in Ana Lucia 's flashbacks in the second season episode " Collision " , returns in Hurley 's flashforward . Randy Nations (Billy Ray Gallion) appears in a few seconds with no dialogue , videotaping Hurley 's arrest . When Hurley hallucinates that Charlie is swimming outside the interrogation room , Charlie has " they need you " written on his hand . This is what Charlie tells Hurley later in the episode .

Due to production of the fourth season being put on hold due to the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike , the show runners wanted to hold the eight episodes that had been completed until they were able to make more of the season . ABC decided against this and announced that " The Beginning of the End " would be aired at the end of January 2008 , regardless of when the strike was to end . This was the first Lost episode to be aired on Thursday at 9 : 00 pm ET , a competitive and prestigious timeslot normally occupied by Grey 's Anatomy ; previous episodes had been aired on Wednesdays . Like the previous Lost season premieres , " The Beginning of the End " was scheduled for an outdoor premiere at Sunset on the Beach in Waikiki , Honolulu , where movies are regularly shown on a 30 @-@ foot (9 m) screen free to the public , but it was cancelled due to the writers ' strike . The original television broadcast of the episode was immediately preceded by a clip @-@ show titled " Lost : Past , Present & Future " .

= = Reception = =

Don Williams of BuddyTV dubbed " The Beginning of the End " " the most anticipated season premiere of the year " . It was watched by approximately 16 @.@ 137 million American viewers live

or within six hours with a 6 @. @ 7 / 17 in the key adults 18 ? 49 demographic , bringing in the best Nielsen ratings for Lost in seventeen episodes and ranking Lost eighth in the weekly charts . The episode was watched by a total of 17 @. @ 766 million viewers live or recorded and watched within seven days of broadcast and this number went toward the year @- @ end average . In Canada , " The Beginning of the End " was seen by 1 @. @ 855 million viewers , making Lost the sixth most watched program of the week . It brought in an audience almost double the size of that of the previous episode and greater than any third season episode , with the exception of the season premiere . The fourth season premiere was successful in the United Kingdom with 1 @. @ 1 million viewers . In Australia , Lost was the fifteenth most watched show of the night with 912 000 viewers , which was deemed disappointing by David Dale of The Sun @- @ Herald .

American critics were sent screener DVDs of " The Beginning of the End " and " Confirmed Dead " on January 28 , 2008 . Metacritic gave the episode a Metascore ? a weighted average based on the impressions of a select twelve critical reviews ? of 87 . Robert Bianco of USA Today wrote that " returning with a heart @- @ stopping , perfectly pitched episode ... Lost is an oasis in a strike @- @ parched TV desert . " Mary McNamara of the Los Angeles Times described " The Beginning of the End " as an " emotion @- @ churning chemical dump right in the old brain stem ? horror , hysteria , regret , adrenaline and what ... will happen next ? " Adam Buckman of the New York Post gave the episode four out of four stars . Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune " blissfully enjoyed every minute " and noted that " there aren ' t any faults " . Diane Werts of Newsday raved the episode as " superb " and " insanely entertain [ing] " and concluded her review with " Lost seems to have found itself " . Tim Goodman of the San Francisco Chronicle declared that it and " Confirmed Dead " " are roller coasters of fast action and revelation [that are] good to see " . Matthew Gilbert of The Boston Globe pointed out that " Lost can still make the pulse race and the brain tingle ... [and] remains TV ' s most gripping serial " . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @- @ Ledger was unsure " if Lost is ever going to give satisfying answers to its many , many remaining mysteries ... but when it ' s as scary and hilarious and moving and exciting as these two episodes , I ' m okay with that . " In less positive reviews , Rodney Ho of The Atlanta Journal @- @ Constitution called it " a satisfactory return episode with a fair share of drama and pathos ... [that] provides just enough revelations to keep fans hungry for more " and David Hinckley of the Daily News rated the episode with three stars out of a possible five .

Brian Lowry of Variety said that " Lost ' s return goes down like a welcome tonic as scripted TV fades to black ... providing an unusually generous array of juicy moments for the large (and , at times , neglected) cast . " Mark Medley of the National Post called it " a brilliant season premiere " with multiple " jaw @- @ dropping moments " . Jeff Jensen of Entertainment Weekly felt that the premiere was mind @- @ blowing and featured good acting by Garcia . Frazier Moore of the Associated Press wrote that " Lost is further upping the ante , and heightening the pressure on us as the show ' s vast mythology continues to metastasize . " Kristin Dos Santos of E ! called it " so well written , produced , acted and directed it felt like a movie " . Michael Ausiello of TV Guide described it as " easily one of the best hours of TV so far this season . " Bruce Fretts of TV Guide responded well to Reddick ' s performance . Chris Carabott of IGN gave the episode 9 @. @ 1 / 10 , stating that it was " a great start to what promises to be an exciting ... season 4 . The momentum and pacing is on par with last season ' s finale " . LTG of Television Without Pity graded it as an " A ? " . Jon Lachonis of UGO gave the episode an " A + " , calling it " a crushingly emotional , action packed introduction ... [which proves] that ... Lost ' s groundbreaking protean form still has plenty of blinding ways to dazzle and entertain in a way that is nonetheless unique unto itself . " Oscar Dahl of BuddyTV wrote that " the episode was pretty much a masterpiece " . Daniel of TMZ graded it as an " A " , saying that it was perfect and set up the rest of the season well .