

= Concentrate and Ask Again =

" Concentrate and Ask Again " is the 12th episode of the third season of the American science fiction drama television series *Fringe* , and the 55th episode overall . In the episode , the Fringe division enlists the help of a troubled telepathic man (Omid Abtahi) in their investigation of a mysterious blue killing powder . Abtahi , Kevin Corrigan , Jody Thompson , and Paul Jarrett guest starred .

Graham Roland and Matthew Pitts co @-@ wrote the episode , while Dennis Smith directed . The episode first aired in the United States on February 4 , 2011 to an estimated 4 @.@ 3 million viewers on its initial broadcast , a 16 percent drop in viewership from the previous two Friday episodes , " Reciprocity " and " The Firefly " . " Concentrate and Ask Again " received mixed to positive reviews from television critics , with writers praising the advancement of the series ' mythology but criticizing the main mystery plot .

= = Plot = =

A lead scientist for a pharmaceutical company is killed by a blue powder that turns his bones into dust . The Fringe division traces the source of the package which contained the powder to a former Marine ; when they search his home , Peter (Joshua Jackson) finds the man nearby and gives chase , but the man is hit by a car and knocked into a coma . Broyles (Lance Reddick) fears that there may be others involved in targeted attacks . Walter (John Noble) suggests they read the man 's mind to learn of any such plot using the ability of one of his undocumented nootropic Cortexiphan patients , Simon Phillips , (Omid Abtahi) . Simon , who is unable to control his telepathic abilities , has isolated himself from the general population for two decades , but finds some comfort in not being able to read the mind of Olivia (Anna Torv) ? a fellow Cortexiphan patient . Olivia convinces Simon to help them with the ongoing investigation despite the mental anguish he will suffer in a large crowded city such as Boston . During their time together , Olivia explains her concerns over Peter , wondering if he still feels any attraction to her alternate self , Fauxlivia , in the parallel universe . Meanwhile , three military contractors are killed by the release of the compound in an elevator , confirming Broyles ' fears .

With Simon 's ability and Nina Sharp 's (Blair Brown) help , the team learn of a " Project Jellyfish " , a secret military bioweapon project that the comatose man and two others were involved in , aimed at developing a chemical agent that destroys skeletons . Though they were given inoculations to negate the effects of the chemical agent , their exposure was passed to their stillborn children who had developed without skeletons . Realizing that the men are seeking revenge on those involved with Project Jellyfish , the Fringe team determines the identity of the last intended victim , a former military general running for public office . With Simon 's help , Olivia is able to neutralize the two targets before they release the powder at a dinner gala for the general . As Olivia returns Simon to his home , he hands her an envelope that contains what he had read of Peter 's thoughts .

In side plots , Nina has recovered different translations of the tomes about the First People , including one from William Bell 's personal safe , and realizes that they all say the same thing in different languages . She identifies the name of the author of each book as an anagram of the name " Sam Weiss " , the bowling alley owner who she had directed Olivia to after her initial return from the parallel universe . She approaches Sam , who does not deny he wrote the books , and who explains that the doomsday device being constructed can either create or destroy a universe ; how that will work will depend on Peter , who is biologically tuned to the device . Sam posits that Peter will most likely save the universe from which the Olivia he loves originates . The episode ends with Olivia reading the note from Simon , which states that Peter still has feelings for Fauxlivia .

= = Production = =

" Concentrate and Ask Again " was written by co @-@ producer Graham Roland and story editor Matthew Pitts , a former assistant of series co @-@ creator J.J. Abrams . The last episode Roland

co @-@ wrote was the season three episode " The Abducted " , while Pitts ' last writing credit was the season three episode " Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " . Dennis Smith directed the episode , his first Fringe credit since the season two episode " August " .

" Concentrate and Ask Again " featured guest star Omid Abtahi as telepathic Simon Phillips , his only credit for the series . Guest actor Kevin Corrigan returned as recurring character Sam Weiss . The episode featured guest stars Jody Thompson and Paul Jarrett as the new characters Sara Downey and Warren Blake , respectively . Thompson called the part " the kind of role that actors dream of " . She described the episode , " The material was so compelling and perfectly written it was a matter of not getting in the way of what the creators had created . I ' m anxious about how it will come off . Truthfully , I ' ve been torturing myself , wondering if I have somehow ruined the beauty of what I read in the script " .

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 " Concentrate and Ask Again " , with the intention of having " students learn about bones and the nature of their chemical and physical composition . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Concentrate and Ask Again " was watched by an estimated 4 @. @ 3 million viewers in the United States on its initial broadcast , earning a 1 @. @ 6 rating . It was a 16 percent drop in viewership from the previous two Friday episodes , " Reciprocity " and " The Firefly " . With 7 @-@ day out time shifted viewings taken into account , over 6 @. @ 0 million viewers ultimately watched " Concentrate and Ask Again " , including a 56 percent increase in the 18 ? 49 age group , the largest percentage gains of any other show of that week .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mixed to fairly positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly staff member Ken Tucker called " Concentrate and Ask Again " the completion of a trilogy of episodes that " bring together a lot of the show ' s mythology . " However , he did not believe the main plot to be all that fascinating , commenting that it " could have passed for an episode of Undercovers . " Instead , Tucker enjoyed the smaller details in the episode , such as the room full of items owned by William Bell ; he also praised guest actor Omid Abtahi ' s " marvelously anguished " performance .

Carissa Pavlica from TV Fanatic noted , " ' Concentrate and Ask Again ' " did little to drive the overriding story forward , but it did a brilliant job of making me question everything . " Nonetheless , she commented that it " ... was nowhere near as intense as ' Reciprocity ' . " IGN writer Ramsey Isler did not think there was anything " particularly remarkable about the core elements of this story ? it ' s the same old formula that both Fringe and The X @-@ Files used frequently ? but the episode has a generous helping of little revealing character elements sprinkled throughout . " Isler praised the final ten minutes for " provid [ing] some really interesting action " with Olivia ' s ending of the case , and the revelation of Simon ' s note in conjunction with Sam ' s knowledge of the First People . He ultimately graded the episode 7 @. @ 5 / 10 .

Fearnet staffer Alyse Wax highlighted the episode ' s opening scene in her review of the best television " kills " of 2011 .