

= 6B (Fringe) =

" 6B " is the 14th episode of the third season of the American science fiction drama television series Fringe , and the 57th episode overall . In the episode , the fringe team investigates mysterious deaths at an apartment building , the result of a merging between the prime and parallel universes ; while there , they encounter a woman who claims to be able to see the ghost of her deceased husband .

Story editors Glen Whitman and Robert Chiappetta co @-@ wrote " 6B " , while cinematographer Thomas Yatsko directed . The episode featured appearances from recurring actors Ryan McDonald and Seth Gabel as well as one @-@ time guest stars Phyllis Somerville and Ken Pogue . The episode first aired in the United States on February 18 , 2011 on the Fox network , and was watched by an estimated 4 @.@ 1 million viewers . Television critics gave the episode generally mixed reviews .

= = Plot = =

Six partygoers simultaneously fall to the sidewalk outside the Rosencrantz apartment building in Brooklyn , apparently having jumped from a seventh floor balcony along with the balcony 's furniture . When the Fringe team investigates , Peter (Joshua Jackson) and Walter (John Noble) determine by the location of the bodies that they seem to have fallen through the balcony , as if it momentarily ceased to exist . From other stories of strange phenomena occurring throughout the building , Walter concludes that the same cracks in reality that have harmed the parallel universe are starting to appear in the prime one , with the building occupying a weak spot between universes .

Peter and Olivia (Anna Torv) are sent by Walter to observe the building as he monitors seismic equipment from the lab . Peter and Olivia go to a bar while waiting , where Olivia tries to kiss Peter but becomes uncomfortable , knowing of the influence of her parallel universe doppelganger , Fauxlivia (Torv) , on Peter . Her emotional reaction triggers her ability to see once again the " shimmer " around Peter that marks him as a native of the parallel universe . She excuses herself and steps outside for some fresh air , followed by Peter . Olivia notices a similar glow emanating from the windows of apartment 6B in the Rosencrantz building , owned by the widow Mrs. Alice Merchant (Phyllis Somerville) . When Olivia and Peter enter the apartment , Olivia (but not Peter) can see a shimmering figure that Alice claims is the ghost of her late husband Derek (Ken Pogue) . Walter surmises that the figure is a parallel Derek seen across a crack between the universes . If the crack widens , Walter predicts they would see occurrences of the same singularities that have plagued the parallel universe , and suggests the use of the same amber @-@ like compound they had previously recovered (" The Ghost Network ") to limit the damage . With Massive Dynamic 's resources , they are able to recreate the amber and a release system to encase the building , but hold it in reserve as a last resort only .

Olivia suggests the possibility that the effect is due to quantum entanglement between Alice in the prime universe and Derek in the parallel one . Alice previously told Olivia that Derek died recently from trying to replace a faulty fuse after they flipped a coin to decide who would replace it , and Walter surmises that the parallel universe Alice died in a similar fashion due to a different outcome of the coin flip . Alice 's connection to the parallel universe Derek is causing the crack . As the building starts to exhibit the initial signs of a singularity and Broyles (Lance Reddick) prepares to release the amber , Olivia and Peter attempt to persuade Alice that the man she sees is not really her husband . Alice does not believe them until Derek starts to refer to their children . Alice , who is childless , realizes Peter and Olivia are telling the truth ; the connection is broken and the effects on the building ebb away .

Though they did not need to deploy the amber , Walter realizes how close he was to making the same decisions that Walternate (Noble) , Walter 's doppelganger in the parallel universe , had to make to save his universe ; Nina (Blair Brown) helps to counsel him . Meanwhile , Olivia and Peter attempt to reconcile and rekindle their relationship . Though still cautious about moving forward , Olivia and Peter kiss and head to the bedroom upstairs at the Bishops ' home .

In the parallel universe , Fauxlivia and Lincoln (Seth Gabel) investigate reports of a Fringe event in the Rosencrantz building , and speak with Derek , who tells them he has not noticed anything out of the ordinary . The two leave , and Derek is left paging sadly through a photo album filled with pictures of him and his late wife and their daughters .

= = Production = =

The episode was co @-@ written by story editors Glen Whitman and Robert Chiappetta , while being directed by cinematographer and Fringe director of photography Thomas Yatsko . The last credit Whitman and Chiappetta received was for the season 's sixth episode , " 6955 kHz " . Yatsko last directed the second season episode " White Tulip " . Alluding to the week the episode broadcast , executive producer Jeff Pinkner called " 6B " " our Valentine ? s Day episode . It ? s all different versions of a love story . "

While filming , first assistant director Brian Giddens summarized the episode as " the fringe team [finding] out there 's been an accident on a balcony " . The focus of " 6B " centered on the idea of ghosts , which was affirmed by actor Joshua Jackson , who called it " a Fringe ghost story " . Referring to the episode 's intensity level , Jackson noted that " on a scale of chile peppers , I 'd say it 's high habanero " . Pinkner remarked that " 6B " and the following episode " Subject 13 " would " tell deep and meaningful sides of the Olivia and Peter story . One in the present [" 6B "] and one in the past [" Subject 13 "] . "

The episode guest starred Phyllis Somerville , known for her recent work on the Showtime series The Big C that ended in her character 's death . Somerville expressed hope that the science fiction nature of Fringe would convince The Big C writers to hire her back , commenting " maybe I can get those sci @-@ fi folks to hook me up with a good gadget that will allow Marlene to come back to life and bug Laura Linney some more . " " 6B " featured recurring guest actors Ryan McDonald and Seth Gabel as Massive Dynamic scientist Brandon Fayette and Agent Lincoln Lee , respectively . The episode also featured one @-@ time guest star Ken Pogue as Alice 's husband Derek .

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 " 6B " , with the intention of having " students learn about spectroscopy and how it can be used to determine certain characteristics of things . "

= = Cultural references = =

Some critics believed that the name of the apartment building , as well as Walter 's coin tosses coming up heads , are references to the 1966 tragicomedy Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead , which in turn derives from the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern , two minor characters in Shakespeare 's Hamlet .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" 6B " was watched by an estimated 4 @.@ 1 million viewers on its first broadcast , earning a ratings share of 1 @.@ 5 , up 7 percent from the previous week 's episode . It led other shows in the same timeslot by more than 20 percent for the 18 @-@ 34 adult viewership market , and second only to Kitchen Nightmares for the night . Three days of time shifted viewing increased the 18 @-@ 49 adult rating to 2 @.@ 3 , a 52 percent increase from its previous rating of 1 @.@ 5 .

= = = Reviews = = =

Entertainment Weekly staff writer Ken Tucker thought it was not " the best Fringe episode " ,

primarily because of " its Twilight Zone construction , with a supernatural event serving as a big , obvious metaphor for ... the rift between lovers (Peter and Olivia ; the elderly couple Alice and Derek) " . Tucker disliked Olivia 's return to " season 1 @-@ one @-@ Olivia poker @-@ faced dolorousnes " and also " worr [ied] about the imbalance between the series ' romantic , family , and mythology ingredients " . Andrew Hanson from the Los Angeles Times felt that the episode 's emphasis on emotions (instead of plain science) was " turning its back on the science that made [Fringe] great " . Hanson also wished the parallels between Walter and Walternate 's decisions had been explored further .

The A.V. Club 's Noel Murray graded the episode a B- , explaining that , despite the " nice moments (including a strong start and a sweet finish) " , the plot was minimal and there were many moments he was exasperated with the Peter @-@ Olivia relationship . For Murray , the episode was " saved " by its small touches , such as when Alice is finally convinced the ghost is not her husband when he mentions " the girls miss you " .

In her 2011 book *Into the Looking Glass : Exploring the Worlds of Fringe* , author Sarah Clarke Stuart found parallels between the episode and the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami , which occurred several weeks after " 6B " aired . Items of comparison included the " cracks " in the universe and shifting tectonic plates , and the " vortex " and the tsunami swallowing up entire villages . Clarke Stuart noted that " because of its destabilizing character , the natural world is often depicted as the antagonist in science fiction and adventure narratives " like Fringe .