

= Owls (Millennium) =

" Owls " is the fifteenth episode of the second season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It originally aired on the Fox network on March 6 , 1998 . The episode was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong , and directed by Thomas J. Wright . " Owls " featured guest appearances by Kristen Cloke , R. G. Armstrong and Kimberly Patton .

Millennium Group offender profilers Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) and Peter Watts (Terry O 'Quinn) become embroiled in a growing schism within the Group , prompted by the discovery of the True Cross . " Owls " is a two @-@ part episode , with the story continued in " Roosters " .

" Owls " was inspired by the earlier second season episode " The Hand of St. Sebastian " , with Morgan wishing to introduce secular beliefs within the Millennium Group . The episode has received positive responses from critics , and was viewed by approximately 5 @.@ 5 percent of the available audience in its initial broadcast .

= = Plot = =

In Damascus , Syria , a team of men excavate a piece of petrified wood ? the True Cross . They are interrupted by the arrival of two armed assailants ; one of the excavators , Le Fur , clutches the wood as a shield , and the attackers ' guns jam when they attempt to fire on him . However , when Le Fur attempts to smuggle the wood out of the country , he is killed by a bomb at the airport and the cross is taken by a man named Helmut Gunsche . Gunsche later calls his employer , Rudolf Axmann , to inform him of the theft ; Axmann 's cufflinks bear a Germanic rune .

In Seattle , Washington , Catherine Black (Megan Gallagher) meets Clear Knight (Kimberly Patton) , an executive at Aerotech International . Knight offers Black a position as a counselor for the fledgling company , which she accepts .

Millennium Group member Peter Watts (Terry O 'Quinn) meets several other Group members to discuss the competing factions within the Group ? the Roosters believe that the coming millennium will trigger a theological apocalypse , while the Owls believe the end of the world will be a secular , material disaster . The discovery and theft of the True Cross threatens to tip the internecine conflict in the favor of the Owls , leaving them in control of the Group ; the assembled members are Roosters and wish to stop this .

Meanwhile , Lara Means (Kristen Cloke) , another Group member , sees a vision of an angel . She begins researching her visions , and is scouted by a Mr. Johnston , who asks her to work with the Owl faction . Meanwhile , Catherine 's husband Frank Black (Lance Henriksen) returns home to find Watts in the house . Watts explains that Black 's modem has been bugged ; the two argue heatedly and Black declares he is done with the Group .

Watts and Means discuss the theft of the Cross ; Watts explains that it is fabled to grant its possessor invulnerability , and that the Nazis had attempted to find it to turn the tide of the Second World War . Means believes that the Owls would not have stolen it , as they would not wish to risk sparking a civil war within the Group . Elsewhere , Catherine leaves work at Aerotech one evening , and finds that her car will not start . She is met by Knight , who invites the Black family to her home ; it is seen that she wears the same Germanic rune cufflinks as Axmann .

Johnston is driving along a quiet road , when his car is overtaken by Gunsche . Gunsche forces Johnston off the road , strangles him to death , and places a piece of wood ? meant to resemble the Cross ? inside Johnston 's car , before setting him and the car ablaze . The remains are later examined by Watts and Means ; they cannot determine if the wood is the Cross or not . However , Watts finds Johnston 's partially burnt diary , and reads an entry about his contacting Means . Suspecting betrayal , he expels Means from the Group immediately .

Meanwhile , Black realizes that a painting he has seen in Knight 's office was a watercolor by Adolf Hitler . He then notices two men watching his house from a car . He approaches and holds them at gunpoint , and they identify themselves as Group members ; however , one of them discreetly draws his own pistol .

= = Production = =

" Owls " was written by frequent collaborators Glen Morgan and James Wong . It was the twelfth episode to have been written by the pair , who had penned several across the first and second seasons of the series . The pair had also taken the roles of co @-@ executive producers for the season . " Owls " was directed by Thomas J. Wright ; Wright had directed eleven episodes previously and would helm a further fourteen over the series ' run . Wright would also go on to direct " Millennium " , the series ' crossover episode with its sister show The X @-@ Files .

Morgan has noted that the plot for " Owls " , and the concluding two @-@ part episode " Roosters " , grew out of the internecine conflict seen within the Millennium Group in " The Hand of St. Sebastian " , an earlier second season episode he had penned with Wong . Morgan had wanted to introduce secular elements to the series ' focus on eschatology , after the theological focus of the earlier episode ; he began focussing on ideas such as biological warfare as a possible way of depicting the end of the world ? an idea which would later play out in the two @-@ part episodes concluding the second season , " The Time Is Now " and " The Fourth Horseman " .

Guest star Kimberly Patton had worked with Morgan and Wong on several occasions prior to this episode , appearing in " Blood " , an episode of The X @-@ Files they had written , as well as acting in Space : Above and Beyond , the pair 's short @-@ lived science fiction series .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Owls " was first broadcast on the Fox network on March 6 , 1998 . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 5 @.@ 5 during its original broadcast , meaning that 5 @.@ 5 percent of households in the United States viewed the episode . This represented approximately 5 @.@ 39 million households , and left the episode the seventy @-@ ninth most @-@ viewed broadcast that week .

The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode an " A " , finding it " exhilarating " despite its seemingly nonsensical plot . However , VanDerWerff felt that the episode moved at a constant and entertaining pace , and that it and " Roosters " never felt stretched out longer than they should have been . Bill Gibron , writing for DVD Talk , rated the episode 5 out of 5 , writing that it " poses amazing questions while precisely and purposefully offering up the answers " . Gibron felt that the episode was a perfect summation of the themes which had been hinted at in the earlier episode " Beware of the Dog " , and would set the tone for the season . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , rated " Owls " three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . Shearman felt the episode was entertaining and fun , but that its plot was confusing and cluttered . However , he felt that the episode served as a better version of " The Hand of St. Sebastian " , with the slower pace of a two @-@ part episode allowing for greater " gravitas " to be given to the storyline .