

= A Many Splendored Thing ( Homicide : Life on the Street ) =

" A Many Splendored Thing " is the second season finale of the American police drama television series Homicide : Life on the Street , and the thirteenth overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 27 , 1994 . In the episode , Pembleton and Bayliss investigate the S & M @-@ related murder of a young woman , which forces an uncomfortable Bayliss to confront his darker side . Meanwhile , Lewis is disturbed when a man commits murder over a \$ 1 @.@ 49 pen , and a despairing Munch crashes Bolander 's date and ruins it by venting his own romantic woes .

Written by Noel Behn and directed by John McNaughton , " A Many Splendored Thing " was not originally planned to close the second season , but the expected finale " Bop Gun " was changed to the season premiere to capitalize on a guest performance by Robin Williams . The homicide case in " A Many Splendored Thing " involving a man who committed murder over a pen was based on a similar real @-@ life killing that took place in Anne Arundel County , Maryland . The episode featured the second of two guest appearances by actress Julianna Margulies as Linda , Bolander 's romantic interest , as well an appearance by Adrienne Shelly as the owner of an S & M fashion store .

" A Many Splendored Thing " marked the final appearance by Jon Polito , who had played Detective Steve Crosetti since the series debuted , but was dismissed reportedly because NBC officials were unhappy with his physical appearance . Polito was publicly critical of the show after his dismissal . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode was seen by 11 @.@ 2 million household viewers , slight increase from the previous week 's episode , " Black and Blue " . It received generally positive reviews , and was identified by The Baltimore Sun as one of the ten best episodes of the series . " A Many Splendored Thing " was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay of an Episodic Drama .

= = Plot summary = =

Pembleton ( Andre Braugher ) and Bayliss ( Kyle Secor ) investigate the murder of Angela Frandina , who was found strangled in her bed clutching a note reading , " Ed did it " , although it proves to be a false lead . Their investigation leads the detectives to discover Angela had several strange boyfriends and worked at an S & M fashion store and a phone sex hotline . The two detectives visit the Eastern Shores Marketing Phone Sex operation where they speak with the manager , Ed . Ed tells them about a boyfriend of Angela 's named Chris Novoselic ( Dan Garrett ) who used to spend time with her at an S & M club called ' The Eve of Destruction ' on Fayette Street . Pembleton and Bayliss go to the Eve of Destruction to question Novoselic . During questioning , Bayliss gets angry and loses his cool with Novoselic slamming the leather @-@ clad , multi @-@ pierced freak against the wall telling him that if he doesn 't start giving them some answers , he is gonna slap some cuffs on him , take him downtown and knock him around ' whereby Novoselic responds by telling Bayliss , ' If you do that , I might have to kiss you ! ' . Pembleton calms Bayliss and they leave . While driving , Bayliss claims to be disgusted by the sexual taboos , but Pembleton insists everybody has a darker side and that until Bayliss recognizes his own , his virtues can never truly be tested . Pembleton and Bayliss return to the S & M fashion store and ask about leather belts with bead patterns matching the marks on Angela 's neck . Store owner Tanya ( Adrienne Shelly ) tells them Angela 's neighbor Jeremy ( Scott Nielson ) has a jacket with a matching belt . After an interrogation , Jeremy confesses to choking and accidentally killing Angela with the belt during quirky and violent ( but consensual ) sex . As a thank you for solving the case , Tanya brings Bayliss a leather jacket as gift , which he reluctantly accepts . That night , Bayliss visits Baltimore 's red light district wearing the jacket , as a way to test himself as Pembleton suggested . He is approached by a prostitute but rejects her , thus passing the test .

Lewis ( Clark Johnson ) and Crosetti ( Jon Polito ) investigate the fatal shooting of a man , who was apparently killed for a \$ 1 @.@ 49 pen . Lewis believes there must be more to the story , refusing to believe a pen is worth killing for . When they search suspect Mitchell Forman 's ( Sal S. Koussa )

apartment , they find thousands of pens , many of which line the walls like bizarre decorations . Lewis later finds Forman at the police station , where he originally planned to turn himself in , but instead went up to the roof to commit suicide . Lewis lures Forman away from the ledge by enticing him with a beautiful golden pen , which belonged to Lewis ' deceased grandmother . Forman is taken into custody . Later , Lewis still cannot believe someone would kill over a pen , but Gee ( Yaphet Kotto ) suggests it is no worse than killing over a car or woman . Lewis , determined not to develop such a strong attachment to a material item , gives his grandmother 's pen to Felton ( Daniel Baldwin ) .

Meanwhile , although Munch ( Richard Belzer ) is cynical and despairing over his recent break @-@ up with ex @-@ girlfriend Felicia , the normally @-@ grumpy Bolander ( Ned Beatty ) is unusually cheerful as a result of his budding romantic relationship with Linda ( Julianna Margulies ) , a much younger ( 26 @-@ year @-@ old ) waitress . Nervous about his first real date with her , Bolander asks Howard ( Melissa Leo ) to go on a double @-@ date with him , along with Howard 's boyfriend , prosecuting attorney Ed Danvers ( ?eljko Ivanek ) . The double date goes well until a lonely Munch crashes , joins the table and ruins the mood of the evening complaining about his romantic woes . Bolander , Munch and Linda leave together and walk to Fort McHenry , where Linda offers Munch words of encouragement . Impressed with her , Munch leaves Linda and Bolander alone , where they happily watch a fireworks show .

= = Production = =

" A Many Splendored Thing " was written by Noel Behn and directed by John McNaughton , who previously directed Homicide star Richard Belzer in the film Mad Dog and Glory ( 1993 ) . Like the other three second season episodes , the script for " A Many Splendored Thing " was already finished by the time the first season ended , but due to poor Nielsen ratings throughout the duration of the show , NBC executives asked for several refinements ? including fewer episode subplots and less camera movements and jump cuts ? before approving a second season . " A Many Splendored Thing " was the second season finale . The season premiere , " Bop Gun " , was originally meant to serve as the finale , but NBC decided to instead open the season with it , with the hopes of getting increased ratings from a guest appearance by actor Robin Williams .

The title " A Many Splendored Thing " is a reference to the 1952 historical romance novel A Many @-@ Splendoured Thing and the subsequent film Love Is a Many @-@ Splendored Thing ( 1955 ) . The title refers to the episode 's theme of the many variations of love , as demonstrated by the sexual taboos from the world of Angela Frandina , the dysfunctional relationship of Munch and Felicia , the budding romance between Bolander and Linda , and the twisted love Mitchell Forman harbors for pens . The Forman case was inspired by a real @-@ life murder that took place in Anne Arundel County , Maryland , in which a 23 @-@ year @-@ old man shot another man 10 times in a doughnut shop when the victim refused to sell the shooter his pen . During the double date Munch crashes , Howard becomes depressed about the hopelessness of life and love , leaving unhappily with Danvers . This scene foreshadows the eventual break @-@ up of Howard and Danvers , which occurs at an unspecified time in the third season .

The episode marked the final appearance by Jon Polito , who had been a regular cast member since the series debuted , but was dismissed reportedly because NBC officials were unhappy with his weight and physical appearance and did not believe he appealed to audiences . The departure was not amicable , as Polito publicly criticized the direction Homicide had taken in the second season and claimed he voiced concerns about the recent scripts to Fontana and Menaul . " A Many Splendored Thing " featured the second of two guest appearances by actress Julianna Margulies as Linda . A few months later , Margulies started her long @-@ running lead role as nurse Carol Hathaway on the medical drama series ER . She was cast in the part after having worked with Fontana on the unaired pilot of Philly Heat , an ABC miniseries he worked on about members of the Philadelphia Fire Department . Tom Fontana had offered Margulies a recurring role on Homicide , but she turned it down in favor of ER . " A Many Splendored Thing " also featured a guest appearances by Adrienne Shelly who played S & M fashion store owner Tanya Quinn , and Sal

Koussa as murder suspect Mitchell Forman . Koussa was not a professional actor , and was working as a waiter at Ristorante i Ricchi , a Washington , D.C. favorite , when the episode was filmed .

The songs " Hideaway " and " Out of Time " , both of which were written by Bernie McNabb and performed by Scarlet Bride , were featured in " A Many Splendored Thing " . Other featured songs include " Whoa " by Soul Asylum , the Donna Summer song " Bad Girls " , and a rendition of Italian composer Ottorino Respighi 's " Feste Romane " , as performed by the Oregon Symphony .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

NBC had renewed Homicide for a second season to assess how the show performed in the Nielsen ratings and make a determination whether to continue the series . The series premiere , " Bop Gun " , drew unusually large viewership numbers due to a guest appearance by Robin Williams , but the subsequent episodes had dropped in the ratings , making the viewership of " A Many Splendored Thing " particularly important for the future of the series . Fontana said if the episode performed well , " NBC 's going to have to do some hard thinking . " In its original American broadcast on January 27 , 1994 , " A Many Splendored Thing " was watched by 11 @.@ 2 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research , earning the episode an 11 @.@ 9 rating . That constituted a slight increase from the previous week 's episode , " Black and Blue " , which was seen by 10 @.@ 83 million households . It was the 37th highest rated television show of the week , tied with the Fox animated comedy series The Simpsons . " A Many Splendored Thing " faced unusually tough competition in its timeslot from the ABC news series Primetime Live , which did a special report about convicted murderer Richard Allen Davis .

= = = Reviews = = =

" A Many Splendored Thing " received generally positive reviews . It was identified by The Baltimore Sun as one of the ten best episodes of the series . Sun writers David Zurawik and Chris Kaltenbach particularly praised the creative pairing of Ned Beatty and Julianna Margulies , of whom they said , " somehow it is as touching a love story as you could want " . The Washington Post television reviewer Tom Shales strongly complimented the episode , especially for its serious and unflinching approach to disturbing and twisted events like the Forman murder : " Homicide is more than a superb cop show ; it 's a helpful guide on dealing with the madness of the modern world . It 's Attention Television ? a program that grips one 's attention and rewards it . " The Atlanta Journal @-@ Constitution writer Drew Juber said the episode " shifts deftly between the underbelly of cop work and the surprising moments of light that leak into these detectives ' lives " . Greg Paeth of The Cincinnati Post called it " another stunning installment of a cop drama that defines the genre " , and particularly praised the " perfect " performance of Ned Beatty . Baltimore Sun writer David Bianculli called the episode superb and said Adrienne Shelly left a " stunning impression in her performance . Bianculli said it left him " hungry for the next episode , " adding , " Personal plea to NBC : Please , please renew this series . "

" A Many Splendored Thing " was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay of an Episodic Drama , but ultimately lost to the Homicide episode " Bop Gun " .

= = DVD release = =

" A Many Splendored Thing " and the rest of the first and second season episodes were included in the four @-@ DVD box @-@ set " Homicide : Life on the Street : The Complete Seasons 1 & 2 " , which was released by A & E Home Video on May 27 , 2003 for \$ 69 @.@ 95 .