

= Northwest Passage (Fringe) =

" Northwest Passage " is the 21st episode of the second season of the American science fiction drama television series Fringe , and the 41st episode overall . The episode follows Peter (Joshua Jackson) as he continues to stay away from Boston after learning his true parallel universe origins ; his travels take him to a small town , where he helps the local police investigate mysterious disappearances .

The episode was written by Ashley Edward Miller , Zack Stentz , Nora Zuckerman , and Lilla Zuckerman . Joe Chappelle served as the episode director . It featured a guest appearance by actress Martha Plimpton . Pearl Jam musician Mike McCready helped write the music for the episode .

" Northwest Passage " first aired in the United States on May 6 , 2010 to an estimated 5 @.@ 82 million viewers . It received generally positive reviews , as many critics praised the writers ' decision to focus on Peter in a new location . Others noted references to the television series Twin Peaks .

= = Plot = =

After learning his true origins in " The Man from the Other Side " , Peter (Joshua Jackson) leaves Boston and travels to a small town in the state of Washington . At a diner , Peter makes plans for a date with a local woman named Krista , but before they can meet she is kidnapped and murdered . Initially , the police suspects Peter is involved in the disappearance until told he was at his hotel all night . Peter decides to aid them in the investigation after catching a glimpse of Thomas Jerome Newton (Sebastian Roché) , believing the shapeshifters are responsible and are coming after him ; however , he does not wish Walter to be involved , asking Agent Broyles (Lance Reddick) to keep his location secret .

During the autopsy , Peter explains to Sheriff Mathis (Martha Plimpton) how removing a part of a brain could provide information to the killers . Mathis ' partner , deputy officer Bill Ferguson (Patrick Gilmore) , soon disappears . After they go to the scene of Krista 's murder , Peter encounters Newton , but he escapes . Peter becomes suspicious of Mathis when he sees blood on her jacket ; however , he believes her when she shows him her cut from a fall , which is bleeding normal blood , not the mercury typical of shapeshifters ; he then explains the concept of shapeshifters to her .

Peter begins to doubt the shapeshifters ' motives after another body is found , but eventually comes up with an idea to read and track the victims ' adrenaline spikes , which allows him to find where the murders took place : a dairy farm . They find the owner , who confesses to killing the women because they rejected him , and kidnapped and tortured Mathis 's partner when he discovered the culprit . Repeatedly at the hotel , Peter receives calls with static , strange noises , and clicks , which he suspects are coming from Newton . In the end , Peter decides and prepares to head back to Boston , but is approached by Newton , who has brought " Mr. Secretary " , the man from the Other Side , to see Peter . The man is revealed to be his actual father from the parallel universe , " Walternate " .

Meanwhile , back in Boston , a distraught Walter (John Noble) suffers a small mental breakdown at a supermarket . Olivia (Anna Torv) and Astrid (Jasika Nicole) escort him home , discovering his house is in disarray . After they ask why he didn 't come to them for help , Walter replies he needs to learn to care for himself if Peter fails to return . He discovers a way to find Peter using his unique energy signature , but changes his mind after worrying that Peter will not forgive him . However , Olivia learns Peter 's whereabouts from Broyles ; they prepare to fly to Washington .

= = Production = =

" Northwest Passage " was co @-@ written by producers Ashley Edward Miller , Zack Stentz , staff writers Lilla Zuckerman and Nora Zuckerman . Co @-@ executive producer Joe Chappelle served as episode director .

Miller later noted that unlike other episode scenes such as in " Grey Matters " , Walter 's breakdown

at the supermarket " came largely out of nowhere . It was a thought experiment that took on a life of its own . " Miller continued that at the time , he and Stentz thought they were writing Olivia @-@ focused episodes , but " In retrospect , we really wrote a four @-@ part story about Walter , his relationship to children , and the struggle between Walter @-@ who @-@ was and Walter @-@ who @-@ is . If you look at it that way , his decision at the end of ' Northwest Passage ' becomes the moment where he reconciles those things . He doesn 't resolve them , but he comes to grips with them . Once again in retrospect , I think that 's what the supermarket breakdown was really about . This happens ? you think a scene is about one thing when you 're in the middle of it , and realize it 's something else entirely when you look back . Characters can be sneaky motherfuckers that way . "

A fan of Fringe , Pearl Jam musician Mike McCready talked with series composer Chris Tilton about writing some music for " Northwest Passage " . McCready said he started " throwing ideas back and forth . And I think they just wanted a northwest guy to do it , because they were shooting it in the northwest " . He elaborated that " My role was smaller than someone who wrote all the music for it , but I think I was none the less integral in there . I mean , it was fun . Chris sent me his cues , and I just kind of rearranged them into guitar ideas " .

The episode featured guest actress Martha Plimpton as Sheriff Tracy Mathis . On her role , she later commented " That episode turned out really well ; I was really pleased with it , and where else but on Fringe would I get to play the sheriff of a small town ? "

The crew shot an alternate ending in which Mathis questions Peter about his faith with the FBI . This was available on the DVD special features . As with other Fringe episodes , Fox released a science lesson plan for grade school children focusing on the science seen in " Northwest Passage " , with the intention of having " students learn about the scientific method and how it can be used to collect data through experimentation and observation in order to formulate and test a hypothesis . "

= = Cultural references = =

Many critics noted the similarities between the episode and the David Lynch television series Twin Peaks , with one reviewer writing there was a " definite Peaks @-@ y vibe to tonight 's episode , from the setting ? Noyo County , Washington , home of a diner with " famous pies " ? to the off @-@ kilter camera angles and hushed tone " . Twin Peaks was originally titled " Northwest Passage " before its pilot , and both focused on solving a murder mystery in Washington state . Other reviewers felt the " Mulder / Scully " -like investigation and the line " You want to believe " was a homage to The X @-@ Files .

A song by Leonard Cohen , " Anthem " is quoted in this episode . " Anthem " lyrics are : " There is a crack in everything / That 's how the light gets in . " The Sheriff played by Martha Plimpton has a pen with " find the crack " printed on it , she states to Peter Bishop " that 's how the light gets in . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The first airing of " Northwest Passage " was watched by an estimated 5 @.@ 82 million viewers in the United States . It earned a 3 @.@ 7 / 6 ratings share among all households and a 2 @.@ 2 / 6 share among viewers 18 ? 49 . This was a ten percent jump from the previous week . SFScope writer Sarah Stegall speculated that the episode 's " standalone mystery " , combined with the recent Fringe season renewal , helped contribute to the ratings gain .

= = = Reviews = = =

A.V. Club writer Noel Murray graded the episode with a B + , explaining " It was the atmosphere that sold me on " Northwest Passage " , an episode with a fairly middling mystery and only minimal

advancement of the master @-@ plot . (Though the end @-@ point of that advancement was a doozy , and has me eating a little crow .) At times tonight the show almost felt like a backdoor pilot for a new series , with Peter tooling around the Pacific Northwest meeting local law enforcement and cracking cases . And while that 's a show I 'd definitely watch , I confess I 'm anxious to jump ahead to next week , when there 'll be inter @-@ dimensional conflict and doppelgangers galore " . Murray considered the ending with the appearance of Walternate a " strong finish to a mostly strong episode " . IGN 's Ramsey Isler gave it 7 @.@ 8 / 10 , writing that " Fringe 's sophomore season is building up to an epic 2 @-@ part finale . This episode doesn 't reveal much in terms of overall Fringe mythology until the very awesome ending , and even then it just confirms what we already knew or suspected . Still , this installment deserves credit for using a different formula and giving Joshua Jackson some much @-@ deserved time in the spotlight all by himself " .

SFScope 's Sarah Stegall praised the writers for showcasing Peter , believing Jackson gave " a solid , convincing performance that teaches us more about Peter than we learned in the first half of this season " . She also was pleased with Peter 's reactions to the obstacles thrown in his path , but criticized the writing for having another man behind the murders (' Too much coincidence . Way too much coincidence . From a plotting standpoint , it was clumsy ') . Stegall concluded her review by praising all of the actors ' performances , explaining that other than the " clumsy " killer plot twist , " I had no complaints at all about this episode . The supporting cast was top notch " . Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly enjoyed how the episode mystery was processed from Peter 's point of view , and loved the revelation at the end about Walternate . MTV columnist Josh Wigler praised the episode 's " pretty mature storytelling " for not making Peter " go on an angry rampage " or become " an angsty ball of self @-@ loathing " after the previous episode 's events . He continued , " You can see that he 's hurting , but he 's still not quite sure how to process everything . Excellent work from the writers and Joshua Jackson " .

After trying various science fiction shows after Lost , the Los Angeles Times ' Andrew Hanson felt the episode made " him feel like [he] picked a winner " . Like other critics , Hanson loved the twist ending , writing that " Fringe is making it more and more difficult for me to pick my favorite episode " . Television Without Pity called Walternate 's sudden appearance one of 2010 's " Most Memorable TV Moments " , explaining " We knew we 'd meet him eventually , but the way they surprised us with him at the end of a stand @-@ alone episode was a fitting introduction for such an ominous and shadowy character , and we knew even then that it marked a new and improved era for the show . " At the time , TV Fanatic called " Northwest Passage " the best Fringe episode to date , giving the series ' its first " five out of five stars " .