

= Pilot ( Millennium ) =

" Pilot " is the pilot episode of the crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on October 25 , 1996 . The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter , and directed by David Nutter . " Pilot " featured guest appearances by Paul Dillon , April Telek and Stephen J. Lang .

Offender profiler Frank Black ( Lance Henriksen ) , a member of the private investigative organisation Millennium Group , retires to Seattle with his family after a breakdown caused him to quit working for the Federal Bureau of Investigation . Using his incredible profiling skills , Black helps in an effort to catch a vicious murderer who believes he is fulfilling apocalyptic prophecies .

" Pilot " was filmed over the course of a month in Vancouver , British Columbia , and was inspired by the writings of Nostradamus and William Butler Yeats . Airing in the timeslot previously occupied by Carter 's first series , The X @-@ Files , the episode received a high Nielsen household and syndication rating and was generally positively received by fans and critics alike .

= = Plot = =

In a strip club in downtown Seattle , an unnamed man known to the club workers as " The Frenchman " ( Paul Dillon ) is mumbling poetic phrases and hallucinating blood pouring over a blonde stripper , with a wall of fire surrounding her . Later that night , the stripper is murdered . Just arriving in Seattle is Frank Black ( Lance Henriksen ) and his family . Frank spots a newspaper about the local murder , and immediately contacts his old colleague Bob Bletcher . Frank joins the investigation as an advisor of the Millennium Group , a private investigative group composed of retired law enforcement agents .

When he views the body , Frank gets various vivid visions of the crime . His knowledge of various details unknown to the others unsettles Bletcher . Frank and a fellow member of the Millennium Group named Peter Watts ( Terry O 'Quinn ) officially join the investigation .

In the meantime , the killer is hunting for his next victim . While unknown to him , the murderer is trapped in a world of grotesque hallucinations . Later that night , local police officers spot his latest victim . Frank visits the crime scene , which gives him a vision of the crime , again startling his colleague Bletcher . Later on , Frank presents his finding to the local homicide department , saying that the murderer is obsessed with apocalyptic prophecies and maddened by twisted sexual guilt .

After Frank presents his finding , Bletcher demands Frank give him the stripper girl 's " rape & murder on VHS . " . Frank tells him he can see what the killer sees . After telling him , Frank rushes to hospital when his daughter , Jordan Black ( Brittany Tiplady ) is stricken with a high fever . Getting another vision , Frank leaves the hospital and gathers local law enforcement officers to another victim .

This follows with Frank tracking down the killer to the local police department 's own evidence lab . In a mad rage the killer attacks Frank , but Bletcher shows up and shoots the killer , saving Frank 's life . After clearing up the case with the local authorities , Frank returns home and opens up a newly arrived anonymous piece of mail containing pictures of his family .

= = Production = =

" Pilot " was written by series creator Chris Carter . Beyond creating the concept for Millennium , Carter would write a total of six other episodes for the series in addition to " Gehenna " ? three in the first season , and a further three in the third season . Director David Nutter would also go on to direct several episodes in the first season of the series ? " Gehenna " , " 522666 " and " Loin Like a Hunting Flame " .

" Pilot " was filmed over the course of a month , which was an unheard @-@ of length of time for a single television episode . The episode was shot in Vancouver , British Columbia in early spring to give it a " gray " and " bleak " look . The decision to film in Vancouver was to give the show the same dark feel as its sister show The X @-@ Files , which had also been created by Carter . The

strip club , Ruby Tip , was inspired by a club in Seattle named the Lusty Lady , which is located on that city 's main street . Director David Nutter had been a long @-@ time staff member of The X @-@ Files crew . Carter said the episode was " directed beautifully by David Nutter who added to the project in so many ways , even as it came on , things that he saw visually that were able to actually change and make the script more concise " . Although " Pilot " did not open with a literary quote as the series would do from the next episode onwards , its plot heavily features the 1919 poem " The Second Coming " by Irish poet William Butler Yeats .

Carter called it a " pleasure " to cast Kate Luyben and April Telek , because they were " good " -looking , which he felt was a refreshing change from frequently casting " character actors " on The X @-@ Files . Luyben would later make an appearance on The X @-@ Files and played a prominent role on Harsh Realm . The idea behind the character " The Frenchman " came from a prophecy by Nostradamus . According to Carter , " the idea that there is something approaching at the millennium , this series being produced I think four years before the end of the century , that we were headed toward something grave and foreboding " . The name of recurring character Bob Bletcher came from an attorney Carter had worked with previously . Another name , Giebelhouse was another name Carter had gotten from his childhood years . Carter said " This idea of the hard @-@ boiled detective is a kind of cliché " . But felt that the characters came " very real to life " , when compared to real law enforcement personnel .

Millennium was given the Friday night timeslot previously occupied by The X @-@ Files , prompting Carter to quip that his earlier series was " being abducted " . However , Millennium received higher viewing figures during its first season than The X @-@ Files had done , while the latter show 's fourth season , the one airing concurrently to Millennium , saw its ratings reach their highest to that point .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Pilot " was first broadcast on the Fox network on October 25 , 1996 ; and gathered a total viewership of 17 @. @ 72 million in the United States . In the " adults 18 ? 49 " demographic , the episode earned a Nielsen rating of 9 , with a 27 share ; meaning it was viewed by nine percent of television @-@ equipped households and 27 percent of those actively watching television . The rating across all demographics was 11 @. @ 9 . The episode 's broadcast set the record at the time for the most @-@ watched program on Fox .

Writing for The A.V. Club , Zack Handeln rated the episode a B , finding it to be " weirdly prescient of the crime dramas we wallow in today " . Handlen felt that episode 's tone was so " overwrought " as to be " hilarious " , but still found the series to be " uncompromising " and " compelling " . Handlen also noted similarities to the films Manhunter and Seven in both the episode 's plot and the series ' premise . Bill Gibron , writing for DVD Talk , rated the episode 5 / 5 , calling it " perhaps the most perfect opening episode to a one @-@ hour suspense thriller ... ever conceived " . Gibron also praised the casting of Henriksen and O 'Quinn in the series . An Entertainment Weekly preview for the episode noted that some of its scenes were " the grimmest ... in prime @-@ time history " . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , rated the episode four stars out of five , calling it " bleak and confrontational " though finding that its symbolism was " too boldly stated " . Comparing the series to its sister show , The X @-@ Files , Shearman and Pearson noted that Henriksen portrays his role " with a confidence that makes him immediately a more credible character than Mulder or Scully would be for an entire season " . Writing for The Register @-@ Guard , Renee Graham called the episode " as lurid a television show as you 're ever going to see " , adding that it seemed " just too horrific to be enjoyable " . However , Graham noted that the episode was " by far the superior show " compared to the similar series Profiler , which aired around the same time .