

= Bloodletting (The Walking Dead) =

" Bloodletting " is the second episode of the second season of the post @-@ apocalyptic horror television series The Walking Dead . It initially aired on AMC in the United States on October 23 , 2011 . The episode was written by Glen Mazzara and directed by Ernest Dickerson . In this episode , Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) and Shane Walsh (Jon Bernthal) rush to save the life of Rick 's son , Carl (Chandler Riggs) , and discover a possible haven in the process .

Production commenced in Newnan , Georgia at Newnan High School in early July 2011 , after attaining approval from the city council and the Coweta County School System . The episode featured guest appearances from Scott Wilson , Lauren Cohan , Emily Kinney and Pruitt Taylor Vince , amongst several other recurring actors and actresses for the series . " Bloodletting " was well received by television critics , who praised the character development in the episode . Upon airing , it gained 6 @.@ 70 million viewers and garnered a 3 @.@ 6 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings .

= = Plot = =

In a flashback , Lori Grimes (Sarah Wayne Callies) is talking with other mothers about a fight she had with her husband , Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) . Rick 's partner , Shane Walsh (Jon Bernthal) , pulls up in a police cruiser and tells Lori that Rick has been severely wounded in a highway shootout . Lori then tells her and Rick 's son , Carl (Chandler Riggs) the news , causing him to break down in tears .

In the present , Carl has been accidentally shot by a man named Otis (Pruitt Taylor Vince) , who was hunting for deer . Otis brings Rick , Carl and Shane to a veterinarian named Hershel Greene (Scott Wilson) , for whom Otis works as a farm hand . Hershel lives with his daughters Maggie (Lauren Cohan) and Beth (Emily Kinney) , Beth 's boyfriend Jimmy (James Allen McCune) , and Otis ' wife Patricia (Jane McNeill) . He treats Carl , but he reveals that the bullet was broken into six fragments . Rick must donate blood to Carl in order to keep him alive .

Lori , Glenn (Steven Yeun) , Carol Peletier (Melissa McBride) , Daryl Dixon (Norman Reedus) and Andrea (Laurie Holden) are still searching for Carol 's daughter Sophia (Madison Lintz) , when they overhear a gunshot . Meanwhile , on the highway , Dale Horvath (Jeffrey DeMunn) believes that T @-@ Dog (IronE Singleton) has contracted a blood infection from a wound he received in the previous episode , and both search for antibiotics , but they fail to find any .

At the Greene home , Hershel reveals that Carl needs major surgery to live , and that he will need a respirator . Otis suggests that they might find supplies at a nearby high school ? where the Federal Emergency Management Agency has set up a trailer ? although the place is likely overrun with walkers . Otis and Shane decide to get the supplies , while Maggie retrieves Lori from the group and brings her to the Greene home . Rick and Hershel discuss the walker epidemic ; Rick believes there is no cure , while Hershel has faith that there could be one .

The group searching for Sophia returns to the highway , where Daryl reveals that he has a bag containing painkillers and doxycycline antibiotics that T @-@ Dog can take . Shane and Otis retrieve the supplies , but are spotted by walkers . The two have no choice but to barricade themselves in the high school .

= = Production = =

" Bloodletting " was written by Glen Mazzara and directed by Ernest Dickerson . In June 2011 , it was announced that Scott Wilson , Lauren Cohan , and Pruitt Taylor Vince would appear on the second season as recurring characters . In an interview with TV Guide , Gale Anne Hurd explained that Wilson 's character , Hershel Greene , served as a patriarchal figure for the group . She continued : " He 's a veterinarian with a great sense of humanity and a very unique take on the [walkers] . " According to Hurd , Scott Wilson was cast because of his " tremendous scope and gravitas " . Hurd also stated that Cohan 's character , Greene 's daughter Maggie , was a woman in

her twenties who eventually becomes a romantic interest for Glenn (Steven Yeun) . Further , Cohan added in an interview with the Philadelphia Daily News that Maggie was a Christian from a sheltered background . In preparation for her role , she spent a few months in Los Angeles , California to work with a dialect coach . Emily Kinney also joined the cast as Hershel 's younger daughter and Maggie 's half @-@ sister , Beth .

Principal photography commenced in Newnan , Georgia at Newnan High School in July 2011 , after approval was received from the city council and the Coweta County School System . Site preparation initiated on July 1 , and filming began at the gymnasium of the school over a period of four days from July 7 ? 8 and again from July 11 ? 12 . The location was temporarily renovated to mirror an abandoned Federal Emergency Management Agency camp . Michael Riley , the production manager for the episode , contacted the Newnan Police Department to collaborate with producers . Because of the large size of the filming location , Riley 's production company notified surrounding neighborhoods , to avoid inconvenience .

" Bloodletting " begins with a flashback of Rick Grimes ' relationship with Lori , before she became romantically linked to Shane . In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , Robert Kirkman asserted that it " speaks to Shane and his relationship to Lori and Rick in the early days . " He continued :

" A lot of people think of Shane as a clear villain and that he did a bad thing . But if you really analyze that situation , he ? s a good guy and has done the right thing at every turn . Because he 's done that , and it ? s not working out for him , it ? s driving him crazy . So we really wanted to show that he ? s a tragic figure much more than a villainous figure . It ? s just a series of unfortunate situations that have led to him slowly losing himself in this world . Popping back in time and showing his concern for Rick and how he cares for Lori and Carl , I thought that would be a good thing to do . "

During a scene on the road , Daryl reveals a plastic bag of Merle 's drug stash he originally kept in hiding from the crew , only bringing it out to aid T @-@ Dog 's rising fever . In the bag are doxycyclin (because , Daryl explains , Merle occasionally catches the clap) , painkillers , ecstasy , and methamphetamine . The meth is blue , leading to speculations that it was a reference to the famous blue meth prepared by Walter White in the television series , Breaking Bad . In his interview in the after @-@ show Talking Dead , Kirkman stated that the scene was " a little Easter egg we were doing for AMC fans . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Bloodletting " was first broadcast on October 23 , 2011 in the United States on AMC . The episode received 6 @.@ 70 million viewers and attained a 3 @.@ 6 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings . An encore presentation gained an additional 2 @.@ 077 million viewers and garnered a 1 @.@ 0 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic . Along with becoming the highest @-@ rated program on basic cable for the night , " Bloodletting " became the second highest @-@ rated program of the week on basic cable , scoring higher than the season finale of Jersey Shore , but garnering less than a game between the Miami Dolphins and the New York Jets as part of the 2011 NFL season . Total viewership and ratings for the episode were moderately down from the previous episode , " What Lies Ahead " , which was watched by 7 @.@ 26 million viewers and attained a 3 @.@ 8 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to the Nielsen ratings .

= = = Critical response = = =

The episode was well received by television critics . Ology writer Josh Harrison gave the episode a nine out of ten rating , and opined that the episode was a " home run episode " for the series . Harrison continued : " Its central conflict is intense , its action is solid , and its new arrivals are

engaging characters in their own right . Light on the gore and heavy on the drama ? just how I like my Sunday night zombie adventures . " Scott Meslow from The Atlantic gave the episode a positive review , deeming it as an improvement from the previous episode , and appreciated that the episode had opened up new plot points for future episodes to come . Meslow wrote , " At the bare minimum , The Walking Dead should be exciting , and the final moments of " Bloodletting " provides more than enough action . " Echoing similar sentiments , Catherine Gee of The Daily Telegraph gave the episode a 3 @. @ 5 out of 5 stars , and compared it to the second season premiere , opining : " It may have been a calmer episode but there was no shortage of story to chew on . " Joe Oesterle of Mania.com commended the opening sequence of the episode , and praised the performances of Lincoln and Bernthal . Oesterle wrote , " Andrew Lincoln and Jon Bernthal [...] gave a fine bit of acting , and I found it interesting how the character Rick started looking and walking a little bit zombish after giving blood . The scenes between the two men were moving , and if you listened close you could decipher the main differences between these two cowboy cops . Rick is bound and determined to get back to his wife and let her know their son is in mortal danger , without ever doubting his own ability to successfully complete the mission , while Shane on the other hand is not quite as automatically selfless and heroic . " In conclusion , Oesterle gave " Bloodletting " a ' B ' grade . Eric Goldman of IGN gave the episode an 8 @. @ 5 out of ten , signaling a " great " response . Goldman stated that it was an improvement over the last episode , and that it had a great scare moment and cliffhanger . Similarly , Paste 's Josh Jackson gave the episode an 8 @. @ 3 out of ten rating , signifying a " commendable " rating . Steve West of Cinema Blend expressed that " Bloodletting " was superior to the previous episode , opining that it was " a character strengthening episode . " He continued : " Even those throwaway threads are immensely important to what ? s about to go down at the Green farm . "

Some television critics were less enthusiastic about the episode . Zack Handlen from The A.V. Club felt that the episode was inferior to the previous episode , deeming it tedious . He wrote , " ' Bloodletting ' was a step down from last week 's premiere , mostly because it focused more on conversations than scares . Much as I want this show to find some way to do its characters right , those conversations were bland , providing no new information beyond , hey , it would suck to have your son get shot in front of you , huh ? " Concluding his review , Handlen gave the episode a ' B ? ' grade . In concurrence , Nate Rawlings of Time stated : " For an episode titled ' Bloodletting ' there was surprisingly little of it last night . What we got instead were outpourings of emotion and frustration . Two entries in , and it 's already clear that the show wants to strike a balance between gore and humanity . " Andrew Conrad of the Chicago Tribune was unhappy with the episode ; he expressed disappointment with the low amount of zombie sequences , writing , " It must be a bit of a relief for the show 's make @- @ up department , but I 'd like to see at least one walker every ten minutes or so . "