

= The Same Old Story =

" The Same Old Story " is the second episode of the first season of the American science fiction drama television series *Fringe* . The episode was written by executive producer Jeff Pinkner and co-creators J. J. Abrams , Alex Kurtzman , and Roberto Orci . When developing the series , they sought to find a medium between serialized drama and the crime procedural . " The Same Old Story " was the first regular episode of *Fringe* , and journalists viewed it as an example of what they could expect from the series . It was directed by Paul A. Edwards .

After a newborn baby rapidly ages into an 80-year-old man , *Fringe* division agent Olivia Dunham (Anna Torv) and consultants Peter (Joshua Jackson) and Walter Bishop (John Noble) investigate . They tie the case to the murders of young women , who have all had their pituitary glands removed . It is revealed that Dr. Claus Penrose (Mark Blum) , an expert in progeria , is working to help his son Christopher (Derek Cecil) stay alive , as he suffers from rapid aging syndrome .

" The Same Old Story " first aired in the United States on September 16 , 2008 on Fox . An estimated 13.272 million viewers watched the episode , a 45 percent increase from the series premiere . The episode received mixed reviews from television critics ? reviewers thought it was an improvement from the previous episode but faulted it for containing plot contrivances .

= = Plot = =

A prostitute is abandoned by an unknown man at a hospital , dangerously in labor . She dies as the doctors perform a caesarean section , but the child ages rapidly in minutes , soon dead having aged to the likes of an 80-year-old man . Olivia Dunham (Anna Torv) , Peter Bishop (Joshua Jackson) , and Walter Bishop (John Noble) , new members of the *Fringe* division , are called to investigate by division head Phillip Broyles (Lance Reddick) , believing the case to be part of " The Pattern " , a string of mysterious incidents . The woman is identified as having recently left a local motel , and Olivia finds evidence that points to a past serial murder case she and her former partner John Scott were not able to solve . Olivia explains to Peter that their murderer would paralyze his victims , young women , then make an incision along their face to extract a piece of brain material , killing the victim in the process . Walter takes both corpses back to his lab and determines that the woman had only been pregnant minutes before giving birth , her child having accelerated aging disease . Walter is reminded of having previously done work in this field , and remembers where he stashed his car that contains the related files . Once they are retrieved , Olivia makes a connection to the pituitary gland which controls growth in humans , and informs Charlie Francis (Kirk Acevedo) to monitor recent cases where the victims ' pituitary gland has been removed .

Olivia and Peter turn to an expert in progeria , Dr. Penrose (Mark Blum) , to trying to learn more about rapid aging , but Dr. Penrose cannot help them further , though Peter suspects he is hiding something . Unseen by the *Fringe* division , Dr. Penrose visits an abandoned warehouse and meets the murderer , Christopher (Derek Cecil) , his son , who suffers from rapid aging syndrome . Penrose warns Christopher to be careful and that they only need one more woman to complete the process . By this time , Charlie has found a recent murder victim killed in the same fashion as Olivia 's serial murderer . At Walter 's lab , they identify the pituitary gland has been removed . They rationalize the murderer must extract hormones from the glands to slow down his own aging process . Walter hypothesizes they can discover the location of the crime by looking at the images left in the woman 's optical nerves induced by the paralyzing sedative . Borrowing an electronic pulse camera from Massive Dynamic , they discover the image of a suspension bridge near Stoughton and identify the likely location from which it was viewed ? the same warehouse that Dr. Penrose visited . The FBI converge on the building , and Olivia and Peter find Penrose about to cut into another victim . Olivia chases off after Christopher , who eventually succumbs to his rapid aging and dies , while Peter , after nicking Penrose with a bullet , confers with Walter to apply a makeshift defibrillator to bring the victim back to life .

As they wrap up the case , Olivia , Peter , and Walter complete forms to finalize their position in the

Fringe division . When Peter is out of earshot , Walter learns from Olivia that the FBI medical files on Peter 's childhood are void of any details .

= = Production = =

Co @-@ creators J. J. Abrams , Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci , and executive producer Jeff Pinkner wrote the episode . Paul A. Edwards served as the director , his first such credit for the series . In developing Fringe , the co @-@ creators did not want to make the series too serialized , as this was a complaint often directed at Abrams ' television series Alias . They wanted to find a balance between standalone stories and serialized content , and studied procedural dramas such as Law and Order and CSI : Crime Scene Investigation for inspiration . Kurtzman explained , " While we make sure that our episodes are self @-@ contained ? have a beginning , a middle , and an end ? the character stories can be serialized . They don 't have to resolve themselves over the course of one show . " " The Same Old Story " was Fringe 's first regular episode , and some journalists viewed it as an example of how the series would be structured .

The episode was based on actual recent research and involved much collaboration among the series ' different departments . For the scene in which they remove the victim 's eyeball , the special effects crew created a mold based on actress Elizabeth Stanley 's head . Using plaster to make a prosthetic , they " drilled out the eyeball and sculpt [ed] it open and [went] through a series of molds . " Stanley stated that " it 's really cool to see the head because it really does look just like me , even though it 's very gruesome because the eyeball 's popping out . " The prop department rigged a weapon which they called a " photon gun " ; according to prop master Peter Gelfman , this gun was based on real devices employed in airport security that look through people 's clothing for concealed weapons . VFX Supervisor Christopher Scollard explained that for the eye 's last vision , they used " a lot of actual photographic reference on the set and on the location , " which they then used to " take that imagery and composite it into the various computer monitors and displays in the lab . "

" The Same Old Story " featured guest appearances by actors Derek Cecil as Christopher Penrose and Mark Blum as his father , Dr. Claus Penrose . Other guest actors included Betty Gilpin as Loraine " Amber " Daisy Alcott , Bernie McNerney as old Christopher Penrose , Carmen Goodine as Amy , Ty Jones as a doctor , and Karin Agstam as John Scott 's sister .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" The Same Old Story " was watched by 13 @.@ 272 million viewers in the United States , a 45 percent increase of four million from the pilot . Fox claimed that this ratings improvement was the best for any new network drama series in over five years . Its high @-@ rated lead @-@ in , House , helped boost Fringe 's ratings for the night , as 93 percent of House 's total audience and 95 percent of 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds stayed to watch Fringe . Fringe was also the highest rated program for male 18- to 54 @-@ year @-@ olds that evening .

= = = Reviews = = =

" The Same Old Story " received mixed reviews from television critics . TV Squad writer Jane Boursaw thought the episode seemed " all over the place " , and wasn 't sure what to think . She stated the two most interesting parts of the episode were when Walter removed the girl 's eye in order to identify her killer , and the cliffhanger at the very end , when Walter states " If you 've read my file , then you know the truth about Peter 's medical history " . Travis Fickett of IGN thought it was better than the pilot ; though it was " laden with lots of clunky exposition and clichéd dialogue , " Fickett understood that it was needed to acquaint new viewers to the show . Fickett concluded his

review by saying Fringe has the potential to be a " great show " , and he also praised the production level as " top notch " , and Torv 's performance as " very good " as she " brings a unique presence to the show " . The A.V. Club critic Noel Murray gave the episode a C + , while Television Without Pity graded it with a B.

Josh Jackson of Paste Magazine disliked the " deus ex machina " aspects that " neatly solved the puzzles of the first two episodes " , and also criticized perceived " plot contrivances " like how the serial murderer immediately began aging once interrupted from killing his last victim . Despite these flaws , Jackson said he would tune in next week because he would " rather have a show err on the side of unbelievable than unremarkable , and I 'm interested to see if Abrams has any more tricks up his sleeve " . Erin Fox of TV Guide also liked " The Same Old Story " better than the pilot because she thought that it " had really cool special effects , awesome Walter @-@ isms , and actual chemistry forming between Olivia and Peter " , and " we also got to delve more into the connections between Walter , Nina Sharp , Massive Dynamic and the government and the experiments they conducted before Walter was institutionalized " .

A UGO Networks columnist was concerned that the expensive pilot would be hard to translate into weekly episodes , but " after sitting down to watch Fringe 's second episode , " The Same Old Story " , my concerns have vanished . Fringe 's second episode represents all that is holy about genre programming without sacrificing any of Fringe 's eleven @-@ herbs and spices . In fact , the subtle framework of what makes Fringe not X @-@ Files is even better defined in the first weekly @-@ episode . I 'd struggled to find the word to describe it , and the winner is ' condensed ' . " The Same Old Story " has all of the sense of mystery , discovery , and humor that the pilot had just in a smaller , more combustible space . " Another UGO writer , Alex Zalben , later compared " The Same Old Story " to the similarly @-@ plotted The X @-@ Files episode " Død Kalm " . Zalben concluded that " Fringe wins this one , just for having a slightly less stupid explanation . "