

= A New Day in the Old Town =

" A New Day in the Old Town " is the season premiere and first episode of the second season of the American science fiction drama television series *Fringe* , and the 21st episode overall . It was co-written by J.J. Abrams and Akiva Goldsman , with Goldsman directing . The episode followed the aftermath of Olivia 's journey to the parallel universe in the last season 's finale , while also introducing the idea of shapeshifters . It guest starred actors Luke Goss , Ari Graynor , Meghan Markle , and Tegan Moss .

It first aired on Fox in the United States on September 17 , 2009 to generally positive reviews . It was watched by an estimated 9 .6 million viewers , and received a 2 .43 ratings share among viewers 18 ? 49 .

= = Plot = =

A mysterious man involved in a downtown Manhattan collision with a SUV flees the scene to a nearby apartment building . He enters the building and attacks a random man , hooking up equipment to the man 's inner mouth , which allows him to adopt his external appearance and shapeshift . The crashed SUV is discovered to be Olivia 's (Anna Torv) , though she is not inside . Peter (Joshua Jackson) and Walter (John Noble) arrive and investigate the scene while being accosted by a new junior agent , Amy Jessup (Meghan Markle) , who wonders what they do for the FBI . After Walter searches through the SUV , he shuts the door and Olivia suddenly ejects through the windshield . She is rushed to the hospital and declared brain dead . Peter and Broyles (Lance Reddick) drink at a bar together in sorrow , and Broyles reveals the Fringe Division is being shut down because of their failure to provide " usable results " . Suspicious and curious of Fringe Division , Jessup begins a personal investigation into their past activities .

After talking to Rachel about her sister , Peter visits Olivia , who is scheduled to be taken off life support the following morning . However , Olivia suddenly wakes up , crying the Greek phrase *Na einai kalytero anthropon apo ton patera tou* . She does not remember getting injured , and incoherently tells Peter there is something they need to do , and their " lives may depend on it , " but cannot remember who told her this , or why . Peter tries to enter the FBI building , but is denied until Jessup agrees to accompany him . She questions him about Fringe Division , and they begin investigating the driver who hit Olivia . When they arrive at his apartment , they discover what appears to be the driver 's body , but he has been dead longer than when the accident took place .

The shapeshifted man makes contact with his group via typewriter (an allegedly nonexistent model of IBM Selectric , controlled by its image in a mirror) , and is told his mission to prevent a " meeting " was unsuccessful , as Olivia is still alive . He is told to interrogate her , and then kill her . Meanwhile , Peter introduces Jessup to their lab at Harvard , and upon performing an autopsy on the man found in the apartment , they find three holes in the roof of his mouth . Walter shows them archived footage of one of his 1970s experiments of a drugged up girl who says she sees shapechanging soldiers from an parallel universe that can " look like any of us " .

After being visited by her partner , Agent Charlie Francis (Kirk Acevedo) and given a gun , Olivia is unsuccessfully questioned by the shapeshifter , who has adopted the appearance of a female nurse . The nurse attempts to kill Olivia , but is shot and flees from Jessup . Peter , Charlie , and Jessup follow her into nearby tunnels , but become separated . Peter and Jessup hear gunshots and arrive to see that Charlie has apparently killed the shapeshifter . Peter returns to Olivia , and tells her the Greek phrase means " be a better person than your father , " and was told to him every night by his mother .

After being told by a panel of Senators that Fringe Division is not worth the human or fiscal cost , Broyles is given the transformation device by Peter so Broyles can justify Fringe Division remaining active . In a separate scene , Agent Jessup is shown working at a computer , annotating an image of the creature from *The Transformation* with biblical verses , notably from the Book of Revelation . The final scene reveals that Charlie is actually the shapeshifter , who disposes of the real agent 's body in a furnace beneath the hospital .

= = Production = =

= = = Background = = =

In February 2009 , Fox announced that if they renewed Fringe for a second season , they were moving the show 's production from New York City to Vancouver , as the American city 's tax breaks had expired . Fox officially renewed Fringe for a second season on May 4 , 2009 , and in July announced the new season would premiere on September 23 , behind a new episode of Bones . Later reports indicated the episode would premiere on September 17 .

= = = Writing and filming = = =

" A New Day in the Old Town " was co @-@ written by consulting producer Akiva Goldsman and co @-@ creator J.J. Abrams , with Goldsman also serving as director . In the DVD special features , actor Joshua Jackson explained the second season begins less than a day after the previous season 's finale , " so the characters have only just barely had a chance to catch their breath from all the madness in the first season , and launch right back into the second one " . Co @-@ executive producer Jeff Pinkner considered beginning the second season directly after first season 's final scene between Olivia and William Bell , but changed his mind because he thought it would be more interesting to show how Olivia 's disappearance and reappearance affected the Fringe team , as well as the rest of the season . The scene between Olivia and Bell is consequently not shown until the season 's fourth episode , " Momentum Deferred " . The premiere began the " gun arc " storyline , which commenced with Olivia hurtling out of her SUV and becoming too weak to control her gun during her physical recovery , and ended with the killing of the shapeshifter posing as Charlie Francis in " Momentum Deferred " .

The production team used new technology called a " breakway windshield , " as well as air cannons to eject the stuntwoman , Melissa Stubbs , from the vehicle . Instead of using wires , they used pneumatic rams to push her ; cables and pulleys made it similar to a " catapult " . The stuntwoman rehearsed with a helmet on , but took it off when the scene was ready to be shot . She wore a small backpad , a mouthguard , and some kneepads , and used her elbows to break the windshield upon being ejected . Stubbs commented that shooting the scene " all went as planned , and was very anticlimactic " because of the lack of problems . Anna Torv later called the stunt " one of the most humbling experiences in my life " . She elaborated , " I don ' t do any of the stuff that ' s dangerous ... Melissa Stubbs is the fantastic stuntwoman who did that [stunt] . They put a rocket for her in the back of the car , and they had that breakaway glass for the windshield . She has nothing on extra , except maybe elbow pads . Then they shoot her out of this rocket , through the windshield , and she rolls on the ground and lands on her mark . The guy goes in . She 's OK . Everybody claps . Then I have to go in , lay in the same position , so they can get a close @-@ up of my eyes opening . That was kind of humbling . "

Prop master Rob Smith created the shapeshifter device and later regretted its design . He had joined the series during its second season , and had to quickly manufacture props while working under time and budget constraints . He explained , " [My] first episode we had to make the shape @-@ shifter device , the thing that you put into your mouth and it transforms one person into another person . I was brand new here and I wasn ' t happy with the way that turned out , and it came back in about 5 or 6 episodes . Every time it came back I was like , ? Oh , I wish I could have that time over again to redo this one . " He added , " A lot of the time , I [didn ' t] actually see [the prop] on set , so I watched the episode to see how everything comes together . "

In June 2009 , Fox put out a casting call for several new characters for the second season . One of these , Lloyd Parr , was described as a guest star in " his 30 's to early 50 's , an average guy . We need a strong character actor who can play hyper @-@ competent . Like someone in a John Frankenheimer movie " . Actor Luke Goss was cast in the role after episode writer Akiva Goldsman

personally called his house and asked him to join the show . On June 24 , 2009 , TV Guide announced the casting of Meghan Markle as " an attractive , brash and quick @-@ witted junior agent " .

The producers considered screening the first part of the season premiere at Comic @-@ Con in San Diego , but ultimately decided against it because they thought the scene " ends in such an exciting way that we were afraid to let it out " . As a promotion , Fox did send out a DVD " screener " package of the premiere to certain journalists , which included a copy of the New York Times article shown in the first season finale as well as a piece of paper with a list of typed phrases . The paper was a copy of the instructions one of the shapeshifters received on the typewriter , which included phrases like " Mission Accomplished " and " Target Terminated " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

In May 2010 , Fox announced Fringe would be moving from Tuesdays to Thursdays for the second season . Fox 's entertainment president , Kevin Reilly , explained the move , " The door is more open on this night than it has been in a long time . Fringe is a real alternative to both [Grey 's and CSI] . " As the season premiere , " A New Day in the Old Town " was the first episode of the season to air in its new timeslot on Thursdays .

In its initial broadcast in the United States , the episode was watched by an estimated 7 @.@ 817 million viewers and earned a 3 @.@ 0 / 8 rating for viewers 18 ? 49 . After time shifted viewing was taken into account , Fringe increased to a 3 @.@ 95 rating for the 18 ? 49 demographic . It earned a 4 @.@ 7 / 8 ratings share among all households , which caused it to be the series ' worst rated episode yet . It was also more than 25 percent lower than its average audience from the first season . These lower ratings have been attributed to a lower @-@ rated lead @-@ in (Bones , instead of the previous season 's American Idol and House) , and tough competition from CBS 's CSI : Crime Scene Investigation and NBC 's The Office . The rest of the season 's ratings would continue to stay lower than the previous season , leading many to question Fox 's decision to move the show in the first place .

= = = Reviews = = =

Critical reviews of the episode were generally positive . Hilary Rothing from UGO Networks enjoyed the perceived parallels to The Wire and praised the further development of Anna Torv 's character Olivia ; " With tonight 's premiere , the writing feels tighter , the pace is fast but not so much so that the story begins to trip over itself - and if that 's any indication of how the rest of the season shapes up , then Fox will have my full attention every Thursday from 9 @-@ 10pm " . Noel Murray from A.V. Club graded the episode an A- , writing that he enjoyed how the writers made the show " new @-@ viewer @-@ friendly without making existing fans too impatient " . After receiving a DVD copy of the premiere in advance , IGN 's Ramsey Isler rated the episode 9 @.@ 0 / 10 , explaining " Everything that made season one special is still here : Walter 's still crazy and obsessed with food , Peter 's still a smart @-@ ass , and Olivia ... well , there 's a lot going on with Olivia , as usual " . Isler thought newcomer Meghan Markle was " cute , and spunky , but ... not quite a good fit here " , and praised the cliffhanger as " surprising in a special way " . MTV 's Josh Wigler praised all the main actors ' performances , and thought the episode gave the second season a " strong start " .

TV Squad writer Jane Boursaw praised Olivia 's entrance in the episode , calling it a " Nice set @-@ up for the focal point of this episode ... Really nice storyline to heave us face @-@ first into the new season " . She lauded the Charlie @-@ shapeshifter plot twist , stating " The possibilities are endless with that storyline , and it 'll be fun to see how it all plays out " . SFScope columnist Sarah Stegall praised Joshua Jackson and Lance Reddick 's performances , giving Jackson " top honors " as he " once again shows us the fangs behind that cherubic smile " . Stegall also noted the

allusions to The X @-@ Files , which included an episode playing during the first shapeshifter 's transformation , " Which is fine , as far as I 'm concerned . If I can 't have Mulder and Scully , I 'll take Walter and Peter , and even Astrid and Charlie ... I 'm happy to see another show on TV that deals with the unknowable and the possibly fascinating , with an actual budget in hand . If this show started out as X @-@ Files Light , it 's developing some serious weight now . "

Writing for the Los Angeles Times , critic Andrew Hanson heralded the return of the series , declaring " Fringe comes crashing headlong back onto television . That 's not just a metaphor . Before we even fade in we have two cars smashing into each other . What a way to return : an accident in which one driver is nowhere to be found and the other flees into a nearby apartment , smooches his face and then uses a strange device to rearrange his appearance . That 's my good old Fringe . " The Futon Critic rated " A New Day in the Old Town " the sixteenth best television episode of 2010 , while website blogger io9 listed it as one of the " crucial " episodes new viewers must watch to get into the show .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Writers J.J. Abrams and Akiva Goldsman submitted " A New Day in the Old Town " for consideration in the Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series category at the 62nd Primetime Emmy Awards . They did not receive a nomination .