

= Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? =

" Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " is the fourth episode of the third season of the American science fiction drama television series *Fringe* , and the 47th episode overall . The first half of the third season alternated entire episodes between the parallel universe (the " Other Side ") and the prime universe (" Our Side ") . " Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " took place in the prime universe , and involved several shapeshifters , including Thomas Jerome Newton (Sebastian Roché) , who is eventually captured . Meanwhile , Fauxlivia (Anna Torv) attempts to maintain her cover and minimize the damage .

The episode was written by David Wilcox and Matthew Pitts , while Kenneth Fink served as director for the hour . It first aired on October 14 , 2010 in the United States to an estimated 5 @. @ 22 million viewers . It received mostly positive reviews , as many critics praised the plot 's focus on the shapeshifters .

= = Plot = =

In the prime universe , U.S. senator James Van Horn (Gerard Plunkett) , who has been reviewing the *Fringe* division 's activities , is hospitalized following a car accident . While in the hospital , Thomas Jerome Newton (Sebastian Roché) arrives and shoots him in the face , then escapes . The *Fringe* team discover that Van Horn was a shapeshifter . Walter (John Noble) finds that the body is still alive to some degree through a second " brain " on his back , and hopes to use Van Horn 's wife Patricia (Shannon Cochran) to try to awaken it and study the shapeshifter more .

Fauxlivia (Anna Torv) , still posing as the prime universe 's Olivia (Torv) , informs Newton of this development . Newton contacts a second shapeshifter , Ray (Marcus Giamatti) , to infiltrate the secured location where Van Horn 's body is being held to remove the data disc that Walter will ultimately find . Ray regrets the possibility of having to leave his current identity , a police officer with a wife and son . Meanwhile , Peter (Joshua Jackson) and Fauxlivia discover that Van Horn has acquired a number of records on the personnel of the *Fringe* team , and likely has used the information to aid the parallel universe 's Walternate (Noble) .

At the secured facility , Fauxlivia is able to clear Peter , Astrid (Jasika Nicole) and Walter from the lab in order to allow Ray access to the lab . Ray continues to avoid shifting to a new body . Walter returns to the lab to confirm a theory and is interrupted by Ray . Ray successfully removes the data device , knocks out Walter , and flees to give it to Newton . When Ray requests to be able to return to his family , Newton kills him near his home , but by this time , the *Fringe* division has identified Ray and have converged on his address . On spotting Newton , they engage in a car chase , eventually damaging Newton 's car . Fauxlivia recovers Van Horn 's data disc from Newton and hides it before taking Newton into custody .

Sometime later , Fauxlivia visits Newton in a high @-@ security prison , and passes him the equivalent of a suicide pill that causes him to self @-@ destruct and bleed out mercury . Fauxlivia realizes Peter has become suspicious of her actions , and sleeps with him to draw away his attention .

= = Production = =

The episode was co @-@ written by co @-@ executive producer David Wilcox and J.J. Abrams ' assistant , Matthew Pitts . *CSI : Crime Scene Investigation* veteran Kenneth Fink served as director , his only *Fringe* credit to date . In an interview with *Entertainment Weekly* , executive producer Jeff Pinkner explained the role of the shapeshifters in the two universes , " The shapeshifters are Walternate 's ' soldiers . ' Part organic , part mechanical ? they ' bleed ' mercury ? and are able to take the shape of any human that they kill . Walternate sent them here years ago (they were able to cross universes safely because they 're not human) to act as sleeper agents " .

" Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " featured the second appearance of guest actor Gerard Plunkett as Senator Van Horn , as well as the first appearance of Marcus Giamatti as a

shapeshifter . It was the last episode with guest star Sebastian Roché (who played the villain Thomas Jerome Newton) . Despite his character 's death , executive producer J. H. Wyman hinted in a later Twitter post that Roché may return .

As with other Fringe episodes , Fox released a science lesson plan in collaboration with Science Olympiad for grade school children , focusing on the science seen in " Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " , with the intention of having " students learn about memory , which is the ability to store , retain , and recall information and experiences . "

= = Cultural references = =

The episode title " Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep " refers to the Philip K. Dick science fiction novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep ? , which was later adapted into the film Blade Runner . The novel dealt with what it means to be human , exploring how faking an emotion long enough can actually develop into real feelings , much like in the episode where two shapeshifters first pretended but then developed feelings for their victims ' families . While Peter is drinking in a bar , science fiction movie The Invisible Boy is playing on a television in the background , with the character Robby the Robot visible . During the episode , Walter makes two requests in order to provide " brain stimulation " to the deceased Senator Van Horn : a portrait of former president George W. Bush , and a copy of Hump Magazine .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Do Shapeshifters Dream of Electric Sheep ? " was watched by 5 @. @ 22 million viewers in the United States , with 3 @. @ 2 / 5 share among all households and a 2 / 5 share for viewers aged 18 ? 49 . SFScope reviewer Sarah Stegall commented that because of the show 's low ratings " it is almost at the point where it would be a top @-@ rated show on cable ; but these are not good numbers for broadcast TV . " Time shifted viewing increased the episode 's ratings by 45 percent among adults , resulting in a rise from 2 @. @ 0 to 2 @. @ 9 .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mostly positive reviews . Andrew Hanson from the Los Angeles Times thought the episode continued the series ' season three " hot streak " , but wished the promo had not spoiled Senator Van Horn being a shapeshifter . Hanson also did not fully buy into the Peter @-@ Fauxlivia relationship , as he expected Peter to realize something different about her . Noel Murray from A.V. Club loved the shapeshifter focus of the episode and graded it an A- , explaining it was a " very strong episode " that " brings back one of my favorite Fringe concepts : those crazy super @-@ powered shapeshifters " . MTV 's Josh Wigler also enjoyed the shapeshifter plot , and wrote that " the latest episode of Fringe marks four fantastic installments in a row , instantly establishing season three as having the strongest opening act of any other previous year in the science fiction series . Fringe has reinvented itself by drastically altering just one ingredient in the show 's successful format ? namely , the true identity of Olivia Dunham ? to create something wholly new and amazing " . Television Without Pity gave the episode an A- .

Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker enjoyed the episode , writing that " this week 's Fringe contained everything I love about the show , from LSD to the great villain Thomas Jerome Newton . [The episode] didn 't use its Philip K. Dick @-@ shifted title as a coy joke ? it really was about the dreams of shapeshifters , dreams and hopes which took a variety of forms " . Open Salon praised Torv 's performance this season , and thought it was a " very thought @-@ provoking episode , with some major implications for Peter and Olivia 's relationship moving forward " . Alex Zalben of UGO Networks , however , called the episode the " first clunker of the season " because despite

approving of the plot and the acting , the " writing was uniformly obvious , stilted and kind of terrible ... there were more head @-@ slappingly stupid moments than I could count " . SFScope 's Sarah Stegall noted similarities to the film Blade Runner , and predicted that the consummation of their relationship would cause Peter to discover Fauxlivia 's true identity .